



# GREEN HORIZON

*Magazine*

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



*Breathing*  
**LIFE**  
*into*  
**POLITICS**

**Politics Gone Sterile with Oligarchy —  
Politics in Desperate Need of  
Redemption/Resuscitation**

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# Hail to Rhode Island Green Party From Global Greens

KELI YEN

Congratulations Green Party of Rhode Island for your 25 years of political activism since your founding in 1992!

My name is Keli Yen, I am the Convenor of the Global Greens. The Global Greens is the partnership of Greens parties and Green political movements around the world. The Greens political movement is one of the fastest growing political movements in the world right now; currently there are 100 Green parties in the Americas, Africa, Europe & Asia Pacific, and many more getting organised to contest elections and join the Global Greens.

It makes perfect sense that your anniversary is celebrated together with activists from across society who are also working on building - democracy, social justice, nonviolence, sustainability, respect for diversity and ecological wisdom - because these are the values that unite us together in the same movement.

The Green Party of Rhode Island and the Global Greens share a special kinship because we were both launched in the same year! The Global Greens was initiated 25 years ago on the fringes of the UN Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

The Green Party of the United States joined Greens from 28 countries to hold the First Planetary Meeting of Greens. At this meeting the Greens decided to get organised globally, we created our first joint-political statement calling for ambitious and urgent action to be taken on:

1. Global warming & pollution
2. Over-consumption
3. Deepening poverty
4. Tax on non-renewable energy & the end of nuclear energy
5. Green Climate Fund
6. 21st century: "It is no longer enough to 'think globally and act locally'. Think & Act globally & locally at the same time.

I'm happy to say that since then the Greens have made progress on these goals thanks in large part to getting more Greens in Government.

I am living in Sweden right now, where the Greens are running the national government in coalition with the Social Democrats. Isabella Lövin is the Deputy

*Rhode Island, continued on page 15*

## THE TEAM

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# *The Cruel Bane of Oligarchy and the Immediate Need to Salvage Politics From Its Grasp*

About oligarchy. I often read or hear it said, when there is a reference to politics nowadays, that politics has come down with a terrible condition (a dis-ease), called polarization. But is that really so? Is that the heart of the matter?

No doubt polarization describes much of what passes for politics nowadays, especially in our national and state capitols. We see and hear people endlessly talking past each other, assailing each other, with stand-pat positions from which they won't budge.

But there is something even worse going on, of which polarization is a dominant symptom. It's oligarchy.

Oligarchy cuts deeper. Oligarchy is a condition of the soul. It betokens complete devotion to money from within the mind and heart of a person, or a class, or a whole nation. It is inherently divisive, savagely separating some from others. It saps energy, destroys community, lures people into unjustified and unjustifiable attitudes of superiority and inferiority. Applied to the economy, it reduces decision-making to shameless submission to money calculations that insidiously destroy people and nature. In sum it turns people into greedy monsters and life into self-defeating misery and failure.

It is into this slough of horrors that our ruling class has fallen, a class composed of billionaires and millionaires grasping always for more in the spirit of a deranged King Midas. Their politics are stupid and drive all of us, and the nature which would nurture us, into oblivion. The very few individuals and families among this class who do not bow the knee to mammon are isolated, or

become skeptics who still clutch their money, or are shoved into a blind alley of one kind or another.

In the pages of this issue, we find a variety of ways to shine a light. I will not, as I have in the past, briefly describe each article on this page. I leave it to you, dear reader, to discover, fully for yourself, these many ways. Be aroused, whether in a collaborative spirit or a critical spirit, to add your own. Include, in your thoughts, the possibility of sending those thoughts to us and we will in all likelihood print them in the next issue.

But there is one thing I especially want you to keep in mind as you read. Do not read with a presupposition in your head that the people writing are writing with an underlying attitude of rejecting politics.

As I read the underlying intent and hope of the articles, it is to free politics of blight, not to dismiss it as the work of the devil. So much of what we read from progressive and left commentaries on politics is rife with a negative attitude to politics as such. We've been schooled in this gross mistake by many traditions: the Christian tradition, the liberal tradition, the capitalist tradition, the Marxist tradition, and the anarchist tradition. It's a heavy burden of negativity about politics that suffuses both extremes on the left and on the right—and confuses those in between. Our Green Horizon Magazine does not fall into that easy trap. We are aware of it, want to avoid it, are working to get beyond it. This striving is part of what makes this magazine unique.

—JR

# Weaving a Unifying Narrative: The Money Thread

HOWARD SWITZER

"Life is a tapestry woven by the decisions we make." —*Sherrilyn Kenyon*

This patriarchy made women property instead of partners in the dance of life.

Despite some notable challenges to the dominant forces of usury, it has dominated the history of civilization.

## WORD

I am often humbled by the wealth of knowledge, creativity and skill that humans possess and feel a little presumptuous that I could contribute to a unifying narrative that could bring us all together to take responsibility for our steadily growing debt to the natural world. However, we must do this before it forecloses on us. Our current story is dominated by our economy and like a tapestry that has worn thin from abuse is in tatters, disintegrating. We need to weave a new tapestry, one rich and diverse in color and texture.

A tapestry is made by repeatedly weaving the horizontal (weft) threads, those which provide the color and texture, over and under the vertical (warp) threads, those that provide structure, then tamping the horizontal threads down so they are very close together completely hiding the vertical threads from view. The warp thread in this metaphorical tapestry is our hidden money system, a social agreement embodied in law made tangible with something used to symbolize it, a currency.

Money actually predates civilization and originated in human cultures who worshiped the Great Mother archetype as a sacred way to acknowledge our debt to the Earth, the Great Mother, from which all life springs and is sustained. Our ecology and our economy are deeply related. Being sacred, money was never created for personal profit.

The advent of civilization saw the repression of the Great Mother archetype displaced by a powerful and angry male God, a sovereign/tyrant over all establishing a patriarchy. This patriarchy made women property instead of partners in the dance of life. With patriarchy came a psychological darkness, what Daniel Quinn called "the great forgetting," the shadow side of the Great Mother where greed, scarcity and a whole host of fearful and violent attributes reside. From this imperialism arose deforesting the commons and mining the fertility of the soil leaving behind deserts, our most enduring human legacy, by giving nothing back. The money was also corrupted, which the Priest/Kings issued as debt for personal gain, a practice known as usury.

## THE WARP THREADS

Our new tapestry will need structure, strong and resilient warp threads so our tapestry can withstand the march of time. We can determine the structural strength of a thread by how the thread is created, or the nature of the agreement creating our money. The broken and weak 'warp threads' of our old tapestry are due to money being replaced with credit, it was legalized usury. Jesus, Plato, Aristotle, Dante and many great thinkers have condemned the practice. Once regarded a great sin by every religion because it was a source of spiritual darkness. Despite some notable challenges to the dominant forces of usury, it has dominated the history of civilization.

The struggle between privately controlled money and publicly controlled money has gone on for centuries with the private money dominating most of history. The American Revolution challenged the private money power of England. The colonists

had learned the power of public money and funded their revolution with it. While the war was won the power struggle that ensued saw farmer Jefferson's vision of publicly issued money for a free democratic society crushed by the power of banker money and Hamilton's vision of creating an industrial giant, a world dominating colossus. Our nation was harnessed in service to international capital but we were an unruly team which continued to threaten the financial elite of the world. The civil war was an effort to break the nation up into more manageable parts but failed due to the power of publicly issued money, greenbacks which Lincoln used to fight off the dissolution of the nation. Thus the struggle between private and public money continued until the bankers eventually retired the greenbacks.

*"We must make our choice. We may have democracy, or we may have wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can't have both." — Justice Louis Brandeis*

### OPPOSITION

Money is power over public policy. The monetary authority is power and progressives of the 19th century understood this; demands for issuing more greenbacks was in the platforms of all the progressive parties in that era. The capitalist bankers bribed professors, clergy, Congress and the press to support their proposal and they won their Federal Reserve Act of 1913 which officially ceded the monetary authority to the private banking system creating a convoluted process to give it a quasi-governmental cover. Two years later they won mandatory mass schooling, taking the children away from their parents to inculcate them with the values that industrialists found most useful for social management. The study of Political Economy was taken apart and divided into Economics and Political Science departments. Political Economy studies the relationship between wealth and power in a society. The bankers did not want that. Any professor in a university today that names a class 'Political Economy' will be questioned by their superiors. So we get Political Science which studies power without looking at wealth and Economics which studies wealth without looking at power and if the bankers have their way "never the twain shall meet."

History supports the growing recognition that capitalism is destroying our natural life support system and must change. Socialism is an industrial age ideology as well despite efforts to tack on a nod to the ecology. The Communist/socialist experiments suffered due to using the same money system. Usury money has psychological consequences erecting barriers to social intimacy and collaboration. It was a poor choice for trying to organize a society of cooperative enterprises.

The problem is that Marx, like Adam Smith, believed in the defunct 'commodity theory of money' thus missing that money itself is a force of production comprising both means and social relations. Socialists ignore this central feature of capitalist power. Capitalism, however, is not just as an economic system; it is a

Capitalism, however, is not just as an economic system; it is a way of destroying the relations between humans and the rest of the natural world.

way of destroying the relations between humans and the rest of the natural world. This severing of human society from its life giving relationship with nature is why the Green Party seeks to replace capitalism with a socially and ecologically responsible democracy.

### THE WEFT THREADS

Now that we've established our strong warp thread structural base of publicly issued money let's begin to weave in the "weft threads" of this tapestry, those that give color and texture to this unifying narrative. These are all the things we want in our society, many of which have long been festering or denied, worn thin and broken in the old tapestry. The new weft threads represent the socially responsible solutions to the many issues and problems facing society. It is our fiscal and public policy solutions to poverty, racism, war, healthcare, education, and environmental degradation. Let's see what they might look like in our new tapestry.

*"Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity, it is an act of justice. Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man made and can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. Sometimes it falls on a generation to be great. You can be the regeneration. Let greatness blossom."*

*— Nelson Mandela*

### POVERTY

Broadly based prosperity is the solution to poverty. Prosperity is an economic state without poverty. What most of us have experienced as "prosperity," however, has been the ability to get a job as you watch enormous wealth whistling by on its way to the top. When the bubble bursts you can't get a job but you still watch enormous wealth whistling by on its way to the top. This is prosperity for the few. We've really never seen prosperity for all which is what a public money system can do. Rather than ever

If small farmers continue to lose the basis of their production, the land, the world will lose its capacity to feed itself.

greater exploitation of the commons, prosperity for all will be the sharing of the commons with all the life therein, as we learn to work with instead of against nature, creating an economics of care. The wellbeing and security this provides will have positive psychological effects, reversing the diseased effects of usury. A public money system will put money into people's pockets so the exchange for needed goods and services can go on unimpeded by the lack of money. We produce enough food and housing, and we can produce enough healthcare and education for all as well. We are not short of the resources to do this, we've just not been allowed the money to do this by the current system.

## RACISM

To address racism we need to first end institutional racism. We do that with authentic democracy, a system that provides an equitable distribution of wealth. White men have held the money power for centuries which is the root of "white supremacy," they considered themselves supreme. They were rich and powerful, and most people were not. They could dominate industry and government policy to suit themselves. They could control the media and academia to support whatever served their interests best. They could use the schools and media to inculcate their distorted values and divide the people by race and class to keep them in conflict. By reclaiming our sovereign prerogative to have Government issue the money for the general welfare of all, we can end institutional racism. This will go a long way toward ending social racism, a learned behavior where one imagines others are somehow inferior. This is an indication of deep psychological issues with self-worth. Many of us have presuppositions of others but when judgement becomes pathological it can lead to violent behavior. Compassion is the opposite of judgment. Public money can fund public programs to teach about the roles compassion and empathy play in healing individuals and communities.

"If the soul is left in darkness, sins will be committed. The guilty one is not he who commits the sin, but the one who causes the darkness." — *Victor Hugo*

## FOOD

Food production is intimately tied to our Earth's natural systems, soil, water, climate and to our hidden money system. Everyone needs food everyday making it a huge industry. The industrialized and centralized agriculture industry is dominated by the banks because they lend the money for these massive mono-cropping operations. The banks have used their power to massively displace smaller farmers as they expand operations.

Ecological balance means we have to curtail emissions, deforestation, mass mono-crop agriculture and private control of the money. The truth is centralized agribusiness does not feed the world but rather it constricts the feeding of the world due to its profit motive. By dumping vast grain surpluses into poor nations who were providing ample and nutritious food for themselves, local economies are destroyed making people dependent on them. The industrialized system also destroys the living food-bearing capacity of soil. If small farmers continue to lose the basis of their production, the land, the world will lose its capacity to feed itself.

A public money system can fund and promote the massive shift to intensive organic local food production capable of feeding the world with better food, using less water and no need for soil killing chemicals. Soil research indicates that fertility is directly proportional to the life within the soil. This research has also shown us how we can grow purely biological fertile soil that feeds on carbon from the air, soil that holds more water, soil that provides all the nutrients needed for healthy food. This is regenerative agriculture stabilizing the natural systems that give rise to life. Like a healthy economy healthy soil is engaged in constant and robust exchange.

## HEALTHCARE

We have all the resources we need to provide the best healthcare and education possible. In our new tapestry healthcare will be fully funded and focused on prevention of health threats as well as care for injury and disease. Public money can assure that the latest medical knowledge is available, easily accessed and applied. Plant based medicines with its thousands of therapeutic compounds will transform human health that has been used for profit instead of for genuine care. Research will not be limited to creating products for treating symptoms to maintain an illness but on actual cures and prevention. The power of the media can be directed toward promoting good public health.

"Schooling is something someone else gives you. Education is something you give yourself!" — *Mark Twain*

## EDUCATION

Our mass schooling system was devised and implemented by the industrialists two years after they got control of the money. It allowed the children to be taken away from their parents

*The Money Thread, continued on page 10*

# For True System Change, Not Climate Change, We Will Need a *New* Kind of Party/Movement

*(and it won't be just the Green Party of today)*

JOHN FORAN

The world's Green parties embody new political cultures of opposition and of creation, sometimes acting to bridge the divide between those who seek to take state power and those who seek to transform the very nature of power. Though far from power in the US and UK, and having made invidious compromises when in government as in Germany, they hint at the powerful combination of social movement dynamism from below and a new kind of party organization, transnational in vision and organization in a way that other parties, including those on the left, are not.

I have long argued that the path to radical social transformation called for the formation of the most inventive social movement the world has ever seen. But as a scholar of twentieth-century revolutions and twenty-first century movements for radical social change,<sup>1</sup> I have started to come around to the idea that the urgency of the crisis in which we find ourselves, and the lack of adequate action on all sides (myself very much included) means that we need to consider the necessity of imagining something akin to a new kind of party.<sup>2</sup> What if we rejected the binary between movement and party, elections and direct action, acted upon the urgency of the mandate for thinking in new ways, and embraced a creative synthesis of the two? This essay will explore our predicament and the prospects for ways out of it along these lines. Readers will note that I do not consider my beloved Green Party the sole, or even the main agent for these changes. We have to go broader if we want to aim higher.

What if we rejected the  
binary between movement  
and party...and embraced  
a creative synthesis  
of the two?

## EXISTING MODELS

To be sure, *the political parties of the future* don't yet exist, but we can catch glimpses of them and hopefully learn from such experimental forerunners as the political movement that grew up in Iceland after the great crash of 2008, and the electoral foibles and fortunes of Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain (one could reference the Labour Party in Britain under Jeremy Corbyn as trending in the direction we wish, and also the much-heralded political experiment under way in Rojava, in northern Syria. Meanwhile, in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador, the Latin American Pink Tide has also been working near this intersection. Other struggles that point toward this include the long movement for radical reforms in Kerala, India; the experiences of the world's Green parties; and the global climate justice movement. Each of these, and perhaps most of all, Podemos, suggest or hint at a new kind of political entity or party, without yet being that party.<sup>3</sup>

## WHAT COMES NEXT?

Instead of these halting if promising precursors, though, what we need is some excitingly *new and original* kind of party (or network, or coalition) that in each country or case comes out of the social movements that would bring it to power and can then be held strictly accountable by them as it turns the ship around. Such a "party" (and the name is apt for the convivial connotations it holds) will be the patient, challenging, loving product of the actions of many people, and it will embrace the multiple, richly diverse threads of the new political cultures of opposition and creation.

