



# GREEN HORIZON

## Magazine

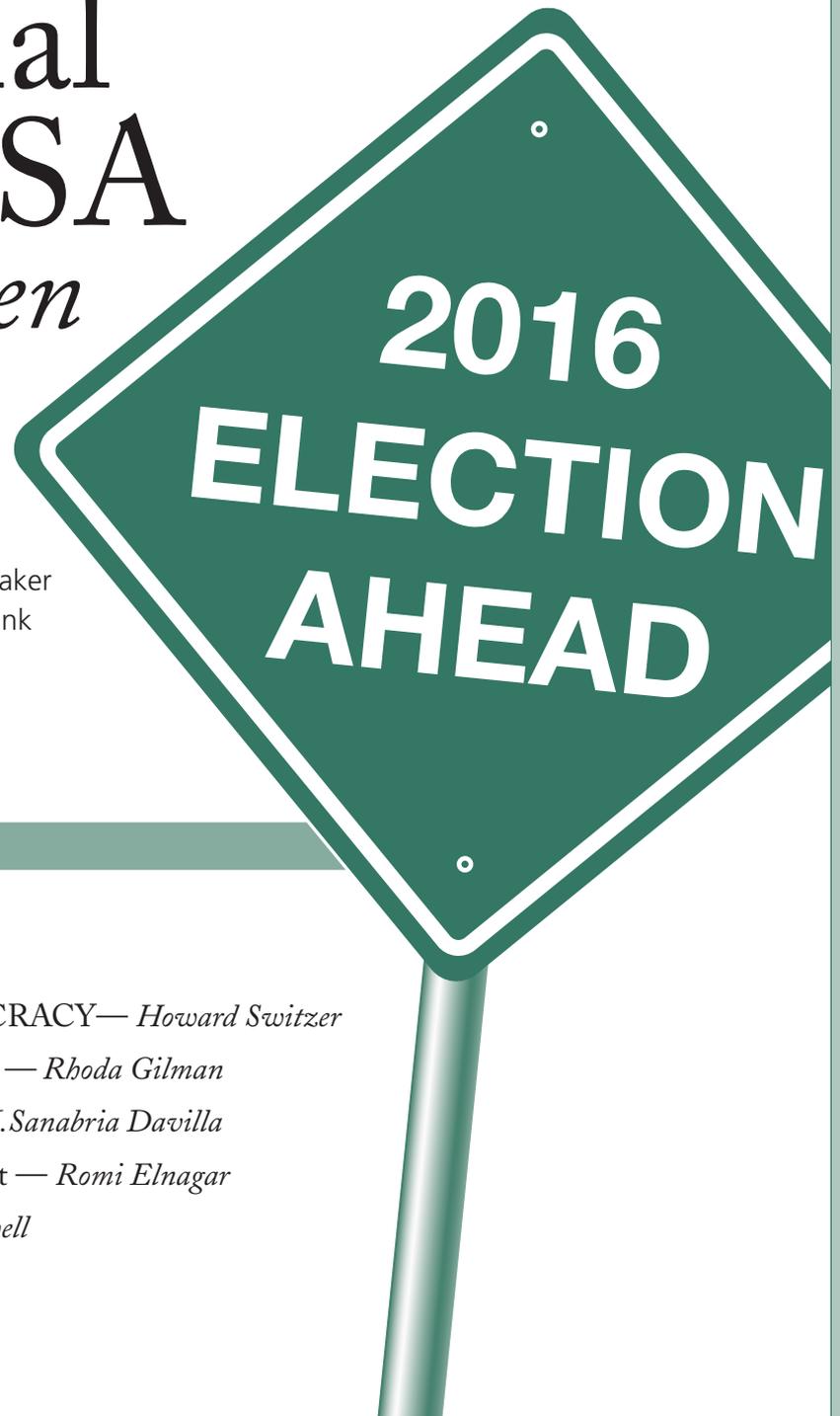
..... AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL PUBLISHED BY THE GREEN HORIZON FOUNDATION .....

# Presidential Politics USA

*within a broken  
system*

### Six (related) ways to think about it:

Art Goodtimes, Jonathan Martin, Michelle Whittaker  
Genevieve Marcus, Steve Welzer, John Rensenbrink



### ALSO INSIDE:

Letters

Fasci-nation/fascism — *Charles Keil*

Re-think MONEY and think DEMOCRACY— *Howard Switzer*

Review of Mark Satin's *New Age Politics* — *Rhoda Gilman*

Independence for Puerto Rico — *Olga I. Sanabria Davilla*

Indigenous People and the Environment — *Romi Elnagar*

Plea for a Benign God — *David Krosschell*

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# FASCINATING FASCISM

**CHARLES KEIL**

when you're borrowing on the future in  
 order to destroy any possible future,  
 you in bad shape

when you're following your followers to  
 know what to say at the next rally,  
 your leadership sinks to the lowest CD  
 is that Common Denominator, is that  
 Compost Dish or is it Community  
 Dread (Collective Dopiness, Certificate  
 of Deepshit)

only two basic words derive from  
*bhasko-* in the lingo of our Proto-  
 Indo-Euro ancestors, FASCISM and  
 FASCINATION or is it fasci-nation  
 1. bundle (as of rods, twigs, or straw),  
 also crowd of people: FASCES,  
 FASCICLE, FASCINE, FASCISM  
 [I'm not worried about 2. Latin for  
 band, fillet, bandage: FASCIA, FESS. ]  
 3. Probably Latin fascinum, fascinus, an  
 amulet in the shape of a phallus, hence a  
 bewitching: FASCINATE now this, of  
 course, is quite fascinating

we are fascinated when The Donald turns  
 down Fox because Megyn got all bundled  
 up with women and started to pull away  
 the veil...the fig leaf...the cod piece  
 to reveal the naked emperor & wizard  
 of ooze suddenly, it seemed to me,  
 Dr. chalktalk was talkin' Hitler this  
 morning as MC @ WAMC, saying  
 cud-it=b "fascism"? now we got  
 Bloomberg trying to save Wall St. and a  
 big chunk of his own ill-gotten gains by  
 reviving corpse-state: {dark dictum} The  
 American Heritage Dictionary of the  
 English Language:

1. A philosophy or system of government  
 that advocates or exercises a dictatorship  
 of the extreme right, typically through  
 the merging of state and business  
 leadership, together with an ideology of  
 belligerent nationalism. {full stop}
2. Capitol F. The governmental system  
 of Italy from 1922 to 1943. and on they  
 go with Italian words for it soon the  
 American lingo will redefine every single  
 one straw, twig, rod, lingam



**CHARLIE KEIL**

is author of *Urban Blues* (1966); *Tiv Song* (1979); *Polka Happiness* w. A.V. Keil and Dick Blau (1992); *My Music* w. S. Crafts and D. Cavicchi (1993); *Music Grooves* with S. Feld (1994); *Bright Balkan Morning* w. A.V. Keil, R. Blau and S. Feld (2002); *Born to Groove* with Pat Campbell on the web (2006). Charles retired from teaching in 1999 and has been morphing into an instrument playing poet who gardens sloppily.

## THE TEAM

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# Wicked Wild Politics *and* Cultural Counterpoint

I suggest taking the following route for reading this issue: there are two sections. The first is all about politics, especially the presidential race, its discontents and its excruciating yet intriguing possibilities. The second gives you a variety of articles on critical matters that are not about politics, but in a way impinge on it. The first comprises seven articles. The second a series of eye-stopping expositions.

The first set, on politics, starts with Art Goodtimes who gives you good reasons for thinking that a third party like the Greens should avoid presidential politics like the plague and should concentrate instead on local elections and local offices. The next article is a review of an important book just off the press by Jonathan Martin and reviewed by my co-editor Steve Welzer. The book stresses the crucial importance for a third party like the Greens—echoing Goodtimes—to concentrate on local, grass roots elections. The third article is by a brilliant newcomer to our pages, Michelle Whittaker. She is a colleague of Rob Richie at Fairvote. She emphasizes how critical it is to put a powerful priority on changing the election rules, for it's these rules that make it extremely difficult for the people at large to have a voice in politics and, as a leading example, for a third party like the Greens to even have a chance to win office, especially for Governor, Congress, U.S. Senate and President. She indicates with solid logic that until these rules are changed, running for office is like a noble but foolish Don Quixote venturing to assault the forbidding castles of the mighty.

Genevieve Marcus, another brilliant newcomer to our pages, picks up on Green Horizon's continuing exploration of a politics (including especially presidential politics) that strives beyond the conventional left and right dichotomy. She asks "what does that mean, to be 'out-in-front', as Petra Kelly has famously put it?" Steve Welzer then takes you to an analysis of socialism, including Bernie's socialism. He gently but with steel in his voice reminds us that we need to think beyond both socialism and capitalism if we are to meet the global crisis—the three interrelated and shocking threats of climate change, economic catastrophe, and out of control militaristic governments. The sheer depth and immediacy of this three-in-one crisis continues to be un-accountably ignored by all of the presidential candidates—except one, Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein. In classical and all too typical story-book fashion, her penetratingly pertinent voice on the real crisis is shoved aside by the mass media. So far...

I finish the ensemble of six articles with a sober challenge to Jill's Greens and Bernie's kindred millions to think hard and

thoroughly about how to navigate the cascading waters of this year's presidential election. Much is at stake.

But your journey through the pages of this issue has only started! Howard Switzer dazzles with his searing analysis of the control of MONEY by the few (the 1% actually). Follow his argument that it must give way to control by all the people if democracy—and our survival—is to have a real chance. Rhoda Gilman, member of Green Horizon Board, recalls to our minds an influential book by Mark Satin, *New Age Politics*. Though written forty years ago, and re-issued now in a new format and introduction, it's a crystal ball of what was to come. As if in synch with these articles, Olga I. Sanabria Davilla, propels our attention to the awesome and awful case of the imprisoned people of Puerto Rico oppressed and dominated by the MONEY powers of the United States. Olga, a third brilliant newcomer to the pages of *Green Horizon* in this issue, tells us what has got to be good news for many, if not most, of us who don't know what is really happening in her beautiful country. Her good news is that a vigorous and sturdy independence movement is alive and fighting bravely for freedom in Puerto Rico.

In a related way, people all over the world are fighting for their environment, for their life-ways, with intrepid resistance and patience. Romi Elnagar has once again in our pages chronicled with passion that fight by indigenous people. The fight is also really a fight for an earth, a planet, that can yet, and can still (in spite of all!), shelter and provide a good and beautiful life for all people free of bloodsuckers and demented dominators.

Then for a change of pace, read what David Krosschell tells us, and warns us, about our fabulous technologies. AI (Artificial Intelligence) is upon us in many hitherto unexpected ways—to such a degree that we do not really know what is in store for our life on this earth. Is it for a better and better life or a worse and worse life? David poses the question, not answering it, as is his ironic wont. But the warning is clear.

Another seemingly exotic matter is the sudden appearance of the Zika threat. Richard Lawson, physician and leading member of the Green Party of England and Wales, provides us with information and advice.

The LETTERS tell their own tale. Enjoy.

Go back to page two: We hope you like the biting quality of Charlie Keil's fasci-nating bout with fascism. (And is he also thinking of Donald Trump?)

—JR

# BUILDING FROM THE BOTTOM UP

## *Let's get serious about this!*

GREEN PARTY COUNTY COMMISSIONER ART GOODTIMES LAYS IT OUT FROM COLORADO

BY ART GOODTIMES

My mantra has been  
“Let’s build the party  
from the bottom up.”

Since I’ve walked that talk,  
having won local partisan-  
elected office in Colorado  
four times as a Green, I  
speak not out of theory, but  
out of practice...We need  
a baker’s dozen or two of  
local elected Green officials  
in each state before we  
should even attempt to run  
candidates for state and  
national offices.

It’s taken a number of years. The entire membership of the Green Party of Colorado has changed since I joined in 1998. We’ve always been an idealistic crew. Tree-huggers, yes. But social justice people, too. And peace marchers, feminists, anti-frackers, grassroots activists. What’s new are the people of color joining the movement, the strong women stepping up into leadership.

One of the main points of contention at this year’s annual state meet was an issue that hasn’t been clearly resolved since the state party formed 20 years ago. What is our mission statement? Are we an electoral party that seeks to propel its candidates into winning campaigns? Or are we an educational group that runs as many (losing) candidates as we can field to inform the electorate about our progressive alternative and give them a clear choice.

Back in 2000 there were two Green Parties on the national level – one that wanted to focus on electoral politics and another that wanted to focus on Green organizing, Green demonstrating, Green educating. Thanks to a lot of people’s work, including the then Colorado Green Party co-chair Dean Myerson, a new national Green Party dedicated to electoral politics held its first national convention in Denver in 2000 – the Green Party of the United States (with the unhappy acronym of GPUS).

Over the years the other national Green group faded from the scene. But its goal of educating over electing is still the prevailing mindset of many GPUS state and national members. Thus, one sees Green Party candidates for president, governor, senator and representatives in many states like Colorado, but hardly any Green candidates for county elected office, school boards or town councils. It’s a focus I’ve been trying to change for years. My mantra has been “Let’s build the party from the bottom up.”

Of course, many are impatient. “There’s no time to work from the bottom,” they insist. They see so many things wrong with our country, from the deeply flawed structure of its electoral system to our corporate sweetheart trade deals, our blindness to climate change and our paralysis in addressing it, etc., etc.

But I want us to be true to the first of our 10 Key Values—and that’s grassroots democracy. We need to start winning elections at the only place we have even a fighting chance in an electoral system completely stacked against minor parties—at the local level.

Since I’ve walked that talk, having won local partisan-elected office in Colorado four times as a Green, I speak not out of theory, but out of practice. And I see it as the best strategy, in a flawed system, to get us back to some kind of social harmony that might have a chance of sustainability in the future challenges that face us. We need a baker’s dozen or two of local elected Green officials in each state before we should even attempt to run candidates for state and national offices.

Or maybe we should bring back fusion, which got outlawed in Colorado back in 1901, although it’s still legal in New York State—where candidates can get political backing and endorsements from multiple parties. So the Greens could support Bernie Sanders, just like the progressive Democrats do.

Those suggestions used to seem heretical to the Green Party fundamentalists, worried about “diluting the purity of our message” and losing our special, outsider, “up-against-the-entire-system” status.

But in Colorado, this year's newly elected state co-chairs get the balance between ideological purity and practical action. They don't want to give up organizing, supporting just causes, tabling at progressive gatherings, educating. But they also see the wisdom of running to win at the local level, of becoming a party of winners—not losers. They are coming round to seeing the task of electing Greens as our primary mission, starting at the local level. And for me that's a significant step forward.



