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GREEN HORIZON

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Grass Roots
Movements
are
Redefining
Revolution



**+ A CALL FOR SUPPORT
OF THOSE IN MOTION**

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A Memorial for RHODA GILMAN

JOHN RENSENBRINK

Rhoda Gilman of St. Paul, Minnesota, died on May 13, 2018 at the age of 92. Her place in the history of *Green Horizon* is classic. She was an outstanding leader on our Board for many years, giving us the gravitas of her wisdom on many occasions, some of which were difficult, complex, and sensitive. Though a person of limited means, she coupled her counsel with steady and generous financial support. On behalf of all of us here at *Green Horizon*, we mourn her death and we celebrate her life.

A memorial published by the Green Party of Minnesota says of her that "Rhoda was quite simply the Grandmother of the Green Party of Minnesota." Born in Seattle in 1927, she came to Minnesota in 1952. By 1958, she was a major researcher at the Minnesota Historical Society. She held positions there in the publications, education, and research divisions. Among the projects she accomplished was a textbook of Minnesota history for schools statewide, which was separately published as "The Story of Minne-sota's Past".

After retirement in 1992, Rhoda launched life as a political activist. She helped found the Minnesota Green Party

and ran for lieutenant governor on the Green ticket in 2002. She edited and wrote about Minnesota's radical political tradition, including the Minnesota Book Award nominee "Ringing in the Wilderness" (1996). In 2008 she received the Vincent L. Hawkinson Foundation award for her work on peace and social justice.

The Minnesota Green Party's memorial states that Rhoda exemplified the "protest tradition" in Minnesota that she wrote about in her final published book, "Stand Up!" In addition to synthesizing those important social and political movements in her writing, she participated in those same movements her entire life. She is a model of effectively combining movement work and Green Party electoral action.

Rhoda served on the boards of the Institute for Minnesota Archaeology and the Minnesota Archaeological Society. She was a founding member of Women Historians of the Midwest and the Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum.

I loved her "Being There" for us. She was resolute in action and was a kind and caring person throughout. We miss her so very much. Ave Atque Vale!

THE TEAM

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Fifty years since 1968...

What We've Learned

During the nineteenth century, the moniker “48-ers” referred to those who participated in the European-wide revolutionary ferment of 1848 (the year of publication of the *Communist Manifesto*). During the latter part of the twentieth century, activists of my generation were proud to identify as “68-ers,” a badge of honor signaling that we had manned the barricades (literally or figuratively) during the global ferment of 1968.

That was fifty years ago. I had just started college and was among the many who felt that revolution was in the air. But our conception of social transformation was notably different from the one presented in the *Communist Manifesto*. In the wake of the '68 upheavals Charles Reich would write: “There is a revolution coming. It will not be like revolutions of the past. Its ultimate creation will be a new and enduring wholeness and beauty—a renewed relationship to the Self, to society, to nature, and to the land.” (from *The Greening of America*, 1970)

Reich’s quote gives a sense that the idea of “greening” involves far more than just environmental remediation—and, certainly, more than just electoral victories. Lessons that started to be assimilated during The Sixties, and awarenesses that have deepened ever since, suggest that social transformation must encompass the holistic revitalization of politics, economics, social relations, and community life—in addition to environmental stewardship.

These awarenesses were the basis for the foundation of the Green politics movement during the 1970s. They’re aptly summarized in the values that remain key to our movement: Ecological Wisdom, Social Justice, Grassroots Democracy, Nonviolence, Decentralization, Community-based Economics, Feminism, Respect for Diversity, Personal and Global Responsibility, Future Focus/Sustainability. They reflect the coming-of-age of theory and praxis since the '48-ers, and then the '68-ers, were crying out for A Better World. And they’ve informed the great variety of analyses and proposals that have been expressed over the years in *Green Horizon Magazine*.

1968 ended ignominiously with the election of Richard Nixon, the escalation of the Vietnam war, the indictment of the Chicago Convention protest leaders, and the disintegration of SDS, the main student activist organization. The need for the

development of a new social change paradigm was evident. Fifty years later it can be said that we’ve taken a number of critical steps in that direction. Many on the left now disdain the old sectarianism. Our sense of historical perspective has broadened. Our explication of the problems confronting people and the planet has become more nuanced.

Revolution of the barricades variety is no longer in the air. Instead, we draw encouragement from recognizing how the “greening” process is gradually taking root, generation by generation, manifesting in various arenas of social change activity. Green politics is making slow headway, but many of the associated movements are advancing rapidly, as evidenced by featured articles in this issue. Joel Rothschild’s is about the ecovillage movement. Maynard Kaufman reviews a book about the movement for a Universal Basic Income. Jill Stein relates how she’s recently become heavily involved with the movement for Electoral Integrity. And my own article extols the Voluntary Simplicity movement.

At a more general level, Kate Schrock says that Green candidates ought to prioritize supporting those who are already in motion. Romi Elnagar discusses the vital need for self-examination in any social change organization—encouraging the Greens, in particular, to hold themselves to a high standard of compassionate self-criticism. And John Rensenbrink urges us to appreciate the ongoing “explosion of institutional innovations at the local level.” Here, he says, is the kernel of transfiguration. When Greens get elected to office they should govern in such a way as to help spur the myriad projects of that Yes-saying, locally-rooted new-kind-of-revolution.

These disquieting times demand nothing less. Though we’ve accomplished some important things since 1968, the aspirational green horizon remains well ahead of us. We have far to go, but the *next* fifty years are likely to be pivotal in regard to the fate of the planet, its people, fauna, and flora. Enlightened political parties will be needed; greening movements will be crucial. Both, of course, are galvanized by committed individuals. Our readers figure to be among them.

— SW

Did you say “THE *Movement*? ”

JOHN RENSENBRINK

For decades Greens have talked about the relationship of the Green Party to “the movement.” But what, or who, is the movement?

One sees a myriad of “movements” to a point where it seems everything is “a movement.” I suggest identifying three kinds of movements: protest/resistance; humanitarian efforts; and a locally inspired creation of projects for basic needs of life and living that can lead to a new economy and society. Only the first seems to have been assumed by the Green Party to be the movement. The others are unaccountably ignored, especially the last.

Close Connection of Movement and Party in Seeking Revolutionary Change from Within

Editors’ Note: We start with eight articles arranged in two clusters: five articles that have a movement emphasis and three articles that have a party and politics emphasis. We invite the reader to visualize each emphasis, to see overlaps, and to share with us our vision of close connection between the two in terms of seeking revolutionary change within the received order. For the two are thusly connected, even though kept strictly separate in the public mind, the media, and even in many progressive publications.

One way to express our editorial vision is this quote from the article written by Joel Rothschild, “We should see our purpose not as teleporting out of a broken society but healing it from within.” Joel is addressing EcoVillagers.

We feel that the same purpose can and should be applied to BOTH movement work AND to political and party work. Both and together as a whole. The vision is of a revolution surely but a non-traditional revolution. The vision faces squarely the fact that wrenching oneself out of the received order to escape it or to destroy it and/or being willing to resort to force and violence on behalf of “the cause” does not work and seldom has. It is time for the left to acknowledge this.

It is time for us all to think it through. It is time for us to be revolutionary in both seeking fundamental change and in seeking it from within the received order—rejecting (transcending) the many ways we have been doing it historically as if from without. This applies as much to the political party emphasis as it does to any movement emphasis. When we seriously do that it becomes much clearer that movement work and political work are closely connected. Thank you, Joel.

Protest/resistance: many say that by “the movement” they mean protest/resistance groups. I have a quick question: all protest groups? There are about 20,000, a modest estimate actually. Some protest groups oppose other protest groups, some veering left, even hard left, some veering right, or hard right. Their conflicting energies and efforts are used by many politicians to cancel mutually incompatible demands. Or what happens is that ever-deft politicians water down their respective demands, “keeping them happy,” meanwhile keeping themselves in control and in power.

Many protest groups on the left do or might share a general sense of opposition to government policy or to administrative edicts and practice, but they nevertheless concentrate their efforts on their own core interest. They remain silos to one another. Coalitions do form from time to time: they rise and disappear and reappear. Sometimes one or more cause is able to fire up a broad enthusiasm and a huge march on Washington follows. Though some largely ineffectual amelioration takes place of ever worsening poverty, the degradation of nature, decimation of the middle class, and worsening prospect for peace (a song and dance that has taken place for many decades) it is also regrettably true that the drift of human failure to face our demise as a species continues. Protest has not really worked, or say that it has not worked well or effectively—and we are running out of time.

As the reaction deepens against the left (and against the generality of the people) by an authoritarian and heartless Trump administration, local demonstrations of resistance and fiery protest increase. Leaders on the left call for a strong turn of strategy to identify with and deeply support the social/economic/political organizations of oppressed peoples. This becomes the focus, the compelling mission, the *raison d'être* of what they now dub “The Movement.” It is a repeated hope and call by a portion of the left for this to happen, going back a hundred years and more. It hasn’t ever really happened,

But I call attention to a third kind of movement. Strangely, it does not get the attention it deserves from Green Parties.

but the hope is that it can and will. The efforts are certainly worth commending and supporting, but the prospects are not encouraging. Putting all your strategy eggs in one basket may not be the best overall approach.