What if we could harness the people power, radical imagination, and boundless energy of all of these new actors of the future, starting by facilitating discussions among the new *social movements*, then brainstorming how to fashion some *new kind of party* to take power where that is possible and in the process beginning to support and enable all the emerging *transition initiatives* to co-create radical social transformation from the local to the national level?

It sounds simplistic and unrealistic, too good to be practicable. But what have we got to lose? We aren't winning at present. So let's think about these pieces. *The social movements* have been introduced above. Not just the Arab Spring and Occupy, but their brilliant, short-lived predecessor, the global justice movement, and their offspring in Black Lives Matter, Standing Rock, and many, many other rising voices, the vast majority of them not yet well known.

Meanwhile, *Transition initiatives*, whether by that name or (more often) some other, have sprouted and are being tended in multiple locations today, from Totnes in the UK<sup>4</sup> to the ZAD<sup>5</sup> in the woods and fields of France. The US Transition Towns Gathering in the summer of 2017<sup>6</sup> brought together people engaged in this work from all parts of the country. The French film *Demain* and the accompanying book in English *Tomorrow* capture the vibrancy and possibility of these movements, across a global space that runs from urban gardens in Detroit, to a zero-waste processing plant in San Francisco, local currency in Bristol, England, a paper factory in France run on the principles of the circular economy, organic farming with solar panels on La Réunion in the Indian Ocean, and a refreshing experiment with village democracy in Kuthambakkam, India.<sup>7</sup>

And if it isn't clear now, or yet, we are striving to eventually build a future without *this* system, without capitalism, without endless growth, without obscene inequality, without the violence of militarism, and with democratic participation from bottom to top and back to the bottom again.

A valuable recent approach to the problem of making change in the midst of diversity and chaos is that heralded in the title of adrienne maree brown's 2017 book, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*. This approach counsels activists to work from the bottom up in an inclusive way to generate a collective analysis that enables all present to focus on

articulating their desires and most sought-after outcomes. After starting with an assessment of the current state of relevant issues, an emergent strategy moves on to a visioning exercise to identify our ideal state, follows this with a "change analysis" stage, which outlines what needs to change in order to achieve those visions, and ends with an "action" exercise to identify the projects that group members are most passionate about, with the potential to

be put into motion.

The perspective is based on strategies for organizers building movements for justice and liberation that leverage relatively simple interactions to create complex patterns, systems, and transformations – including adaptation, interdependence and decentralization, fractal awareness, resilience and transformative justice, nonlinear and iterative change, creating more possibilities....

Emergent strategy is how we intentionally change in ways that grow our capacity to embody the just and liberated worlds we long for, and maybe, if I'm honest, it's a philosophy for how to be in harmony and love, in and with the world.<sup>8</sup>

If this sounds more evocative than prescriptive, that's because it's about attending to process, cultivating relationships, maximizing our diversity, and staying open to learning and deciding in uncertain, unfolding situations, which are skills much more useful to social movements than any step-by-step list of activities to check off.

#### LINKING ARMS: A US SCENARIO

Let's end with a speculative future set in the United States, ground zero of capitalism. In the 2016 elections, the dissatisfaction of Americans with their political system was manifest, with tens of millions more eligible voters choosing not to register or vote than the number of ballots either Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton received.

What if a future election in the US featured candidates emerging from the young activists of the social movements and the older ones in the transition initiatives, allied with those members of the Green and other progressive parties that were willing to share the stage, disaffected Sandernistas, and committed and passionate individuals everywhere, from all across the country?

What if a future election in the US featured candidates emerging from the young activists of the social movements and the older ones in the transition initiatives, allied with those members of the Green and other progressive parties that were willing to share the stage, disaffected Sandernistas, and committed and passionate individuals everywhere, from all across the country?

Who would run for office in this scenario? The urban gardener in Detroit, the young indigenous activist in Standing Rock, the women leading Black Lives Matter in St. Louis and many other places, the local community leaders everywhere – teachers, community organizers, daycare providers, activists, and organizers, many of them much younger than the bland batch of candidates put forward by today’s Democrats and Republicans.

A number of “blueprints” for a radical governmental policy of the future already exist. Each of us will have their own list; undoubtedly, many conversations lie ahead in which such lists are compared and synthesized into the powerful manifesto that we may one day craft.

### GOING GLOBAL

What if those of us in the United States pulled off something spectacular like this? That would surely alter the global balance of power for the better. And this would only be strengthened if others carried some version of it that made sense in their own contexts. Were such a government to come to power in the United States – against all odds, admittedly – it could work with others in the global North to honor their collective obligations to 1) degrow their own wasteful and harmful economies and their carbon footprints 2) cancel the debt of the global South, 3) transfer technology and other assistance to supply clean, abundant energy to all global citizens, 4) pay or make reparations for colonial and imperialist exploitation, 5) de-militarize down to the bone, and 6) guarantee fair and scientifically sustainable shares of the atmosphere and all resources to all.

The powerholders of capitalism scoff at the idea of such a movement, though in their words one can hear the faint stirring of fear that it might come to pass. Following his surprise election victory, Trump told a rally in December 2016: “There is no global anthem. No global currency. No certificate of global citizenship. We pledge allegiance to one flag and that flag is the American flag.” After wild cheering from the crowd, he added: “From now on it is going to be: America First. Okay? America first. We’re going to put ourselves first.”

But consider this rich data from the present moment: “A poll of more than 20,000 people in 18 countries, conducted by GlobeScan for the BBC World Service from December 2015 through April 2016, found that 51 percent of respondents saw themselves more as global citizens than as citizens of their own

countries.<sup>9</sup> This was the first time since tracking began in 2001 that a majority felt this way.”<sup>10</sup>

Globally, *the climate justice movement* might now be the name for the network of these movements all in the service of radical climate justice, in the broadest, most intersectional understanding of the term. Its sustaining meme is one that young climate justice activists carried literally on a banner through the frosty streets of Copenhagen on the occasion of the ill-fated COP 15 negotiations in December 2009, demanding “System Change Not Climate Change.”<sup>11</sup> Let us all exercise our right to imagine new names for our movements, “parties,” and their key demands.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

We are going to have to leverage the strength and power and beauty of our many movements and ideas into a new kind of entity – a completely new kind of party – that can take political power away from those who hold it, in place after place. In time, these experiments with the unknown would be able to support each other and link themselves together to find and co-create the pathways to the future we want. The new entities that come out of our movements must be made to live up to their promise and to enact our dreams by *us*, their only possible guarantors.

Such new parties, if they emerge, and the broader, diverse social movements that *must* drive and hold them accountable, will need to link arms firmly with existing transition initiatives and the many more projects of creation that will need to be built everywhere.

And they must synergistically support each other’s efforts to fashion the collective power we need for global governance. *Then* we would see a people’s COP articulate a “FAB” (fair, ambitious, and binding) universal climate treaty. *Then* we would be able to tax and legislate the fossil fuel corporations out of business. *Then* we would be able to take on the legacy of inequality and genocide that the United States has been built on. *Then...*

As the Zapatistas, those un-professionals of hope, often say, “We want a world where many worlds fit.” That world, containing somehow our many worlds, will be created and constructed by all of those who are willing to seek it, to do the hard work (which, let’s not forget, also brings so much joy and purpose), and to embrace hope, imagination, and heart, in equally abundant measure.

This essay is offered in the hope of generating further participation and passionate commitment among readers and the millions of ordinary people who must rise to our common occasion.

What we need is  
some excitingly new and  
original kind of party  
(or network, or coalition)...  
It sounds simplistic and  
unrealistic, too good to be  
practicable. But what have  
we got to lose? We aren’t  
winning at present.

Else, nothingness awaits us after extreme and unimaginable suffering, which however likely, is simply not acceptable.

The path will be long, hard, dangerous, and difficult, friends, so let's get going!



#### JOHN FORAN

works passionately as a scholar-activist on and within the global climate justice movement, which he sees as at the center of the struggle for any prospect of achieving social justice and radical social change in the 21st century. A lot of his work is published at [www.resilience.org](http://www.resilience.org). It can also be found in two places that he has helped co-create: the websites of the International Institute of Climate Action and Theory ([www.iicat.org/john-forans-iicat-research-portal/](http://www.iicat.org/john-forans-iicat-research-portal/)), and the Climate Justice Project ([www.climatejusticeproject.org](http://www.climatejusticeproject.org)).

#### NOTES

- 1 A more extended version of this essay has been published as "Finding Pathways to a Better Future: A proposal that our movements confront the issue of Political Power, finding new ways to take and use it." *Radical Ecological Democracy* (December 16, 2017), <http://www.radicalecologicaldemocracy.org/finding-pathways-to-a-better-future/>
- 2 Calls for a new kind of party and/or a synthesis of oppositional social movements and positive new alternatives are increasingly being made: see Micah White's excellent *The End of Protest: A New Playbook for Revolution* (Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf Canada, 2016); George Monbiot in *Out of the Wreckage: A New Politics for an Age of Crisis* (London: Verso, 2017); Patrick Reinsborough and Doyle Canning, *Re:Imagining Change: How to Use Story-based Strategy to Win Campaigns, Build Movements, and Change the World*, updated and expanded second edition (Oakland: PM Books, 2017 [2010]); Manuel Castells, *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movement in the Internet Age*, second edition (Cambridge: Polity, 2015); Paul Raskin's *Journey to Earthland: The Great Transition to Planetary Civilization* (Boston: Tellus Institute, 2016), as well as the work of The Next System Project at <https://thenextsystem.org/>.
- 3 These cases are all discussed, along with the foundational concepts of political cultures of opposition/resistance and creation, can be found in John Foran, "Beyond Insurgency to Radical Social Change: The New Situation," in *Studies in Social Justice*, 8 (1) (2014): 5-25, <http://brock.scholarsportal.info/journals/index.php/SSJ/article/view/1036/1006>
- 4 Transition Town Notes website: <https://www.transitiontowntotnes.org/>
- 5 Zone À Défendre website: <https://zad.nadir.org/?lang=en>
- 6 Nils Palsson, "Initial Report on the Transition National Gathering and Movement Strategy Session" (September 15, 2017), <http://www.transitionus.org/blog/initial-report-transition-national-gathering-and-movement-strategy-session>
- 7 See the film trailer for *Demain*, directed by Cyril Dion and Mélanie Laurent (2017) at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NUN0QxRB7e0>; the book is by Cyril Dion, *Tomorrow: All Over the Globe, Solutions Already Exist* (Paris: Actes Sud, 2017).
- 8 adrienne maree brown, *Emergent Strategies: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds* (Oakland: AK Press, 2017), 23-24.
- 9 BBC World Service, "Global Citizenship a Growing Sentiment among Citizens of Emerging Economies: Global Poll" (April 27, 2016), <https://www.globescan.com/news-and-analysis/press-releases/press-releases-2016/383-global-citizenship-a-growing-sentiment-among-citizens-of-emerging-economies-global-poll.html>
- 10 The passages quoted here are found in Lawrence Wittner, "World Citizenship Is More Popular Than You Might Think" (September 17, 2017), <http://portside.org/2017-09-19/world-citizenship-more-popular-you-might-think>
- 11 This is also the name and acronym astutely adopted by a small but feisty network of North American ecosocialists with whom I am engaged, and whose analyses and discussions can be found on their website: <https://systemchangenotclimatechange.org/>

#### *The Money Thread, continued from page 6*

to inculcate industrial values and to assure that they had a compliant labor force. Using publicly issued money our education would be transformed and integrated into the community allowing real experience to teach children the connections between our lives and the natural world. Education programs would seek to inspire each learner to explore, understand and play their unique role in making the world a better place. Education would not be an instructional process but a facilitative one that provides a supportive atmosphere in which each learner feels free to explore their beliefs and express them. Both creative and critical thinking abilities would be used to help create a whole, compassionate and empathetic person.

#### A NEW TAPESTRY

Our tapestry is far from complete but I hope you see how the monetary system we allow provides the foundational structure for our economy and how we relate to the Earth. Because the system is a global system all nations need to exert their sovereign right to self-governance by issuing their own nation's money. Once we end centralized monetary authority we can look at ways to further decentralize power and wealth. It will require an extraordinary human collaboration to overcome the cultural and political barriers to change. However I witnessed something in rush hour traffic a few weeks ago that gave me some hope.

There was an accident between two major intersections less than a block apart. A large SUV had been spun sideways and was blocking two lanes of traffic and the other car was wrecked and blocking a third lane leaving just two lanes on one side open. Despite the huge amount of traffic pouring into these intersections and no emergency vehicles on the scene, drivers immediately began shifting into a single file lane from each direction allowing a steady flow of traffic past the accident. This was not a major problem but consider this; there was no leader, no one giving any directions, there were no politics, there was no divisive rhetoric, there wasn't even any discussion, people simply recognized and understood the problem and in cooperation with one another created the remedy.



#### HOWARD SWITZER

is an ecological architect and student of monetary science. He is a former co-chair of the Green Party of Tennessee (2002-2003) and has served a number of terms as a TN delegate on the Green Party National Committee. In 2006 he began the 'Moving the Money to Main Street Campaign,' adopted by GPUS in 2007, which has since been taken up by other groups. He is an active advocate for monetary reform and was invited to join with the American Monetary Institute to help revive the American Revolution electorally to reclaim national economic sovereignty for the democratic governance of the United States and the world.

# An Open Letter\*

## *Thinking to Some Purpose*

\* Open Letter to the United States Green Party (individuals, states, caucuses, locals, groups, committees) and Green Party allies:

Well, it's the new year and hopefully, we can take a Sankofa moment (African saying meaning looking back to go forward). Whether this will be a happy new year or just a continuation of the previous year (and years) depends solely on us. Over the past few months there have been some very hostile, nasty, and destructive exchanges between Greens and others who have found a voice within the Green systems of communication (namely social media). We face some real challenges internally and externally. The biggest challenge is that people seem to have a "do it my way or no way" attitude. We have forgotten the tenets of nonviolence and the foundation of how the Green Party proposes itself as an icon in the political arena.

### TENETS OF NONVIOLENCE

1. Respect everyone—including yourself.
2. Always include constructive alternatives.
3. Be aware of the long term.
4. Look for win-win solutions.
5. Use power carefully.
6. Claim our legacy.

[www.opendemocracy.net/transformation/michael-nagler/six-principles-of-nonviolence](http://www.opendemocracy.net/transformation/michael-nagler/six-principles-of-nonviolence)

King's political-philosophy extends further beyond this and it is best said by the King Center at [www.thekingcenter.org/king-philosophy](http://www.thekingcenter.org/king-philosophy).

Recurrently, people continue to demonize and revisit the history of our presidential candidates, we have put a lot of stock in those fledgling candidacies and have stored up a lot of anger when or if the candidates or campaigns made choices that others may have disagreed with. Now, this is in no way an effort to rewrite history. It is meant for us, if we choose to, to take a hard look at these issues that have festered and find a way forward through them.

To be blunt we have what seems like a tendency to discredit or attack the credibility of former candidates, especially, if some disagree with what they did or said, or a decision the campaign made. But let's be real there is no person (even our most intimate partners) that we agree with 100% of the time. So why do we think we will or must agree politically? The platform is a consensus document, meaning that we have come up with the thing we can most agree with but it is not perfect and it does not mean that individuals and candidates will not have nuanced perspectives on any of the subjects.

Specifically, we seem to have harsh criticisms for Nader, Cobb, and Stein (and almost nothing to say about the VP candidates). Ironically we have little to say for or about McKinney/Clemente (and no intraparty criticism of how these candidates were treated and have been since the campaign). It is true that we may not appreciate or like some of the decisions that the campaigns or candidates made but how is it that we can cannibalize our own Greens even after the fact? Which Greens among us are no longer welcome at the table and who gets to decide that? Who gets to decide that any of these people deserve to be dragged through the mud, have their characters assassinated, or their motives challenged years and years after campaigns?

DARRYL! LC MOCH

For years I have advocated a National Strategy that includes campaign and candidate development, ballot access, and a strategic plan to elect people and/or disrupt the system giving GPUS more prominence in the mainstream political world.