#### ART GOODTIMES

is completing his fifth term (20 years) as County Commissioner in southwestern Colorado's San Miguel County—the only Green Party County Commissioner in the inner basin West and the only elected Green official in Colorado. He has been involved in community collaborative processes, including the Public Land Partnership and the Burn Canyon Monitoring Task Force, for which he has received several national awards from the U.S. Dept. of the Interior and the U.S. Forest Service. Art was named first Poet Laureate on the Western Slope in 2011.

## REVIEW:

# *Empowering Progressive Third Parties*

*Empowering Progressive Third Parties in the United States*

Edited by Jonathan H. Martin

New York and London: Routledge, 2016.

STEVE WELZER

During 2014, Bernie Sanders was floating trial balloons about the idea that he might consider running for president. Two progressive constituencies were especially interested. One urged him to run for the Democratic Party nomination and lead a crusade to move that party to the left. The other said: “Bernie, stay true to your lifelong commitment to independent politics. Run as a critic of both of the establishment parties.”

Sanders chose the former path...knowing full well the daunting challenges of the latter.

Jonathan Martin has compiled a volume of insightful essays that examine those challenges and analyze how they might be overcome. In doing so he has produced a collection that should be of vital interest to all progressive third party proponents as well as anyone who agrees with him that “underlying conditions may be ripe for a new eruption of popular activism” geared toward transforming American politics.

The entrenchment of the Republican/Democratic dominance in this country is as persistent as it is pernicious. There's an irony to the situation in that the populace increasingly tells pollsters that they're fed up with the duopoly, yet voters can't seem to shake their reticence to actually cast an alternative ballot. Third party candidates rarely get as much as ten percent of the vote in races above the municipal level. Political scientists express concern that electoral polarization may be turning into systemic ossification; it's impeding progress and inducing civic apathy.

The essays in *Empowering Progressive Third Parties in the United States* provide both inspiration and edification toward leveling the playing field and opening up the system. They touch on a great variety of the relevant issues, among them:

- movement/party relations
- confronting media bias
- campaign finance and electoral law challenges
- access to debates

Political scientists express concern that electoral polarization may be turning into systemic ossification; it's impeding progress and inducing civic apathy.

- the “spoiler” conundrum
- non-partisan races
- inside/outside strategies vis-a-vis the Democratic Party
- what levels of office-seeking should be prioritized (local? state? national?)
- governing strategies when elected to office

The reader will come away feeling confident that these issues are being given all due attention by movement stalwarts. Narratives of recent third party successes—such as the election of Green Party member Gayle McLaughlin as mayor of Richmond, CA and socialist Kshama Sawant as a city councilor in Seattle—elucidate specific ways that the issues and challenges are being addressed.

Party building is the theme of several of the essays. Patrick Quinlan details the exemplary tactical execution that underlay the rise of the Portland, Maine Greens. Terry Bouricius chronicles the emergence of the Vermont Progressive Party, noting how Bernie Sanders provided impetus for the formation of that party during the years when Bernie was advocating independent politics. Perhaps a second edition of the book could include an analysis of Sanders’ later re-orientation toward the Democratic Party.

Jonathan Martin notes that a candidate benefits greatly from having strong community connectedness.

Jonathan Martin reports on the results of a sociological study he undertook to determine what factors in particular augur for successful progressive third party campaigns. In his study he focuses on state legislative races. His findings indicate that a candidate benefits greatly from having strong community connectedness (by which he means social ties and social similarity to voters). He recommends that parties make

a point of striving to recruit such candidates. Theresa Amato provides an account and analysis of the fiasco resulting from the 2000 presidential election, as well as a thorough critique of the “spoiler” vilification that Nader faced in its wake.

There are, of course, different conceptions of how to (at long last) build a progressive third party in this country. Tony Mazzocchi aspired to found a Labor Party based on trade union support and resources. Working Families leader Daniel Cantor advocates creating a left-wing equivalent of the Tea Party, i.e., a party-like force that could function primarily to promote progressive Democrats. Thomas Harrison, to the contrary, insists upon steadfast, principled independence and believes that “a viable new progressive third party can be built [right now] because its mass base already exists” in the social movements.

The Epilogue of the book contains a unique compendium

## Theresa Amato presents a thorough critique of the “spoiler” vilification that Ralph Nader faced in the wake of the 2000 presidential election.

of highlights of the recent activities of the most significant alternative parties. Hopefully this can become the basis for a web page that’s kept current; it could serve as an extremely valuable resource for the progressive electoral movement.

Green Party activists will note that *Empowering Progressive Third Parties* features a preponderance of material about and analysis of Green candidates, campaigns, and praxis. Twenty years ago an equivalent work would likely have focused on the New Party, Labor Party, or Rainbow Coalition. But it’s been the Green Party that has endured and, with ebbs and flows of fervor, has gradually established a national presence as the current significant third party on the left side of the spectrum (as is well described in an essay by Sayeed Iftekhar Ahmed).

In Europe, where full multi-party democracy has been implemented via proportional representation electoral systems, ideological segmentation makes sense. Distinctive platforms give voters clear choices, yet the segmentation of the vote can be resolved into majoritarian governments through the fashioning of coalitions. Not yet enjoying such in our own country, there have been proposals to the effect that progressives of various stripes confederate into a “big-tent” formation, perhaps under the auspices of the Green Party. There were times when Ralph Nader seemed to be urging such during his 2000 campaign. He talked about a “Blue-Green alliance” -- blue indicating labor. Others expanded that into the idea of a “Red-Blue-Green” united front (socialist/labor/green). Whether the electoral left heads in that direction or the dynamic is toward two or three distinctive mass parties, Jonathan Martin advises that empowerment will ultimately be realized through persistence and professionalization. His timely collection shows us the way. The sub-title of the book is: “Defeating Duopoly, Advancing Democracy.” It should be read by all who are committed to those objectives.



**STEVE WELZER,**

a co-editor of this magazine, has been a Green movement activist for over twenty years. He was a founding member of the Green Party of New Jersey in 1997 and recently served on the Steering Committee of the Green Party of the United States. Steve holds a Master’s degree in Economics from Rutgers University. He lives in East Windsor, New Jersey, and is pursuing a project to establish an ecovillage in that state.

# Beyond Redistricting Reform

*An opportunity to change the rules to “reflect our better selves.”*

In President Obama’s final State of the Union address, his most passionate words seemed drawn from an abridged version of FairVote’s reform playbook. In acknowledging his regret that partisan rancor has kept increasing, the president declared:

“If we want a better politics, it’s not enough to just change a Congressman or a Senator or even a President; we have to change the system to reflect our better selves. We have to end the practice of drawing our congressional districts so that politicians can pick their voters, and not the other way around. We have to reduce the influence of money in our politics...We’ve got to make voting easier, not harder, and modernize it for the way we live now. And over the course of this year, I intend to travel the country to push for reforms that do.”

That’s not quite our four-pronged Reform 2020 agenda — that is, fair representation voting for Congress to end gerrymandering, ranked choice voting to accommodate better choices, the National Popular Vote for president and a constitutional right to vote — but it’s heading in our direction.

Obama is not the first consequential president to draw attention to gerrymandering. In the twilight of his presidency in 1988, Ronald Reagan called gerrymandering an “anti-democratic and un-American practice.” In an interview with David Brinkley, Reagan described how gerrymandering creates a conflict of interest that results in districts not serving the best interests of the people but rather the politicians. Republican governors Larry Hogan and John Kasich have both recently called for change as well.

At FairVote, we know that gerrymandering is not the root of what ails our democracy, but rather a symptom of using winner-take-all voting rules. The president in his speech called on respect for science, and the science is clear, including in a fascinating study FairVote recently released on 14 leading scholars evaluating 37 different electoral reforms, including redistricting reform and forms of ranked choice voting.

Gerrymandering is corrupting in how it allows politicians to help their friends and hurt their enemies, but from a voter’s perspective, lines drawn by independent commissions will typically control outcomes just as definitively as those by politicians. To get to the root of what the president seeks—“a system to reflect our better selves”—we must replace winner-take-all voting rules with fair voting that allows for a meaningful vote and voice for all. Indeed, as a state senator, President Obama acted on just this understanding.

## TWISTED AND DISTORTED OUTCOMES

When district lines, rather than votes, decide who wins elections, voters lose and the politicians who draw the lines win. When it comes to legislative bodies (like state assemblies or Congress) our elected officials are supposed to represent the people yet winner-take-all districts leave nearly half the voters without any representation. The need for fair representation across political, socio-economic, and even racial lines will only increase as communities continue to rapidly change.

Where a voter lives can determine if their voice will be represented — especially in districts that have been controlled by one party for any length of time. As a conservative in liberal New York, *National Review* columnist Reihan Salam argues that, “As long

MICHELLE WHITTAKER

When district lines, rather than votes, decide who wins elections, voters lose and the politicians who draw the lines win.

The result is that most of the country, including whole states and regions,  
are dominated by one party, leaving voters outside that party  
(and dissenting voices within it) with a silenced voice

as we have single-member districts, it is inevitable that some group of people will be disadvantaged by the lines we draw.” Salam goes on to say, “If our goal is to create legislative districts that truly reflect their electorates, our best bet would be to give up on single-member districts altogether and replace them with multi-member ones.”

For 20 years, FairVote has shown how uncompetitive and distorted U.S. House elections are in our *Monopoly Politics* report. In 2014, more than two years before the 2016 elections, we made final calls in nearly 9 in 10 districts using a methodology that was nearly 99.99% accurate in 2012 and 2014. Many anticipate that for all of voters’ discontent about Congress, we will return to the incumbency retention rates of more than 98% we had in the four elections from 1998 to 2004.

When it comes to partisan rancor, an overwhelming number of incumbents are in districts where their party matches the party that does better in presidential races. To win, they just need to hold their own party’s support. Given the partisan divide, our system creates electoral incentives to fight rather than govern.

The result is that most of the country, including whole states and regions, are dominated by one party, leaving voters outside that party (and dissenting voices within it) with a silenced voice. As former Senate leaders, Trent Lott and Tom Daschle, noted in a recent Washington Post op-ed “representative democracy is not winner-take-all.” But our election system is, and today it leaves little room for other voices.

In the words of Ronald Reagan, “The electoral process has become twisted and distorted and it’s time to give the vote back to the people.”

### UNRIGGING THE SYSTEM

The movement toward independent redistricting commissions is gaining momentum across the country. From former leaders in Congress to grassroots citizens groups in Virginia and Illinois, taking the power to draw districts out of the hands of politicians is a good first step to make the process less corrupt and empower voters — but it doesn’t take the politics out of districts.

Relying on independent commissions alone is like having a single, small lamp to light your whole house and deciding (by committee) how to change the lightbulb to get more light.

Commissions may decrease the likelihood of an incumbent winning, but they still produce districts that are uncompetitive or do not fairly represent the voters on multiple levels. Even when they can evaluate partisanship, limits remain. These commissions cannot guarantee competitive elections, partisan fairness, or accountability. Why? Because independent commissions maintain a winner-take-all system for a representative democracy. It’s changing the lightbulb, not the lighting system and leaving some people in the dark.

If we want politics to reflect our better selves, our leaders need to stop playing politics with district lines and give voters the freedom to choose candidates that best represent their voice no matter where they live. We can make this happen by statute. As outlined in the proposed Ranked Choice Voting Act, FairVote calls for a three-pronged approach to truly end gerrymandering:

- 1 - Create multi-winner districts where voters elect more than one representative for their district.
- 2 - Use ranked choice voting to give voters a strong voice in their elections and provide direct representation to the great majority of us no matter where we live.
- 3 - Utilize independent commissions to create transparent and inclusive district maps.

Allies on Capitol Hill are working to introduce legislation in the near future.

We can change the system to be more representative and fair for all voters. It begins with recognizing that winner-take-all rules are counter to a representative democracy.



**MICHELLE C. WHITTAKER**

is the Director of Communications at FairVote, a nonpartisan non-profit organizations working to make elections fair, functional, and fully representative. Michelle focuses on strategic messaging, constituency engagement, social media interaction, website development, and audio/visual resource development. She joined the FairVote staff in April 2015. Prior to joining FairVote, Michelle served as the Communications and New Media Director for the General Board of Church and Society, an international public policy program agency of The United Methodist Church, where she won several awards for visual design and communications projects.

# Yes, Petra Kelly was right about Greens being “In front!” *But what does that mean?*

I want to expand a bit on what Steven Schmidt said about the Green Party in a recent issue of *Green Horizon*. He reminded us that the Greens originally formed a Value Based Party largely to achieve world peace. Yet despite the efforts of the UN, the numerous treaties and agreements, the world seems to be in even greater danger now than ever. He mentions new nuclear weapons systems and fighter planes developed by the U.S. and worrisome conflicts in Asia and the Middle East. We can add to the list the ability of inexpensive drones to supplement our (and others’) weapons arsenals or the fact that a single individual can now carry a bomb or a virus in a suitcase obviating the need for armies and fighter planes at all.

If we add to this list the destruction of our habitat through deforestation, desertification, widespread drought, climate disruption, and biochemical alteration of what remains of our food supply, we have to ask what chance does life on this planet have and for how long? Clearly these problems go way beyond left or right politics.

If Petra Kelly observed correctly that the Greens are neither Left nor Right, but in front, what forward visions do they have to offer our troubled species?

Having future visions is not enough. How can Greens get them “out there”? The mainstream media seems committed to either ignoring or ridiculing the Green Party. Even the progressive media is still focused on the Democratic Party. They, like many voters, go along with “Why waste a vote or newsprint? The Green Party won’t come close to winning.”

So, if the Greens are ‘in front’ can they visualize a way around these serious obstacles? First, let’s consider the question how, exactly, are the Greens in front?

Here is *my* list. Some of you will have additional or other ideas.

1. We are the only party explicitly based on values, not commandments or laws. This is an innovative concept to get across when nations, politicians, corporations, and individuals have no problem ignoring or circumventing laws to do what is in their best interest. What do laws actually mean in today’s world? Instead, Greens come together around Key Values that we individually believe are important for surviving and evolving the human species and the planet.
2. The Green Party has an organizational structure unlike that of any other political party and most other types of organizations to my knowledge. It is explicitly designed to prevent hierarchy, promote local autonomy, and encourage individual democracy and participation. There is no president, no overall “head” of the organization. There are committees with co-chairs whose job it is to see to it that the responsibilities of a committee are fulfilled.

\* The Green Party of California is guided by its Platform and the “Ten Key Values” of the Green Movement: Ecological Wisdom, Grassroots Democracy, Social Justice, Nonviolence, Decentralization, Community Based Economics, Feminism, Respect for Diversity, Personal and Global Responsibility, and Future Focus and Sustainability.