Resistance and protest (saying NO) is one way to see “the movement.”

A second way is to note and affirm numerous points of light in the gathering gloom of our public life. They are expressions of saying “Yes.” They shine as altruistic ventures by individuals and groups. They are acts of human kindness that try to relieve some of the terrible suffering that people endure—people caught in the coils of a selfish and greedy capitalist system. The system’s masters are responsible. BUT the responsibility for this is hidden from public view. Ironically it is hidden from the humanitarians themselves who labor to alleviate the suffering. That is no reason to dismiss or deprecate these efforts or not to acknowledge that they, too, are part of the movement.

But I call attention to a third kind of movement. Strangely, it does not get the attention it deserves from Green Parties.

I see an explosion of institutional innovations at the local level. Community gardens growing good food are sprouting up all over, both urban and rural. Worker owned companies are increasing, as are community development corporations, as are land trusts, public pension funds, community supported agricultural projects, young people turning to farming, solar power businesses and cooperatives, municipal enterprises for renewable energy, nature-learning ecological projects for the schools, neighbor-to-neighbor “slow money” ventures, state banks on the North Dakota model, and alternative self-reliant micro-economies sprinkling the country. There is the constant striving to get armament crazed corporations to convert to peace time production, as for example, Bath Iron Works in Bath, Maine, owned by huge armament maker, General Dynamics.

Continuing this catalog, there is the long standing Initiative and Referendum movement in Maine and 20 other states—whereby people are taking public policy into their own hands to make up for the repeated failure of state governments to meet critical needs and opportunities.

Especially important and heartening are the community-centered life ways of indigenous peoples. In recent decades, and

indeed for centuries, they have been and are in the forefront of many of the aforementioned initiatives and projects. They show by example that everyone can reach an alternative and creative economy.

Another word for all this is “the New Economy.” But a more just and accurate word for it is “revolution”, a grass roots revolution. As these localization—pre-figuring—ventures come together (this is beginning to happen) there is a-building a new society. It will be a new society that is multicultural, multiracial, multigender; classless; ecologically sound; with diverse forms of community-centered ownership; and a fair and democratic distribution of political power.

A blizzard of books, blogs, and magazine articles detail these initiatives. The New Economics Institute and older ventures like the Institute for Local Self Reliance are providing timely technical and conceptual support. Books by David Korten (and the “YES” magazine he has fostered), and books by Gar Alperowitz, and by Michael Shuman are read by millions. Sam Smith of Washington and Maine has written eloquently on going local. The influential writings of Paul Hawken and Lester Brown do the same.

There’s a revolution going on beneath the radar screen of the mass media. The corporate goliaths that run the media don’t want it known that this revolution exists. They ratchet up their economic power to undermine this “quiet revolution.” They are smart. They hide from the people the people’s ongoing revolution and then bore in to undermine it with their top down consumer and investment ploys. They are beginning to mouth “local” and then do all they can to assure their top-down control. But however much it is “quieted,” it’s a revolution.

That’s the good news. The sad and troubling news is the dearth of awareness and political attention to this by the Green Party of the United States—and by most if not all state Green Parties. By foolish and incomprehensible in-attention, we Greens are missing the great opportunity of this historic moment, to support a revolution that from the ground up can topple the empire of the monster corporations.

Another word for all this
is “the New Economy.”

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accurate word for it is
“revolution”, a grass
roots revolution.

The revolution is already underway! Hello Greens: are you listening?

You may be among those who demur. Isn't one of our famous watchwords "think globally, act locally!" And don't we pride ourselves on being a down-to-earth and grass roots centered party?

I hate to tell you, but it isn't so. One of the reasons it isn't so is a peculiar phenomenon. Our posture is one of not really listening to what the people conducting the revolution are doing. Instead we spend so much time telling one another that we are the ones who can and should be in there doing the innovations, the projects, the work. The funny surprise is that the innovations, the projects, the work *is* being done. Not by us. But by ordinary people!

It's already being done! The revolution is already underway! Hello Greens: are you listening?

So instead of presenting ourselves as a handmaid, a helper of the revolution, a catalyst thereof, we want to be the revolution ourselves. This approach is especially noticeable to those of us who are delegates to the Green Party's National Committee. What we hear is that we have ideologies to back us up. We have our good intentions, our superior understanding of history and what not. We are the new missionaries with a gleam in our eye. We regurgitate the same old recipe of centuries on how to bring about fundamental change: that if only this program (ours) is followed, the revolution will come about, everything will be fine and (ahem) we will be there to carry it out.

Unfortunately, and shamefully, the work we can and should be doing is left to languish, or put on the back burner. That work is to assist the revolution that is already underway—to come forward as practical people determined to run for office—conveying therewith a no-nonsense *will to govern*—*to govern especially* to help spur and support specific innovations and projects of the on-going locally-rooted revolution; and, just as important, to lobby local and legislative bodies for those projects of the revolution between elections.

There is this further dimension: to fight for the political power of the voters—for Ranked Choice Voting that eliminates the blight of spoilerism; for Clean Elections that eliminate mammoth corporate money; for a popular vote for president to get rid of the Electoral College. These basic changes to our outmoded and reactionary electoral system are absolutely necessary for the growth and success of the revolution for democracy already underway.

We do some of this. But not steadily or resolutely or in a focused way as an alternative political party. Nor do we connect the fight for electoral-system changes to the specifics of the local revolution.

The revolution I am challenging the Greens to catch up with is at the core of revolutionary change—the core of "the movement." Not no-saying protest and resistance, not humanitarianism either. But raw institutional change exhibited in the examples I have cited.

I don't want to be misunderstood. I'm not knocking protest or humanitarian endeavor. Both are crucial, both part of the ongoing revolution.

A caveat: I think we need a criterion to help guide us through the thicket of protest politics. The left suffers from a surfeit of no-saying. When we prepare to act, and as we act, there needs to be present in our minds a definite element of proactive yesness. Not that we allow the Yes to overwhelm and shutter the strong No, but to have in mind how and to what degree saying and doing No can lead to a positive result, a Yes to life and the benefit of the people.

I think this was done by Maine's Merrymeeting Greens' fight in the 1980s against an out-of-state corporation's attempt to foist a so-called toxics emitting waste-to-energy plant upon our mid-coast towns. We won that fight and this encouraged and enabled the towns to turn to recycling programs. Our "No" went together with a "Yes."

I think the earth shaking NO in Maine Against Clear Cutting in the 1990s, even though it lost narrowly in the Referendum, put out a clear message of YES—a message to the state and the paper companies to respect the forest, to treat it as a companion for life and not as an exploitable commodity.

Similarly, looking ahead we can carry that kind of approach to Nestle's exploitation of our water, initiating a referendum in states where we can for a water-tax; and apply it to a struggle for a climate saving, climate justice carbon tax. And certainly, we can apply it to a campaign for Ranked Choice Voting. Here it's very clear that saying NO to spoilerism goes hand in hand with saying YES to a citizen's inalienable right to fair elections.

What I have presented here is the stuff of an ongoing revolution. The Green Party everywhere should be fully part of it. And whether Green or not, assist in its fulfillment!



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). The publishers, Lexington Press, issued the book in paperback in June.

The 3-D's of the Greening Movement: *Downscale, Decentralize, Democratize*

Review of: *Voluntary Simplicity, the poetic alternative to consumer culture.*

Samuel Alexander, editor. 2009. Stead & Daughters Ltd. 439 pages.

Liberation through simplification and localization.

This is a relatively new idea. It runs counter to the progressive-development ideology of Western civilization which has led, over centuries and millennia, to the construction of an awesomely complex Technosphere that no one seems to control or fully understand. With its runaway dynamic, the Technosphere has grown to the point of enveloping the ecosphere and dominating culture. What had been considered a great and hopeful achievement is enclosing and oppressing us.

With his volume, *Voluntary Simplicity*, Samuel Alexander has assembled an array of vital essays that address this predicament and, thus, hold the key to our liberation.

IT TAKES A NEIGHBORHOOD

In the last *Green Horizon* issue, Barbara Chasin and Richard Franke described the benefits and challenges of a certain kind of lifestyle transformation. They reside at the EcoVillage at Ithaca, NY (EVI) which is one of the most fully realized manifestations of the movement to consciously create more responsible and more satisfying lifeways. It was founded on the principle that, in order to “save the planet,” we’ll need to re-learn how to live more lightly, more simply, and more locally.

Ecovillages can model the kind of ecological and communitarian “best practices” that show the way forward toward the general greening of society. Yes, it takes a “village” (a collective of some kind), because downscaling and simplifying are not easily done personally, in isolation. A green lifestyle can be fostered by—almost *requires*—the compensations and reinforcements of community life. Goals: give up stuff, gain social enrichment; share resources and share experiences.