Now, none of these people are “above reproach” but they did do the work of the party. They ran campaigns and in each successive campaign did something better or made improvements in our work collectively. It is also true that each success built on the next and it is my fervent hope that the next campaign will do even better.

But what of this trend? In the midst of talking about and detracting from the presidential campaigns, we have not had real discussions of the great work down ticket that really also made an impact. No real conversations about the Margaret Flowers, Colia Clark, and the Robin Lavern Wilson Senate campaigns or the Luis Rodriguez, Laura Wells, Howie Hawkins, Seth Kaper-Dale or other gubernatorial campaigns, and precious little on recent or current campaigns that could make the difference in states and local areas. For years I have advocated a National Strategy that includes campaign and candidate development, ballot access, and a strategic plan to elect people and/or disrupt the system giving GPUS more prominence in the mainstream political world.

### A HOME FOR PROGRESSIVES

GPUS seems to be reaching out to any progressive communities as a home for them but we are also vulnerable. We must ensure the sanctity of the party for the party not just for our own individual desires. If we desire to see the work of the party grow and maintain some impact we need to protect our brand more. Some parts of the progressive community have other parties to fight for or in. Socialists and Communists have parties they can populate. Clearly, these parties do not have the types of ballot access GPUS has gained but this makes us vulnerable as well as powerful. We must meet the influx with both welcome and caution so that we can protect the sanctity of the party and the Green values. There are Green Socialists and socialists that lean green and in the end, we should seek to work together but the end result must be mutual growth and development not just the growth of one over the other. We cannot have socialists asking to work with our voters by having us encourage votes in a ranked-choice situation and then refuse to do the same at the same time. That is manipulative and disingenuous plain and simple.

Even more disturbing is the attack on other greens like Andrea, George M, Samantha Pree-Stinson, and myself, to name a few, by other greens. These attacks need to stop. If there are legitimate concerns lets air them, address them, and resolve them. If the concerns amount to resistance to change, then let’s follow the same process and come to a reckoning so we can move forward. But we have to have a way to address these types of issues without assassinating people’s characters. There are others as well but I mentioned these for their relative recognition. The point I am making is that we cannot build together if we continue to trash and attempt to discredit those with whom we have a difference of opinion or perspective be they fundamental or subtle.

We are driving people away, good people. We do not have to agree with everything but we cannot drive people away who have the passion and fortitude to help us build. We cannot hope

to attract voters and people who will work for the agenda we have if we drive people away. I am sure that someone among us will find fault with this letter and attempt to cast it as something it is not. For those who read this, I ask you to judge the words, character, and intent for yourselves.

We are a political party. And we are an active agent of change. This means we should be engaged in movements and activities that engage people and move them to action and that action should eventually lead to a Green voting record. We are an evolving political party, not a cult and we will not always agree but we can come to consensus. We are a progressive evolving political party and this means that we have elements of socialism, communism, reformists, and radical revolutionist, based on participatory democracy. No one element is more important than another and we cannot be the party of the people without all of them. We are the imperative, progressive, evolving political party; it is time to not only believe that but to KNOW it and begin to live it.

### #WWGD - WHAT WOULD GREENS DO?

We need to be a repository for hope so that we can increase our supporters, sustainers, and voters. In 2018, let’s show the nation WWGD? –What Would Greens Do? #WhatWouldGreensDo? #WWGD? #GPUS #GreensImperative.

Then after asking the questions let’s show them. In every post on social media, in every press release, at every activity, we need to show what Greens WILL do when elected to fulfill our mission and achieve our platform. This is what will make the difference, not pushing and bullying to get our own way, individually. Instead, we need to work for the common collective good...the reason why each of us came from where we were to populate the Green Party. Do not let 30+ years of building disintegrate in intraparty squabbles and fracturing factions.

In 2018 you are cordially invited to vow to work better together, to respect each other, to disagree honorably, and to use our powers for good. We need to build a national electoral strategy, we need to get more wins on the elected column for Greens in states and locals. We need more outreach, direct action, organizing, engagement, including campaign and candidate schools, movement building efforts, voter education, to build resources (especially financial), and other initiatives that will ensure more ballot access and successful candidates.



**DARRYL LC MOCH**

is a social entrepreneur; an activist, advocate, artist, minister, life coach/psychotherapeutic specialist living in Washington, DC. He is currently completing his doctoral studies in Transformational Leadership and writing his dissertation on “Othering”. Darryl! currently serves as Chair of the DC Statehood Green Party in Washington, DC and as a National Co-chair of the US Green Party. He is a member and Co-Chair of the GPUS National Black Caucus & Lavender Caucus. This article states the views of the author and does not necessarily represent the views and opinions of any institution or organization.

# Neither Left nor Right

## The small-c conservatism of Edward Goldsmith

1962: *Silent Spring*

1968: Club of Rome founded

1970: First Earth Day

1972: *A Blueprint for Survival*

1973: Formation of the UK People's Party

STEVE WELZER

The People's Party (renamed "Ecology Party" in 1975 and then "Green Party" in 1985) was the first European party identified with the nascent Green politics movement. It was founded by Tony Whittaker, a former Kenilworth councilor for the Conservative Party, who had been inspired by the manifesto called "A Blueprint for Survival." The principal author of the latter was Edward Goldsmith. Its original version filled the entire issue of the January 1972 edition of Goldsmith's influential magazine *The Ecologist*.

Political ideologies don't conform to hard-and-fast definitions. There are conservatives who champion free market capitalism; others romanticize some prior golden age of benevolent autocracy. Those types of conservatives are unlikely to be comfortable within the milieu of Green politics. On the other hand, there are self-identified conservatives who (a) prioritize conservation of social and natural resources, and (b) disdain big government social programs in favor of more local, decentralized solutions to problems. Consider Ted Trainer, who authored *The Conservator Society*, or Paul Goodman, who called himself a "Neolithic Conservative." Both were critical of capitalism yet not enamored with socialism or with standard-fare leftism in general.

Likewise Edward Goldsmith. He published "A Blueprint for Survival" prior to the watershed 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm. A group of previously disparate environmental organizations coalesced around its ideas under the rubric of "The Movement for Survival." Goldsmith influenced the movement toward embracing a "new paradigm, neither left nor right" orientation. When British leftists labeled him an anti-Marxist technological reactionary, Goldsmith responded: "To be a conservative with a small 'c' does not mean that I am right wing in the normal sense of the term. Right wing governments such as those of Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, George Bush and John Major—and, in effect, Bill Clinton and Tony Blair as well—are committed to defending economic growth and the interests of big corporations, interests that are in many ways in total conflict with those of the citizens who elected them to power. I hated Mr. Major's government and set up a commission that published a 64-page booklet entitled 'The Tory Record: an Assessment.' It was a merciless indictment of its record, showing how it had sided with big industry and against the electors on such issues as unemployment, health, child malnutrition, the privatisation of the nuclear industry, and contaminated land. 87,000 copies of this booklet were distributed by Green Party candidates in different constituencies . . . I have never had any contact with right wing political parties. The only party I have been a member of is the British Green Party, whose formation was largely triggered off by *A Blueprint for Survival*. I stood for the first parliamentary election that the Green Party ever contested in October 1974." (from: "My Answer," January 2003)

Owing to their critique of industrial modernity, Goldsmith and Shiva found themselves with many detractors on the left.

Industrial capitalism is ruinous; but so is industrial socialism.

Simplification needs to be underpinned by a transformation of the modern worldview.

### THEORETICIAN AND ACTIVIST

As the founding editor and publisher of *The Ecologist*, Edward Goldsmith was admired by many within the environmental and deep ecology movements. Wanting to go beyond mere theory, he and his editorial team relocated their offices from London to rural Cornwall, where they bought a farm and attempted to form a small-scale, relatively self-sufficient community of their own. Wikipedia relates: “In 1977, when the Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) threatened to site a nuclear reactor on farmland in Cornwall, Goldsmith was among those who organized a continuous sit-in of the land, with local people blocking the entrance and staffing round-the-clock garrisons to prevent CEGB contractors from starting their drilling work—an early example of an environmental protest camp.”

In 1974 he spent four months with the Gandhi Peace Foundation in India, comparing the Gandhian (Sarvodaya) movement with the Ecology movement in Europe. This led him to forge close links with Indian environmental activists, in particular with the Chipko movement, including Sunderlal Bahuguna and Vandana Shiva. Owing to their critique of industrial modernity, Goldsmith and Shiva found themselves with many detractors on the left.

Historically, leftism has been imbued with the ideology of progressive development. Marx’s “stages of history” schema views industrial capitalism as initially progressive, the stage that “establishes the material basis” for socialism. In a certain sense, Edward Goldsmith was more anti-capitalist than Karl Marx. He said that industrial capitalism is and has always been ruinous. But, he added, so is industrial socialism. The notion of an ecologically and socially non-toxic industrialism is chimerical—whether the means of production are owned publicly or privately.

### ADDRESSING THE WHOLE EXTANT SPECTRUM WHILE FORGING AN ALTERNATIVE WORLDVIEW

Goldsmith worked toward a goal of having the destructiveness of the industrial growth paradigm become recognized all along the political spectrum. A dynamic speaker, he was much in demand

on the lecture circuit. Among the hundreds of presentations he made over the course of many years, some were at the invitation of conservative-leaning organizations in various European countries and the US. The British left took him to task for it. He replied: “We must realize that we can only hope to win the critical battle we are fighting by getting the public on our side—and not just part of the public, but as much of it as possible. It is broad public pressure that can make governments change their policies. As it happens, almost half the population of a country like the UK or the US is made up of people who normally vote for Conservative or Republican governments. Just like liberal and left wing voters they, also, must be converted to our cause if we want our children to have a life worth living on this planet.” (*ibid.*)

Goldsmith disdained the left’s advocacy of economic growth and refused to compromise or attenuate his de-growth perspective. He pointed out that, rather than culminating in the social attainment of generalized abundance and security, progressive development has resulted in ecocide and the withering of local communities. And he didn’t shy away from talking about spiritual impoverishment, a discourse generally anathema to the left. He noted that the populaces of our post-modern societies are experiencing a kind of discontent that goes beyond material anxieties. At the periphery, the social fabric is disintegrating; after the death of “the god that failed” (communism) many have turned to religious fundamentalism. At the center, the majority has become affluent enough in a material sense, but the extent of discontent is evident in surging rates of clinical depression, patterns of mindless consumption, and a widespread retreat into the fogs of media, technology, and psychopharmacology.

For the sake of forging a pathway toward sanity, sustainability, and grassroots democracy Goldsmith gave us an image of a “Great U-Turn.” He understood, of course, that we can’t “go back” to any pristine or innocent earlier period—there are too many people and we’ve done too much damage. But he emphasized that we need to make *some* kind of dramatic turn at this point in history, and our praxis could well be informed by an appreciation of what Gary Snyder termed “the Old Ways.”

### LIVING WELL WHILE LIVING MORE LIGHTLY

Edward Goldsmith posited increased life satisfaction via a decreased material standard of technology, commerce, and consumption. He said we’d be happier in a downscaled eco-communitarian world. He arrived at this conclusion after spending years intensively studying the literature addressing the lifeways of aboriginal peoples. He noted how the scale of their technological and social infrastructure was constrained (the past tense is appropriate because almost all of the remaining aboriginal societies have been heavily influenced by contact with moderns). Within such, the individual’s domain of experience was simpler and more local, yet there was no lack of cultural richness. Conjecturing that the quality of life was at least as good, he asked: If we can live perfectly well while living more

lightly, doesn't it follow that most of our touted "development" amounts to sheer folly?

Goldsmith maintained that simplification needs to be underpinned by a transformation of the modern worldview toward naturalism (in place of humanism), communitarianism (in place of individualism), ecologism (in place of economism), and transcendentalism (in place of materialism). Such a transformation could be the basis for a vision of a green society compatible with the sustainable, satisfying, and thriving lifeways that had characterized our species for 99% of its history:

- \* community-based vs. institution-based
- \* place-based vs. network-based
- \* humanly-scaled bioregional units vs. nation-states
- \* cultural diversity vs. the modern tendency toward monoculture
- \* vernacular localism vs. globalized cosmopolitan mass society
- \* sociality values vs. productivity values
- \* organic (communitarian) education of the young vs. schooling (segregation of the young)
- \* earth-based spirituality vs. sky-god religions
- \* tools as organic components of social-productive life vs. development of a Technosphere as an edifice "above" and dominating the social sphere
- \* a sense of belonging to the land and its community of life vs. ownership of the land and its resources (alienation from the community of life)

## GREEN POLITICS AS A SPRINGBOARD

Edward Goldsmith's radically transformative vision was neither left nor right, but deeply green. He asserted that material sufficiency in an eco-communitarian society could provide the conditions for a diverse variety of meaningful, grounded, and fulfilling lifeways. He held out hope that electing Greens to office, in conjunction with a broad movement for change, could begin to foster such a transition.

Goldsmith, who died in 2009 at the age of 80, recognized that the alternative vision he advocated was "off the spectrum" and thus would encounter much misapprehension and resistance. He believed that Green politics could be the springboard toward gradual affirmation of the new worldview. Whether or not his optimism in that regard was justified has yet to be determined.



**STEVE WELZER,**

a co-editor of this magazine, has been a Green movement activist for almost thirty 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, NJ, and is pursuing a project to establish an ecovillage in that state.

### *Rhode Island, continued from page 2*

Prime Minister, Co-leader of the Green Party, and also serves as the Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate - which really shows the Greens' priorities are once they get in power: leading on Climate action and international solidarity. We walk the talk.

The Greens have a lot of successes around the world at every leadership level: in individual activism, at the village level, city councils, state, national, regional and global.

Where are the Greens heading to now? From my perspective I see Greens connecting, consolidating and campaigning more and more effectively. We are continuously learning from one another how to communicate and campaign on issues that resonate with people in their everyday lives and on a future that people want to build together.

I see the global community coming together to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Currently all countries are falling short of our goals, so we need more ambitious commitments and we need to live up to them. That's why the Greens are ever more important today. By working together as part of a broad social movement

for a just society, hand in hand with all members of society - like you are doing in the Green Party of the United States and in the Green Party of Rhode Island. It is by connecting, consolidating and campaigning together that we will be the change which we seek to see in the world! So, Rhode Island, we need you to celebrate and to continue onwards. In the spirit of the Global Greens Charter "Will support each other personally and politically with friendship, optimism and good humour, and not forget to enjoy ourselves in the process!"



**KELI YEN**

has been serving as the Coordinator of the Global Greens since November 2015. From 2011-2015 Keli was the Convenor of the Asia Pacific Greens Federation (APGF), the APGF Representative to the Global Greens Coordination and Executive Committee, and supported Green Party Taiwan's International Secretariat and as a Director of the Taiwan Friends of the Global Greens. Keli loves the Global Greens because it's all about caring for one another—for the earth and all its inhabitants—by facilitating global progress through the respect for diversity, participatory democracy, sustainability, ecological wisdom, nonviolence and social justice.

# Campaign Finance — *Another Layer*

WILLIAM P. KREML

Can we recross the Great Divide between the democratic and oligarchic state?

I suggest we must move beyond arguing that a corporation is a person, and that money is not speech. There is another layer.

Put simply, a small political contribution, say \$100, and a large contribution, say \$100,000, are not only different quantitatively; they are different qualitatively.

By now, anyone with a scintilla of public spirit knows the names of Adelson, the Koch Brothers, Mercer, and the mammoth corporations from Wall Street, the banks, the oil companies, big Pharma, big agriculture, and the like. If you are of the older generation, as I am, you remember when you and those who thought like you clucked over the millions that were being spent in political campaigns. How quickly the change in a single letter signified our movement to campaigns of millions. Now it's billions.

Distinguished professors from Princeton and Northwestern, as well as leading public figures like former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and former President Jimmy Carter have suggested we have crossed the political Rubicon. What may have been the world's greatest constitutional democracy has become what Aristotle called an oligarchy, or rule by the few. Can we reclaim what we once were? Can we recross the Great Divide between a democratic and an oligarchic state? It will be extraordinarily difficult to do so, but I am hardly the only commentator who believes that the first step back to constitutional democracy requires that we deal with the excess of money in our politics. I suggest that there is a way of thinking about this issue that has not yet been advanced. But first, some background.