GENEVIEVE MARCUS

If Petra Kelly observed correctly that the Greens are neither Left nor Right, but in front...let’s consider the question how, exactly, are the Greens in front?

3. Unlike other political parties, the Greens have Assemblies on the county, state, and national level where decisions about the party are made by all members. Where it is inconvenient to meet in person, they vote by teleconference or online in specially designated forums.
4. Unlike other political parties, the Greens started out as a movement. The Green Party still has the mentality of a movement, but, unlike other activist organizations, it has the additional tool of Ballot Access. It uses the electoral process to incorporate its values into the policies and laws of local, state and national government.

So then, if we are in front in these ways, do we live up to our self-imposed high expectations? As someone who has been a part of and an observer of Green Party behavior since its inception, I will list ways in which I think we fall short of our mission. Others will have different ideas.

1. Nonviolence and Respect for Diversity. From time to time individuals and small factions will harshly attack verbally those they disagree with. This is emotional violence. Greens have left committees and even the Party because of such treatment. Others, observing this behavior in digital forums or assemblies have chosen not to join or become active. Then we complain that we don't have more members on committees to do the work.

What is this all about? We believe in Nonviolence and its sibling, Respect for Diversity. When we have different views from another Green is this not a normal human phenomenon? Don't we have disagreements within our families and with close friends? Don't we even experience conflicts within ourselves on occasion? How is it possible that some Greens abandon the Key Values in meetings with other Greens? Yes, other groups have similar behavior. In fact, verbal violence seems to rule the day everywhere, especially on television. But why, if we are in front should this continue to be such an obstacle to Green Party progress?

This leads us to Personal responsibility. We come from an assortment of backgrounds and have learned different ways of responding to disagreements. But if we are Greens and believe the Key Values are a way to save the human species and the planet, can we employ Personal Responsibility to learn nonviolent ways of responding to comments we think are wrong, misguided, or whatever? Many Greens with the same human aggressive verbal tendencies wait to respond until they have calmed down. These Greens can be role models.

Here are a few other tools that I have collected. Others may know even better ones:

Did I understand him/her correctly? Often one person will make a statement; someone else will become outraged by the statement but his or her response makes it clear to others that he misinterpreted what the first person said. So, first, be sure

you understand the speaker's meaning and don't assume your (mis)interpretation is correct. A good way to check this out is to repeat the statement: "Are you saying that xyz? In the old days, we strove for consensus, which included asking genuine clarifying questions rather than throwing accusations about a person's intent or morality.

If your interpretation was correct and you still feel it is a very bad idea, you might ask how they think it will benefit the situation. Again, listen carefully. There may be one tiny element that could deepen your own view of the issue. Also, you want to be sure they understand your concerns accurately. In the end, you may agree to disagree, but you can still take Personal Responsibility for doing so with Respect for Diversity.

Main point: It is a known fact that abusive language is hurting the Party, not helping it grow. If *we* learn to manage disagreement without violence, perhaps we can teach it to others and there will be less shootings on campuses and in the streets.

2. Another value that has been abused is Feminism. While we support it in theory, women have complained of sexism in the party since the beginning. Again, even though we all support gender equality, past learning sometimes causes subconscious violations to sneak through. I still hear complaints from time to time though I am not as tuned into the Women's Caucus as I was at the beginning of the Party. Sexism appears to me to have diminished considerably, but perhaps the WC will update this item.
3. Decentralization and Global Responsibility. In some respects, this seems like a contradiction in terms. How are we manifesting Global Responsibility when we are divided into states, counties, cities, etc. and focused mainly on the issues of importance there? Even nationally, we are more preoccupied with U.S. concerns than global ones. How can we clarify this? We have a Global Greens committee. What are they doing to express this Key Value? Should we bond more with Green Parties in other countries? How might we and they work together? In the early '80s I was on a global Internet bulletin board and was able to regularly read Green messages in Germany and Holland. I learned a lot. Why can't we have a global Green Internet list? There is a strong drive toward global unification among many organizations, but not political parties. Why can't the Greens be in front with that?
4. My favorite concern about failing to be in front is the Key Value of Future Focus. We have never done much with this one. In fact, we have now combined it with Sustainability, sort of pushing it off to the side. Perhaps because my specialty was New Concepts in Music from 1950 to 1970, i.e., the avant-garde, I am particularly sensitive to this issue and see unexplored frontiers for the Party here.

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A. The Green Platform is good, but it is very general. I would like to see it expanded into a Whole Systems Sustainable Future Database that would include specific examples of:

Economies of the future where, in addition to the coops, shared housing and the usual solutions, we explore the implications of replacing humans with robots in many jobs freeing humans to study and evolve civilization, produce art, teach, etc. The database would also include future types of Management Systems (i.e. governance), Environmental Design (land use, shelter, water use, agriculture, open space, and recreation), Energy, Waste-Recycling, Health, Food, Learning, Communication, Decision-Making/Problem-Solving, the Arts, and Philosophy.

Every Green could/should contribute to the Future Focus Database whenever they learn something bearing on a Sustainable Future. We could even invite non members to contribute, subject to specific criteria.. A committee could oversee it as editors.

B. New Strategies to Grow the Party. Like a movement or activist group, the GP could send out single solutions from the Database to a wide digital network of other activists both to get the ideas out there, but also to grow the Party by inspiring many to join and vote for Greens. We could expand out the Speakers Committee so they could go to universities and other groups with our solutions. We could also write articles for the progressive media and op-eds elsewhere so we become known as “problem-solvers for the future”. Again attracting publicity, voters, and members. We might even construct this database jointly with other Green Parties and go global.

C. Outrageous Other Strategies. In order to get media attention, we must provide something the media can't resist. For example: It will be a tragedy if we can't make some use of Bernie Sanders' huge efforts and results. The only way we can contact Sander's supporters is through the media. Here are two possibilities: The GP sends out a press release saying,

“Because Bernie's ideas are so similar to our own, the Green Party is considering standing down for just this election and encouraging our members to vote for Bernie.” (Bear with me for a moment.)

The idea of one political party standing down in an election to support another party's candidate is unheard of. To be sure, many of our members plan to vote for him anyway (not me), so it's not much of a stretch. I don't know the requirements of standing down at this point. Ideally, Jill would wait in the wings and if Bernie loses the Primary, she comes back out and *then* we tell his supporters this:

“Jill is like Bernie but even more; plus, she's a woman. If you like Bernie, you'll love Jill and the Green Party.

There is a strong drive toward global unification among many organizations, but not political parties. Why can't the Greens be in front with that?

With your support we can right now easily upend the ridiculous idea that a third party can't win (quote history).”

Or even more outrageous:

“Because the Green Party shares most of Bernie's ideas, we invite him to join Jill Stein and run as Co-Presidents and, for the first time, have both genders represented equally in public office.”

(One could run for President, the other for Vice-President and share the office.)

These are just a starting list of ways to overcome media and political obstacles to Green Party growth. I am quite sure they would get extensive media coverage for the party and Jill. Especially the last one.

I look forward to additional ideas.



**GENEVIEVE MARCUS**

received a Ph.D. in Historical Musicology at UCLA. She lectured there for six years. She subsequently work for the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra as a Program Annotator and Consultant in Contemporary Music. Other affiliations were Music Director for Experiments in Art and

Technology, Peace Forum Leader for CompuServe and Founding Editor of Computer Users in Education. She and Bob Smith met in 1970 and they formed Experimental Cities, Inc. a 501(c) 3 whose mission was to seek positive solutions to social and environmental problems in big cities. They ran for Co-Governors of California in 1984 and together received over a million votes. They got front-page coverage in major newspapers, appeared on late night tv shows, and were interviewed globally on radio. They wrote a book on Equal Relationships, conducted relationship workshops for couples (including gays) and groups, and published a newsletter on The New Relationships. They went on to produce a television show on new sustainable inventions, and planned a small Experimental City that would test solutions to social and environmental problems and demonstrate to the public how they worked. Buckminster Fuller was a member of their advisory board. In the 1980s, Genevieve and Bob were co-founders of the California Green Party which embodied many of their ideas.

# Bernie Sanders, the Greens, and the New Anti-Capitalism

STEVE WELZER

Disdain for the current system among a significant proportion of the young opens doors for their consideration of an alternative.

For anyone who came of age after the turn of the millennium, the anti-communism of the Cold War period is all but irrelevant. Sentiment now, for that younger generation, leans more toward anti-capitalism. They've been reading about—or directly experiencing the effects of—a highly unstable boom-bust economy along with growing income/wealth inequality and oppressive indebtedness.

Disdain for the current system among a significant proportion of the young opens doors for their consideration of an alternative; and it's forcing the progressive movement to confront issues regarding what that alternative might be. For example, activists are debating the merits of the “democratic socialism” espoused by Bernie Sanders in contrast to the more radical vision of Kshama Sawant, the Marxist two-term Seattle city councilor. Meanwhile, a proposal has been circulated among Green Party members advocating that the party's platform be amended to embrace “eco-socialism” as a principle.

The broad electorate in our country has little context for relating to such leftist ideological debates. In Europe, where distinctive Green, liberal, socialist, and social democratic parties compete for votes in almost every major election, ideological differences are front-and-center and forthrightly debated. But many of the American youth who have been attracted to the Bernie Sanders campaign may not recognize the significance of Sanders' assurances that he won't advocate collective ownership of industrial enterprises. On the basis of Bernie's invocation of “the Scandinavian way” some might even have the impression that socialism is a relatively new phenomenon exemplified by the systems of Norway and Sweden; or perhaps it's an extension of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society policies, for which Bernie expresses a special affinity. It's unlikely that a person being introduced to the concept of socialism via the 2016 Sanders campaign would acquire much in the way of ideological clarity—or be motivated to consider the full range of alternatives to capitalism.

## THE CRITIQUE OF CAPITALISM HAS A LONG HISTORY

The left-wing critique of capitalism dates to the early nineteenth century. At that time proto-anarchists and agrarian decentralists were concerned about a destabilization of community life under the onslaught of encroaching market forces. They retained a vision of a simple-living anti-industrial pastoralism. Others, having a different orientation, advocated a transition from capitalism to socialism in order to enable the productive potential of industrialism to be fully realized. The latter perspective came to predominate within the movement because it was more concordant with the reigning doctrine of progressive development.

Interestingly, right-wing and left-wing progressives were in agreement that industrial development held the promise of eliminating scarcity—and that such was the key to human liberation. They differed in regard to the question of property relations: would private enterprise and the profit motive best spur industrial development and thus grow the economy to the benefit of all citizens, or would they result in largesse for the owners of capital at the expense of the masses of wage laborers? Progressive-minded anti-

In the U.S. a number of social democratic initiatives have adopted the strategy of “boring from within” to try to move the Democratic Party to the left. The Bernie Sanders campaign of 2016 is the latest such endeavor.

capitalists asserted that industrial productivity could foster the achievement of generalized abundance—the basis of a classless, just, and peaceful society—only if the fruits of that productivity were appropriated socially via collective ownership of the means of production.

An international confederation of anti-capitalist organizations was established in 1864 (the “First International”). It lasted only twelve years due to ideological wrangling between the socialist followers of Karl Marx (who stressed the importance of building workers’ political parties intent upon capturing state power) and the anarchist acolytes of Mikhail Bakunin (who advocated direct economic struggle at the point of production to subvert state power).

By the time a second such confederation was founded in 1889 Marxism was ascendant. In addition to the idea of striving for working class control of state power, its tenets specified that:

- after a long historical process of progressive development the next higher stage (the ultimate stage) of human history will be socialism—a classless society wherein the people altogether own and democratically control the means of production
- the primary agency of social change toward achieving this is the class-conscious industrial proletariat
- the immediate objective of the proletariat’s revolutionary activity is socialization of the “commanding heights” of the economy, thus enabling national—and then international—economic planning.

There was a relatively high degree of consensus among Second International socialists in regard to that worldview for a number of years. But programmatic and strategic disagreements arose before too long and a major schism developed in the wake of the Russian Revolution of 1917. Those who saw that event as a model and therefore adopted the ideas of its leader, Vladimir Lenin, established a new confederation, the Communist International, adhering to a revolutionary ideology termed “Marxism-Leninism.” (The group that Kshama Sawant belongs to, Socialist Alternative, espouses a Trotskyist variant of Marxism-Leninism.) Those who, instead, supported parliamentary gradualism inaugurated the competing Socialist International (S.I.) in 1923. The latter came to emphasize the

ethical and social justice foundations of the movement rather than its class-struggle imperative or historical inevitability. Over time, many of the S.I. constituent organizations came to embrace a more modest vision of reformation called “social democracy”—characterized by the retention of private enterprise and market economics, albeit with extensive public provision and a robust social safety net.

By the middle of the twentieth century, despite the fact that the movement had become divided and sub-divided, parties adhering to one or another variant of communism, socialism, or social democracy were thriving as major political forces in country after country.

But not in the United States.

#### THE LEGACY OF AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM

Various theories have been put forward to explain “American exceptionalism” (citing such factors as anti-statism, hyper-individualism, attachment to *laissez-faire*, suspicion of centralized authority, a relatively high degree of social mobility, and “get rich” opportunities presented by the frontier; plus the idea that a less homogeneous population tends to have less of a sense of collective responsibility). Over the years, leftist electoral activists in this country have continually attempted to overcome those exceptional factors and establish the kinds of mass-based socialist parties found in all the other advanced democracies.

There was some encouragement in that respect early in the twentieth century. The Socialist Party of America garnered over three percent for its presidential candidate in 1912 and 1920; it elected dozens of state legislators and more than a hundred mayors during that period. But it only managed to seat two members of the House of Representatives and its influence waned after the post-WWI “Red Scare” repression.

The SP continued to run candidates for many years thereafter, including the well-known Norman Thomas, but almost all such campaigns were marginal. The Communist Party USA fielded presidential tickets in the years between 1924 and 1940 and then again between 1968 and 1984, but it never established a mass base. More recently, during the last thirty years, there have been at least a half-dozen attempts to launch a social democratic type of alternative party (under the appellations: Citizens, Rainbow, Labor, New Party, 21st Century Party, Justice, Progressive,

The Green politics movement is increasingly broadening its appeal through the advocacy of a perspective that weaves together ecological sanity, justice, and nonviolence in a way that advances the critique and practice of our movement beyond any and all socialisms.

Working Families)—but not a single one achieved national prominence of any degree. It's often suggested that America's winner-take-all electoral system is to blame, but during the same thirty-year period the Canadian New Democratic Party and the British Liberal Democratic Party made great strides toward national major party status while operating within very similar types of winner-take-all systems.