EVI is cognizant of the issue of appropriate scale for such a transformation and has concluded: it takes a neighborhood. The settlement has grown since its inception in 1996, but rather than just expanding by adding units, they’ve added clustered-housing neighborhoods that each have their own Common House, culture, place, and identity. Two of the neighborhoods have thirty units, one has forty units. At that scale—clusters of about eighty or ninety residents—all members of a neighborhood are able to know and, to some extent, support each other. Face-to-face interaction and interdependence come naturally.

The latter are key. They’re what is missing in our current mass-society reality. For most of human history, until just a few hundred years ago, the norm was to live within a social environment of local concentric circles. The nuclear family was embedded within supportive extended family or clan. The domain of experience for most people, even after the rise of the state, remained grounded primarily within the village or parish; secondarily within a territory or a county or a province. “Above” that loomed the often-feared realm of the impersonal Authorities—reigning, taxing, and conscripting from the seat of a remote duchy, kingdom, state, or empire.

Trajectories of growth and centralization have resulted in the state enveloping the village as the Technosphere has enveloped the ecosphere. The industrial state is now ubiquitous in our lives. Comprised of two wings—governmental and corporate—it holds just about all the power, has a monopoly on force, manipulates the economy, employs

STEVE WELZER

Trajectories of growth and centralization have resulted in the state enveloping the village as the Technosphere has enveloped the ecosphere.

The industrial state has usurped so many functions and resources that the intermediate social layers between it and the family have withered.

a majority of the working population, and produces the toxic “cornucopia” that placates the mass of consumers. It has usurped so many functions and resources that the intermediate social layers between it and the family have withered. The norm now is that the nuclear family—or the living-alone single individual—is atomized, dependent upon state or corporate institutions, and (due to hypermobility) tends to be rootless, confronting the complexity of the modern Leviathan with little in the way of local support. People try to establish mutual-interest or mutual-aid networks, but stable, reliable, face-to-face community has become a rarity.

Within this problematic context of life, effective politics also withers. Beyond a certain scale, representative democracy is mostly a sham, controlled by the plutocracy. The amorphous mass of “we the people” is subject to the vagaries of the globalized economy and geopolitics.

MORE, BIGGER, FARTHER, FASTER

For us typical modern citizens, politics is conducted by “them.” It’s the realm of the power elites. It’s remote. And we don’t have time for it, anyway. We seem to be always working.

That latter fact is, rightfully, a source of consternation. After all, productivity has gone up by a factor of five over the last hundred years. Theoretically we should be able to sustain the same standard of consumption working eight hours a week instead of forty. Yet household hours of work have actually gone up over that period of time. Why? Because we’re encouraged by advertising and mass marketing to feel we “need” to consume more and more.

Expansive consumption is stressing us (and the planet) for no discernible gain in quality of life. Instead of enjoying the leisure that enhanced purchasing power could yield, we’re using the fruits of productivity increases to obtain More. Large, expensively-furnished and expensively-maintained housing used to be the province of the affluent. Now many of us feel that we need (and, thus, try to afford) such. A hundred years ago only the One Percent who derived from, or aspired to, aristocratic lineage sent their children to college. Less than half of the population completed a high school education. Now a majority feels compelled to try to achieve some kind of post-secondary credentialing. As a consequence, the number of educational institutions has expanded by a factor of twenty.

People now spend more money on recreation and pastimes. We dine out more often and clamor for near-constant entertainment or stimulation (when we’re not working!). We drive around and fly around more. We try to “stay in touch” with more people over greater distances. We buy a lot of machines, appliances and gadgets. Only recently have we started to recognize that the result of the continual striving for more, bigger, farther, and faster is debt, congestion, over-stimulation, and enervation.

THE ALTERNATIVE

Voluntary Simplicity: The poetic alternative to consumer culture is an anthology containing important essays by many of the

outstanding theorists of the greening/downscaling movement. They all agree that industrial growth is yielding little but human spiritual impoverishment. And they all advocate shifting onto an alternative pathway that will lead in the direction of simplification and localization.

The simplification movement, which traces its roots back to the anti-industrialist presentiments of the nineteenth century (*vide* Ruskin, Morris, the Transcendentalists), has recently been emerging from the margins. It involves a whole bunch of “de’s” ...de-growth, de-centralization, de-industrialization, and, of course, de-militarization.

As might be expected, several essays in this compilation cite Ivan Illich’s writings of forty years ago. A forerunner of the current movement, Illich said that a cultivation of communitarian self-reliance could result in a beneficial de-institutionalization of society (including de-schooling). Rather than a burdensome affluenza, we could aspire to a “convivial” post-industrial economy scaled for a participatory form of democracy.

The bioregional concept emerged in the wake of Illich’s major writings. Samuel Alexander: “While there would still be some limited space for global trade in a post-growth economy, most production would seek, by default, to use local resources from the bioregion to meet mostly local needs, thereby shortening the links between production and consumption.” He argues that we would gain more than we would lose by localizing economic relations and, among affluent populations, lowering consumption standards. In fact, we really wouldn’t lose much of *significance*—there can be a fully adequate division of labor and ample human resources for a flourishing cultural expression within a bioregion.

We don’t all have to live in ecovillages. A bioregional polity might be made up of some urban centers and multiple townships, in addition to many villages. The key toward fostering ecological responsibility and participatory democracy is that cities, towns, and villages should be comprised of functional and supportive *neighborhoods* small enough to be informed by a communitarian ethos.

“GREENING” IS REJUVENATION

Mass society breeds alienation, anomie, inequality and compulsive consumption. Rejuvenation of community life will require downscaling and a renewal of commitment to place. We’d be happier moving around less, re-prioritizing access to extended family, and reviving our neighborhoods. The essays in Alexander’s *Voluntary Simplicity* tell us how. They elucidate how social interaction and interdependence can be fostered by providing common space, eating some meals together, empowering cooperative decision-making, sharing maintenance responsibilities, and cultivating local traditions of celebration.

We need to be thinking in terms of neighborhood-oriented sustenance of life activities. Such would go far toward relieving the current stresses on the nuclear family. The “greening” process can be a source of liberation if we conceive of it broadly—including, but going beyond, environmental remediation.

This means we need to be talking about new ideas and new alternatives that, altogether, envision a deeply transformative way for us to live on the earth.

ADDENDUM: TEN THESES ON THE HUMAN CONDITION AND THE PRIMACY OF ECOLOGY

1. Our civilizational trajectories are leading us in the direction of hypertrophy, overshoot, and collapse.
2. Having great powers of imagination and creativity, human beings have a tendency to go too far. “Too far” by what standard? relative to what criteria? Relative to natural, normal and healthy ecological limits and balances.
3. Humans excel at instrumental/technological innovation for the accomplishment of envisioned goals. One distinctively “instrumental” thing we do is channel the energy flow of the life force.
4. Nature’s myriad individual organisms are each just a current, temporary manifestation of the life force. What we’re constantly witnessing is an exuberant efflorescence. With each newly born, hatched, or sprouted organism there’s a renewal. Then there’s a natural and inherent waning of energy after the prime of life, a process of devitalization that ultimately results in the death of the individual organism, the inevitable ending point of that discrete manifestation of the life force.
5. Nature’s myriad individual organisms are each just a current, temporary manifestation of the life force. What we’re constantly witnessing is an exuberant efflorescence. With each newly born, hatched, or sprouted organism there’s a renewal. Then there’s a natural and inherent waning of energy after the prime of life, a process of devitalization that ultimately results in the death of the individual organism, the inevitable ending point of that discrete manifestation of the life force.
6. Human beings have a tendency toward over-control of the life force. We’ve found that we can channel it for our instrumental ends. We’ve mastered the art of *using* it for our advantage—akin to how we control water coming through a hose. We regulate, inhibit, channel, pare, and mold it. Much of the theorizing about human psychology revolves around how we suppress, repress, or express the flow of “psychic energy” . . . the latter being just another way of conceiving of the life force itself.
7. Animals seem to have fewer psychological issues than do human beings. Animals don’t seem to get bored in the way that humans do, perhaps because the natural state is thoroughly in touch with and synched into the flow of the life force.
8. Moreover, the lives of “mere animals” are *directed* by the flow of the life force; while humans are inclined to try to take control (Daniel Quinn talks about “Takers” in his book, *Ishmael*). We’re inclined to *resist* simply “going with the flow.” Highly conscious, we find the state of nature frightening, disconcerting. We “rise above it” and “handle it” when we regulate, control, inhibit, channel, pare, and mold the life force. For protection we create a cocoon of culture. But there are consequences in doing so. We get out of touch. We lose our grounding. We are less sensuously synched-in than are the animals, and so we’re more prone to boredom, dissatisfaction, and restlessness. We seek stimulation to compensate for being out of touch. We take control and then we want . . . More. We tend to lose appreciation for natural limits and balances, for ecological health and sanity. We go too far and we build too much. Thus have we arrived at a point of generalized hypertrophy.
9. There is an alternative, more sanguine, narrative. Marxists claim that the hypertrophy (and attendant inequality) results from an exploitation-based, profit-driven, growth-lusting private ownership system. It could be ameliorated through socializing the means of production (thus eliminating the profit/growth imperative). They say that the deep ecological perspective is deficient to the extent that it fails to address the social dimension of the problem. They have a point, but their solution is simplistic, as implementation attempts have shown. Also, their belief that history is “progressing”—with socialism constituting the “highest stage”—is misguided. They need to recognize that we’ve lost more than we’ve gained from their touted progress and development. Until such is re-established, no alternative economic system will save us.
10. Approaching a point of civilizational crisis, what’s needed is a thorough re-thinking of who we are and where we’ve been going. The gods seem to have tried an experiment with human beings: Can a creature deal with the anxiety that results from such a high degree of consciousness of inherent vulnerability, frustration, infirmity, and mortality? Our reaction has been to strive for control and mastery in an attempt to alleviate the anxiety. But it’s a folly to believe that we can “master nature through development.” The actual consequence has been alienation and loss of grounding. Under the auspices of the ideology of development we’ve just been stressing ourselves and stressing the planet. So we need to go in a profoundly different direction—in a sense, re-learning how to relax into the stream and “go with the flow” of the life force—toward re-establishing a healthy relationship with nature. Edward Goldsmith said what’s needed now is a “Great U-Turn.” It would liberate us, gradually putting an end to the over-control, the alienation, and the developmentalist folly. Samuel Alexander frames it in terms of simplification and localization.