Years ago, a husband and wife were simultaneously graduated from the political science Ph.D. program at UCLA. The husband's name was Vincent Ostrom who was so well thought of that many schools offered him employment. He settled on Indiana University, the school that I later went to for my Ph. D. Vincent's wife, Elinor, was not recruited, but she followed him to Bloomington, becoming a housewife and mother of two, seemingly never to enjoy a career.

One day the political science faculty held its semi-annual scheduling meeting. No one seemed eager to teach a 7:30 AM American Government section. Vincent offered that Elinor would be willing to teach it and, after much grumbling, the boys relented and the other Dr. Ostrom was penciled in for the class. Thirty-five years later, Prof. Elinor Ostrom became the first, and still the only, woman to win the Nobel Prize in Economics. Her studies of how various cultures preserved their common resources were unique in economic study. Micro-economic, price theory types such as those at Milton Friedman's University of Chicago, were horrified. Her being my Philosophy of Science professor at Indiana University was as much an indispensable segment of my education then as it is now a part of this writing.

Some years before the above, I had received my JD from Northwestern University's School of Law. Though I was not overwhelmed with the education, I confess that over the years a few legally trained public figures earned my respect, perhaps none more than the former Supreme Court Associate Justice John Paul Stevens, a fellow Northwestern Law School graduate. I trailed him by fifteen years. Those who deplore the 2010 decision in the *Citizens United v. F.E.C.* case, which flung the door open to the wholesale buying of our politicians, may recall that Justice Stevens penned an eighty-page, legally trenchant, dissenting opinion.

With due respect to Justice Stevens as well as the many citizens groups that have subsequently critiqued the case (*Move On*, *Public Citizen*, etc.), I suggest that we must move beyond arguing that a corporation is not a person, and that money is not speech. There is another layer. It embraces what I believe to be the deepest understandings

of the original seven articles of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and the highest understandings of the nature of knowledge itself, or what I learned from Elinor Ostrom.

### THE CONSTITUTIONAL BALANCES

What is called the Pyramid of Knowledge is not a part of either America's political or legal canon. But certain kinds of knowledge are more important than others. The Pyramid of Knowledge that Prof. Elinor Ostrom taught us contains the highest strata of knowing. It deals with the forms, or shapes, of knowledge. All knowledge has a form to it, much like the cave wall characters that Plato wrote of in *The Republic* and *The Phaedo*. Regarding the campaign finance issue, what is most important is that the original seven constitutional articles and the Bill of Rights possess very different forms.

I submit that the original seven constitutional articles are what philosophers call analytic in their form. America's political structures, with their separation of powers, federalism, bicameralism, staggered elections, and separation of personnel between the executive and legislative branches (Article One, Section Six), are about as centrifugal, or decentralized, as they could be. The Philadelphia Founders imposed an arms' length, or contractual, form of interaction upon our constitutional institutions, not wishing for the citizenry easily to aggregate. James Madison candidly argued as much in his # 10 *Federalist*. They deplored political parties—the latter being aggregators above all.

The Bill of Rights is altogether different. Although the *locus*, or place, of the Bill is individual, that is rights are possessed by singular citizens, the *telos*, or purpose, of the Bill is aggregative in its form. It is designed to facilitate individuals' joining together to foster what they consider to be the common weal. The guarantees of free speech and free press, the right to petition, and the right to associate all protect collective political activity. Forbidding soldiers involuntarily to lodge in your home protects political intercourse from prying eyes. Forbidding unreasonable search and seizure protects correspondence that might include political opposition. Forbidding testifying against oneself protects the identity of political allies as well as the testifier, while the right to a speedy trial protects association with those whom one might give up rotting in a cell. Protections against cruel and unusual punishment, similarly, shielded the disclosure of political allies. Again, all of these rights are aggregative in their form.

But beyond the above depictions of the First, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Eighth Amendment, the Seventh Amendment is also aggregative, but in a very different way. Here, a jury's determination that a debtor suffered what Alexander Hamilton described as a "hard bargain" could not be overturned by what were expected to be Federalist, creditor-friendly, appellate judges. This amendment specifically responded to the structurally contractual Section 10 of Article One which forbade state legislatures, like those in debtor-friendly Rhode Island, from "impairing the

Obligation of Contracts" with moratoriums, the alteration of terms, and the like. A jury's constitutionally protected inclusion of something new in a contract is synthetic in its form.

Why is the above important for campaign finance? Put simply, a small political contribution, say \$100, and a large contribution, say \$100,000, are not only different quantitatively; they are different qualitatively. They are, as we might suspect, of very different forms. While the \$100 contributor begs for additional, aggregating contributions, summing to something significant, the \$100,000 contributor wants no assimilation with other contributors. She wants a contractually formed interaction with the recipient contribution's recipient, mirroring the original seven articles' contractual interactions. The form of the \$100 contribution, again, is aggregative. The form of the large contribution, at the apex of the Pyramid of Knowledge, is analytic, a solitary but powerful quest for political influence with a campaigning office-seeker. What the Harvard Law School educated Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. and the majority associate justices in *Citizens United* mistakenly argued was that large contributions were protected as free speech. They did not consider that the First Amendment's free speech protections are synthetic in their form. Accordingly, to them, large contributions are contractual and therefore they are not protected speech.

Let me honestly concede that the thinking which underpinned the above analysis is part of something larger. I am a theorist. I taught political theory classes and I am generally an admirer of the classical figures who contributed to political philosophy through the years. But I would like to think that I am more than a student of political theory. I began, many decades ago, to create a political philosophy of my own. The theory is best labelled as The Natural Left. It is based on cognitive preferences within the general population, or the differences in how people think. In short, I explored whether the classical notions of the analytic and synthetic forms, as they existed in philosophy and various subfields, were something more than abstractions. Maybe they were also reflections on how different human beings reasoned.

For example, what may have been the two greatest philosophers since the Greeks, the German Idealists Immanuel Kant and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. They held differing views over whether the equation  $5 + 7 = 12$  was an analytic or a synthetic statement. Kant labelled it synthetic. Hegel thought it was analytic. What kind of mind made Kant think that  $5 + 7 = 12$  is a synthetic cognition? My answer is that Kant possessed the kind of logical, deductive, even linear mind in which any differentiation was found to be sufficient to be categorized as synthetic. The fact that two integers, 5 and 7, were on one side of the equation and that only one integer, 12, was on the other, was, for Kant, a significant differentiation. Kant believed all mathematics to be synthetic.

One generation later (Kant died in 1804, Hegel in 1831), G. W. F. Hegel argued that the two-on-one-side/one-on-one-side differentiation was not a sufficient differentiation to warrant status as a synthetic cognition. Recall that Hegel created a

speculative, dialectical model of history, one that reached boldly into the future with great leaps from one intellectual paradigm to the next. For such leaps, Hegel argued, you needed a robust differentiation. Hegel chided Kant's depiction of the  $5 + 7 = 12$  equation as synthetic, noting that all entities in the equation were of the same quality; they were all numbers. Indeed they were, I once suggesting that a truly synthetic cognition needed to be something like  $5 + \text{blue}$ , that is a whole integer with a primary color. From such churlishness, and some serious exploration into the analytic and synthetic forms as they existed in different human minds, I developed my theory of the Natural Left.

## THE SOLUTION

And so, back to campaign finance. Please recall that the United States Congress passed maximum contribution limits in its campaign finance legislation of 1971 and 1974. No, the Congress did not envelope their limits in a wrap of differentiated cognitive forms. Neither Kant nor Hegel, nor the  $5 + 7 = 12$  equation, were discussed on the Hill. But it would not be a stretch, I submit, to think that the Congress, at least intuitively, understood that the small campaign contribution and the large campaign contribution were horses of different colors. What is not arguable is that the Congress drew a line beyond which the individual contributor could not pass. Neither is it arguable that the Congress did not reverse the long standing legislative prohibition of corporate contributions. Enter Lewis Powell.

Those of the older generation will remember that the 1968 Republican presidential candidate, Richard M. Nixon, made the 1960's hippies, the permissiveness of society in general, the Earl Warren liberal Supreme Court in particular, the *bete noires* of a troubled society. Nixon believed it was time for the conservative "silent majority" to regain control of the country. No writing was probably more persuasive in setting the conservative's course of national redemption than a formulaic piece written by a Richmond, Virginia corporate lawyer named Lewis F. Powell, Jr.

Powell, to be fair, had had a reputation as a compromiser in his early years. But he was no compromiser when he responded to the call of the American Chamber of Commerce to draft a strategy to take the country back to conservatism. Long story short, Richard Nixon read the report, loved it, and, surprise, Lewis Powell wound up on the United States Supreme Court. Space does not permit a summary here but let me note that, in great part because of the newly minted Associate Justice Powell and two of the three other justices that Nixon appointed, Congress's attempts to modulate the kind of campaign finance excesses required by exploding television budgets began to be whittled away by the Chief Justice Warren Burger Supreme Court.

The case we should never forget is the opening shot challenge to Congress's regulation of moneyed influence in political campaigns—*Buckley v. Valeo* (1976). In that case, the compromiser, Justice Powell, made a distinction that he believed would fit the Solomonesque mold. Powell separated the free

speech issue as it related to campaign contributions from the free speech issue as it related to campaign expenditures. One Associate Justice, Byron White, had the temerity to label the distinction specious. He argued that the court's principal goal should be "to equalize access to the political arena" by not protecting candidate contributions or individual contributions not made in concert with the campaign, as Powell's majority ruling had done.

From 1976, right up to directly before *Citizens United*, it was clear what direction a conservative Supreme Court was taking in the campaign finance arena. In the last moments of sanity, you could see widening cracks in the wall. In *FEC versus Wisconsin Right to Life* (2007), for example, three of the most conservative justices, Scalia, Thomas, and Kennedy, wrote a separate opinion, stating that Section 203 of McCain-Feingold legislation, which prohibited issue advertising in periods before an election, should be overruled. Chief Justice Roberts and Associate Justice Alito upheld Section 203, although they still served as part of the quintet that made up the majority in *WRTL*, striking down before-an-election McCain-Feingold regulation. You didn't need Nostradamus to know what was coming next.

The short of it is that Justice Powell's use of the contribution/expenditure paradigm, and even Justice White's laudable rejection of that dichotomy, both failed to touch the pinnacle of the Pyramid of Knowledge. Neither described the form of either the contribution or the expenditure. As above, *Buckley's* nose under the tent missed the mark entirely, the cognitive form at the pinnacle of the Pyramid never appearing. Neither discussed the size differentiations of either contributions or expenditures. Did Powell take us off the scent of the central issue intentionally?

We will never know, but we can retrace Hansel and Gretel's bread crumbs all the way back to 1976 and confront the current excesses in campaign spending from a wholly different perspective. The other layer, as I have laid it forth in this article, melds the highest forms of knowledge with the most basic understanding of the Constitution. Immodestly, I believe it to be time for bringing an intellectual creation of this sort to the wholly undemocratic electoral processes that increasingly plague our nation. Like Article One, Section Ten, and Amendment #7's response to it, if conservatives balk at embracing the highest level of constitutional analysis, we progressives (and especially Greens) have every right to include it.



**WILLIAM P. KREML**

received a BA from Northwestern in 1962 and a JD from Northwestern Law School in 1965. He received a Ph.D. in political science from Indiana University in 1972. He spent the bulk of his career in the Political Science Department at the University of South Carolina. Kreml has authored nine books on the American government, constitutional law, and political theory. The president of the American Law School Association, Victor G. Rosenblum, described Kreml's application of cognitive forms to the Constitution as "the most extraordinary theoretical perspective ever lent to the American Constitution."

# My Evolution to Political Revolution

JUSTIN BETH

How does one find out about the Green Party, in a media landscape that works at every angle to keep it hidden from view? At the same time, how does one form a favorable view of the Green Party, when the mainstream media you do find on the Green Party is negative and slanderous?

I'd like to share my experience and how I got to the point where I've come to understand that the Green Party is the solution. It starts with recognizing that our government is broken...the reason being that we the people have been apathetic towards who controls our government for too long. That's why I'm sharing my story now...to make up for my previous apathy. Let me explain.

## BACK IN THE ELECTION OF 2000

In the year 2000, I was 26 and not really that concerned about politics. I remember seeing Jello Biafara (of the Dead Kennedy's) at the University of Maine in Orono, encouraging us to get out and vote...that it was an imperative. While I really admired Jello, his plea didn't work. Thinking back on it, he even probably mentioned that we should get out and support Ralph Nader, but it just didn't stick with me. Instead, I sat at home and Bush walked away with the election.

Following this election, I started to pay attention to what was going on...especially with the re-ignition of the war in Iraq. I partly blamed myself at that time, because I hadn't voted. Looking back on it now, I know that voting for Gore wouldn't have changed a thing...but it did get me to pay attention. That is the point to be made here and is one of the steps in my evolution.

At this point, I was starting to connect with the vague idea that I identified with the Democratic Party. I hadn't really heard about the Green Party and it seemed to me that the Democratic Party was the opposition to the Republican Party and the agenda of George Bush. How wrong I was. If I'd really paid a little more attention, I would have seen that progressives in the party were not being accepted. The first ones that caught my eye were candidates like Dennis Kucinich and John Edwards. In those days, I didn't understand that the Democratic Party was not really interested in these progressive candidates (that they were only using them to draw young idealistic people such as myself into supporting their party). I was hoping that these progressive candidates would get through the primaries, but I was an outsider to the process and could only just go along with what the party offered me for the nominee. Even though I was paying closer attention, I wasn't at the point where I could connect all the dots.

## THEN CAME HOPE AND CHANGE

My first involvement of being involved in the political process, came in 2008. I had been hoping for John Edwards to be the nominee, but was satisfied with the nomination of Barack Obama. I was still naïve, and it worked to get me involved in volunteering my time. I found myself knocking on my first doors in a Get-Out-The-Vote effort in New Hampshire. This was simply another step in my evolution. I was part of electing the first African American president and believed in the hope he was selling. Unfortunately, I wasn't at all aware of Cynthia McKinney at the time and had no idea that my efforts

I began to understand what the Democratic Party was truly about. A party torn between those believing that the Democratic Party could live up to its name (e.g. people like me) and those who know better, —the party establishment insiders getting kickbacks from Wall Street.

Therefore, when people insist that we are confined to a two-party system of governance, I point out that we have three distinct, major political parties now...the Green Party, the Libertarian Party, and the Plutocrat Party.

would have been better spent working on her campaign. I just wasn't there yet.

Quickly after the 2008 election, it became apparent that Obama was not the change I was hoping for. His refusal to bail out Americans with underwater mortgages, but instead to prop up "too big to fail" banks, was outrageous! His refusal to start off negotiations on health care reform with Single Payer Universal Health Care...such a letdown. I was still willing to give Obama a chance, believing optimistically that he was doing the best he could, with those in government with him. While I was becoming more skeptical of the Democratic Party, it wasn't enough to get me to not vote for him again in 2012. Sadly, at this point I had no idea about who Jill Stein was and was completely unaware of the Green Party being an option. I was still in the dark...and that was right where the Democratic Party wanted me.

### AND THEN CAME BERNIE

My true awakening began in 2015, with the emergence of Bernie Sanders in the run for the Democratic Party presidential nomination. Wow...what a progressive champion he was! Here was the change I had been dreaming of and the Democratic Party would be shooting itself in the foot if they didn't give the nomination to Bernie. It was clear to me from the start that his popularity was an extension of the Occupy Movement...a movement that I support whole heartedly. Bernie was a candidate for the 99% and it seemed obvious to me that either Donald Trump or Bernie Sanders was going to win this election...because Americans had simply become too fed up with the typical establishment candidates. In my opinion, whichever party had the outsider candidate in November, was going to win the election.

I remember waiting in line to see Bernie, for the first time, at the Cross-Insurance Center in Portland. As I waited in line with my friend Erin, she put the thought in my head that I would be a good delegate for Bernie Sanders. That thought stuck and after seeing Bernie speak, that thought became a mission. Here, my political involvement exploded. I was a tireless volunteer phone banking and door canvassing, first in New Hampshire and then in Maine. I was determined to be a part of Bernie's success, because I believed it was time for the Democratic Party to truly represent everyday Americans. I truly believed we could make this happen and we started off with huge successes. At the Maine Democratic Party Convention, my hard work and dedication paid off, as I earned a spot as a delegate to the National DNC Convention in Philadelphia.