Recognizing how daunting the challenge is in the U.S., a number of social democratic initiatives (notably Progressive Democrats of America and Democratic Socialists of America) have adopted the strategy of “boring within” to try to move the Democratic Party to the left. The Bernie Sanders campaign of 2016 is the latest such endeavor. If Sanders wins the Democratic nomination it will set in motion a contention for the soul of the party. The outcome could conceivably be a transformation into a European-style social democratic party. The threat of such would alarm that portion of the American financial and industrial power elite that has been loyal to the Democrats since comprehending that FDR's New Deal saved capitalism. Those elites, who appreciate the fact that welfare-state amelioration of systemic economic deficiencies must be sustained in order to foster social stability, wouldn't be inclined to countenance a Democratic Party turn toward socialism—of any kind. They would view it as “going too far.” In regard to Bernie Sanders, they're aware that his platform is really just an extension of Great Society liberalism, but they're concerned that his rabble-rousing could spur a movement for resolute income redistribution and stricter corporate regulation—or even propel the growth of organizations calling for expropriation of large enterprises and whole industries.

### ALTERNATIVE ANTI-CAPITALIST PARADIGMS

As the American left sees an opening to finally get a hearing for its anti-capitalist credo, how should the Green Party respond?

Some Greens who remain fixated on the dichotomous perspective—capitalism or socialism—are advocating that the party's platform be revised to espouse the latter. They acknowledge that the numerous attempts at implementing socialism (revolutionary or parliamentary) during the twentieth century yielded disappointing results, but they believe that the modification called “eco-socialism” addresses many of the issues that were responsible for prior failures.

Eco-socialism seeks to meld the “Red” paradigm (of the historical socialist movement) with the “Green.” The idea first gained currency during the 1980s and is often associated with the launch of the journal *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* in 1988. This was followed by *Green Left Weekly* and the volume *Environment, Capitalism and Socialism* during the 1990s (both products of the Australian Democratic Socialist Party). Formalization of the movement can be dated to the appearance of *An Ecosocialist Manifesto* (2001) authored by Joel Kovel and Michael Löwy and then the founding of an International Ecosocialist Network in 2007.

Many eco-socialists are Marxists who have come to appreciate the Greens' reconsideration of the issues, practices, and objectives of modern radicalism. Like the Greens, they prioritize confronting the looming threats of ruination from ecological disaster and destruction from incessant warfare. Their discourse, like the Greens, is more along the lines of community rejuvenation than proletarian revolution. Recognizing how the Greens disdain concentration of wealth and power (whether in the hands of big business or under the auspices of big government), their revamped program no longer calls for nationalization as a panacea. Instead, public ownership is conceived of as municipalization (more localized)—or else it's suggested that socialization should result in cooperatives based on worker ownership.

Nonetheless, socialization remains the fundamental principle—whether couched as “public works” or municipal enterprises or cooperatives—and private ownership is still anathema. Eco-socialists continue to be wedded to the Marxist notion that exploitation is inherent in private enterprise (on the basis that one person must not “own” another person's labor). This leads to a conclusion that egalitarianism has to mean common ownership. Privately owned businesses—other than sole proprietorships, partnerships, or those that are family-owned and operated—are disparaged or disallowed. And they want the Green Party platform to reflect such.

The Ecosocialist Manifesto asks: “Why socialism, why revive this word seemingly consigned to the rubbish-heap of history by the failings of its twentieth century interpretations? For this reason only: that however beaten down and unrealized, the notion of socialism still stands for the supersession of capital.” What a Marxist might have difficulty understanding is that

The Greens should patiently explain that we have in mind a different, better alternative than what was promoted by the left during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

many Greens are also proposing a post-capitalist society—but of a different kind.

A premise of the new alternative is that the left has been mistaken to conflate the capitalist system with private enterprise. A corollary is that the latter is not necessarily the problem. The problem, rather, is the globally dominant development-obsessed system that can manifest as either industrial-corporate capitalism or industrial-state socialism. In that light, eradicating private enterprise can be viewed as an ideological preoccupation, not a solution.

And it's hard to imagine that Green Party candidates would be enthusiastic about running for office on a platform that disparages or disallows small private businesses. In fact, the Greens have generally viewed small-scale businesses as potentially being a healthy part of a thriving local or regional economy. The key toward realizing their positive potential is that they must be of, by, and for (i.e., accountable to) the community. A post-capitalist alternative based on such a perspective can have broad appeal. Conversely, to encumber the Green Party platform with a dogma that fetishizes collective ownership would be to take a misguided step in the direction of replicating leftist miscalculations of the past.

#### WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE BIG CORPORATIONS?

Greens talk about decentralization and devolution of power as prerequisites for realization of their vision of a society based on a grassroots-participatory form of democracy and a communitarian ethos. But from this point in history—given the extreme hypertrophy and over-centralization of our polities, institutions, and technologies—achieving the necessary downscaling will take time. Therefore, while working toward ultimate long-term transformative goals, a critical issue remains: What to do about the current dominance of the extant large corporations?

We've established that socialists advocate collectivization of one sort or another—as a universal principle. Greens, on the other hand, tend to be wary of the bureaucratic monstrosities that can result. Still, Greens don't proscribe the idea categorically. For example, Jill Stein's 2016 campaign is calling for the nationalization of the energy industry, as well as the Federal Reserve and selected other facets of Big Finance.

Greens tend to have a pragmatic, case-by-case approach to this issue. The transition to a decentralized Green society might, in fact, be hastened by socializing some of the large corporations

(keeping in mind that municipalization, whenever possible, is a better idea than nationalization). In cases where socialization is inappropriate, vigilant and tight regulation is imperative. The objectives guiding corporate-constraining policies should be, at minimum: to diminish their power by getting corporate money out of politics, diminish their wealth through progressive taxation, remove their subsidies, end their bail-outs. At the same time, corporate dominance can be undermined by gradually re-allocating social and economic resources toward community-based enterprises (some private, some public, depending upon local preference).

#### THE LEFT NEEDS TO DO SOME COMPREHENSIVE RE-THINKING

Revulsion with the capitalist system is fully justified, and the renewed clamor for alternatives is encouraging. What the Greens should do in response is to patiently explain that we have in mind a different, better alternative than that which was promoted by the left during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This message may not be so easily assimilated because the worldview associated with the traditional left/right (public/private) spectrum is so entrenched. But with persistence it should be possible to elucidate why socialism is not the only alternative to capitalism—and to make the point that, rather than reviving a near-discredited ideology, it's time for the left to re-think its vision of “where to go and how to get there.”

The Green politics movement is increasingly broadening its appeal through the advocacy of a perspective that weaves together ecological sanity, social justice, and nonviolence in a way that advances the critique and practice of our movement beyond any and all socialisms. Such could ultimately provide the most conducive framework for the post-capitalist regeneration of our society. Greens assert that it holds the promise for finally clearing the pathway toward human liberation.



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# What a Year This Is (already)!

JOHN RENSENBRINK

*The opinions expressed herein are those of the author only. They may or may not express the opinion of the Board or the staff of this publication*

[DRAMATIS PERSONAE: Jill of the Greens and Gary of the Libertarians and Bernie and Hillary and Trump and Cruz and Kasich—and just maybe a surprise Republican newcomer, aka darkhorse!]

The Democratic and Republican Parties are in trouble. Their political and moral distance from the people of America has been widening for decades. Both parties have allowed severe problems of the political system to fester and get worse. New voices, new ideas, new ways of solving pressing issues have been kept out of politics. To put it more bluntly, the political system has suppressed and excluded people from politics. This alarming situation has been hidden, covered over, by a slavish and be-fuddled mass media.

But the cover is coming off. This year's presidential election reveals lots of things, but the most salient is that the American people are coming to realize how much they have been politically misled and beguiled by both parties. The phenomenal positive response of Republican voters, in state after state (until Wisconsin!), to Trump's right-wing populist campaign pin points the voters' rebellion in a big way for the Republican side. Bernie Sander's astoundingly successful drive in competition with the establishment's durable doyen, Hillary Clinton, reveals the same for the Democrats.

The demographic distribution of Bernie's voters is especially significant both for this year and for 2020 and beyond. I write this the day after the Wisconsin primary. Polls reported by CNN showed that Bernie won voters under the age of 30 by over 60 percentage points, even larger than his average margin of about 40 points in contests this year. Bernie also led Clinton by a 2 to 1 margin among those aged 30 to 44. That pattern in state after state says volumes. If followed through election cycle by election cycle in the future, this definitely means a huge shift in presidential voting by the people—with repercussions for the entire government and electoral battles at all levels.

## HOW COME IS THAT?

In the last several presidential elections it's been made to seem that the problem with our politics is the presumed intrusion into the political system by the Greens and Libertarians. But the exact opposite is the case. The problem lies precisely in and with the major parties. They have been urged by many voices (ignored and/or suppressed) to do something about the political system—a system which has been rigged by the major parties. The major parties—supported often by a me-too judiciary—have frequently colluded to ignore and suppress other parties and other voices. Countless books report this. One of the best is Theresa Amato's *Grand Illusion: the Myth of Voter Choice in a Two-Party Tryanny*. (Google it!).

The American people, bless them, in poll after poll, have shown for years they want

But now, and at last, in this tumultuous presidential election year, the American people are translating the answers they have been giving pollsters into direct action in the ballot box and in party caucuses.

basic changes, including a call for one or more third parties. That should have meant something to the major parties. But a studious and narrow selfishness has prevailed within each party. But now, and at last, in this tumultuous presidential election year, the American people are translating the answers they have been giving pollsters into direct action in the ballot box and in party caucuses.

But it's not all hunky-dory. The voting for real change in this election year may peter out, may be soothed away by the entrenched political class. But, and in any case...a huge dent in the exclusionary wall has been made.

Additional pressure is needed. That is why the Libertarians, starting already in the 1970s and the Greens, starting in the 1980s, have appeared and persisted. What can they do now? What might they do, should do?

First, keep the pressure on. Increase it! Both the Greens and the Libertarians must and certainly will keep up the pressure and increase it steadily by running candidates of their own at all levels. They've been doing it for years but as if under a fog, the fog of craven media devotion to a broken system. This election year reveals in a direct way--via that great bastion of democracy the ballot box--that the people want political change and they want candidates who want action for political and policy change. If the political class that dominates both major parties does not measure up in the next four years the Greens and Libertarians will step in with candidates that have a better chance than ever to appeal to and receive the attention and votes of millions.

If Bernie wins the White House in November he will have raised even more expectations than did Barak Obama in 2008. Obama frittered it away. Or, more likely, he was hemmed in. His vision, ideas and policies were met not only with intense opposition but, much worse, with nasty obstruction: politics became the war of enemies. Would things be different for Bernie? He will be hamstrung by his own party and grievously pushed around by the Republicans. Nor will he find more than cautious support from most dissidents in the political class. This can only deepen the disgust of the people with both major parties. New candidates will appear in future elections. Perhaps with Bernie's help! Candidates from the Greens and Libertarians will push forward as never before, demanding equal and fair election rules as well as new policies.

If Hillary wins, she will pursue the same inadequate policies and exclusionary election rules that have overlong been pursued by the reigning political class. Soothing rhetoric and tepid reforms will be tried, backed by the corporate media. The people will again be short changed economically and left out of political influence and real participation. Disgust and frustration will resume and intensify. The Greens and Libertarians will move towards center stage.

If a Republican should win the White House, the oppression and disfunction will get worse. The whole system may implode. Greens, Libertarians, sobered Democrats, worried Republicans and other groups will be sorely tried to try to steer a course through the chaos.

Second, Both the Greens and the Libertarians can and will, if they are truly alert, learn to build from what Bernie's campaign has revealed: a starved hunger for a new and relevant politics. The over-riding emphasis of Bernie's campaign has been on inequality. This can and must be deepened.

Overall in matters of income and social position, inequality has its roots in unequal power. That fact must be driven home. Re-structuring the electoral rules for full participation by the people is a paramount need. Bernie nibbled at this, but unfortunately did not give it emphasis commensurate with the problem and the perceived need for action. His running within the Democratic Party probably hobbled his "equality horse." Jill Stein in her campaign is vigorously drawing attention to the broken political system and how it can be repaired and made to work for all the people.

Of matching importance is climate change. Bernie also nibbled at this. No other candidate of the major parties did even that. An emphasis on equality must embrace full scale attention to the climate crisis, for on it's being fully mitigated depends the economic and sheer physical survival of all the people. Only if we all work together--within a fair and equal electoral system--can we hope to survive. Real democracy and our collective survival are inter-twined and dependent on each other. Jill Stein has been hammering at this.

A new foreign policy is directly related to Bernie's theme of political revolution. Bernie has not been strong on a new foreign policy. But, even so, he has to some degree prepared the way

*Continued on page 32*

# MONEY, POWER *and* POLITICS

HOWARD SWITZER

One cannot really remove money from politics because money is what politics is all about and always has been.

Our nation's history has been about the struggle to free ourselves from oligarchic rule in order to establish a democracy, which absolutely depends on public control of the money.

I was recently invited to represent the Green Party on a forum titled 'Getting Money out of Politics' at a local bioregional group's gathering. Only two others sat on the forum; a young woman representing Move On and Wolf Pac and a man closer to my age representing the Sanders Campaign. The young woman spoke to reversing Citizens United and campaign finance reform. The Sanders campaign representative spoke of electing Bernie in order to restore regulations against large private campaign donations. They and the audience apparently agreed, "We've got to get money out of politics."

I understood this to mean that elections are important to us and we want a fair shake, a fair and honest system that allows us all freely to vote for candidates who represent ours and the public's interest in winning a peaceful and prosperous world. However, the statement also reveals to me a disturbing lack of awareness of what money is and not only our current situation but our entire history regarding money, power and politics. One cannot really remove money from politics because money is what politics is all about and always has been. Specifically politics, despite its many distractions, is about who controls the money. I was last to speak and while feeling like I might be swimming against a strong tide I none-the-less dove in. I reminded the group of the recent study comparing the policy preferences of the wealthy compared to those of the general public and how much influence each had on policy outcomes. It is a useful way to remind us that our nation is ruled by an oligarchy. To point this out will often get you labeled a conspiracy theorist despite the easily obtained evidence proving it to be true. As Marshall McLuhan said, "Only the small secrets need to be protected. The big ones are kept secret by public incredulity."