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 Masters’ degree in Economics from Rutgers University. He lives in East Windsor, NJ, and is pursuing a project to establish an ecovillage in that state.

Green Independent and the Power of Saying “YES”

KATE SCHROCK

The focus was on sustainable self-government in small communities.

I am walking the Green path here in Maine. I was a delegate in a most disturbing major party national primary a few years back. And on the heals of my disgust and disillusion, I left my party, registered as Green Independent and connected to a vital yet small group here in Portland. This past year I was asked if I would be willing to step up and run as a local green independent candidate for state legislature and I said “yes”.

At our annual convention in Augusta on May 20th I had the pleasure of hearing John Rensenbrink speak. His words struck such a positive chord with me. In essence, he reaffirmed the power of saying “YES”. He told us to look around and find the places where folks are quietly getting on with innovative and sustainable problem solving. His speech has been echoing in my mind for days now.

My grandfather, Dan West, founded the non profit, Heifer International (www.heifer.org). His idea and premise was to find the budding nucleus of positive action in the middle of a dire situation, where only embers of fading hope remained. He pioneered support by listening (not dictating), by learning to understand respectfully, and by carefully gifting with sustainable goods and with education in stewardship. The focus was on sustainable self-government in small communities. The first gifts were young heifers from Indiana farmers to Poland, in the 1940’s following World War II. With each gift of a heifer, the recipient becomes a donor by gifting the calf to another neighbor in need. Through this chain of gifting and careful stewarding of the process, a community of support begins to grow. Innovation and trust within the community is strengthened. Spirits are lifted and people are reconnected.

Growing up with this story, I have always been inspired by off-the-path citizen gathering—local problem solving. Maybe it is also my Amish roots several generations back. (My great grandmother was born Amish but then her family “jumped high” when she was still quite young). Communities would come together and help families in need. Raise a barn, create collective health insurance funds, grieve together, farm together, worship together.

POSITIVE EXAMPLES

Here in Maine, I have stumbled into many humble helping places which give me hope—like the Kennebec Valley Poverty Coalition—which carefully addresses, case by case, small (yet substantial) needs for folks who are struggling...a car tire here...an apartment down-payment there.. baby clothes...whatever. People quietly *being there* for each other. Without judgement or question. A small vital network of citizens helping citizens.

The Recovery Center here in Portland was created and founded by Steven Cotreau, who was instrumental in developing vital support communities in Chicago during the Aids crisis. Necessity was the mother of that invention, and when Steve landed in Maine amidst the opiate crisis decades later, he duplicated this model and partnered up with law enforcement to create Project Hope. And now regions around the state are working to create their own similar support centers – not because they are being told to, but because they are in need and they have reached out, and they have seen that it works. As it turns out, allowing for spiritual connection and community building helps assuage the ravages of addiction.

In Lisbon Falls, Maine, immigrant farmers from Africa, who were initially helped by Heifer International over a decade ago, have now grown beyond their community gardens and have created their own vibrant self-sustaining agricultural industry, now successfully managed by Creating Community in Portland.

These are just a few of the hundreds if not thousands of examples of grassroots problem solving and sustainable community building. It is critically important for us to lift beyond the things we say our emphatic "NO" to, and say "YES" to positive social solutions already in progress.

In 2004 I traveled to Ecuador with H.I. and I toured through regions of extreme poverty to visit projects once supported by H.I. (H.I. had worked themselves out at that point - usually giving only 5 years of "support" and then the projects become self-sustaining). These communities, which were once crime-ridden, impoverished, desperate, disconnected, are now vibrant and spiritually rich. Through the locally directed identification of needs, and the work to carefully problem-solve, these communities, instead of warring with each other, came together to solve their common problems. When I arrived back in the States I was struck by our large isolating neighborhoods and by the many examples of disconnection and struggle. I began asking why was this was so, and how could we help those of us who are struggling right here in the US.

I love finding the places where people truly connect and thrive. I love seeing the micro beer industries bloom here, bringing with them jobs and innovation, Grains being grown again locally on a large level. The micro-breweries are a great example of creative industry which effects positively so many other areas of industry, agriculture, jobs, tourism, and so-on.

The efforts of Maine Farmland Trust are remarkable. This organization helps people, young and old, reclaim old farms and works to protect valuable farmlands. Many of the millennial generation are getting into Oyster farming and other forms of locally based food growing, restaurant stewardship. and on and on.

The Milestone Foundation in downtown Portland is a group of what I call "angels in community" (AIC instead of CIA). They provide the only wet shelter in the city and offer a recovery program. Their staff handles death on the streets daily, weekly. This unique organization works with and has taken a huge financial burden off our municipal local police force and emergency medical facilities. One particular Angel in Community, a retired federal drug officer, now counselor, is one of the most compassionate persons I have ever met. He dreams of creating a hospice-like center for the homeless and dying, so they can have dignity in their last days of life and *not be alone*. A center where family members, lost loved ones have the chance to find their family nucleus and be cared for and supported. I want to help my friend make that vision a reality.

There are millions of positive things happening all over - they are human community and natural miracles.

Lately I am learning the concept of permaculture. As someone who enjoys growing a big garden every year, I understand the

idea of interconnectedness - of timing - of patience - of "ripening" - the quiet observation and gentle support needed for proper nurturing. Nature is powerful beyond our ability to understand. And it is at work at all times. Even in this fantastically crazy time of manic development and global corruption, nature is at work to find balance. This is what I believe. It comes back to the core of understanding and hope that my grandfather envisioned - after witnessing war - after witnessing devastation - and then witnessing renewal. Nature works always to find balance.

OUR FUTURE

The Green Movement is on the threshold of a trajectory of great things. With the adherence to values and dedication to work, in addition to our efforts to say "no" to atrocities we witness daily, we will also look to the beautiful embers of hope and innovation in our communities and beyond, and support those already in motion. These works deserve our focus, our support and a resounding "YES" from us.

I was raised in a fishing community on the Maine Coast and have been a performing song-writer for most of my life. Criss-crossing the US - traveling coast to coast, through the midwest and south. In the process my eyes were opened to widespread economic and social disparity. As I passed through regions of abject poverty and into affluence on a daily basis, it brought up many questions in my mind. And as the past election cycle of 2016 came along, I became a delegate in my home state after hearing an establishment politician speak truthfully regarding our disparate economic and environmental reality. My hopes for a grass-roots movement of truth were dashed as I witnessed our democratic process become intentionally undermined, and our movement compromised. I stumbled into the Greens. And I became vocal on social media.

This past year I said "yes" to run for Maine state legislative office. I began putting small but solid steps forward to connect with others in my own back yard in positive and meaningful ways. As I learn and grow on this path, I see where legislative bills are needed and should be fought for at the local level. I see a future for strong solar power advances and where we need legislation to help the process. I see where we need support for food sovereignty solutions, for a water tax and efforts to preserve aquifers, to protect our state from corporate pilfering, for single-payer health care insurance, and a public avenue not only for insurance options but for healthcare options (why should it cost \$300.00 for a 20 minute doctor visit??) I believe we can help create a more efficient model for the provision of public healthcare which can reach the hundreds of thousands of people in our state still not accessing effective or sufficient health care.