### BUT AT THE DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION

Here again was another step on my path. During those four days, I began to understand what the Democratic Party was truly about. A party torn between those believing that the Democratic Party could live up to its name (e.g. people like me) and those who know better, (e.g. the party establishment insiders getting kickbacks from Wall Street). Considering the Wikileaks

revelations, the corruption in the DNC, the rigging of the election against Bernie, and my experiences at the convention, I have all the evidence I need to know that the Democratic Party is not the party for the people as they would have us believe. It is the party of (and for) those in Wall Street and the Military Industrial Complex. Through my experiences, I have concluded that the Republican and Democratic Parties are really nothing more than two wings of the Plutocratic Party. Therefore, when people insist that we are confined to a two-party system of governance, I point out that we have three distinct, major political parties now: the Green Party, the Libertarian Party, and the Plutocrat Party.

I first saw Jill Stein, in person, at the convention in Philadelphia. I was honestly surprised to see her getting interviewed inside the halls of the convention and was immediately inspired by her words. With Bernie giving up on the American people to endorse Hillary and getting to hear Jill Stein for the first time, I knew where I would be going next. As Hillary was coronated as the Democratic Party nominee, I walked out in solidarity with many other Sanders delegates. And on the 4th and final day of the convention, I proudly walked out of that convention holding a "Jill Stein for President" sign, high above my head.

As progressives in the Democratic Party, we Sanders delegates had been silenced by the DNC and to me there was no point in staying with a sinking ship. I would often liken the coronation of Hillary to Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*...with Debbie Wasserman-Schultz in the role of Captain Ahab. Ultimately, the Democratic Party's insistence on nominating Hillary Clinton was their White Whale and they were willing to sacrifice the life of its crew and the fate of the Pequod to accomplish that. I guess you could "Call me Ishmael", if you'd like.

### I LANDED AT THE RIGHT PLACE, THE GREEN PLACE

Well, there you have it. My evolution to political revolution. Unfortunately, I took the long way of getting my head on right. However, I think I had to experience it all to get to where I am today: with the Green Party. Knowing my own winding path, it is encouraging to see such an insurgency of young progressives with passion and integrity, coming straight into the Green Party today. They give me hope and inspire me to continue giving it my all...to fight for a party that is committed to People, Planet, and Peace over Profit. A party where I belonged, all along. And now that I'm awake, it's time I got to work. Onward for the revolution, Green Teammates!



**JUSTIN BETH**

is a working Radiation Health Physicist in his day job (to pay the bills), but makes his living from playing music, sea kayaking, getting in a round of frisbee golf, and dabbling in photography (you can follow him on Instagram @ Justinfuzzy). Most recently, he is making his living from

being fully engaged in transforming politics to represent "We the People". Justin lives in a cozy apartment on Munjoy Hill in Portland with his venerable tuxedo cat, Chubby and always hopes for the best.

# A Rude Awakening

CARL COMPTON

My cousin is one of my closest friends. He introduced me to politics. We would talk endlessly about an array of topics; everything from the war on drugs, to Israel and Palestine. We agreed on many polarizing issues. In fact, we would joke about how many political viewpoints we had in common, at least until the 2016 presidential election came about. No, neither my cousin nor myself suddenly started marching in the streets with red hats screaming “make America great again,” but we did learn that we had less in common politically than we initially thought.

It wasn't until late into the election season that I started to notice myself internally rebutting some of the comments he would blurt aloud while watching the debates by Democratic Party candidates. One of these moments in particular happened on a night where there was news about third party candidates expressing dismay over their exclusion from the national debate stage. That was a headline I thought for sure we would be in agreement on: qualified candidates of a political party should have an equal voice so to ensure every citizen can make an informed decision about who they will cast a vote for in November.

To my surprise, this was a statement he did not agree with. In his mind, a member of a third party like the Green Party shouldn't have the right to share their beliefs alongside other candidates because it would take a disproportionate number of votes away from the Democratic nominee. I conceded that this may occur in negligible amounts, but he would not concede that this was equivalent to gaming the election in favor of a particular party. The two hour debate that ensued in our living room was more baffling and bellicose than the one on tv.

We were able to cordially move past our disagreement. Some few weeks went by and over this time I had sincerely tried to understand his perspective. I simply could not get past the laziness of the idea. I put it behind me, convincing myself that it was okay if we simply agree to disagree. Just as I was able to do this, another point of contention was brought up when I mentioned that I might vote for Jill Stein once each party was down to a single nominee. As one could imagine, my cousin was outraged by this.

He was outraged that third party candidates were stealing votes away from Hilary Clinton. I issued a correction in response, claiming that the Green Party nominee did not steal my vote, but in fact, earned it. She earned it by having a clear commitment to standing up for policy measures she believed in and not for what was politically convenient. More of my political beliefs aligned with the physician from Massachusetts rather than the career politician; the most frustrating part of our ongoing disagreement was that the same was true for my cousin. Unfortunately, he would treat reports as infallible that claimed Jill Stein believed wifi causes cancer. He actually believed this was proof that she was unstable and a frivolous choice for president of the United States. It became clear to me in this moment that he was not concerned with implementing liberal policies in America. It showed me that his only concern was party, not policy.

## THE PATH FORWARD

Feeling forced to vote for a candidate simply to maintain the status quo and silencing people from sharing their ideas is the antithesis of liberalism. It shifts society towards the fringe of the Overton window. It's a move towards less freedom and more injustice.

I issued a correction in response, claiming that the Green Party nominee [Jill Stein] did not steal my vote, but in fact, earned it.

I encourage every member of third parties and independents to continue to engage in those tough conversations.

When the Republican candidate won the presidential election, my cousin was outraged. He blamed the deplorable, the sexists, the uneducated, and the Greens for the defeat. Conspicuously absent from the list of excuses were the Democrats themselves: 9% of registered Democrats voted for Trump in the 2016 election. A recent Gallop poll found that 31% of the American electorate is Democrat. Which means more than 9 million democrats cast their vote for the Republican nominee. How could his outrage be so egregiously misplaced? How is this bit of information not game changing to his beliefs about the negative impact third party voters have on elections? Why wasn't this outrage focused within his own party? These are questions that Democrats need to deal with honestly.

My concern now is that instead of honesty, we'll get more obfuscation and ad hominem attacks from the Democrats. Instead of using this monumental loss as a way to reflect on how to be more responsive to the republic, it seems as though the Democrats are willing to point fingers and deflect blame. This I believe presents an amazing opportunity for the Green Party to capitalize on. As Shannon L. Adler wrote, "After every storm, there is a rainbow." With droves of young people getting involved in politics, now is an opportunity for Greens to mobilize

to confront this broken way of thinking. To be the leaders in the fight against Tweedledee/tweedledum-dum-ism and corruption. This is a message that truly resonates with people. This is the message that will sway the views of good, honest people like my cousin, who truly want to see the most number of people thrive in this country and across the world.

I encourage every member of third parties and independents to continue to engage in those tough conversations. Continue the fight towards fairness and expose the pseudo-liberal attitudes that work to elevate those whose intent is to limit the power of the people, as opposed to expanding it.



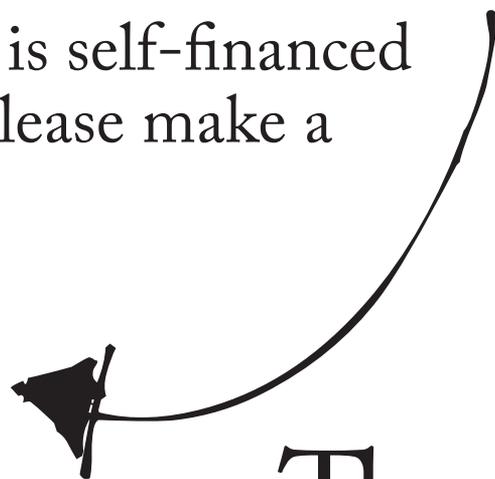
**CARL PAINCHAUD-COMPTON**

was born and raised in Brunswick, Maine. He attended college at the University of Maine at Orono, graduating in 2012. Carl currently works in the health and rehabilitation field in Topsham, Maine. He finds passion in helping individuals improve their lives by helping heal their bodies from various injuries. He and his wife, Katonya Compton, were married in the Summer of 2016 and they bought their first home in Topsham in the Summer of 2017. In his free time, Carl enjoys spending time outdoors with his friends and family. He also loves playing sports and supporting his favorite Boston teams.

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# Thank YOU!

# KEEPING IT REAL:

## The Green Path to Alternative Energy

In facing our energy crisis, we seem to be at the crossroads Anishinaabe prophets described as the Time of the Seventh Fire. They warned that during this time humans would have to choose between two paths: the Burnt Path of destruction or the Green Path of renewal and healing.<sup>1</sup> While many Americans now agree we need to get off fossil fuels, even some environmentalists are advocating the kind of transition that keeps us on the same Burnt Path of sacrificing the future for the present. It's become clear that *how* we move to more Earth-gentle energies will determine whether we actually achieve a Green and sustainable future – or merely continue ruinous business-as-usual with different resources.

### WAGING WAR ON FOSSIL FUELS

Paul Kingsnorth calls environmentalists who put unbounded faith in techno-fixes “neo-environmentalists.”<sup>2</sup> The neo-environmentalist answer to our energy crisis is an immediate, all-out development of mega-scale wind and solar farms. This narrow focus on replacing fossil fuels with alternative energies takes on the narrative of a “war” in which the “enemy” is fossil fuels and the objective is to quickly get off them no matter what the collateral costs.

Framing the issue in terms of the urgent need to address global warming while also meeting our growing energy demands, neo-environmentalists label those who seek to protect rural/wilderness ways of life and unspoiled habitats as “selfish” NIMBYs. Concern for other animals, or emotional, aesthetic, and spiritual values are dismissed as frivolous. We can't let “romantic” attachments to rural vistas or wilderness values trump energy demand, they reason. While we need to end fossil fuel use, they claim that we still need to meet the voracious energy appetites of our society. If meeting that need involves using nuclear power or creating “national sacrifice areas” for alternative energy projects, it can't be helped. If migrating birds must bear the cost, so be it. If what few relatively intact eco-systems we have left need to be fragmented and remote rural areas colonized by energy companies, they say we just have to accept it.

This scorched-Earth policy is extremely short-sighted, however. What we need is to achieve independence from fossil fuels *and* protect our environment by appropriate siting and scale of energy projects and by reducing energy demand.

### ANOTHER FORM OF DENIAL

Neo-environmentalism is deaf to talk of appropriate siting and scale of energy projects and to any mention of the need to dramatically reduce energy consumption. So long as mega-industrial-scale projects involve solar panels or wind turbines, neo-environmentalists insist they are “green” and should be enthusiastically promoted by all Greens.

What their agenda promotes is not Green, however. It's a transition to renewables according to the rules of the current centralized, corporate-controlled system that's fixated on growth and profits. It plays into corporate agendas that enable our wasteful energy appetites, when what's needed is to rein them in.

LINDA CREE

How we move to more Earth-gentle energies will determine whether we actually achieve a Green and sustainable future – or merely continue ruinous business-as-usual with different resources.

There is no energy resource that will allow us to continue using energy at our current rates.

Our energy crisis isn't only about running out of fossil fuels or the dangers of climate change. It's about human overshoot and the need to heal our land and bring our societies back into balance with ecological realities.

While neo-environmentalists accept the reality of climate change, they've not yet come to terms with the fallacy of constant growth on a finite planet. They don't admit that many of our energy "needs" are "wants." Nor do they recognize the moral implications of humankind seeking to appropriate *all* of the Earth's biosphere to meet our own anthropocentric ends.

### A QUESTION OF SCALE

The reality is, the scale at which modern industrial civilizations operate is a big part of the problem. As Richard Heinberg of the Post Carbon Institute says, "[T]he world uses an enormous amount of energy currently; only if that quantity can be reduced significantly, especially in industrial nations, could we imagine a credible pathway toward a post-carbon future."<sup>3</sup>

In his ground-breaking book, *The Long Emergency*, James Kunstler questions the viability of large-scale solar and wind projects after the demise of fossil fuels. Wind, solar and water power can be very useful, he believes, but only at smaller scales. "The wish to keep running the same giant systems at gigantic scale using renewables is the heart of our illusions about solar, wind, and water power."<sup>4</sup>

For the long run, Kunstler concludes, there is no energy resource that will allow us to continue using energy at our current rates. Instead, he tells us, whether we like it or not, we'll have to move to much simpler, localized lifestyles and technologies.

### BIO-REGIONALISM AND RESTRAINT

Greens realize that the solution to our energy crisis involves much more than substituting alternative technologies such as wind and solar for fossil fuels. The GP-US Platform advocates *decentralized, bio-regional electricity generation and distribution* to restore community control and to *"prevent the massive ecological and social destruction that accompanies production of electricity in mega-scale projects."*<sup>5</sup> It also calls for *reducing our energy consumption*, and cites the moral responsibility we have to all of our relations, and the need to *"halt the destruction of habitats which are being sacrificed to unqualified economic expansion."*<sup>6</sup>

David Haenke (one of the original conveners of the US Greens-Green Party in 1984) says: "Ecological economics means bioregional self-reliance, deriving as much as possible of our livelihood from within, and close to, our community, only moving farther afield when we must. To be sustainable, we must better see our reliance on and interdependence with the nonhuman members of our community. This inclusion of the nonhuman in the definition of community is vital."<sup>7</sup>

We forget the importance of our non-human relatives at our own peril. Despite sci-fi fantasies of a future in which humans are nearly the only species, we've evolved in tandem with the myriad other beings with whom we share this planet. Our very lives depend on that intricate web of relationships we treat so cavalierly.

Bioregionalism brings us back to Earth. It breaks us out of the cancerous "growth-mentality" that's heretofore dominated our

nation's economic and social thinking. It roots us in the realities of place and carrying capacity, and encourages the move to a more localized, land-based society. Along with a reduction of energy consumption, it can help us create a more equitable world for all instead of continuing our current path of parasitizing and impoverishing vulnerable nations and the homes of our non-human kin in our quest for more and more resources.

In light of the above, the last thing we need as we move toward a land-based society is more degradation of habitats, more species extinctions, and a further erosion of bioregional carrying capacities. There's no place for destructive energy colonization or "national sacrifice areas." There is no *terra nullius* – or *aqua nullius* for that matter – for us to exploit, and there never was. Those remaining rural and wilderness areas we still have need protection – and expansion! – if we're to have any chance for a good quality of life in the years ahead.

### NEED FOR A SOCIAL SAFETY NET

The transition to more bio-regional self-sufficiency can open incredible opportunities for each bio-region to create its own unique policies, with the answers as varied as the bio-regions themselves. It can be a time of unprecedented grassroots citizen involvement, a chance to re-think and re-imagine the kind of world we wish to live in.

Going from a global economy based on heavy industrialization and over-consumption to a bioregional one of simplicity and thrift, however, amounts to nothing less than an economic earthquake.

To accomplish the needed downscaling and energy transition without causing grave harm to large segments of our population, we'll need a carefully crafted guaranteed basic income.

Work may become more home-centered for many as industrial jobs are lost and skills in sustainable living are rediscovered. To accomplish the needed downscaling and energy transition without causing grave harm to large segments of our population, we'll likely need a carefully crafted guaranteed basic income (GBI) built into any Green energy plan.<sup>8</sup>

Not only will a GBI soften the adverse impacts of the transition on workers, but a guaranteed income can promote the flexibility we'll need as we reconfigure and re-localize our lives. The GBI could be financed by redirecting most of the 50% of our taxes currently siphoned off for the bloated military budget.