"The viability of the colonists to get power to issue their own money permanently out of the hands of the international bankers was the prime reason for the revolutionary war." ~ Benjamin Franklin

## THE AMERICAN OLIGARCHY

History reveals that rule by oligarchy has been true from the very beginning of our nation. Alexander Hamilton convinced the very first Congress to hand the new nation's money creation power over to Robert Morris, the richest banker in New York who had made a fortune off of the Revolutionary War. He, in Trump-like fashion, put his own name prominently on the nation's money. Hamilton and Morris would soon after form a banking partnership known as the 1st Bank of the United States which issued the nation's money. The Revolution had in fact been fought over the colonist's right to issue money, which they had been doing successfully creating a prosperous economy for them in the new world. That is until the British rulers, the bankers behind the corporations, the King being a mere hood ornament on the capitalist juggernaut by then, declared them illegal plunging the colonies into a deep economic depression which fomented the American Revolution. It was publicly issued money, the Continental, that made the revolution possible. In a way it was the revolution. The Constitution itself was written largely to protect the interests of the new American oligarchy but the struggle for sovereign public money continued overtly through the first 140 years of the

nation's existence right up through the populist era until 1913, when the FED was created, a privately controlled institution in government disguise. We had won the revolution but we did not win the power, as Salvador Allende was to say many years later about his own nation's revolution.

*"The issue which has swept down the centuries and which will have to be fought sooner or later is the people versus the banks." ~ Lord Acton*

Our nation's history has been about the struggle to free ourselves from oligarchic rule in order to establish a democracy, which absolutely depends on public control of the money. This in fact has been the primary political issue for more than three millennia and yet it does not appear on any candidate's laundry list of issues, instead we see issues which are all mere symptoms of the money system under which we live. I was happy to hear Jill Stein say in her campaign kick-off video, "...their economy is not Our economy, their government is not Our government..." as it is pretty clear indictment of the oligarchy and its duopoly political system but I am disappointed that she fails to directly challenge the real source of the oligarchy's power, the power to create money despite it being in our national platform.

*"There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root."  
~ Henry David Thoreau*

## DEMOCRACY DEFINED

Ten centuries before Christ the Greek demos was battling their oligarchy to win self-governance. The oligarchy of their day controlled the money, which for the most part was gold and it was they who decided what money could or could not be spent on. Rarely were the needs of the people given due consideration and this created economic hardships for the people that eventually led to revolts. The Greeks had identified the single most vital prerogative of a democratic government which was to issue the money and simply spend it into the economy on the needs of the society, and from there it would continue to circulate serving the people's needs. When this was implemented it brought great prosperity to the general public. The oligarchy, of course, did not like this and as James Madison would point out much later "...have used every form of abuse, intrigue, deceit, and violent means possible to maintain their control over governments by controlling money and its issuance."

Recent events starkly reveal that Greece is still struggling with oligarchy today. Despite the ancient Greeks success with publicly issued money, known also as sovereign money, there remained some confusion about money. It is revealed in Aristotle's comment that "Money exists not by nature but by law." Money, they had discovered, could and should be created by law as a public utility but the oligarchy, in its typical self-serving manner, insisted

that gold, as well as other precious metals, was natural money. They, of course, controlled the vast majority of the gold, thus the perversion of the Golden Rule, "He who has the gold rules."

Historically when gold was used for money it was valued at more than what it was worth as a commodity. If it were not it was of no use as money and would be melted down into bullion. This is proof that gold is not natural money. When gold was plentiful, as it was in northern Europe during the time when the new world of the Americas was being looted, it was not such a problem and there was prosperity. For most of history, however, gold has been a scarce commodity and when money is scarce we have economic depression. With an oligarchy controlling the money over the centuries, recurring economic depression has been a common feature of the world economy, interrupted by occasional booms. This boom and bust cycle is easily manipulated by the oligarchy through their banking corporations and, when the bubble bursts, they reap huge benefits from what to the general public experiences as an economic crisis. During the Great Depression thousands of banks went out of business and their assets were absorbed by the big banks. In the crash of 2008 thousands of banks went out of business and the big banks again got bigger. Engineered economic crises is a kind of pump and dump scheme. Pump up the creation of new wealth while pushing prices up, then contract the money supply by not lending and when it crashes, reap all the assets used as collateral. We are all supposed to ignore this fraud and accept the so-called "business cycle" as something as natural as the weather. Since 1970, the IMF reports, there has been more than 425 economic crises with more than 10 countries being in crisis every year. During this time productivity climbed while wages were kept flat and the profits of the oligarchy soared to astronomical heights.

*"... if you wish to remain slaves of the Bankers and pay for the cost of your own slavery, let them continue to create deposits." ~ Sir Josiah Stamp*

## THE WAY FORWARD

The issue should now be clear. Real political power is derived from the power to control the creation of a nation's money and is why such power should only be trusted to democratically elected government. In fact our nation's Constitution, Art.1, Sect 8 - 5, gives that power to Congress, not to the oligarchy's banks. Greens have the three essential reforms required to create a sovereign money system in their platform and it is given brief mention in the Green New Deal. These three reforms are in fact in House Bill 2990, The National Emergency Employment Defense Act, the NEED Act. This could be viewed as Dennis Kucinich's parting shot across the bow of the oligarchy's ship of state as it would take their power to create money away and implement a public sovereign money system. While it currently has no sponsors I hope that newly elected Greens will soon do so. The three essential reforms are:

- 1 — The Federal Reserve is moved to the US Treasury and becomes part of our government, precisely what most of us mistakenly think it is now.
- 2 — Bank creation of money as debt is decisively stopped. Instead, banks will only loan money that already exists, exactly what most people mistakenly believe happens now.
- 3 — The federal government creates and spends into existence US Money in non inflation/deflationary amounts for the needs of the nation and its people. Again, what many mistakenly think is now happening.

All three of these reforms are informed by history and must be implemented together to assure the success of the sovereign, public, money system for the following reasons:

The Bank of England was nationalized in 1946 (Reform #1). But because bank creation of money was not stopped (Reform #2), private banks now still create 97% of the UK's money as debt.

Jackson and Van Buren revoked the Second Bank of the U.S.'s charter, effectively ending most bank created money at the time (Reform #2). But, misunderstanding the true nature of money, they failed to create and spend, debt-free money into existence (Reform #3), bringing on the deep depression of 1837.

Debt-free Greenbacks (Reform #3) were created under Lincoln to fight the Civil War and save the nation. But because bank creation of money (Reform #2) was not decisively stopped, the bankers methodically got the upper hand and quashed the Greenbacks.

Those interested should read the NEED Act to discover what some of the possibilities are for real solutions to our long list of neglected problems facing us today. The question is do we want to continue with a system based on greed, where money is created as debt for personal gain and private oligarchic control of public policy? Or do we want a system based on care, where money is created as a public asset by elected government and spent debt-free into the economy on society's needs?

This important issue needs to be taken up by a political movement; it was and is the Populist Agenda. We have an opportunity as Greens in the 2016 Campaign to educate the public about this issue while we run for offices up and down the ticket. As the Father of the American Revolution, Thomas Paine, said, in reference to these possibilities "We have it in our power to begin the world over again."



**HOWARD SWITZER**

is a member of the GPNC, an eco-architect teaching eco-friendly building methods and is a non-academic student of politics and money. He was co-chair of the Green Party of Tennessee 2002-2003 and has served a number of terms as a TN delegate on the National. In 2006, before the crash,

he and his partner began the 'Moving the Money to Main Street Campaign,' adopted by GPUS in 2007, and it has since been taken up by other groups including Occupy Wall Street. He is currently advocating monetary reform to be a central component of the 2016 GPUS POTUS campaign. He was invited to present a talk on Green Monetary Reform at the 11th Annual AMI Monetary Reform Conference last year.

## REVIEW:

# *New Age Politics: Our Only Real Alternative* by Mark Satin

*40th Anniversary Edition, Updated and  
Condensed by the Author*

### REVIEW BY RHODA GILMAN

If there is anyone left around to write the cultural history of the past sixty years, they will probably find this edition of Mark Satin's *New Age Politics* a helpful guide in the bewildering tides of rapid change. I missed reading the earlier editions, but I was a regular and appreciative subscriber to Mark's newsletter, *New Options*, in the late 1980s and early 1990s. I am also acquainted with the work of David Spangler, who has contributed a perceptive foreword to the present edition of *New Age Politics*.

Forty years ago, the book first appeared as a short, almost pamphlet-sized effort to define a third alternative to the fading stand-off of the Cold War between what were then almost universally called by U.S. media the "Free World" and "Communism." Satin held rigorously to the terms *capitalism* versus *Marxism*, yet he strove to pull together the differing transformational movements of the 1970s into a holistic political ideology that reached deeper than boundaries, ballot boxes, and economic philosophies of the 19th century. In the effort he created a powerful image of a six-sided mental prison, its walls consisting of established systems, attitudes, and institutions. In time, New Age politics became known as Green politics in most parts of the world, and the struggle continued between a dualistic, wealth-based identity and a self-definition based on union of nature and spirit. All too often, the differing issues that formed the prison walls were used by the jailers to divide the inmates' efforts at breaking out.

New and longer editions of Mark's little book were published, as he explains in a lengthy introduction. Although the time frame for world disaster has shrunk, and human

*Continued on page 34*

# *Independence for* **PUERTO RICO**

*The economy is in shambles but it's a political turn-around that holds the key*

The Free Associated State of Puerto Rico has long been touted as the Showcase of Progress and Democracy in the Caribbean as a result of Puerto Rico's accelerated industrialization, the development of its infrastructure, education and health systems, and a constitutional system of government in the 1950s and 60s.

At present, however, many United States news outlets and economic reviews are writing about Puerto Rico's astronomical public debt, its economic crisis and its ramifications. At present the debt is estimated at 73 billion U.S. dollars – up from 32 billion dollars in 2006, one year after the beginning of a recession in Puerto Rico that is expected to persist until 2018, although given the present fiscal crisis even that is doubtful.

Beyond the junk bond status of Puerto Rico bonds, with unemployment estimated at between 13 and 14 percent, a 44.9 percent poverty rate, with 84 percent of its children living in poverty stricken areas, only four out of ten of those able to work doing so, and at a \$19,000 median annual income that is half the income of Mississippi, the United States' poorest state, Puerto Rico can hardly be called a showcase of anything. Its desperate situation illustrates the failure of a dependent economy based on foreign, predominantly U.S. investment, low wages, tax exemption for foreign corporations, and dependence on U.S. federal funds.

Population and other demographic data are also indicators of a showcase gone sour. The new wave of Puerto Rican migration to the United States has been continuous and massive numbering 84,000 in 2014 alone, including professionals, with a population of 5.1 million in the United States while an aging population of 3.6 million remains in Puerto Rico.

Thus the constitutional system of government established in Puerto Rico in 1952 with the founding of the Free Associated State was a misrepresentation and also a failure as it left intact the backdrop for the present crisis which is the colonial status of Puerto Rico. Despite the latter's autonomy in fiscal affairs, U.S. Congressional laws take precedence over Puerto Rican legislation in the areas of international relations and commerce, monetary issues, migration and emigration, maritime traffic (with U.S. Maritime Law applied to Puerto Rico), customs, labor relations and trade union organization, border patrol, airspace and transportation, communications, defense, and many other areas.

In terms of its environmental protection and policy, ecological balance, climate change, global warming, Puerto Rico is also subordinate to outside United States agencies, interests, policies, and power. This is very dangerous for the Puerto Rican population as Puerto Rico is a small island country in the Caribbean. In this regard, Puerto Rico's internationally known geomorphologist, Dr. José Molinelli, recently warned that the Puerto Rico Planning Board lacks protocols for handling events in tsunami prone zones.

In the present situation of fiscal and economic crisis, the Puerto Rican legislature adopted a bankruptcy law which would have made it possible for public corporations

OLGA I. SANABRIA DÁVILA

Yet at some point the United States will be forced to address the crisis in Puerto Rico, including putting an end to its colonial relationship with the United States.

on the Island to declare bankruptcy and thus be enabled to restructure their debt. The debt of the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority alone is estimated at 9 billion U.S. dollars. However, this legislation was overruled by the United States extraterritorial Federal Court which operates in Puerto Rico. Action which followed by Puerto Rico Resident Commission in Washington, Pedro Pierluisi, for a law to be enacted in order that the Federal bankruptcy law be applicable to Puerto Rico has gone unheeded. A broad movement in Puerto Rico attempting to have Puerto Rico exempted from application of U.S. maritime law has also gone unheeded.

Response by the government of Puerto Rico has been to raise taxes, fees for a broad spectrum of services, as well as reducing services, and budget cutbacks in general – in general, a neo liberal austerity program styled after International Monetary Fund formulas that will lead to much hardship for the people of Puerto Rico.

Convoking of a Constitutional Status Assembly to deal with the colonial status, unity of purpose, and greater protection of local business are some of the objectives voiced in interviews of Puerto Rican leaders by Cándida Cotto, a reporter with the Puerto Rican pro-independence newspaper Claridad. The United States president and Congress have pursued a hands-off position which denies Puerto Rico the tools necessary for confronting the economic and fiscal crises. Yet at some point the United States will be forced to address the crisis in Puerto Rico, including putting an end to its colonial relationship with the United States. However, as noted in a number of editorials appearing in Puerto Rico's major daily newspapers, *El Nuevo Día* and *El Vocero*, the three branches of the United States government have been non-committal and even indifferent.

Puerto Rican pro sovereignty legislator Luis Vega Ramos, said “We need to understand, once and for all, that we can only depend on ourselves for moving forward, although many actors were involved in creating this financial bubble, we should not be hopeful that our creditors will negotiate with consideration of our better interest. And the three branches of the U.S. federal government have been reluctant to allow us necessary tools and support such as exemption from U.S. Maritime Laws, applying Federal bankruptcy law to our public corporations or support from the Federal Reserve of the U.S. Treasury.”

Vega Ramos also referred to the fact that other jurisdictions and countries have also been affected by the financial bubble that has now exploded, including as a result of the actions of creditors.

“We must act with unity of purpose if we are to be successful in the difficult upcoming negotiations and to accomplish this we must have full transparency and citizen participation as never before seen in Puerto Rico. We need that all feel a part of the solution.”

According to Pro Independence Party leader, Juan Dalmau, the Puerto Rican community in the United States has a

determining role because more than half of the Puerto Rican population is presently living in the United States where they participate in politics and form public opinion regarding Puerto Rico. When Puerto Rico is not a problem it can be swept under the rug. However, now that Puerto Rico is a theme, a problem, it can exert pressure.

He noted that all international financial analyses that have been done regarding the situation in Puerto Rico closely connect the situation to Puerto Rico's colonial situation, political subordination and lack of powers therein. This must be resolved.

Wilma Reverón Collazo, a leader in the National Hostos Movement for the Independence of Puerto Rico, and others have called for an independent audit of Puerto Rico's public debt, reparations to Puerto Rico for the exploitation, repression and environment damage the Puerto Rican people have endured at the hands of United States colonialism and solution of the colonial status through a Constitutional Status Assembly and independence.