MOVING FORWARD

Bills in the Maine House and Senate such as LD1781 passed recently with bi-partisan support, which asked for 60 million tax break for General Dynamics, a military conglomerate contracted to build war-ships on the mid coast, must be fought against. Why

did our state wish to bail-out operatives in our already bloated US military? I challenge first the idea of the desperate need for military increases, and second the false presumption of a local scarcity of jobs opportunities. Why not look to our local businesses and cottage industries - which are providing jobs in sustaining and growing ways and support them? Why not instead of letting out-of-state corporate-military lobbyists dictate our budgetary focus, and threaten our legislature with false narratives, we look to our locally-owned and growing business solutions already underway? I challenge the notion that we need a military industry producer in our state for our local and global well being. Global economic changes are underway, and unilateral military solutions have become antiquated. Why not retool the ship-building plant, to craft solar and other renewable energy infrastructure - so that we become a leader in the region for renewable energy innovation? We are in a new global era. We can say "no" to the continued wrong direction of militaristic over-development, and say "YES" to a new type of industry which provides jobs and social and environmental stability. This is our new model of "swords into plowshares".

And if we are concerned about growing opportunities for our children, we should invest in them by providing free in-state college tuition and providing a pathway for their personal growth and productivity. We should also be offering aggressive relief to those who are currently struggling with crushing student loan debt.

Maine used to be a breadbasket of agriculture. It can be again. With innovations and technological advances, basic food and

value-added local industry is a renewed and ripening notion which addresses food sovereignty issues and attracts young entrepreneurs into our state. We should be working to support these local based innovators as they seed and grow. And when multi-national out-of-state corporations like NESTLE, come to us to acquire and profit from our natural resources, we must put proper protections and taxes in place first.

We should fight for a constitutional change to expedite Ranked Choice Voting for all offices, including for Governor and the state legislature, to not only honor the overwhelming citizen initiative, but to help broaden the political playing field.

I am eager to go to bat for these issues and I encourage others to take the step to join me. Let's work to effect positive changes for the 99% at all local levels. May we continue to parse through the difficult areas where we must say "no" to find the places where we can say "yes". Let's get inspired by our local groups already in motion and roll up our sleeves beside them. And in the spirit of service and stewardship of our humanity, work to create and pass legislation which moves us in this new era in the right direction. By acting locally, we work globally for the better good.



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Take a Peek Inside: Criticism and Self-Criticism in Growing the Green Party

Building a third party is no easy road. This seems especially true for the Green Party. Its members want so much to succeed. There is high expectation, from friendly non-Greens and within its members, to live up to a high standard of commitment and of walking their talk. For a general discussion of growth in the Green Party, there is little I can say to improve on Darryl Moch's essay in the last issue of *Green Horizon* (Winters/Spring 2018), "An Open Letter: Thinking to Some Purpose." If you have not read it, dig out your copy of GH and peruse it. It really is a blueprint for the future of the Green Party.

ROMI ELNAGAR

There is a saying in Arabic, "A friend is the one who is truthful, not the one who agrees with you" (*sadikak m'n sadakak la m'n saddakak*). It means the friend is the one who confronts you with what you have been doing wrong, even making you cry with remorse.

One indispensable process in the organizer's toolbox is the practice of regular self-examination, aided by constructive criticism from all who share common goals. Saul Alinsky stated as much when he reportedly said, "Organize off your mistakes." He meant that if we recognize what we have done wrong, and analyze them, our mistakes can guide us in creating social change. Our mistakes often come out of the spiritual damage that we have suffered in this sick society. We are part of that society, and whether we want to admit it or not, we have absorbed some of its faults, even though we strive to overcome them. "Organize off your mistakes," implies a process of constructive self-evaluation as a means of renewal and growth. In the process, we also gain insight into how to reach those who have not yet recognized their errors, and see how we can help them to change themselves.

After all, the fact that you are sitting here now reading this article means that:

1. You speak English, the language of the British Empire, which colonized so much of the globe. The American Empire has carried on where Britain left off, and so now English is the lingua franca around the world, a fact that always made me uncomfortable even as I accepted that my students needed English to succeed.
2. You read English. Probably it was some underpaid teacher who taught you spelling and punctuation.
3. You have the time to sit here and read this. You don't have to work so hard for a living that you can only come home, and wolf down junk food as you crash in front of the TV.
4. Publishing this magazine depends on an industrial base that manufactures everything necessary to produce magazines, with all that this implies about labor and capital and the environment, including cheating workers of their pay, and the production of paper from trees and electricity for the computers and telephones authors and editors need.

One indispensable process in the organizer's toolbox is the practice of regular self-examination, aided by constructive criticism from all who share common goals.

"Organize off your mistakes," implies a process of constructive self-evaluation as a means of renewal and growth.

So, while we criticize our society for its colonialism (#1) and its treatment of teachers (#2), and capitalism for the injustice of the income gap and abuse of workers (#3) and its abuse of the environment (#4), we must understand our complicity in capitalism's wrongs.

Greens hopefully have not wittingly or unwittingly engaged in other social evils: militarism, racism, sexism, discrimination against the poor, etc. If we have, we must acknowledge that to the victims, and make restitution as best we can. That's not easy, but George Wallace did it, and blacks—whose ability to be gracious and forgiving is sometimes incomprehensible to me—indeed forgave him.

We shouldn't expect victims to forgive, though. Forgiveness is best, but no one has the right to tell victims they must forgive, as the Qur'an admonishes. The real restitution must be to work for a just society in which people are not victimized because of race, gender or poverty.

The zeal and commitment of activists with a socialist perspective should be a welcome infusion into the Green Party. There is much to learn from them, and they, in turn, can widen their perspective with insights from Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, and from a large number of ecological thinkers.

Marxist leaders have often exhorted their comrades to practice self-criticism, and one discussion of self-criticism is in the Open Letter on Criticism-Self-Criticism by the Workers Congress (Marxist-Leninist) and Friends from the East Coast.

"Disunity can be overcome by starting from a desire for unity, distinguishing right from wrong through criticism or struggle, and arriving at a new unity on a new basis... Criticism and self-criticism is a method; it is the method of resolving contradictions among the people and indeed the only method."

When self-criticism is practiced in a group, and particularly if *everyone* in the group is encouraged to engage in *mea culpa*'s, as in the Catholic Church, it can build group solidarity.

Another reason for critiquing in groups is to avoid the problem

of people demanding others to engage in self-criticism, but don't do it themselves.

Of course, such practice of self-criticism in a group setting must be done to improve the behavior of members of the group, not to censure, punish or force conformity to an oppressive model or regime. It needs to be carried out with the same spirit of *constructive* criticism that analysis from other members of the group is done, and not as self-destructive fault-finding.

THE VITAL NEED FOR SELF-EXAMINATION

My mother used to tell me, "Be careful when you point a finger. Remember! You're pointing three back at yourself!" The Christian Bible asks, " Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:3)

We don't want to be part of the problem, but part of the solution. So, before we start making accusations of others, we must examine our own motives and actions. People who have served in the institutions of capitalism must recognize their parts as cogs in the machine. This is especially true of people who have contributed in any capacity to the largest military on the planet, including producing research used by it.

Many in the Green Party advocate "socialism" and "Marxism" as paths the Green Party should follow, without saying what exactly is meant by those terms. To be sure, Greens agree that large and multinational corporations are the greatest single despoilers of the environment, the worst abusers of labor, and the greatest threats to democracy and peace. Yet, socialism has been tried in a myriad of states, from the U.S.S.R., Maoist China and Cuba, to the Scandinavian countries, and except for the latter form—which was not preceded by a revolutionary change in the socio-economic system—socialism failed to retain power over time, ending not in the "withering away of the state," but in corrupt capitalist regimes.

Why?

One might expect that socialists would engage in constructive self-criticism to discover the reasons for these developments. If we want to go forward in a socialist direction, we need to know the results of such self-examinations. Is self-examination

something that once was preached, but is now no longer practiced by socialists?

GREENS AND SELF-CRITICISM

Carl Rogers, of the German Greens, analyzed that Party's setback in the German Parliament in December, 1990:

"So why did the voters turn away from our farsighted Green policies on December 2, 1990?"... eight years of self-destructive and fruitless infighting among our various factions had paralyzed our political activities and created an atmosphere steeped in jealousy and distrust, and this was too much even for the Greenest voter. In the course of eight years in Parliament, our internal feuds grew worse and worse. We became intolerant, know-it-all, and smug about passing the 5 percent hurdle. In weekly intervals, we fought our battles in the most aggressive and inhumane ways, often denouncing each other, quarreling, and pointing fingers at whatever faction was unwelcome at that particular moment. We could not succeed if the ways we treated each other made more headlines than the substance and aims of our policies."

Rogers goes on to say, "We will survive as a party only if our electoral defeat is the starting point of a new learning phase for us. We have to confront our grievances and failings..."

"I hope that other Green parties will learn from our mistakes...and...learn to avoid rigid structures and pressures that punished those we elected as speakers or leaders. Our party has not solved the problem of how to deal with committed, energetic, and credible personalities. Each time an individual stood out as committed, working very hard for the party and receiving much support, there was envy, jealousy, and constant attacks for the work that person did."