As respected anthropologist John Bodley says, "[T]he obvious solution is for the presently most powerful and most

*Keeping it Real, continued on page 28*

# EcoVillage at Ithaca

## *Benefits and Challenges of Cohousing*

**M**oving day: July 9, 2009. Almost nine years ago we left suburban Montclair NJ for the far more rural Finger Lakes region of New York State, as we moved to the cohousing community of EcoVillage at Ithaca (EVI). The goal of cohousing is to re-establish “community” in people’s lives. But our first need had to do with “stuff” and where to put it. We left a 3,200 square-foot home with an attic and basement to begin anew our lives in a 1,642 square-foot duplex, no attic, and a tiny half basement. The moving company we hired was able to squeeze all the household goods we had not given away, sold, or otherwise disposed of, into a large van—with our avocado tree being the last to (barely) fit in.

Our new neighborhood looks different from the Montclair one we had lived in for 34 years. Instead of multi-story single-family homes with yards of grass and long driveways there are much smaller homes joined as duplexes. Each house does have its own front and back yards, but they are small, and in place of manicured, and possibly pesticide-doused, green grass we see flowers, trees and even vegetables. Most households own cars, but the private garages and driveways are replaced by communal parking lots and carports for some. The cars are mostly out of sight and traffic is on the periphery of the village, making walking (and for kids, playing) safer.

### EXCHANGING LIFESTYLES

In Montclair we looked out on busy streets, large homes similar to ours, and heard the sounds of suburbia, changing with the seasons: lawn mowers in spring and summer, leaf blowers in the fall, snow blowers in winter, and always traffic noises. We exchanged these sensory experiences for views of rolling hills, trees, meadows and a large pond. All year bird songs replace machine and traffic noise, while in April the mating calls of peepers and frogs signal the end of winter.

In our Montclair home we had our own washer and dryer so could do laundry whenever it was convenient. At EVI we go to the neighborhood laundry room, hope there are empty machines, and make a return trip if they are all in use.

In Montclair we enjoyed a large refrigerator in the kitchen with a smaller one in the basement, both with good-sized freezers. And we had a stove with the usual oven. At EVI we had to get used to a small refrigerator and freezer and instead of an oven just a four-burner electric counter-top range. Now we cook using a microwave/convection oven or our toaster oven, being careful not to turn them on at the same time and trip a circuit breaker.

These changes all took some getting used to, but we are now comfortable with the differences and have adjusted our food buying and cooking habits to match our appliances. The appliance situation at EVI is a result of decisions to be energy efficient and keep a low carbon footprint rather than residents buying the latest, largest appliances they can afford.

### REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

EVI’s smaller homes mean residents are going to be careful not to accumulate consumer goods that they can do without. Since there is no ‘keeping up with the Joneses’ ethos,

BARBARA H. CHASIN  
and RICHARD W. FRANKE

The goal of cohousing is to re-establish “community” in people’s lives.

EVI’s smaller homes mean residents are going to be careful not to accumulate consumer goods that they can do without.

The recent creation of an “economic balancing fund” within the monthly billing system is an attempt by EVI residents to compensate for local economic inequality.

Issues of aging in community have recently become more salient.

at EVI the value system also acts as a brake on consumption. Going shopping is less of a recreational choice than in more mainstream communities. And there is certainly a good deal more sharing. Residents can and do place unwanted goods in a Reuse Room located in one of the Common Houses. Clothes, toys, kitchenware, books, etc. are there for the taking. In addition, EVI-ers use the email system to let their neighbors know when they have something to give away. Often a resident who needs something will send an email asking if someone has it and doesn't need it rather than making a new purchase. A fair amount of borrowing of tools, books and electronic device chargers goes on.

In at least one way, living in Montclair was actually more sustainable than our present lifestyle. In our Montclair

The community dinners provide a place to sit and connect with people you already know or sit with those whom you don't know in order to expand acquaintances.

neighborhood we could walk to a pizza place, a bagel store, cleaners and a Whole Foods. EVI is more than two miles from stores, restaurants, theaters, etc. This means a lot of driving: one estimate has it that our 100 households generate up to 500 trips daily back and forth on Rachel Carson Way, our main road. On the other hand, we can walk the

half-mile to West Haven Farm, a 10-acre organic vegetables and fruit farm run by an EVI resident. The CSA from this farm offers weekly an abundance of fresh produce during the 22-week growing season and has members from town as well as from EVI. Even closer, about a quarter-mile from our house, is an organic berry farm, also managed by a resident, which from June until October offers a variety of luscious berries through a CSA or a pay-as-you-go system.

### SUBURBS VERSUS INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES

Suburbs resulted from land-use decisions driven by developers, supported by government policies, in contrast to intentional communities such as EVI. Intentional communities result from the visions of their founders and those recruited to join in an experiment. They harken back to the utopian community movement that has existed in the United States since the nineteenth century. The development of the environmental movement has been a major factor in the conscious creation of more sustainable lifestyles. With three cohousing neighborhoods, 100 households, and almost 250 residents, EVI is one of the largest of these communities in the country. Founded in 1991, it is also one of the oldest.

As the community has grown, more people can live the sustainable and cooperative lifestyle that characterizes EVI, but there is a trade-off to growth here. With more people it is more

difficult to know all the residents, and some of the closeness that existed at the beginning has dissipated as a result. On the other hand, there's a greater number of interesting people to get to know and more who can contribute to community enrichment.

### SOCIAL CAPITAL AT EVI

What, exactly, is "community"? For us, as for many residents, an attraction of EVI is the opportunity to live in a community where there is a deliberate attempt to create *social capital*. Social capital refers to the resources that come from relationships with others. There can be economic benefits (inside information about a desirable job, for instance), but more common are the non-financial aspects of relationships with neighbors. While in many mainstream communities there is anonymity and lack of ties between neighbors, at EVI people see each other fairly regularly at dinners, parties, community rituals and monthly self-management meetings.

There are deliberate attempts to make newcomers feel they are part of the community. When people move in, the Membership Committee in their neighborhood organizes a "Meet and Greet" for them. More established residents usually sign a card welcoming the newcomers. In our "FROG" (First Residents Group) neighborhood our Meet and Greet often has been a Sunday potluck brunch. These have been so successful that we're now having them occasionally even when there aren't new residents to welcome.

### MORE COHOUSING BENEFITS

While there is no pressure to interact with others, it is relatively easy to get to know people. For those moving into a new community this can be very reassuring. We quickly got to know many of our neighbors—much more so than in Montclair, where we mainly knew the people living directly on either side of us.

The three-times-a-week community dinners provide a place to sit and connect with people you already know or sit with those whom you don't know in order to expand acquaintances. There are numerous social events, often planned by the Committee on Community Life. This committee organizes the annual "Guys Baking Pies," a delicious occasion when men and boys prepare a variety of these desserts. Interested individuals or various committees show films (usually followed by lively discussions), present musical events, and organize poetry readings.

Any resident can create an event or organize an activity. Since we all live within walking distance, attendance is easy, so a great many occur—some planned, some impromptu. In Montclair there was lots to do, but it took more effort to get information about and then travel to activities of interest; and they frequently cost money.

In a suburban setting it's much harder to create an event with people you're not directly in touch with. Our EVI email system makes communication about activities very easy. In addition to electronic notices, those promoting events will sometimes tape a

notice to residents' doors. You can choose to be reclusive, but you can't honestly say you didn't know what was happening!

### INTERPERSONAL ISSUES: OVERCOMING COHOUSING CHALLENGES

The name EcoVillage at Ithaca would seem to indicate a community focused on environmental sustainability. Yet a survey from 2006 found that 49% of respondents cited "living in community" as the "most important reason for living at EVI" compared with only 30% who chose aspects of "sustainability."

EVI has a loose, informal and not very thorough membership recruitment and selection process. If you want to purchase a house here and one to your liking is available, you just have to (1) attend a Meet and Greet, (2) attend one meeting where a consensus decision is made, (3) stay for five days in the community, (4) join a two-hour volunteer work group (usually a cook-team meal), and (5) sign a statement that you have read and understood the community bylaws. No formal vote is taken by any group within the village, although in theory the elected board of directors could refuse a sale to a person or family whose needs and interests seem incompatible with the goals of EVI. One result of this loose policy is that occasionally incompatible individuals do purchase homes—and sometimes they do not end up adjusting to community life. Since most local decisions are made by consensus, this can lead to a situation where a single person or household blocks decisions otherwise consensed on, necessitating a complex process of fallback—and lots of bad feelings. Despite a system for local self-management that encourages participation in decisions about budgets and policy, many EVI-ers are reluctant to deal with conflicts, which makes disagreements difficult to resolve. Typical problem areas have included such things as: allocating money for community projects; pet policies and practices; leaving inappropriate materials in the recycling bins; not following the rules for reuse items; leaving a mess in the Common House kitchen; allocating garden space; and access to carports.

Community members continue to work on overcoming problems such as these—and have successfully resolved a good number. One of the biggest issues of the past few years has been whether and how much of the dirt road (Rachel Carson Way, which connects us to the outside New York state highway) we should pave with asphalt. The need for paving has come up because of a short steep hill on the road that turns icy in winter, resulting in occasional slides and car crunches. In summer the road is often quite dusty. Many houses of the recently-completed neighborhood ("TREE," Third Residential EcoVillage Experience) were built right next to the road. Residents there have been complaining of asthma and bronchitis attacks.

The substantial projected cost of paving even a part of the road has opened up an awareness of the scope of economic inequality within the community. In response, residents have set up a voluntary "economic balancing fund" within our monthly

billing system. Upon implementation, the finance team found that most households (82%) are willing to be billed \$5 per month or more for this. For the 18 households unable to contribute to the fund, it's hoped that half will nonetheless be able to pay their own road-paving cost share. That will leave about nine households in need of internal funding support. The balancing fund is apparently the first direct attempt by EVI residents to compensate for local economic inequality, and some residents are thinking of further experiments. Unfortunately, in the FROG neighborhood moisture damage in several of the structures has resulted in substantial and expensive repairs that may compete with the balancing fund idea or absorb some of the funds that might otherwise have been able to go to new initiatives.

### DEMOGRAPHIC TRADE-OFFS: AGE AND RACIAL DIVERSITY PROBLEMS

Since being founded in 1991 by mostly young householders, EVI's population has become older and is, in fact, aging rather rapidly. Currently about 26% of EVI residents are over 65; the comparable figure in Montclair is 13%. Issues of aging in community have recently become more salient. Some residents are trying to find ways to attract more young families, but it remains to be seen whether or not this will be successful. EVI is apparently attractive to people who have retired or are close to this stage of their lives. Older people can more easily afford to live here, especially if they have good pensions. And many feel that aging in place will be easier here.

Community conversations are developing around the questions of what we can and should do as residents age. How much responsibility do we have toward each other? The TREE neighborhood of 25 houses and 15 apartments was explicitly built to have accessible units, but the other neighborhoods were not. In FROG, of 30 houses, only four are accessible. The other 26 have stairs and doorways that cannot easily accommodate wheelchairs.

Aging is more than a question of material infrastructure, however. Should we help neighbors remember to take their medicine? Should we set up a check-in system where we make

Any resident can create an event or organize an activity; since we all live within walking distance, attendance is easy.

sure others are up and about by a certain time of day? Should we take responsibility for notifying relatives if our aging neighbors start to show signs of confusion or problems with mobility—or if we think perhaps they should not be driving?

There is a lack of ethnic/racial diversity at EVI. Fewer than five African Americans live here, and all are renters. By contrast, 27% of Montclair's population is African American. The larger local area—Ithaca City and surrounding Tompkins County—

itself lacks a sizable minority population from which EVI could conceivably draw new members.

Why is EVI unable to attract more residents of color? Besides the local-area homogeneity, one possible reason derives from EVI's origin and history: highly homogeneous from the start, it may not be attractive to those not fitting its existing demographic pattern. And acquiring a home here is relatively expensive. These are likely to be issues at other cohousing communities as well.

## CONCLUSION

In our eight years at EVI, we've learned that to get the most out of cohousing, one must join the work of building community. Sometimes it is tedious, but mostly it's interesting and can give an expanded feeling of meaning in one's life—especially in a community such as EcoVillage at Ithaca where environmental and social justice issues engage many of one's neighbors and where satisfying relationships can be created.



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## Keeping it Real, continued from page 24

unsustainable countries, and especially the US, to take the lead in redeveloping themselves by implementing policies that will redistribute wealth and income, install effective minimum living standards, and institute drastically less energy-intensive development processes.”<sup>9</sup>

## BECOMING THE PEOPLE OF THE SEVENTH FIRE

Our energy crisis isn't only about running out of fossil fuels or the dangers of climate change their use poses. It's about human overshoot and the need to heal our land and bring our societies back into balance with ecological realities. We face nothing less than the imperative to radically transform our way of doing things.

The coming transition is both a daunting challenge and an unprecedented opportunity. We can choose to continue on the ultimately self-destructive Burnt Path of growth, self-

indulgence, hard-heartedness, and anthropocentrism. Or we can choose the Green Path. In doing so, we can become those spoken of so hopefully in the Anishinaabe prophecies of the Seventh Fire, “the ones who will bend to the task of putting things back together to rekindle the flames of the sacred fire, to begin the rebirth of a nation.”<sup>10</sup>

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### LINDA CREE

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# A New Pathway to World Peace: *From American Empire to First Global Nation*

*A New Pathway to World Peace: From American Empire to First Global Nation*

by Ted Becker and Brian Polkinghorn. Resource Publications, an imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2017.

REVIEW BY JOHN RENSENBRINK

This book may well alter the terms of future discussions and debates about the constricted complexities of the Israel/Palestine/Mid-Eastern theater of false turns. Its authors, Ted Becker and Brian Polkinghorn, present an arresting idea. For most of us, initially, their call for Israel to become the 51st state of the United States will seem a bit crazy, far flung, a gilded fantasy, or just plain beside the point.

But then we might re-think our reaction should we actually sit down to read it. For one thing, you and I dear reader know by now, after years and years of listening to experts, pundits, politicians, diplomats, presidents, military leaders, prophets, and fellow citizens, that there has been a plethora of solutions advanced by a plethora of people—none of which have proved feasible, or if feasible, acceptable. Maybe one more solution, and one that is totally un-orthodox, and sounding sufficiently off-beat, should be picked up. That is my first thought, that the book should at least be read. Since no solution has been found, or even gotten any promising follow through in real life, why not look at this one. The protagonists in the conflict may well have reached what the authors, with their background in mediation processes, call “a conflict fatigue point,” (CFP) such that they, the protagonists, may be ready at last to listen to a new way of thinking and action.

My second thought goes further. Whatever you might think of the idea as such, you will have to admit, once you start reading, that the book is done with considerable, maybe even unbelievable, attention (a) to the nitty gritty of the situation itself (b) to the clarification of policy, strategies, and the forces posed in opposition to one another, and (c) to the weight of the arguments in favor of Israel joining the United States (and vice versa) as one of 51 united states. In this latter case, you will note that they do not shy away from identifying, with almost embarrassing candor, the reasons why their proposal necessarily faces immense objections and immense resistance from embattled quarters.

At the very beginning, the authors introduce themselves. They explain convincingly that they have the background of knowledge and experience, both in historical fact and in conflict resolution, that enables them to write with confidence and scholarly authority about their idea.

## THE FIRST 100 YEARS OR SO OF AMERICA'S EXPANSION

The first part of the book is replete with efforts on their part to show that the United States does have (or did for over 100 years have) the history, the character and the kind of expansion methodology to embrace, as a new state, the state of Israel. They illustrate it and sum it up, pp. 90-97, by recalling five case studies of expansion that involved, not conquest, but sometimes a very thorny state by state admission into the union: Vermont, Texas, Utah's Mormon state, Alaska and Hawai'i. The last two, being non-contiguous, offer further precedent for Israel's joining the union. This kind of expansion is authentically “American exceptionalism”, they argue, further filling out the argument by citing the grounding of the growing country in the mores and theologies of practical and practiced religion, especially Christianity. It was largely in these terms, they aver, that America's unique expansion took place. For the first one hundred years or so of the new country, this was the principal methodology of expansion.

At first, their call for Israel to become the 51st state of the United States seems way too far-fetched.