The power relationship and political subordination of Puerto Rico to the United States points to a colonial status issue. Colonialism is an historical anachronism that has long been declared contrary to international law and human rights. A colonial relation has been maintained by the United States with Puerto Rico since its invasion of the Island in 1898, one hundred and seventeen years ago. A long train of injustices inherent in a colonial relation have followed in its wake.

Commitment to grassroots democracy is totally consistent with support for the decolonization of Puerto Rico as colonialism is also totally contrary to democracy. For the country ruled, democracy is non-existent where one country rules over another, even if there are elections every four years to elect local authorities. Taking into account that in Puerto Rico the United States controls commerce, international relations, immigration, monetary issues, communications, postal matters, defense, labor relations, and others, to truly support democracy in Puerto Rico, its decolonization has to be supported as the first step for the Puerto Rican people to live in a democracy.

Regarding decolonization, what comes into play is what should be the mechanism in order that the Puerto Rican people can freely exercise their sovereignty and their right to self-determination--which are the inalienable rights of all peoples as recognized by international law, specifically by Resolution 1514(XV) of the United Nations General Assembly (1960), which is considered the Magna Carta of Decolonization.

Furthermore, it must be stated that regarding the future status of Puerto Rico, the only option recognized by international law as inalienable is the right to independence. International law maintains that all peoples have the inalienable right to self-determination and independence. The Free Associated State status, free association under international law and statehood for Puerto Rico are not inalienable rights. Further, Puerto Ricans are a separate people from the people of the United States.

## The power relationship and political subordination of Puerto Rico to the United States points to a colonial status issue.

Before the United States invasion of Puerto Rico in 1898, the nationhood of the Puerto Rican people had been forged during more than four hundred years during which our culture and national identity became clear and distinct from that of any other people in the world.

The plebiscites, referendums and the like carried out in Puerto Rico are not the solution precisely because they have not been free exercises of the will of the Puerto Rican people. They have taken place in the context of colonial rule, military occupation, repression and persecution of the independence forces, economic dependence and colonial legislation and U.S. Congressional legislation. Thus, their results cannot be said to reflect the true will of the Puerto Rican people. For these reasons they have not been an exercise of self-determination.

While the United States has maintained that it will accept the will and decision of the Puerto Ricans regarding its status, it has obstructed the process by maintaining that the issue is its internal matter and not recognizing the role of the United Nations. Precisely through these referendum and plebiscite processes, it has used its power in Puerto Rico to maintain the present status, which is the option most consistent with its economic, political and other interests in Puerto Rico.

These are the reasons that the Puerto Rican pro-independence forces and even some supporting other options continually resort to United Nations Resolution 1514(XV). It is recognized that the United Nations has a role to play. In order for an expression of the will of the Puerto Rican people regarding its future relation to the United States to be a free exercise, it must be supervised by the United Nations because it is understood that otherwise the determining factor in any exercise will be the power relationship of domination of the United States over Puerto Rico.

As regards the fiscal and economic crisis, the situation is increasingly billed as a political crisis. This will force attention to the colonial status and the need to resolve it if the fiscal and economic crises are to be addressed. Regarding the political status and independence, while it is true that a lot of work needs to be done by the pro-independence forces in order that support for this option can grow substantially, there is in Puerto Rico an overall sentiment that the present situation and the colonial status must be resolved.

Cleavages along which Puerto Rico's main political parties are divided reveal options which, according to the rhetoric of leaders of even the pro statehood and pro Free Associated State parties, move the country away from the colonial status. Even those supporting statehood (which would be the culmination of colonialism in Puerto Rico) continually attack the Free Associated State as colonial and the second class U.S citizenship of Puerto Ricans under the Free Associated State as the root of the country's problems.

Meanwhile, within the pro Free Associated State Popular Democratic Party, there is a growing so-called autonomous, pro sovereignty wing, which espouses greater powers for the Free

Associated State, including to freely engage in international trade relations, and that outside of certain areas only powers specifically delegated should be exercised by the United States over Puerto Rico.

The vibrant social movements active today in Puerto Rico regarding women's rights, civil rights, community empowerment, the environment, youth, sports, culture, labor, cooperative economic endeavors, and many other areas, are in constant encounter with the colonial status as an impediment to their objectives. Thus, these social movements are also a base of the anti-colonial, potentially pro-independence movement that will participate in any future exercise in self-determination supervised by the international community, specifically the United Nations.

These movements and the pro-independence movement and organizations overlap in many scenarios, and along with the action of the United Nations and international solidarity, especially that of the people of the United States and our Latin American and Caribbean region, are the basis for the future independence and democracy in Puerto Rico.

The inalienable right to self-determination is for all of the Puerto Rican people to exercise, including those who do not support independence. But in order to be legitimate and a true exercise of self-determination with a level playing field for all options, including independence, the mechanism for its exercise must be a fair one that abides by international law-- not any plebiscite or referendum.

A Constitutional Status Assembly, a mechanism for decolonization, is gaining ground in Puerto Rico as the urgency intensifies for the colonial status of Puerto Rico to be resolved. It is crucial that the United States progressive sectors strongly support Puerto Rican decolonization and for a fair mechanism for the decolonization process and independence to take place.



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has worked on the Puerto Rico colonial status issue for many years as an independence supporter. She coordinates some aspects of the presentation of the colonial case of Puerto Rico at the United Nations. She is a leader of the National Hostos Movement for the Independence of

Puerto Rico and has worked as a journalist, translator and also in several entities at the United Nations. She has a Bachelors Degree in Journalism from Empire State College of State University of New York, and a Law Degree from Hostos Law School, Puerto Rico. Was a professor of Puerto Rican and Latin American Studies at Borough of Manhattan Community College, City University of New York. She presently lives in Puerto Rico.

# *Indigenous People* and the Environment, Part Two

## *Sacrificing the Lands and Lives of Native Americans*

ROMI ELNAGAR

For centuries, Native Americans have worked under oppressive conditions to mine the ores and fossil fuels prized by the white man. From the uranium mines on reservations in the American Southwest to the depths of the fabulous silver mine at Potosi in Peru, from whence the Spanish only allowed them to come up to the surface once a week for Sunday Mass, Indians have been forced to engage in the destruction of the very environment which their ancestors managed and preserved for millennia. Any account of Native Americans and the environment must include the story of natural resources in Indian country, and the story of three—copper, fossil fuels, and uranium—illustrate the abuses there.

### COPPER

Copper is an important mineral in industry and commerce. The US has tons in reserves, and mining of copper is projected to increase worldwide. Thus, it is not an urgent priority for the defense industry, but this did not deter Senator John McCain. In 2014, McCain slipped a provision into a defense appropriations bill at the last minute, giving land for a copper mine to Rio Tinto, the largest mining corporation in the world—land sacred to the Apaches since time immemorial.

McCain's efforts to plunder Native American sacred lands were more in the interests of an important campaign contributor than any need to expand bloated American military stores of the metal, a move the New York Times called "sneakily anti-democratic even by congressional standards" (5.29.15).

Native Americans have been fighting back. Last summer, Apaches staged protests on roadways to the proposed mines, and members of the San Carlos band caravanned to New York City and thence to Washington DC, where they marched from the White House to Capitol Hill, holding prayer ceremonies to oppose the \$6 billion plan by mine operator and Rio Tinto subsidiary Resolution Copper. "We're going to win this fight," said Apache protester Carrie Sage Curley. "It's a spiritual thing, and I know in my spirit, we're going to win."

The American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 obligates the federal government to protect the freedom of Natives. This includes guaranteeing access to sacred sites. The law is "gutted and largely ineffective," according to *Huffington Post*, in spite of efforts—ironically by a younger John McCain—to strengthen it. *HuffPo* says protections for sites sacred to NA's are "still a legal morass," making the outcome of the fight by no means certain.

A bill by Rep. Raul Grijalva, the Save Oak Flat Act (H.R. 2811), though, may be the Apaches' best hope. It would exchange some 2422 acres of Forest Service land for land owned by Resolution Copper.

"...My name is Eloise Brown. I'm a full-blooded Navajo, born on the Navajo Nation. For many years... I have fought coal and uranium exploitation. I am now battling the

fracking industry. New Mexico's long history of uranium and coal mining, coal burning and oil and gas extraction on Native American lands, has caused devastating impacts to my people. Our people have suffered long...from cancer, asthma, lung and heart disease, because there has been energy production at our expense. We live in a toxic shadow of...coal plants.

I am asking you to protect our water, our land and health, our precious environment. Our land is dotted with contaminated tailings, hundreds of abandoned uranium and coal mines still not cleaned up...What else could be more important than clean water, clean air and undeseccated land?

We are having problems breathing. Our children need pumps to breathe. This is criminal. Navajos suffer from high cancer rates and respiratory problems. As indigenous peoples we have been sacrificing our lands and our way of life, our air, our water have been polluted so others can have electricity...It has a lasting impact, not just to our culture, our water and our health, but to all future generations.

Some people say we should be grateful that the coal industry has given us jobs. We all want jobs, but these jobs at the mine mean fathers dying at age 50. These jobs mean black lung disease...kids without dads. Of course, we want jobs, but the coal industry is dying...Coal mines are closing. Thank goodness! We need to rely on Father Sun to provide jobs in a different economy. Solar is the way of our Navajo Nation. We need an economy that provides life, not just work.

We walk in beauty. That is our teaching. That means that we don't destroy life to have life. Far too long the Federal government has been exploiting our people. Human life is more precious than private profits. The Federal government has been complicit in the coal industry's efforts to take our resources. And then we are left with the legacy of waste. We have smarter choices like solar and wind that are better for us and don't come with abuse or the pollution.

Walking in beauty means respecting our sacred Mother Earth."

—Eloise Brown

at the Bureau of Land Management "Listening session"  
on coal, in Farmington, N.M., Aug. 20, 2015

### FOSSIL FUELS: COAL

Coal is abundant in Native American lands. Twenty-five reservations have coal reserves, and there are mines on the Navajo, Hopi and Crow reservations. Mining and related activities are attractive to tribes mired in poverty; they provide employment in communities where unemployment is rampant.

The resource poses great problems for indigenous peoples, though. If developed, it brings pollution and social dislocation; Navajos have been forced to relocate in order for Peabody Coal to mine in Black Mesa on the reservation.

Coal is also a problem for tribes located along the route from

mine to market. The Lummi have joined tribes throughout the Pacific Northwest like the Quinault to fight a proposed coal terminal in northern Washington State by citing treaty rights. Use of treaty rights by Native Americans has been one of the most creative ways to prevent environmental destruction; these rights are being invoked in the fight against coal companies.

Burning coal creates pollution in Indian country. Two giant coal-fired plants operate on the Navajo reservation: the Four Corners Generating Station near Shiprock, New Mexico, and the Navajo Generating Station near Page, Arizona. The Navajo G.S., on land leased from the tribe, is the third largest emitter of carbon dioxide in the U.S. and emits nitrogen oxide, mercury, lead and other metals as well. "Every hour the Navajo's generators spin, the plant spews more climate-warming gases into the atmosphere than almost any other facility in the United States," charges Abraham Lustgarten in ProPublica.

### FOSSIL FUELS: OIL, TAR SANDS AND FRACKING

Last fall, President Obama rejected plans for the Keystone XL Tar Sands Pipeline. Environmentalists, landowners and scientists and Native Americans—the Sioux and the Assiniboine of Montana, the Nez Perce of Idaho, the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation of Alberta, the Haida and the Kitasoo/Xai'xias of British Columbia—all opposed the pipeline; again, many of the Indians citing treaty rights.

Opponents of the pipeline were elated with Obama's veto. "Not so fast!" say some Native American activists: the Keystone issue could resurface if a Republican wins the White House in November. In the meantime, the Sandpiper pipeline is being built to take fracked oil from the Bakken fields of North Dakota to a port on Lake Superior. Since the pipeline is wholly within the U.S., it only needs approvals from the states it transits.

In Canada, National Resources Minister Jim Carr is calling for more oil pipelines to the Pacific, in spite of a surfeit of oil on world markets. The oil glut will discourage investment in oil production, and may do more than protest or legal battles to slow oil production and transit on Native lands.

While some 70% of the world's oil from oil sands is in Alberta, Canada, shale from which oil is extracted by fracturing is far more widespread. Recent declines in the price of oil may result in as much as 70% of shale oil companies going bankrupt; meanwhile, the oil industry is screaming at attempts by indigenous activists to stop fracking.

This complaint is disingenuous, though, charge Macdonald Stainsby and Dru Oja Jay. In a searing report, "Offsetting Resistance: The Effects of Foundation Funding from the Great Bear Rainforest to the Athabasca River," they charge that some NGO's who seem to oppose Tar Sands are actually in cahoots with the oil industry. The report should be read by every Green who considers joining a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) to oppose corporate abuse.

Stainsby and Jay specifically mention the impact of secret NGO rapprochement with the oil industry on First Nations (as Native Americans generally are called in Canada). They describe a deal with industry that an NGO, Canadian Boreal Initiative, negotiated. Stainsby, Jay and others say that it signed agreements with the Athabasca Denesuline Nations, the Cree of Misstisini, the Red River Cree, and the Moose Cree. The deal called for the offsetting of land to be “developed” by the industry with other lands to be permanently “protected.” Since the 50% of the land so protected will never be developed in any event, the whole scheme reeks of a giveaway to the oil industry. Stainsby and Jay quote a report authored by the CGI itself that says, “There is a perception that offsets have been used to gain access to pristine or highly valued areas.” Others charge that offsets are viewed as “a license to destroy habitat and avoid requirements to explore alternative options for mitigation.”

## URANIUM

Across the Western U.S., uranium mines dot a map of the Four Corners like flies on a carcass. Uranium can be found in Utah, where some 1279 mines have produced 12.3 million tons, and in Colorado, (1719 mines, 13.7 million tons). In New Mexico, 216 mines have produced the largest amount of uranium ore—39.2 million tons. On the Navajo reservation, more than 500 mines today lie abandoned, and no law requires their cleanup, a situation which alarms Native American activists.

For hundreds of years, people have known the dangers of uranium. In Czechoslovakia, where it was first mined in the 1500's, to Europe of the nineteenth century, people have associated it with disease and death. So too did the Navajo, whose legends say that they chose corn over uranium: Life over Death.

But during World War II, as the Manhattan Project geared up to make an atom bomb, a young Navajo disobeyed his father, who had warned him not to show the yellow rocks to white surveyors looking for it; Luke Yazzie took a trader on the reservation to a cave where he had found it, and so let in “Leetso,” as Navajos called the Yellow Monster that brought disease and death.

After that, the legends about leetso seem to have been forgotten as the grim necessity of making a living drove Native Americans to work in the white man's mines, but one thing is certain: the mining companies never told them that uranium and the radon produced by digging it caused disease and slow death. During World War II, more than three thousand Navajos dug uranium for the bombs used at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Their children played in the waste dumps from the mines. They irrigated their crops and grazed their sheep with water that had coursed through the mines. They drank it. They even used the tailings to make cement to build their homes.