Are we in the Green Party here in the US falling prey to the same errors Rogers describes?

Furthermore, we need to accept that people come to understand and support Green values after a lifetime of living in, and contributing to, a militaristic, oppressive society. After all, if we didn't accept people from such backgrounds, how would we grow in strength?

The Green Party cannot become a rigid organization with Procrustean requirements for membership. Just because someone served in the Vietnam War doesn't mean they are violent, another William Calley. People like Col. Ann Wright and Ray McGovern, who have worked for the government and defense contractors—he military-industrial complex (the "MIC")—and understand their workings as well as anybody, are often the strongest, most knowledgeable opponents of those institutions.

If people come to the Green Party after having worked in the MIC, the party should welcome them and realize the true nature and import of their work. Such people can be part of the struggle to "stop the military madness" in ways people innocent of involvement in militarism cannot.

DANGERS OF CRITICISM AND SELF-CRITICISM

In confronting our colleagues in the struggle for social justice, we are obliged to do so in the clear understanding that the purpose of such challenges is to enlighten. It is not to demonstrate our own moral superiority or to gain power in the group at the expense of others. Such purposes are destructive to the growth of the Party.

Rogers says, "Some of my most painful times within the party were those concerning my commitments to human rights in Tibet and the democracy movement in China. Over and over, I was belittled and ridiculed by our dogmatic leftwing that seemed to become more and more selective on human rights issues. There were others who were not quite honest about why they had joined the Green Party, who saw nonviolence not as a philosophy and way of life, but simply as a tactic."

...while we must criticize...capitalism for the injustice of the income gap
and abuse of workers and the environment,
we must understand our complicity in capitalism's wrongs.

If people come to the Green Party after having worked in the MIC (Military Industrial Complex), we should welcome them. They can be part of the struggle to "stop the military madness" in ways people innocent of involvement in militarism cannot.

Asam Ahmad is a Canadian black who writes about criticism among groups on the Left. He says in his essay on "A Note on Call-out Culture,"

"Call-out culture refers to the tendency among progressives, radicals, activists, and community organizers to publicly name instances or patterns of oppressive behaviour and language use by others. People can be called out for statements and actions that are sexist, racist, ableist, and the list goes on. *Because call-outs tend to be public, they can enable a particularly armchair and academic brand of activism: one in which the act of calling out is seen as an end in itself.* (Italics mine)

"What makes call-out culture so toxic is not necessarily its frequency so much as the nature and performance of the call-out itself. Especially in online venues like Twitter and Facebook, calling someone out isn't just a private interaction between two individuals: it's a public performance where people can demonstrate their wit or how pure their politics are. Indeed, sometimes it can feel like the performance itself is more significant than the content of the call-out. ...

"In the context of call-out culture, it is easy to forget that the individual we are calling out is a human being. Call-out culture can end up mirroring what the prison industrial complex teaches us about crime and punishment: to banish and dispose of individuals rather than to engage with them as people with complicated stories and histories."

Ahmad goes on to suggest that there is a "totalitarian undercurrent" to the way progressive communities define who is part of the community and who is not.

He says, "...when people are reduced to their identities of privilege (as white, cisgender, male, etc.) and mocked as such, it means we're treating each other as if our individual social locations *stand in* for the total systems those parts of our identities represent. Individuals become synonymous with systems of oppression, and this can turn systemic analysis into moral judgment..."

Ahmad ends by reminding us that, "...there are ways to call people out that do not reduce individuals to agents of social advantage. There are ways of calling people out that are compassionate and creative, and that recognize the whole individual instead of viewing them simply as representations of the systems from which they benefit."

This is the Green Way, the way of peace and nonviolence. We cannot do better than to heed Ahmad's call.



ROMI ELNAGAR

is a retired teacher-librarian who has written for *Green Horizon* on social issues involving nuclear power, Native America, and Islam. She has worked for social change beginning with opposition to the war in Vietnam. At UC Davis, her history degree emphasized colonialism in the Third World and American labor history.

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A New Movement for Ecovillagers

This is the first of a projected two-part series focusing on innovative ways to foster places of equity, integrity, and sustainability.

BY JOEL ROTHSCHILD
ECOVILLAGERS ALLIANCE

A TALE OF TWO ECOVILLAGES

Gaia's Dance Ecovillage started with beautiful intentions. The founders were visionaries who saw the power of place could be equal to, perhaps greater than, the power of institutions or electoral politics. While others built companies, organizations, and political campaigns, Gaia's Dance went back to the basis of human life, the Land, and used this most powerful of foundations to build a physical manifestation of our values.

What did we achieve? Today the Ecovillage is an inspirational place. The community generates a third of the electricity it uses, it grows a fifth of the calories it consumes, and its waste and carbon footprints are half those of the neighboring subdivisions. A spirit of independence shines in the children running in packs around the Common grounds, queer and non-monogamous residents living their lives openly without judgment, and the Free Store overflowing with books on every subject known to humankind. It is a vibrant and warm community, where no one eats or drinks alone who doesn't want to and no one gets sick or depressed without daily offerings of support. Yet many introverts enjoy well-respected solitude and clean freaks happily keep their distinctly tidy homes. Flowing through it all is a *culture*, a palpably different, greener, more self-sufficient culture of love and nonviolence toward each other and all living things.

And what did we *not* achieve? Today, the Ecovillage is a tease. It's a diamond in a glass case locked up by market forces. The land was already a rare find in the '90s. Now competition for parcels to build on is a losing game against swarms of deep-pocketed developers. What we hoped would inspire a movement of exponentially more ecovillages, until sustainability became a mainstream way of life, has proven too hard to replicate. Instead of a template for sister ecovillages throughout the area, Gaia's Dance is, in a sense, a negative inspiration too. Standing alone, it inspires many to see sustainability as a strange, niche lifestyle.

It doesn't help that the Ecovillage is so white. It doesn't help that its ownership structure, which once made debt financing easier to come by, now makes it hard for the community to offer affordable housing. It doesn't help that the community's governance, devised by the founders, is resistant to the adaptations younger residents want. It doesn't help that the location is far from the jobs, families, and community institutions most people rely on, especially most people of color. If enough additional people experienced ecovillage life, maybe their spirit could overcome the barriers to starting new ecovillages, but the barriers to joining Gaia's Dance may be just as high.

The movement started with beautiful intentions and produced some of the world's most inspiring places, yet after three decades its impacts on society are negligible.

Why?

(NOT JUST LIKE) STARTING OVER

Gaia's Dance isn't a real ecovillage, but the story of its triumphs and its limitations is, arguably, the real story of the global north's ecovillage movement as a whole. The movement started with beautiful intentions and produced some of the world's most inspiring places, yet after three decades its impacts on society are negligible. Why?

When Robert Gilman first articulated "The Eco-village Challenge" in 1991, the "eco-village" was an idealized vision of future human settlement and the "challenge" was a checklist for getting there. Dutifully, the pioneers of ecovillage design tackled that checklist, answering questions like "how will decisions be made?" and "what are sustainable economic activities?"

Before laying out the work to be done in these cogently-organized bullet points, Gilman asks a profound question: "If eco-villages are such a great idea, why don't we already live in them?" He suggests an equally profound answer:

Industrial society has the momentum of hundreds of years of institution building and capital development. Given the enormous infrastructure and social patterning in place, it has so far been much easier for people to keep living in the same old unsustainable ways [...]

And then, a tragic turn! Instead of asking, "how can these hundreds of years of industrial capitalist momentum be resisted and subverted?" Gilman simply announces, "we are at the very beginning of a new era!" As though declaring the dawn of the Age of Aquarius erases capitalism's history or the immense power of all that social patterning.

So the "eco-village challenge" was conceived as a societal do-over, premised on the wishful thought that anyone can start from a clean slate. And this is how many an ecovillage project has been conceived, free of the expectation that capitalism, racism, and every other harmful "ism" would sneak in alongside our beautiful intentions like a virus at the playground.

GIMME SHELTER (FROM STRUCTURAL OPPRESSION)

Of course, wishing away our real circumstances only gives them more power. Any institution assuming itself "color-blind" is almost certainly awash in unconscious racial bias, to take just one example. Ecovillages and intentional communities of all kinds have tended to assume that the mission is to start over, therefore

We should see our purpose not as teleporting out of a broken society but healing it from within.

we do not have to build from the compromised resources—and people—that we've already got, and indeed we shouldn't.

So a typical project *will* begin with a committee to vet members and ensure that only "evolved" people join, magically pre-endowed with good ecovillagey values. A typical project will *not* begin with, say, anti-oppression training for all would-be members irrespective of how evolved they may be.

A typical project *will* begin with a decision to adopt this or that democratic decision-making model. A typical project will *not* begin by assessing the community's capacity to practice democracy in the first place, identifying and planning how to mitigate the obstacles to full, equitable engagement like educational and cultural differences, sexism, racism, trauma, and learned aversion to power.