**A PROBLEM**

But here is their problem. It looms large in their effort to persuade us that America can continue to expand in those terms. For the past 100-plus years, a different methodology has arisen and is now flourishing. It started full scale with McKinley at the close of the 19th century. Since then what has gripped the American ruling cohorts (and then class) is the methodology of imperialism. The religious roots and moral roots thereof have faded away. Voices for imperial splendor and expansion, increasingly secular and strident (and amoral), have grown decade by decade. The authors cite a skein of influential imperialist thinkers: Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914), Halford John Mackinder (1861-1945), an enormously influential Britisher (1861-1945), and Nicolaus John Spykman (1893-1943). Building on the work of these thinkers, the acme of the imperialist surge and takeover was the rise of Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and the neo-cons at the end of the 20th century. Pushing farther than ever a nakedly amoral imperialist agenda and un-manifest destiny of America (preaching a militaristic brand of American exceptionalism), they announced and promoted a “muscular, nuclear-tipped empire,” which they dubbed “The Project for a New American Century.” (PNAC). They created PNAC in 1997 and catapulted into power with the election of George W. Bush in 2000.

The authors are devastating in their rejection and critique of the hawkish imperialist takeover backed as it is by a global corporate ascendant oligarchy. They see it as the exact opposite of the earlier idea of the United State as an ever expanding nation believed by many pioneers to be God’s will. “The American Empire,” they write (p. 24) “has become analogous to a widespread bacterial infection on the world body politic.” A few pages later (p. 28) they write, “Americans need to regain control of their government and get it to abandon ‘The American Empire.’” They seem to be saying that this (what would be a basic change of revolutionary proportions) is a crucial pre-condition for Israel to be able join the United States as its 51st member-state. But they also predict that “The American Empire” is faltering and will collapse, maybe sooner than expected. They point out that the march of things is towards a multi-polar world. Just exactly how a multi-polar world and a re-invented America as “an ever expanding nation” (p. 15) would cohere—this signals some further food for thought, I would think.

**ISRAEL AND ITS NEIGHBORS:  
POSITIONS VERSUS CORE INTERESTS**

Becker and Polkinghorn base a good part of their analysis of the Middle East quagmire—on the need to do something the nations involved have failed to do. It is imperative for the protagonists to make a clear distinction between “position” and “interests” (especially core interests). If they with awareness were to do this, they would locate their core interests more clearly and readily, and find, lo and behold, lots of common ground. Failure to do so condemns them to remaining stand-pat in their fears, resentments and motives of revenge. Whether the reader will in every case agree with the authors’ assessments of what each nation’s core

interests actually are, they, the authors, offer enough to indicate that this is a promising departure from the usual and tiresomely repeated postures, position-thumping, and rhetoric of blame.

Whether, however, attention and focus on “core interests” would or could lead to energy within Israel to become the 51st state; or whether a resolute focus on their core interests by Israel’s neighbors would lead them to accept Israel as a member-state of the United States, these things are very problematic.

According to the authors, a discovery of its core interests by Israel would reveal at least these three points: a deep concern about the alarming degree to which Israel is becoming an international pariah; taking due stock of the relatively diminishing role of the United States as the world powerhouse which can only mean a diminishing security for Israel overall in the years and decades ahead; and the rising agitation for fair representation in the Israeli government by increasingly self-conscious and courageous Palestinians whose homeland is Israel. On this latter point the Israeli government will have to take more and more into account the often ignored fact that a full quarter of Israel’s population is non-Jewish, a number definitely on the increase. Such “inconvenient facts” can also be seen as opportunities, if drawn on effectively, that could extricate Israel from the no-exit bind that threatens ominously. As one reads the book, one also finds similar “facts as opportunities” that are latent if not directly present for all of Israel’s neighbors.

I have long agreed with those who advocate for the “one-state” solution.

Maybe by stimulating more dialogue of the kind Becker and Polkinghorn are promoting—dialogue that focuses on core interests— this will make a one-state solution seem more and more feasible and attractive. That in turn might even lead to consideration of such an unorthodox solution as that advanced by the authors of this book.

Becker and Polkinghorn title their book “A New Pathway to World Peace.” They are ambitious for the people of Israel and the peoples of Israel’s neighbors. They see that the sorrowful plight of all—of their own making, to be sure, and yet not of their own making—is bound up with the fate of the world as a whole. It is also bound up so very intimately with what happens in and with the United States. Being of an optimistic turn, laced with deep realism, they offer us—they push us towards!— a way to think outside the box, that, in spite of all, the peoples of the world can learn and find a way to live together on this great planet in peace and with plenty for all. The struggles of Israel and its neighbors are a test case. If not, in fact, THE test case.

**JOHN RENSENBRINK**

Co-editor of *Green Horizon*, John lives in Maine, is professor emeritus of government at Bowdoin College, helped found the Maine and U.S. Green Parties, is founder and member of the latter’s International Committee, and the author of *Against all Odds: the Green Transformation of American Politics* (1999). His new book is *Ecological Politics: for Survival and Democracy* (2017). As we go to press, we’ve learned that the publishers, Lexington Press, will issue the book in paperback in June.

# The Last, Great Political Philosophy Book

## *Is it too late to save humanity from self-destruction?*

REVIEW BY TED BECKER

*Ecological Politics: for Survival and Democracy*

by John Rensenbrink. Lexington Books, an imprint of the Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group. Lanham, New York and London, 2017.

***Ecological Politics* will be out in paperback in June, 2018.**

This essay, a book review essay it might be called, is my urgent attempt to urge you, the reader, to obtain a copy of this book—by hook or by crook. But be forewarned: it is not to be read. *It must be studied.* Does the reader remember how to study a book? Frankly, I haven't studied a book since graduate school over 50 years ago. But the farther I got into Rensenbrink's "Ecological Politics," the more I felt like a diligent graduate student once again. So why study a book if you aren't going to be grilled about it by a scary uber-professor in a seminar or have to analyze it in a final paper or thesis or dissertation?

The book has that about it which recalls the gravitas of a "Das Kapital" or "The Federalist Papers." The only reason to lift such heavy philosophical lumber is to develop the philosophical and empirical muscle to free oneself of the many collective well-conditioned and daily reinforced illusions and delusions about (a) why "politics" doesn't matter all that much; (b) the ugly, abhorrent and effete kind of political economic system in which we actually live; (c) the extent of the decay, rot and evil of the American Empire that is hell bent on destroying the future of humanity on this Earth; and (d) why you and I need to make transforming America's national government into a real democracy a top priority in your life ASAP!

So, since you are reading *Green Horizon Magazine*, then you are part of a small, relatively highly educated or evolved group of citizen-activists. This book is political philosophy's most advanced instrument for bringing about a peaceful transformation based on self-governance and ecological sanity for survival. But like any good warrior, you need to be able to disassemble it and put it back together again, that is, it must be read and re-read and then discussed in groups.

This book has sufficient heft and precision to be deployed as a lever into a new kind of "politics" that aims to empower and "connect" so many disconnected factions of dissatisfaction with all present systems. This includes feminists, indebted college students and graduates, under-employed workers, ex-workers, marginalized ethnic and racial groups, scientists, ecologists, life-style innovators, localization pioneers in food, energy, health, housing, and education—the list is large: they are the 99% that the Occupation Movement of 2011 coined and that Rensenbrink mentions throughout the book. The elite disorder and malfunction he describes and recognizes throughout must be confronted and rearranged

This book is political philosophy's most advanced instrument for bringing about a peaceful transformation based on self-governance and ecological sanity for survival.

now. *We are at Code Red.* This is a clarion call to radical change before it is too late, which, frankly, as he admits, might already be the case. But what kind of radical change? I'll get to that. But first it is important to touch base with several of his basic themes.

## THEMES

A major theme is woven in various ways throughout the book: "It's the super rich and whatever form of government they control, stupid!" All sorts of political and economic hierarchies and oligarchies—the vast "disconnect" between the master and servant class—have formed over the past few millennia. Therein lies the fundamental inequities, stupidities and atrocities that most likely will terminate the human presence on Planet Earth.

Another theme that wends its way through this philosophical tapestry is that when humanity turned from hunting and gathering and began to tame terra firma into farms and domesticate animals, a fissure began to form between humanity and the environment, and between humans as well. These fissures turned families into tribes, tribes into clans, clans into feudal domains, feudal states into nation states, nation states into national empires, and national empires into its final degenerate form, the present day global corporate plutocracy. This perennial pattern was greatly aided and abetted by the so-called Enlightenment and its offspring, the Industrial Revolution. These have further alienated humans from any vital relationship to the land—as well as to one another—even though and ironically, these social and economic inventions saw a huge spurt in the productive power of the species. In short, hierarchies grew more steep, with power addicts running nation states and global empires, gorging themselves on all the riches under the land, while almost everyone else is gurgling: "I can't breathe".

A third, and related, theme in the Rensenbrink repertoire, is that the American system of government must be corrected in a similar way as Isaac Newton's 17th century physics have been corrected by the advent of quantum physics in the 20th century. And how is this? It is by understanding that the cosmos is NOT a machine that operates with some kind of mathematical precision, but that the truth of cosmic existence, including Earth's solar system, and life on Earth, lies in probabilities and the interconnectivity of everything, every atom, every molecule, every quark, and, yes, every duck, every meteor, every butterfly, every human being.

Thus, a new political system must be devised, if it is not already too late, and it must be corrected by applying this new

scientific understanding of universal reality, i.e., quantum theory. Newton's theory undergirded much of the thinking of the 18th century Founding Fathers of the American Constitution, i.e., a new physics helped draft a new, for that time, political system.

So, as Rensenbrink affirms, why should not the new (quantum) physics of modern times help now to create a political system based on probabilities and not rigid cause and effect, and on interconnectivity in lieu of separation? Let's cut to the chase. Where Newtonian physics led to top-down governance, quantum physics leads to horizontal, networked participatory democracy—truly a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

Sad to say, but since the early days of city-states and nations on Earth, even a semi-democracy has only been tried in one nation-state: Switzerland, where it has functioned pretty well for centuries. If one looks at comparative statistics on quality of life for citizens, in all nations over any length of time, the Swiss system of democracy always ranks extremely high, if not at the very top.

Yes, I know. The Swiss system is not adaptable to every nation and culture and it obviously would not, as presently structured, be able to prevent all the looming global catastrophes on the horizon which Rensenbrink reminds us about throughout his text. People throughout the world are protesting, demonstrating and revolting against every form of oligarchy which is omnipresent today. What is desperately needed is a new form of citizen participation and empowerment that is enabled and reinforced by the tremendous electronic achievements humanity presently has at its fingertips.

Thus, a fourth theme Rensenbrink advances is the tantalizing possibility for a new beginning open to our species offered by the political applications of quantum theory. Being a devotee of both quantum physics and Taoism (they share some similarities), Rensenbrink offers a guideline of how a new form of democracy may realistically be imagined and come to be, if our species has time. Realizing that we are well along into a new era of ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies), alongside the new epistemology of uncertainty and chaos, and the early onset of a new world of robotics and AI (artificial intelligence), he cites a book, co-authored some time ago (2000 A.D.) by myself and my co-author, Christa Slaton, titled "The Future of Teledemocracy," in which we relied heavily upon quantum principles to derive a hybrid form of governance that would allow elites some power in governance, but which could be corrected (or overruled) by the voice of the people as expressed by persons selected by chance, i.e., randomly at any and/or every level of

[A major] theme is that the American system of government must be corrected in a similar way as Isaac Newton's 17th century physics have been corrected by the advent of quantum physics in the 20th century.

governance. The desires, views and interests “of the people, by the people and for the people” would be connected from small units (local, state, regional, national) up to a world governance mechanism via these new and yet to be fully developed 21st century technologies. The way I put it in haiku form is “Until the people/are involved, global issues/will go unresolved.”

These authentic democratic practices and components exist in empirical reality. They are happening as we speak, write, and act. What hasn't happened is that they have not been knitted together and synthesized via a political philosophy (until this book) and wedded to a viable global political movement (yet).

## GREEN PARTY!

### WHY IS IT STILL ONLY IN THE WINGS?

Obviously the best, presently available “mechanism” which might be deployed to accomplish this in the present “timespace” is the Green Party in all its 100 different national locations around the world. “Grassroots democracy” and non-violent transformation have always been equal pillars of Green philosophy to that of a sustainable ecology. So, the Green Party can and should be thought of as an existing vessel—albeit a still relatively small and obscure force in the bastions of the 1%—to restore human sustainability and interdependence on Planet Earth.

So why does the Green Party of the United States gain so little traction among the public even after decades of vigorous activity? Nor is the traction all that great for Green Parties in other countries, even in Europe where Green parties flourish, in a way, but only within the channeled walls provided by the dominant capitalist/industrial elites. I'd say the Green Parties' greatest failure is to try to play the role of a political party in nothing but obsolete and fake “democracies” around this world. Au contraire, Greens need to see themselves as a grassroots educational tool to help “the people” realize that they have a “false consciousness” which will continue to perpetuate their victimhood

Rensenbrink evinces greater faith than I in the efforts to change the rules by which politics has been and continues to be conducted in the United States. These rule-changing efforts include such things as fair ballot access for third parties; popular vote for president (abolishing the Electoral College); clean (i.e. publicly funded) elections); equal opportunity on TV for qualified parties; and (most important) doing away with the first-past-the-post system in decided winners of elections, and introducing instead versions of Ranked Choice Voting, leading to full scale proportional representation. He couples these now reverberating demands for hands-on political change with a

seven-point set of guidelines for a new party like the Greens (pages 236-245). The first is a strong emphasis on educating and urging party members to support in their election campaigns and to “participate in the self-help, community building, and new economy efforts already underway “ among broad sections of the American public. (p. 236) He recalls the chapter in which he details these efforts, Chapter 14, “The Return of the Local.” I applaud the emphasis he puts on this.

He argues that these political changes and an accompanying direct support for grassroots efforts for an emerging new economy require the exertions of a new political party dedicated thereto. His point is that this can and will lead to electing people in significant numbers who are not of the established oligarchy. It opens the way for significant non-violent ways to change fundamentally the extant oligarchic system. He has a point. But I remain skeptical. More is needed.

### GRASS ROOTS EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES NEED PRIORITY

This reviewer puts more direct scope and emphasis on grass roots educational strategies. I would offer the book as evidence of the need for precisely such strategies and I point to the opportunity its publication provides for this. “Ecological Politics” needs to be deeply understood by Green activists, along with other citizens, through small meet-ups in familiar settings: nuclear families; extended families; workplaces, classrooms, subdivisions, trailer parks, co-ops, wherever. The individuals in these small groups need to personally realize that the most efficient and rapid method of converting this book's newly

articulated philosophy into a concerted movement is to transfer their new insights about the imminent global destruction by all ruling classes and how a new and genuine democracy is literally a click or two away from their Facebook friends, Linked-in colleagues, Instagram audience, Twitter followers, and YouTube viewers. This revolution will not be televised. It can only fully happen—given the total control of mass media by the various and sundry oligarchies—by going “viral” on social media.

Dramatic example: The Porto Alegre (Brazil) Participatory Budgeting method of direct democracy started with neighborhood self-selected samples and went up to a city wide negotiating team selected by each neighborhood. Then there was a negotiation level and any new priorities and/or agenda items had to be referred back to and agreed upon at the neighborhood assemblies again (and again) until city-wide consensuses were reached. Clearly this could be done by randomly selected neighborhood assemblies and randomly selected city-wide,

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then state-wide, then nation-wide negotiator-legislators. The negotiation process at each level could easily be skyped to the lower levels for direct input.

This Porto Alegre process of direct democracy has spread globally in only three decades, is in wide use, and is growing because it is effective at redistributing wealth laterally, and has many variations to suit diverse cultures, including the increasing use of ICTs. According to the Participatory Budgeting Project, it is now used in about 1,500 Latin American cities, 150 North American ones, and some in the United Kingdom, Australia, France and Taiwan. It shows no signs of slowing down.

### PEACEFUL REVOLUTION BECKONS, BUT...

Thus, if the people want to empower themselves—and why not?—the democratic tools are all right there in the here and now. But is there anything or any way to get citizens' attention focused on such dramatic changes—particularly all those advocated in “Ecological Politics”?