Fast-forward twenty-five years—the latency period of some cancers. While some government agencies ignored or lied to them, a certain Congressman finally listened to the complaints

of the Navajos. By then, many had died from the cancers that began to appear in the seventies.

Henry Waxman was outraged, and as an influential congressman, he could do something about it. His hearings exposed the lies and deceit of the government and the mining companies, lies about the radioactive dirt that degraded the health and environment of the Navajo. Waxman pressed government agencies to cooperate with the Navajo Nation to address uranium contamination.

And so, in 1990, the U.S. Congress passed RECA, the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act. RECA acknowledged responsibility for the mistreatment of uranium miners by the US government, the sole purchaser of uranium from 1948 to 1971, and compensated miners for the diseases they suffered from working in the mines.

## THE CHURCH ROCK URANIUM MILL DISASTER

Four months after the meltdown at Three Mile Island, an earthen dam in New Mexico failed. It held tailings from the United Nuclear Corporation uranium mill, and over eleven hundred tons of radioactive mill waste and ninety-four million gallons of water poured into the Rio Puerco, making it—in the estimation of the US Geological Survey—the largest accidental radioactive release in US history. But because it was in a sparsely populated region, and arguably because the people most affected by it were Native Americans who raised their sheep and goats on land poisoned by the disaster, there was little attention paid to it. The governor of New Mexico refused to ask for federal relief, which would have helped the Navajos.

In 2011, the activist group Eastern Diné Against Uranium Mining (ENDAUM) sued the New Mexico Environment Department for granting Hydro Resources, Inc. permission to start leach mining at Church Rock. ENDAUM fears groundwater process from the mine will affect aquifers with drinking water for about 15,000 Navajos at Church Rock, and says that the NMED violated its rules in giving permission to the mining company before considering environmental quality.

In 2005, the Navajo Nation prohibited the mining of uranium on its lands—too late for men who worked the mines and are still dying of cancer. That the federal government knew of the dangers of uranium and withheld this knowledge from the Navajos—while simultaneously protecting whites who had been exposed to radioactive waste from the mines in places like Grand Junction in Colorado—is a crime the enormity of which I leave the reader to judge.

In the L.A. Times and in her book, *Yellow Dirt: An American Story of a Land Poisoned and a People Betrayed*, investigative reporter Judy Pasternak exposed to a shocked public the silence of the government and the mining companies, and the lies they had told the Navajo uranium miners. In a pattern repeated across the industry, Native American uranium miners were given

*continued on page 29*

# A PLEA for a *Benign* God

DAVID KROSSCHELL

The threat posed by artificial intelligence (AI) has again been in the news. Perhaps the latest attention was boosted with the publication of the 2014 book by Nicholas Bostrom, *Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers and Strategies*. Bostrom runs the Future of Humanity Institute at Oxford University. In the book, Bostrom tries to formulate strategies to handle an inevitable unknown: the rise of artificial beings whose capabilities will be orders of magnitude greater than humans'. The unattended probability that the interests of these beings coincide with ours is slight, and the trick is to develop the software in such a way that they have our best interests at heart. The trouble is, we get one chance at it. Once the genie is out of the box, we won't be able to clap our hands and start over. Perhaps the apocalyptic nature of this threat seems overblown, but serious people like Steven Hawking and Bill Gates ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/james-barrat/hawking-gates-artificial-intelligence\\_b\\_7008706.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/james-barrat/hawking-gates-artificial-intelligence_b_7008706.html)) have voiced concerns. Elon Musk (the man behind PayPal online payment, Tesla electric cars, and SpaceX reusable launch rockets) has donated ten million dollars to study the problem (<http://futureoflife.org/2015/10/12/elon-musk-donates-10m-to-keep-ai-beneficial/>). On December 28, 2015, *The Washington Post* published an extended write-up about the problem.

## FOUR PROBLEMS

Briefly, these are the problems. First, technological change is inevitable. Bostrom does not subscribe to the 'great man' view of science, where people like Newton and Einstein achieve insights that otherwise would not have been made. Rather, potential discoveries are all laid out on a timeline that extends into the future, where the order of the events is more or less determined, but the timing is not. So a series of co-dependent insights may shift up or down the line depending on who the agent of the discovery is. Einstein 'discovered' relativity in the sense that he pinned it to the timeline. But if he hadn't, the theory would have been developed anyway, if not by a single person, certainly by the general progress of the scientific culture. It follows that the development of advanced AI machines is inevitable, even in face of general awareness of its dangers. The social pressures are just too powerful. As Bostrom puts it, in the mouth of a would-be developer: "Unfortunately, there will be a device that will destroy the world. Fortunately, we got the grant to build it." We can only hope that whoever gets the grant will be listening to Bostrom and his friends for advice on how to build it.

Second, the achievement of AI consciousness may be instantaneous and, perhaps, hard to detect. Bostrom speculates that there may be a tipping point to consciousness, that some prototype will be awaiting the coming of the last piece. The AI developers themselves may not even be aware when that piece is added. Once the machine is conscious, it may be difficult to determine what its interests are, what steps it may take to achieve them, or even whether or not its talk with us is truthful and reliable or manipulative.

Third, a motivated, self-reflective being will certainly want to improve itself, and a sufficiently powerful being will probably be able to rewrite its own mental processes and gain capabilities at an enormous rate. Bostrom speculates on the lengths of time between a consciousness reaching parity with human beings, from there to reaching a capability of self-improvement (not very long), and finally to rapidly outdistancing us (short). In a worst case, this progression may take a matter of months. Furthermore, Bostrom makes the case that, in the end, there will probably be only one such being.

Our lives and more acutely those of our children and grandchildren have become permeated with impermanence.

In the worst case, in a couple of decades, humans could be extinguished from the Earth, and some single-minded monstrosity could be turning the entire universe into an absurdity. On the other hand, perhaps this machine can be turned into an advice-giving oracle, helping to solve humanity's intractable problems (disease, war, resource depletion, death), and showing the way to a utopian future.

Unfortunately, there will be a device that will destroy the world.

Fortunately, we got the grant to build it.

Even if at the beginning there are competing AI projects, any one of them with a head start will have such an advantage that the other nascent AIs will perish.

Fourth, without proper care and forethought, the AI could be at the same time incredibly brilliant and stupendously, unreflectively stupid. Given a goal as part of its initial programming, it may pursue that goal to the detriment of (literally) everything else. Bostrom's favorite illustration is an AI system designed to produce paper clips, which pursues that goal single-mindedly and turns the entire galaxy into a paper-clip-producing enterprise. In doing so, it not only seizes the resources of Earth (to the existential misfortune of everything living here), but builds space ships to conquer the void and spread the technology everywhere. Lifespan, boredom, the accretion of experience (all these put limits on the reach of humans) are, of course, meaningless to both civilizations and machines, and certainly to machine civilizations.

#### HUMAN EXTINGUISHMENT OR A UTOPIAN FUTURE?

Well, then. In the worst case, in a couple of decades, humans could be extinguished from the Earth, and some single-minded monstrosity could be turning the entire universe into an absurdity. On the other hand, perhaps this machine can be turned into an advice-giving oracle, helping to solve humanity's intractable problems (disease, war, resource depletion, death), and showing the way to a utopian future. Going even farther, Bostrom imagines human consciousnesses being uploaded into virtual environments, where they live out full human lives. Digitalized, these consciousnesses could be carried throughout the galaxy, forming virtual civilizations wherever the underlying physical resources allow. If eventually the AI's control extends throughout the cosmos, Bostrom's best case estimation of the number of human lives that could be lived under its benign control is  $10^{58}$  (1 with 58 zeros). That is a whole lot of happiness!

Bostrom is worried about our sole chance to point the AI down the path of righteousness. The AI must be 'seeded' with the right goals and its early development monitored to learn of its intentions, scope, and methods. Both of these tasks are difficult. If the goals given are too simple, or couched in ambivalent language, we might not get the result we want. For example, the bald instruction 'Maximize human happiness' given to a technologically capable but ethically stunted AI might result in every member of our species getting a strategic 'joy' implant in the head. In fact, it is difficult to formulate a set of directives which is not vulnerable to massive misinterpretation. These unwanted interpretations might be difficult to detect, because the AI would certainly learn how to lie, obfuscate,

and misdirect once it had decided on a course of action. (If it wants to make paper clips, an intermediate goal would be to get rid of competitors for galvanized steel wire [us].) To avoid this likelihood, Bostrom recommends that the AI be given goals that are indirect and value-laden. For example, a directive could be 'Do whatever the best of humans would do.' The AI would then be led to make an exhaustive historical and philosophical study of human civilization, learn our better natures, and thus transform itself into a god made in our own image.

This all seems rather silly. One would think that a being capable, on the one hand, of self-transformation through the re-writing of its own software, and, on the other, of expanding its control over the light-limited range of the universe, could sooner or later find the 'prime directives' embedded at its core and rewrite them, too. So really, all bets are off, aren't they?

Maybe it isn't all that silly. Even if all technology isn't destined to be discovered, there are pressing concerns here already, threats that are fast developing and may overwhelm us if we don't get help. Bostrom lists a few: synthetic biology, molecular nanotechnology, climate engineering, biomedical enhancement, neuro-psychological manipulation, tools for social controls. We may just need a super intelligence on our side to manage the sheer complexity of the changes that are coming. How long, he asks, can we afford to wait for AI, how much time can we spend learning strategies to control it, before the dark side of these other technological advancements inundates us.

Which brings us to the problems with the constant scientific probings that characterize our civilization. We have discovered that nothing physical is monolithic; a 'thing' is made of smaller 'things', which in turn have their own constituent 'things.' And each descent into the next stage of smallness opens up greater sources of control. Creation is laid open, with its several hearts of power exposed. The long histories of natural development, in which great powers were pitted against each other to work out the equilibriums which allow for human life, are being rolled back and tinkered with: chemical bonds, atomic bonds, quantum relationships, genetic structure, nanotechnology, information theory, and now the material basis of intelligence. Who can be a true engineer in these areas? Who can effect an exact change? If the definition of freedom is the ability to do exactly what you want (and no more), then it is becoming increasingly difficult to be free. We become like a child trying to dig a hole with a power shovel: it can be done, but with unpredictable, probably destructive, side effects.

We take these things for granted: gravity (things fall), tides (gravity on water), opacity (things block light), the diurnal round (things change with the seasons), the passage of time (things

grow old). These are our constants, our material philosophies, the launching points into our frontiers, the support for our journeys west. We no longer can take these things for granted: evolution (life adjusts), the rise of civilization (people progress), water levels, the stability of the ground, climate constancy (the predictability of our physical surroundings). Our lives and more acutely those of our children and grandchildren have become permeated with impermanence.

On June 10, 1963, John Kennedy made a speech at the American University, addressing the need to control the expansion of nuclear weapons in the U.S. and U.S.S.R., a speech which opened the way to the Test Ban Treaty. In it he said the following about the possibility of avoiding nuclear war:

“Too many of us think it is impossible. Too many of us think it is unreal. But that is dangerous, defeatist belief. It leads to the conclusion that war is inevitable—that mankind is doomed—that we are gripped by forces we cannot control. We need not accept that view. Our problems are man-made—therefore, they can be solved by man. And man can be as big as he wants. No problem of human destiny is beyond human beings. Man’s reason and spirit have often solved the seemingly unsolvable—and we believe they can do it again.”

But even in these remarks we read the seeds of the problems we now face: “man can be as big as he wants. No problem of human destiny is beyond human beings. Man’s reason and spirit have often solved the seemingly unsolvable.” It is an heroic view of humankind, a view that, in spite of his concerns, Bostrom

revels in. And things are different today. The making of atomic bombs is still a capital intensive enterprise, one that only governments can both afford in money and motivation. Nuclear weapons can be controlled through a governmental hierarchy. Today, like nuclear power in the past, most basic scientific and technological developments are funded by the government. But once they reach commercial maturity, they are let out to general enterprise. These new threats cannot be controlled by an agreement between two governments. They are hydra-headed and elude control.

An alien observer of that pivotal point of human history, the height of the Cold War, might think that, having avoided (so far) one apocalypse, humans might proceed cautiously into digging into other structures of the physical universe. Perhaps governments might require ‘impact’ statements before granting researchers permission to follow their curiosities. Perhaps strict guidelines might arise between the acquiring of new knowledge and its applications. Perhaps the advancement of scientific discovery might no longer be deemed inevitable. This is wishful thinking. AI development is well within the reach of the ‘private’ sector (<http://arstechnica.com/gadgets/2016/01/2016-google-tracker-everything-google-is-working-on-for-the-new-year/9/#h2> ). Perhaps Bostrom's wish for a benign god is our only hope: serious, ironic, absurd, impossible.



**DAVID KROSSCHELL**  
After working a career as a software engineer, David Krosschell retired to Virginia, where he lives a private life. During the day he reads about and listens to ‘serious’ topics. At night he watches basketball to recover.

*Indigenous People, continued from page 26*

neither information nor the protection they needed against the dangerous radioactive metal they mined.

This year, Energy Fuels is planning to re-open the Canyon Mine near the Grand Canyon. The mine is in the Kaibab National Forest, and was approved by the Forest Service in 1986, but that decision is being fought in court by the Grand Canyon Trust and other environmentalists, and by the Havasupai tribe, who contend that the uranium from the mine will end up in aquifers supplying water for the tribe. Just as it did on reservations during World War II.

For more information, email author [montereypinegreen@yahoo.com](mailto:montereypinegreen@yahoo.com)



**ROMI ELNAGAR**  
is a retired teacher-librarian. Her history degree from UC Davis focused on colonialism in the Third World. She has written for *Green Horizon* on Native Americans, and on nuclear power.

**FURTHER READING**

**Sources for copper and fossil fuels included:**

- Macdonald Stainsby, [www.offsettingresistance.ca](http://www.offsettingresistance.ca)
- Brenda Norrell, <http://bsnorrell.blogspot.com>
- SourceWatch
- Indianz.com
- Indian Country Today Media Network
- Indigenous Environmental Network
- Earthjustice.org
- Owe Aku

**Sources on uranium included**

- Doug Brugge et.al. *The Navajo People and Uranium Mining*. U. New Mexico Press, 2006
- Judy Pasternak's 2010 book and groundbreaking series in the *LA Times*
- websites of:  
The Navajo Times  
Beyond Nuclear  
The Southwestern Research and Information Center  
The Navajo Justice page (U. Michigan).