A typical project *will* begin with a search for the perfect piece of land, ideally land unencumbered by housing and workplaces built the bad old way. So-called "greenfield" development is anything but green. New construction, even the most LEED Super-Plus Eco-Groovy new construction, rarely has a smaller ecological footprint overall than retrofitting the buildings we already have, and that's to say nothing of the transportation and infrastructure costs of building farther from existing hubs. Yet a typical project will not even consider existing neighborhoods as potential ecovillage sites, and the urban ecovillages of North America can still be counted on one hand. The presumption is that those buildings, and the people in them, don't want to be part of an ecovillage. Maybe they're even unfit to be. No wonder the movement stays small!

Perhaps most insidiously, a typical project begins in debt, usually multiple bank loans for land and construction and home mortgages. Debt is capitalism's prescription for every kind of fresh start: a first home, a new business, an ecovillage. It is even seen as equalizing—better to shoulder debt together as equals than for one rich member to own half the land! These dangerous illusions trick us two ways. We may assume the pre-existing wealth gap between community members can be left at the door and won't show up in unintended power dynamics over time, which, if we aren't on the lookout, it surely will. And we may fail to recognize debt itself as a means of structural oppression, ensuring the powerless remain powerless and the powerful gain power.

Structural oppression cannot be resisted passively, *given the enormous infrastructure and social patterning in place*. If forced to choose between affordable housing or repaying a construction loan, even the most progressive community will tend to favor the bank, even though cash-strapped members are committed to their community and the bank is not. In imagining that we can start over, literally moving out of a sick world and into a healed one, we tend to skip past the *healing process*, which is where any movement's true power lies waiting.

PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT, PROCESS BEFORE PRODUCT

I can't count the intentional communities I visited before the LA EcoVillage ("LAEV"), but when I stepped inside I saw

immediately that this community took a more realistic approach, one with more promise to change the world. LAEV was conceived as a platform for activism in the city, evidenced by the class on cooperativism, open to the public, taking place in the commons the moment I walked in, as well as by the community food hub and the bicycle co-op and countless public programs.

LAEV is retrofit from buildings that already stood in Koreatown, a central LA neighborhood rich in access to services and institutions, and also histories of violence and abuse. The LA EcoVillagers never imagined they could just start over. People needed help, so they created a center for work that heals. When LAEV bought its original apartment building, everyone there was invited to stay put, either as members of the ecovillage's new housing co-op, if they chose to join, or otherwise as tenants like they were before. Everyone was assumed to be a potential ecovillager.

If the typical ecovillage is somewhat of a bubble, LAEV tries to be more like a living lung, breathing in, breathing out, supporting life amidst the dust and toxins. Those "hundreds of years of institution building and capital development" are taken as a given, along with the brokenness and trauma they have wrought. Rather than futilely declare the status quo's abusive patterns null and void, this approach embraces them as opportunities to come together and help each other repair.

LAEV's mechanisms for owning and financing real estate are also designed to be a healing part of the industrial capitalist world as we know it. A community land trust protects the ecovillage's land, and therefore its residents, from the profit-seeking property market. A limited-equity housing co-op gives all residents the opportunity to hold wealth in their homes—a common financial need and, for the historically marginalized, a form of financial justice—without allowing property speculation to pass inequity forward. Perhaps most radical, LAEV was not financed with institutional debt, but rather through a kind of financial barn-raising that involved hundreds of individuals lending modest amounts to support the cause.

Of all the ecovillages one could photograph, Los Angeles is perhaps the last one you'd pick for a glossy magazine. There are no architect-designed eco-buildings. It is not surrounded by lush forest. Its deepest beauty is in the diversity of its people and the organic, healing nature of its processes, first and foremost its *social* processes. People and process were always LAEV's driving priorities, coming before this exciting building technique or that photogenic landscape design. In short, its weaknesses as a marketable product are its very strengths as a human community, and as a model for others to follow.

A MOVEMENT FOR ECOVILLAGERS

It is also true that there is only one Los Angeles EcoVillage. One could echo Robert Gilman's question three decades ago and ask, why aren't we already all living like the LA EcoVillagers? The answer too could ring familiar: The inertia of industrial capitalism

Structural oppression cannot be resisted passively, given the enormous infrastructure and social patterning in place.

continues to perpetuate itself, through many attempts to envision (and finance, market, and sell) community as a product, rather than as a people- and process-centered social movement.

The good news is, contrary to the ecovillage in its 1990s formulation, today's social movements aren't taking their first baby steps. We have generations-deep wells of wisdom and technique to draw upon, including, but by no means limited to, the lessons of LAEV's experiments.

When we see our purpose not as teleporting out of a broken society but healing it from within, we find ourselves among many comrades, such as those organizing for racial justice, labor equity, cooperatives and the "solidarity economy," restorative justice, queer rights, non-"traditional" families, and gender equity. These and other aligned movements already bring healing, education, and empowerment of just the sort an ecovillage needs for its ecovillagers. At the same time, the work of these movements is often made more difficult by the housing and gentrification crisis, environmental injustice, and the lack of community control of land—exactly what a well-organized movement of ecovillagers could and should offer to remedy.

In the second of this two-part series, we'll summarize the many years' work underway to make LA-style ecovillaging more accessible to neighborhood organizers everywhere, starting with cities and towns in the US Mid-Atlantic region. A spectrum of co-op and community land trust principles have been distilled into a holistic method for cooperative property investment and stewardship that organizers can use in existing communities.

We'll describe how the Community Land Co-op combines cooperative investment with community-based education and grassroots democracy to hold space for equity, justice, and sustainability at the neighborhood level. Finally, we'll dip into some of the activist possibilities for ecovillage neighborhood-based racial injustice reparations, ecological repair, and economic re-localization.



THE ECOVILLAGERS ALLIANCE (EVA)

is a nonprofit coalition of educators, healers, storytellers, and organizers dedicated to cultivating Community Land Co-ops in service to ecovillagers and ecovillage neighborhoods across the US. Joel Rothschild is an EVA founder and servant-leader. Once part of the Ravenna Kibbutz community in Seattle, today Joel lives in the city of Lancaster, PA, at the site of a new ecovillage neighborhood in formation. Joel is also working to organize Moshav Derekh Shalom, a residential center for the study and practice of nonviolence to be part of the Lancaster ecovillage.

A Pathway Back to Electoral Activism

MADELYN R. HOFFMAN

After the 2000 election, I thought it might take a generation for the nation's alternative parties to recover from the vilification that Nader's campaign received.

It seems like the country is ready for "more voices and more choices" in the electoral arena, even if the leadership of the establishment parties is not.

Running for elected office again was the furthest thought from my mind and has been since I ran for US Congress in New Jersey in 1998, twenty years ago. Prior to that race, I had been on the New Jersey ticket as Ralph Nader's vice-presidential running mate in 1996—on the basis of having worked with dozens of grass roots environmental organizations and local governments on matters of toxic chemical pollution. Following that, in 1997, I ran for New Jersey governor as a Green.

After being harshly criticized for running against a "progressive Democrat" (Rush Holt) in 1998, I lost my enthusiasm for representing the Green Party in subsequent elections. In addition, I got a full-time job as the Executive Director of a then-40-year-old nonprofit organization dedicated to nuclear disarmament and striving to shift federal spending away from the military toward programs that address community needs such as education, public transportation, environmental protection and more. Working for a nonprofit, I had to remain "politically neutral." In fact, it took a couple of years before members of the organization trusted that I would perform my responsibilities as Executive Director without showing political bias toward the Greens.

So much has happened in the world—and in US politics—since 1998. In 2000, Al Gore (D) lost the presidential election to George W. Bush (R) and Ralph Nader was demonized for having supposedly drawn crucial votes away from Gore. Unfortunately, this analysis missed many other important reasons for Al Gore's loss. He failed to carry Bill Clinton's home state of Arkansas. He failed to carry his own state of Tennessee! Nonetheless, he still would have been declared the winner of the race if he had successfully fought for a thorough recount of the Florida vote. Seemingly ambivalent, Gore acquiesced when the US Supreme Court prematurely terminated the recount process, basically throwing the election to George W. Bush.

The presence of Nader in the presidential races of 1996 and 2000 provided a convenient whipping post for Democrats, and arguably made some voters oppose the development of a third party. I remember thinking at the time that it might take a generation, 20 years or more, for the nation's alternative parties to recover from the vilification that Nader's campaign received.

Well, here we are, about 20 years later, and the Green Party is not only alive and well in New Jersey, it is increasingly active in many electoral campaigns throughout the state. In 2018 it has been running two high visibility campaigns—my own for US Senate against incumbent Democrat Robert Menendez and Republican challenger Bob Hugin, and Diane Moxley's for US Congress in District 7 against Republican incumbent Leonard Lance and Democrat Tim Malinowski.