Up to now, the ever more obvious destructive climate change is not enough to get a large swath of the American population to realize that we need to drastically change our political system. Ditto with the growing threat of a nuclear World War III. Even when we add the increasingly obvious abomination of a billionaire class robbing the poor and working class in broad daylight, that still apparently isn't enough. Even if Trump is impeached or resigns in 2018 or soon thereafter, the present system will have prevailed. Even if the Democrats wipe out the Republican Party in the November 2018 election and replace “The Bad Cop” with “The Good Cop,” the ancient, outmoded Newtonian, 18th century oligarchic system will still prevail.

In the last chapter, Rensenbrink specifies two historic compelling factors the intersection of which can and will sweep history forward to a new level, a level in which fundamental change

for survival and democracy can take place. One is a continued forward motion of transforming forces now at work in the life of Americans and among most peoples of the earth (hidden beneath the biased and obscuring falsehoods of the mass media), forces that include the gradual strengthening of the Green Party everywhere. The other is a continued and deepening failure of established corporate-dominated economic and governing institutions and associated major political parties to deal competently and willingly with the unbelievable crises that envelop the earth and its peoples. Both factors are accelerating, he points out

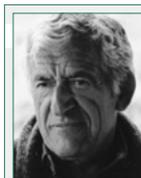
He ends the book quoting Martin Luther King. “We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there is such a thing as being too late. . . . We may cry out desperately for time to pause in her passage, but time is adamant to every plea and rushes on. Over the bleached bones and jumbled residues of numerous civilizations are written the pathetic words, ‘Too late.’ (p. 254).

It is not too late. Our destiny is still ours to shape. “Ecological Politics” is the roadmap to a democratic and viable future for America and humankind on a rejuvenated Earth.

The first step on this new “long march” is to thoroughly study and digest the contents of this book. The next steps—some suggested above—are strictly up to you.

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historic compelling factors  
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“Ecological Politics” is the  
roadmap to a democratic  
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**TED BECKER**

was the first Walter G. Meyer Professor of Law at NYU Law School and is Chair and Professor of Political Science Emeritus at the University of Hawaii; and Head and Alma Holladay Professor Emeritus at Auburn University. He is the author of 20 books including one in progress: “Don't Blame Capitalism:

It's Oligarchy's Fault.”

# Letters

## *Please Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood*

### TO THE EDITOR,

As I read the response in *Green Horizon* # 35 (last Fall) to my article for *Green Horizon* #34 of a year ago, “Green Party and Socialism: Engagement, but is there a Marriage?” what first came to mind was the mid sixties song “I’m just a soul whose intentions are good. Please don’t let me be misunderstood!”

I did feel rather misunderstood when I was reading the valid criticisms of the first few attempts at socialism that ended up as authoritarian bureaucracies—light on democracy and heavy on centralism. It seemed as though by making these criticisms the authors’ responses, for the most part, thought they were taking me to task, even though I had tried to be clear that I shared in their critiques. For instance, I had said, “What if these cooperative enterprises” (references in the previous paragraph) “were the dominant structures?” (instead of either the dominant feudal-like corporate structures we detest and the centralized bureaucracies of the late USSR and contemporary China.) I also wrote “But these enterprises need to be run within the context of reasonable ecological and human rights parameters and at a scale consistent with local supervision . . . We allow creative small businesses to operate within the context of a decentralized cooperative economy.”

When Aimee L. Cree Dunn says in her opening paragraph, “Keeping the discourse confined to a choice between capitalism and socialism, however, locks us into the urban-industrial model, and prevents our questioning the basic assumptions of Western thought that have caused today’s massive social, cultural and environmental destruction in the first place.” Her critique, which she goes on to elaborate with reference to honoring the inherent wisdom of Native culture, is one with which I fully agree. However, her critique completely misses my point of a radically reconceived eco-socialism that goes in a direction completely congruent with her perspective. In short, she critiques a straw man, not me. She writes correctly that we must have a mutually nurturing engagement with Nature. Of course!

Further, she asserts, “Both capitalist and socialist governments remove people from their self-sufficient relationship with the land.”

Again, this is certainly true regarding the USSR and China, and likely North Korea (Cuba has a somewhat different history). But again, this has little to do with what I am proposing. She does note in passing that I “advocate for decentralized, self-sufficient, and small scale societies,” but then dismisses this point as though it is irrevocably separated from the concept of eco-socialism that I am advocating, asserting that a generic concept of socialism necessarily involves “using up nature rather than living in full awareness of being part of nature. . . .”

Having lived among Hawaiians in hawai’i for 36 years and now also with great appreciation for the First Peoples of Maine, I unite with that ancient and “pono” (righteous, honorable, appropriate, responsible) relationship with our Great Mother. In my conception, the eco-socialism I envision fulfills this perspective in a modern context, being frugal ecologically, cooperative, and with an effort to energetically restore our great commons, forests, oceans, lakes, rivers, land and the air itself from the contaminations that now pervade them all.

John Rensenbrink makes the point that socialists “don’t get it” with regard to the primacy of ecological wisdom. He says of the term “eco-socialism” “They mean thereby modifying or even diluting ecology to make it fit with socialism.” This is not at all what I have in mind! I very much “get it” that we face an unprecedented ecological catastrophe if societies do not rapidly change. That change MUST entail the dismantling of both corporate capitalism AND state capitalism masquerading as socialism (think USSR and China), and its replacement with a variety of societies (hopefully much smaller, bio-regional ones) in which cooperation (hence social-ist) is the dominant mode with provision for small-scale entrepreneurships. I concur with Rensenbrink’s point that the elimination of corporate capitalism provides a necessary, but not sufficient solution to the ecological crises. It merely clears the political landscape so that we can plant seeds of rational, ecologically-based methods and institutions compatible with Nature.

Steve Welzer’s piece, I felt, much more captured the essence of what I was saying, yet he too makes this claim: “A problem with socialism is that it prescribes ONE way—a supposedly best system, advocated for universal application.” This too misses my main point, namely that we need to INVENT forms of socialism (i.e. cooperative, non-hierarchical, gender balanced,

Nature-centered) that do not yet exist. Such inventions will in practice as well as theory, repudiate both the corporate globalist model and the centralized misguided attempts at socialism of the 20th century.

The characteristics of the eco-socialism I envision are the removal of economic and political control from the private capitalist class and the bureaucratic managers of state capitalism, and transferred to the majority working class, broadly defined, empowering them collectively to govern society. Further, we must have a significant degree of leveling of income so that there are neither homeless people nor billionaires, recognizing that due to differing levels of education, responsibility, capability and ambition, some income differential is appropriate, to be determined after much debate.

Welzer concludes with the following, with which I concur:

“I could support an advocacy of socialism in the Green Party platform—but only if it’s a reconceived kind of socialism concordant with the advancement of a communitarian left and an ultimate vision of a diverse and decentralized Green world.”

Amen.

Jon Olsen, Maine  
co-chair Maine Green Independent Party  
co-chair GPUS Outreach Committee

#### TO THE EDITOR

Have done with binary thinking re capitalism/socialism!

I suggest that the persistent discussions pitting capitalism versus socialism are more likely to bear fruit if we don’t fall into the habit of thinking in either/or terms about them. I’m staunchly anti-capitalist, but I also recognize that Marx’s solutions were solutions for an industrializing, centralizing 19th century world, and they are not solutions for a de-industrializing, 21st century world facing ecosystem collapse.

Our task as Greens is not to solve a 140-year-old European debate, but to imagine the economy of the future, based on the Four Pillars: Ecological Wisdom, Social Justice, Grass Roots Democracy, and Non-Violence. It won’t be capitalism, but it will include the freedom for people to be their own economic agents. It also won’t be Marxist, but it will place the common weal before private gain. We have scarcely begun the important work of imagination that lies before us. If there is anything worth pulling together around, it is this.

B. Sidney Smith  
Virginia

#### TO THE EDITOR,

*What’s Needed*

I feel strongly that a united front in presidential politics is the best possibility we have, that is, IF we are still having national elections in 2018 and 2020.

Quite a few small groups of Greens, Libertarians and Independents need to meet regularly to discuss: a list of 10 to 20 unifying candidates for President in 2020 and pick the best 6; a list of vice-presidential candidates to pair with each of those 6 and an alternate for each veep. Plus more lists of “sunshine cabinet” possibles. The Greens have already worked on this. They need to work some more on including many people not identifying as “greens” just yet. This would be another wise use of time, effort, and fund raising.

We need to be broad and deep in candidates so that we are prepared for the worst IF things get really nasty in terms of scapegoating, street fighting, economic collapse.

Same sort of process needs to happen in different regions of USA so that hidden talents emerge and young people start to see a sustainable, resilient future for themselves with on-coming leaders like Tulsi Gabbard, Nina Turner, Jill Stein, Andrew Kimbrell, Keith Ellison, Van Jones, and many others.

The Greens need to focus on sending a few people to the House of Representatives and keep asking “independents” like Bernie Sanders and Ralph Nader to label themselves Green Libertarian Socialists building “local peace economies” that will promote resilient and satisfying sociocultural traditions. Codepink, Schumacher Society, Transition US and quite a few other organizations need to invite people to conferences on a “united front against fascism” theme.

As per my writings for Green Horizon the past few years I am still hoping for the emergence of a GOOD (Global Organization Of Democracies) that would promote caring for Nature and a fair sharing of Her “resources” into the foreseeable future.

Peace and love,

Charlie Keil  
Connecticut

### *Are we Greens a political party or not?*

#### TO THE EDITOR,

1. The answer should be crystal clear. The Greens are a political party. Our job is not to be the leader of any nonpartisan protest group. Our job is to recruit, back and elect candidates, so that they can be leaders. There are lots of protest groups out there, and their work is valuable, but our work, as a political party, is more than valuable — it is essential. We are the only entity empowered to meet those who abuse power at the place they most fear — the ballot box — and replace them. When

we squander that for taking to the streets, we betray ourselves and we betray the people who have registered Green and we betray the populace as a whole.

2. To the extent it does not interfere with candidate work, I support us endorsing and working for ballot measures, and belonging to coalitions to do that, because ballot measures actually draw people to vote, and ballot measures that are in line with positions taken by the party and our candidates will draw our kind of voters.
3. Other coalitions are about protest. I, as an individual, support some protest activity [and fill out the crowd, or speak, if asked]. But only to the extent that it does not interfere with my party work. I think it is great to wear a GP Tee at such events, or carry a GP sign or banner, for visibility. But better visibility is to carry a clipboard at that event, and gather signatures for ballot status or for a GP candidate. Or to sign up volunteers for a candidate, or to gather candidate campaign donations. Or to distribute candidate literature. And, always, to have voter registration forms. This kind of presence is true leadership, because it shows other protestors that the strongest form of protest is to meet the bastards at the ballot box, and wrest power from them by replacing them. To do these things says more than any banner or Tee can about what needs to be done if we are to change things. Any group which illegally tries to bar us from such activities has already shown whose side they are on, and it is not the side of the people or the planet.
4. My experience with coalitions is that they are generally organized by folks whose agenda, whether they are conscious of it or not, is to exclude folks who are not like themselves from any form of leadership, other than in the most token and presentable form. No real influence is purchased by presence, and fighting for an equitable say, once there, is a distraction from being a political party, and a loser's game. I've already done a lot of that with my life, learned from it, and left it for the Green Party, because I figured out that I could repeat repeat repeat, or I could try something that might actually change things.
5. Merely lending our name means they will keep that name as long as they like, and trot it out only when it serves their purpose. Which, given the basic agenda, is most likely to be at a time when we wouldn't want it used, like to prove their [generally lacking] openness when another group rightly questions it, or to hide behind it for something questionable, or to excuse incompetence or pretend activity. So guarding our name would require vigilance on our part, and an official response — again, a waste.
6. The exception is where joining a coalition does more than lending a name and engaging in internecine battle for recognition and influence. The exception is where joining means, automatically, power. There are coalitions which give each member organization

a seat on the decision making board and an equal voice in decisions.

If there is strong evidence that a given coalition actually does that, I'd consider changing my stance in that particular case.

claudia ellquist,  
*Arizona Green Party*

### *Ranked Choice Voting is Third-Party Unfriendly*

#### TO THE EDITOR,

While I appreciate Rob Richie's effort to respond to my Summer/Fall 2017 piece on RCV, I find it unsatisfactory on two grounds.

First, there is the issue of some misstatements on his part. For instance, in my piece I cited the 2009 Burlington, VT IRV election, not because of any preferences on my part about the candidates as Richie implied, but because the data on that election clearly demonstrate a weakness on the part of IRV in reflecting voters' preferences in the outcomes.

There are other misstatements in his piece. For example, in his piece Richie stated that Plurality Voting, Runoff Elections and Ranked Choice Voting "are the only ones used in single-winner elections everywhere in the world, at every level of government, without exception," which is patently false. United Russia, the ruling party in Russia, has used approval voting in its open primary elections for single-member districts in the last and previous Duma (parliamentary) elections.

Second, in his reply Richie did not deal with the serious perverse problems of IRV such as its monotonicity failures, its spoiler problems and its erratic behavior which are well set out in Sir Michael Dummett's book "Principles of Electoral Reform" (Oxford University Press, 1997).

In terms of voting system reform, third parties ought to be concerned about two things: 1) Whether a voting system has a tendency to elect the most representative candidate or candidates given voters' preferences and 2) Whether a voting system is third-party friendly.

The argument that IRV is third-party friendly is puzzling in the extreme. Australia, for instance, has used IRV to elect its House of Representatives since 1918. That has done nothing to break the two-party duopoly in that body or to give third parties meaningful participation in that House. Why doesn't Richie acknowledge this given its importance for third parties in thinking about alternative voting systems?

It is my assertion that approval voting is third-party friendly while based on the theoretical and empirical evidence it is clear that IRV is not. Under approval voting, every voter has a clear

incentive always to give a vote to his or her favorite candidate even if he or she is a third-party candidate.

Approval voting does a good job of electing the most representative candidate—that candidate approved by the largest number of voters.

And in doing so, it is not subject to the behavioral problems encountered by IRV.

For some reason Richie appears troubled by the fact that some voters will continue to vote for only one candidate under approval voting. Such voting surely makes sense if a voter considers only one candidate fit for an office. It also makes sense on other grounds as well. But in other situations voters have an incentive to cast more than one vote such as when they have two or more equally favorite candidates or when they want to participate in the real choice in an election in which their favorite candidate doesn't have a realistic chance.

Given what I know about the single transferable vote (STV), I find myself deeply troubled by Richie's support of the Fair Representation Act. STV suffers from all the perversities of IRV as Sir Michael Dummett so well demonstrated in his book. It is a scandal that those associated with FairVote do not seem to have read Dummett's book, or, if they have, have not understood it and continue to push for a voting system like IRV that will do so little for better elections and third parties.

John Howard Wilhelm  
*Michigan*

## *Strong "NO!" to One State solution*

### TO THE EDITOR,

As a result of the article by Miko Peled [Summer/Fall 2017] in which I discovered the Green Party's advocacy of a one state for Jews and Palestinians, please remove my name from your mailing list and from all other lists of your organization. And do not contact me.

The platform of the Green Party in proposing a one state solution is in the best fascist tradition of eliminating Jews. Shame on you!

Gerald A Gerash  
*California*

## *It's All About Palestine*

### TO THE EDITOR:

There will never be a one state solution between Palestine and Israel. Israel does not want it and the United States government (Congress and Whitehouse) does not want it, it is all Israel or nothing.

The United States gives Israel \$4 BILLION a year and will for the next 10 years and allows over 1/3 of Congress to held dual citizenship.

Until the United States government stops giving Israel the money and stops the dual citizenship, The United States of America will always be Israel's bitch.

Richard C. Evey  
*North Carolina*

[Editor's Note: Mr. Evey and the reader are invited to have a look at an intriguing alternative solution to the Israeli/Palestine quagmire in a book by Ted Becker and Brian Polkinghorn. It is reviewed on page 29 in this issue of *Green Horizon*.]

## The Last Word *(for this Issue of Green Horizon)*

The ultimate irony of the Trump administration is that it pretends to be a bastion of Christian politics when, in fact, it is comprised in no small part of despoilers, usurers, war-mongers, hypocrites, idolaters, and groupies of false prophets—all of whom are frowned upon by the Book it pretends to follow.

Sam Smith  
*Taken from his daily column  
of September 7, 2017*



# GREEN HORIZON

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