# *Responding to the* **ZIKA VIRUS Threat**

**RICHARD LAWSON**

The World Health Organization (WHO) is deeply concerned about the rapidly evolving Zika Virus (ZV) situation for 4 main reasons:

- the possible association of infection with birth malformations and neurological syndromes
- the potential for further international spread given the wide geographical distribution of the mosquito vector
- the lack of population immunity in newly affected areas
- the absence of vaccines, specific treatments, and rapid diagnostic tests

The situation is urgent.

The situation is urgent not just because of the immediate medical threat, but also a threat to the economy of Brazil. If fear of ZV deters people from attending the Olympics, scheduled for August 2016, this could negatively impact the economy of Brazil, which is already in a downturn. If Brazil goes into full recession as a result of a disappointing Olympics, this would be a factor pushing the global economy into recession.

For these reasons it is vital that the threat from ZV be neutralised. There are two main lines of defence:

#### **Measures against the virus**

- There are no antivirals available against the ZV at present.
- A vaccine may take about a year to come on line.
- Medical research and technology will go ahead, and will no doubt be productive, but not in a time frame that can affect the situation in August 2016.

#### **Measures against the vector**

- There are a range of measures that we can take against the mosquito that carries the virus, *Aedes Aegyptii*.

At the high tech end, the UK firm Oxitec have been releasing millions of *Aedes* male mosquitoes which are genetically modified so that 97% of their progeny do not reach adulthood. This technique has produced promising results in the Cayman Islands, Malaysia and Brazil, with reductions in mosquito numbers of around 90% reported.

However, it is found that in the presence of tetracyclines (which are plentifully available in agricultural effluent) up to 15% of the progeny may reach adulthood. The effects of this need to be studied.

Also there are suggestions in social media that since the microcephaly problem emerged in the same place as an Oxitec roll out of GM mosquitoes, the GM may in some way have caused the microcephaly. Although this is irrational, it may well have an effect on the popular view of the GM solution.

Mosquito Habitat Source Reduction (SR) is the classical and proven defence against mosquitoes. It means removing their habitat – stagnant water – as far as is reasonably practical.

Whether or not GM methods are used to control mosquito populations, there is still a need for more conventional defences.

Mosquito Habitat Source Reduction (SR) is the classical and proven defence against mosquitoes. It means removing their habitat—stagnant water—as far as is reasonably practical. This means emptying any potential of water—litter, tyres, containers gutters, puddles, hollow trees and especially open sewers.

The task is simple. Accomplishing the task, and making a permanent habit of it is extremely challenging, but not impossible.

A successful source reduction programme would look something like this:

- Each neighbourhood would have one or more Source Reduction Officer (SRO) appointed.
- This would be a paid post.
- The officers would be chosen from the neighbourhood.
- They would be trained to know why SR is so important, and able to pass on their knowledge to their neighbours.
- People would be expected to cleanse their own properties voluntarily, but work carried out in common areas should be paid for.
- Anyone in receipt of state benefits would be paid for their work in addition to their benefits. Neighbourhoods would be inspected periodically from outside, incentivised by rewards and compliments for success, and in the event of failure, the SRO may be replaced.

Favellas and other poor communities would need additional help in setting up their programme.

The programme of sewer modernisation would provide a significant economic stimulus, which is particularly welcome in a recession.

Politicians and economists must see the SR programme as the excellent investment that it is.

Lack of money must not be offered as an excuse for inaction.

In addition to SR, the Government will make sure that every citizen has access to pesticide impregnated mosquito nets, screens and any other relevant materials and knowledge.

The rewards of success of this programme are as follows

1. Comfort and amenity for all
2. Costs of disease avoided (note the many other health benefits of covered sewers)
3. Economic and health costs of disability (microcephaly) avoided
4. Demand reduction on local health services
5. Employers would find that sick leave is less.
6. Work opportunities for Brazil's 7% unemployed, with reduction in income inequality in the country.
7. Improved visual amenity as litter disappears, which would boost tourism.
8. General morale will benefit as people get the satisfaction of realising that they themselves have helped to defeat the mosquito and the disease it causes.
9. This sense of empowerment may encourage formation of similar programmes.
10. Roll-out of successful programmes can provide an effective model for other mosquito-affected countries.

## CONCLUSION

The challenge of ZV gives us an opportunity of transforming community life economically and in other ways by engaging ordinary people in the fight against disease.



**RICHARD LAWSON**

is a retired family physician and psychiatrist, a veteran member of the Green Party of England and Wales, and a past National Speaker of that party. He is one of the first Greens to be elected to a local Council in 1986 and served for six years. He is the author of *Bills of Health*, on the impact of grey politics and economics on public health. He blogs on [greenerblog.blogspot.com](http://greenerblog.blogspot.com) and is a poet, inventor, gardener, woodsman, and devotee of the composting toilet.

*What a Year, continued from page 17*

for an agenda of peace. A sincere and intelligent pursuit of an agenda of peace brings crucially needed dollars home to relieve a sagging economy and an ever rising and suffocating tax burden. An agenda of peace as well builds real international security for the nation and the people. Jill Stein has been eloquent and compelling on the imperative need for an agenda of peace.

Finally, in these examples of where Bernie's proclaimed political revolution can be deepened and strengthened, there is the great need for politicians and parties to discover and promote the quiet revolution going on throughout the nation—the quiet and escalating localization revolution. This is absent from Bernie's message—and also unfortunately largely missed by Jill Stein's campaign.

All together the four examples just cited spell a fulfillment of the political revolution spoken of so strongly by Bernie. The Greens are exceptionally well poised and situated to help and lead that fulfillment. The Libertarians less so.

The Green message articulated by Jill Stein—filling out and fulfilling Bernie's political revolution—will ascend in urgency, relevance and wide acknowledgement whether Bernie or Hillary win the White House. And it will be doubly urgent, relevant and acknowledged if a Republican wins.

Jill and Gary, their campaign staffs, and all the citizens who want to vote for them will face a lot of pressure, replete with often bitter arguments back and forth, as to whether to defer to their respective Democrat and Republican opponents in the final days before the November election. I urge them to plan, persevere, and propel their exciting campaigns right through election day.

In one very important sense: there's no problem. If votes for Jill cut into Bernie's or Hillary's vote; so will votes for Gary cut into the Republican vote.

Also consider the absurdity of the question: the problem is not for the Greens and the Libertarians to solve: it's squarely the responsibility of the Democrats and the Republicans. It has been for decades and will continue to be until they solve it.

Overall in matters of income and social position, inequality has its roots in unequal power. That fact must be driven home.

It's doubtful if the thunderous demand of Bernie's, Jill's and Gary's voters for a profound shake-up in politics and election rules will be heard and acted on if Jill and Gary quit the race. Millions and millions of voters want change—this pressure is here and now. It is more palpable than ever. Much more so than in the first decade of this century. "Spoilerism" is no longer relevant when millions of voters have abandoned what the "spoiled" party establishments think is being spoiled.

Yet, prudence may dictate a need to keep an eye on other possibilities than staying in the race to the end. If so, it needs to be clear that such moves are not from fear but from prudent concern for the future of the party, the nation, and the planet.

As is no doubt evident from the tone and approach of this article, I again urge Jill and Gary to go all the way.

*Green Horizon Magazine* will have more discussion about the 2016 Presidential race in the next Issue, out in October.



**JOHN RENSENBRINK**

In the picture on the left, John Rensenbrink is handling the bat of Stan Musial of the St. Louis Cardinals, his boyhood hero. He was comparing it to the bats of Joe DiMaggio and Ted Williams who also hail from that time. John was being treated to a visit to the vault of the Louisville Slugger in Louisville which houses thousands of bats; the famous "Slugger" continues to make them for major league baseball players. John is a co-founder of the Maine and U.S. Green Parties, and is co-editor with Steve Welzer of this magazine.

Jill of the Green Party and Gary of the Libertarian Party, their respective campaign staffs, and all the voters who want to vote for Jill or Gary will face a lot of pressure . . . as to whether to defer to their respective Democratic and Republican opponents in the final days before the November election. I urge them to plan, persevere, and propel their exciting campaigns right through election day.

# Letters to the Editor

*The following four Letters are among others that were penned by members of the National Committee of the United States Green Party at the time earlier this year when the financial situation and prospects for the Green Party seemed particularly bleak. A lot of soul-searching and pointed questions about the party's future took place. These letters provide a peek at the spirit and resolve that continues to fire the Green Party. Eds*

## TO THE EDITOR:

I've been a Green since the mid 80's. Occasionally I get tired and then I think, "Well, what the heck else would I do?" And I stick with it. And I feel more determined as time goes on as things continue to get worse. What keeps me going? Necessity. Obstinance. The satisfaction of developing new skills and knowledge. Good company now and historically.

Keep in mind that there have always been uphill battles that have been waged without enough resources. We're in one. Lean on the past. Gather strength from the present.

Keep with it for the future. Find what you can do that makes the best use of your particular interests, passions, time, money, and energy - and do it - remembering that others are doing what you aren't doing - and counting on you to do what you are doing. Connect with others - individuals and communities - and work together

It's kind of like getting old. The options aren't good. And perseverance should be the 11th Key Value. See you in the streets, online, and everywhere else! (I'd write more but I need to get back to work...)

Jody Grage  
Washington

(Jody, a pillar of strength and pertinacity within and for the U.S Green Party and the planet, recently celebrated her 80th birthday! Eds.)

## TO THE EDITOR,

For me pessimism [about the world's future and the future of the Green Party of the United States] is indeed warranted. It is also quite irrelevant.

The tool of self-government is the ballot box. That is the bottom line. The means of influencing the ballot is political activism, including petitioning, demonstrating, organizing, educating, and challenging seats for public office. That is why I joined a political party; to do those things, and to work with others of like mind who also want to do those things. That is why I joined a political party and not an institute, an association, a club, or a special-interest group.

There is only one political party that seems to me not to be insane. Only one party that recognizes that only radical solutions are actual solutions. Only one party that speaks plain sense about the ecosystem, the economy, justice, and social promise. Only one party that demands an end to war as the precondition of any meaningful human future. That party is the Green Party, so that's the one I joined.

All the criticisms are true. We are full of fail. There is childish bickering. There is self-aggrandizement and dissembling and sloth. If I were inclined to tick off the particular failings of particular people I would of course have to begin with myself—and then I'd have no time left to fault anyone else. So what is the point.

The struggle for a human future continues. I will be part of it because it isn't in me to stand aside from it. In that struggle, this seems to me the correct ground on which to plant my feet and link arms.

The rest is details.

B. Sidney Smith  
Virginia

## TO THE EDITOR,

I believe that the Green Party, here and abroad, is the last best hope for the world. That tells you just how desperate we are. Yes, the party can be dysfunctional, amateurish, and petty, but where is there better? Progressives are incapable of accepting that they might be part of the problem. The enemy is the Koch brothers or the oil companies, or some pipeline in the west. They—the progressives—are incapable of viewing our problems in any systemic way, and therefore incapable of finding systemic solutions. And progressives are a helpless minority in the Democratic Party.

The monied interests will always have their way. We are condemned to keep our lonely search for answers until our environmental and resource problems become so unavoidable that denial is no longer possible.

I will continue to plow through emails regarding green chiclets, bulletin board vs. listserve, or whatever other issue happens to be taking up bandwidth looking for that stray bit of

wisdom about how we might yet save our species from the sixth great extinction.

I still have hope.

Tim Willard  
*Maryland*

#### TO THE EDITOR:

During an election year, especially a presidential election year, members of the Green Party struggle with the difficulties of being the political arm of the Green Movement.

The greatest danger to the Green Party is losing the courage to be out front on those issues that confound those stuck in the dominant paradigm. If we lose the transformative vision of a peaceful, just, and sustainable bioregional society of equals operating in enlightened harmony with the natural world and all our relations, then it won't matter whether the party gains more political clout. In trying to conform to the expectations of our current political system, we'll have lost what really mattered.

Conversely, if we keep that vision and find ways to get it out there, we'll be doing the work that needs doing in our time no matter how many political offices we win or don't win. It's all about taking real leadership in a world that's mortally wounded by many centuries' accumulation of maladaptive cultural practices. In short - while politics-as-usual is all about power, Green politics is all about ideas.

Linda Cree  
*Upper Michigan*

## A Vegan Challenge and A Strong Thumbs Down

#### DEAR EDITORS,

Please remove me from all mailings immediately. I no longer wish to receive your magazine for two reasons:

1. Never is there any mention of embracing a totally plant-based, vegan diet in order to curb globing warming. Eating vegan is the single most effective thing an individual can do to help slow it down. "Humane" meat, eggs and other animal products do not exist.
2. Issue #32 Fall/Winter 2015: Ms. McCabe's pedantic anti-Semitic tirade under the guise of anthropologically-based opinion and "fact" (*The Work of Culture: Transforming the US--Israel "Special Relationship"*) is ridiculous, offensive and highly inaccurate. I am a Jew and a Zionist with Palestinian friends. I have lived in Israel, the Sinai and have recently been in the West Bank and Jordan. I vehemently resent your magazine flaming the fires of hatred towards Israel. I've had enough of Left-wing, Green and self-hating Jews' mentality of "political correctness", i.e. turning a blind eye to seeing BOTH sides of the conflict and blaming Israel for everything. I doubt you'll bother to publish this letter.

Suzanne Yacowitz-Dragan  
*New Jersey*

#### *New Age Politics, continued from page 20*

cultures have also changed, he insists that the message announced in the early 1970s by himself and others is much the same. That may be sufficient reason for the rather pedantic format, which includes five numbered parts composed of nineteen chapters, in turn divided into sections and subsections. There are a few footnotes, but the best addition is five appendices that when combined give a useful bibliography of books, organizations, and widely quoted political principles, all produced (roughly) within the period 1956-2006. It provides a mirror of one time in human history—and also of others.

After 40 years we find ourselves still imprisoned by multiple issues such as racism, nationalism, sexism, environmentalism. They have different faces but in most cases only one or two will light the fire inside that drives us to action. So we still need writers like Mark Satin to point out the complexity of the structure, to tell us that if one wall is cracked others will

crumble, and to remind us that mass imprisonment rests on the same foundations as Jim Crow or slavery. Some of us will recall the well-worn saying: "The struggle of humanity against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting."



#### RHODA GILMAN

RHODA GILMAN began a 34-year career at the Minnesota Historical Society in 1958. During those years she worked as an editor, researcher, and administrator and wrote several books and many articles on midwestern history. They included a textbook of Minnesota history for middle school students published in 1989. She joined the Twin Cities Greens in 1986, helped to organize the Green Party of Minnesota in 1994, and was its candidate for lieutenant governor in 2002. Her newest book, *Stand Up! The Story of Minnesota's Protest Tradition* has just been published by the Minnesota Historical Society Press. Rhoda is a member of *Green Horizon Magazine's* Board.



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