The need for alternatives to the two mainstream political parties is greater now than ever. It certainly seems like the country is ready for "more voices and more choices"—as Nader advocated—even if the leadership of the establishment parties is not. The popularity of Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump's victory in 2016 showed that many voters rallied around a message that differed from the tired old Democratic and Republican party platforms. Worried about political parties taking them for granted, independent and young voters were attracted to one or another anti-establishment candidate. For Democratic-leaning independents, Sanders' socialist, inclusive message brought them out in droves. For those leaning Republican, the message that Washington, D.C. is broken, corrupted by big money, and committed to policies Trump branded antithetical to American interests had a resonance that, unfortunately, brought out a nativist, racist,

and xenophobic current within the electorate.

In any case, voter disenchantment with the ultimate candidates of both mainstream parties was historically high. The total vote for third-party candidates in a national election usually is in the two- to three-percent range. In 2016 it exceeded five percent. Given the inclination to vote “out of the box,” 2016 could have presented a great opening for a candidate like Jill Stein. If our national elections were organized differently, with instant run-off or preference voting, it is likely that a significant proportion of the electorate would have been ready to consider Stein’s distinctly progressive platform—speaking out for single-payer health care and demilitarization, both of which would save money, freeing up billions of dollars for education, the environment, public transportation and more.

This tendency toward listening to independent voices and the need to address the problem of endless wars are the main reasons I decided to run for US Senate in 2018. Another is the fact that, for years, New Jersey Senator Robert Menendez’s votes on many proposed wars or diplomatic agreements placed him in opposition to the peace movement. We were distressed to see him take anti-progressive positions toward the Iran Deal, US material support for the Saudi-led war on Yemen, and any legislation involving Israel, in particular. So my sense was that a peace-oriented challenger in the race would be most welcome. Cries of “spoiler” are sure to be muffled because of the Democratic incumbent’s track record.

This is also a propitious time for Green politics in New Jersey. Momentum is building from last year’s Seth Kaper-Dale run for governor with feminist activist Lisa Durden on the ticket for Lieutenant Governor. Among other issues, their campaign was strong on immigration reform and the need for sanctuary cities. Earlier this year, “A People’s Movement,” or AMP, ran a slate for Newark City Council. Three of the four candidates were endorsed by the Green Party. Victor Monterossa, Jr., Anthony Diaz, Hellane Freeman and Tanisha Garner ran a progressive campaign in direct opposition to Mayor Ras Baraka’s political machine. One of their main issues was the need for the local government to protect affordable housing and to oppose continued efforts by developers to gentrify Newark. Johnnie Lattner ran with Green Party endorsement for the Newark Board of Education, the first local election for school board in Newark in 22 years (the state took control of the school district in 1995 due to allegations of mismanagement). In Paterson, Zellie Thomas ran for city council. He was endorsed by the Democratic Socialists of America, Black Lives Matter and the Greens. Zellie was proud of the fact that he spent a good amount of time speaking to homeless people and others whom the electoral system generally leaves out.

Diane Moxley (US House candidate) and I (US Senate candidate) both have long histories of social activism. We are both committed to challenging the duopoly and the electoral system that consistently marginalizes low-to-moderate income people, members of the LGBTQ community, labor unions and the immigrant community, along with Muslims, African-

Americans and Latinx communities. Our campaigns have generated many comments, ranging from the standard begging for the candidates to withdraw from the race to “allow” the Democrat to win, to applause that the issues of war and peace will finally be raised in a public forum, since no mainstream political party offers even token opposition to the every-growing military budget and the US foreign policy of endless war.

Our two federal-office campaigns will also have to address the idea promoted by the Democrats that Vladimir Putin and Russia meddled in the 2016 US elections. The hysteria around this accusation not only attempts to absolve the Democrats from any responsibility for their lackluster presidential campaign, it also casts suspicion on candidates critical of US foreign policy, even those supportive of the peace talks between the US and North Korea, an initiative sought by South Korea. This hyper-partisanship damages domestic policies and acts as a brake on promoting positive programs for peace. We believe that it makes the presence of an independent political party vitally important—even while painting a target on *our* backs as candidates!

As Greens, we are uniquely positioned to tell the truth about how both mainstream political parties have lost their ability to discuss, let alone implement, policies that benefit the people, both here at home and overseas. We have no corporate donors to alienate and no large PACs to appease (like AIPAC, for example), thus no reason to compromise the truth. If we are pushed to back down, there is no big donor who will pressure us to do so. We can criticize the Israeli occupation forces, the playing of politics with DACA and immigration, corporate take-over of public education, or the ridiculous proposals for a border-spanning wall between the US and Mexico. We’ll bring independent voices to the race, equally as critical of the Democrats as of the Republicans.

For me, personally, 2018 represents an unusual and welcomed opportunity to return to electoral politics—20 years older, wiser and more radicalized! Over that time, the dysfunctionality of the American political system has become increasingly evident, the establishment parties have steadily lost support, and the electorate has expressed a desire for alternative candidates. Ralph Nader’s call for “more voices and more choices” has never been more appropriate!



MADELYN HOFFMAN

was a founder of the Grass Roots Environmental Organization (GREO, based in Newark, NJ) and worked as its Director for 15 years (1983-1998). She served as the Executive Director of New Jersey Peace Action from August 2000 through May 2018. Her commitment to peace has taken her to Afghanistan, Tunisia, Japan, Syria, Israel and Palestine. Her blog “[Middle East] Mix-Up” was launched in early 2015. Madelyn ran with the Green Party in 1996 as Ralph Nader’s vice-presidential running mate for the state of New Jersey and then for Governor in 1997 and for US Congress in 1998. An Adjunct Professor of Political Science, Madelyn has a B.A. *cum laude* from Wesleyan University and an MPA from Rutgers-Newark.

What Ranked Choice Voting Means in Practice

ROB RICHIE

In the first half of 2018, nearly half a million voters ranked their choices in elections for the most important offices in their communities. Voters in Santa Fe, New Mexico elected their first full-time mayor, voters in San Francisco elected their mayor in a hotly contested special election, and voters in Maine ranked their choices in state and congressional primary elections.

Greens and other third party backers have been key players in the rise of ranked choice voting (RCV) because it enables voters to indicate support for their favorite candidate without the worry that doing so will help elect their least favorite, and candidates can earn their true level of support unaffected by the usual “spoiler” charges. We’ve now seen RCV in action enough to know it works. And we know it can win. It’s a great time to try to win RCV, from elections for president to local leaders.

Looking at the 2018 results shows:

- Voter turnout surpassed expectations.
- Implementation of RCV was smooth and inexpensive.
- Voters used the ballot well, ranking their choices and making few errors.
- Outcomes were fair, with winners earning both core and broad support.

These benefits come from an easy change: allowing voters to rank their preferences among the candidates: first, second and so on. The tally then simulates a series of runoffs in which the last-place candidate is defeated, and ballots for that candidate go to their next choice until someone wins with a majority of the vote.

SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO: Santa Fe first adopted a charter amendment for RCV in 2008, with the Green Party’s Rick Lass playing a central role. Because Santa Fe historically relies on the state for voter equipment, implementation was delayed. However, after New Mexico added new software to its machines, RCV could finally be implemented for its elections in March, although it took great community organizing and a lawsuit to ensure it happened. Five strong mayoral candidates ran. Alan Webber won with 66 percent of the vote after leading in the first round with 39 percent. One city council race was also decided decisively in an instant runoff.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA: San Francisco has used RCV since 2004, after Greens were key players in a 2002 ballot measure win. Following the death of Mayor Ed Lee, the city called a special election that would take place during the state primary elections on June 5. Eight candidates ran, with three frontrunners: Board of Supervisors President London Breed, former state Senator Mark Leno, and Supervisor Jane Kim. Both Kim (a former Green Party activist) and Breed had campaigned well under RCV in upset wins for the Board of Supervisors, and Leno had helped the city adopt RCV in 2002. Sharing many policy positions, Leno and Kim each asked their supporters to rank themselves first and the other second. Breed led in first choices by 12% and won the final instant runoff by 1%.

MAINE CONGRESSIONAL AND STATE PRIMARIES: In 2016, Mainers voted to become the first state to adopt RCV for all of their state and congressional elections in a great citizen-

led campaign. The new law then faced a gauntlet of legislative and legal challenges from incumbents, but ultimately the will of the people prevailed. RCV was used for the first time in Maine's partisan primary elections on June 12, with seven Democrats and four Republicans running for governor. Four Democrats were also on the ballot for the 2nd Congressional District primary. Janet Mills won the Democratic nomination for governor, and Jared Golden won the Democratic nomination for the CD-2, with both candidates securing decisive majorities after an instant runoff. Shawn Moody won the Republican nomination for governor on the first round, and the one state legislative primary with more than two candidates was won on the first count as well.

In the same election, Maine voters voted to keep using RCV in its November general elections for congressional offices and in future congressional and state primary elections. RCV doubled its 2016 victory margin. Because of an adverse ruling by Maine's highest court, RCV will not be used for general elections for governor and state legislature without a change to the state constitution, but Mainers seem determined win RCV for all their elections.

VOTER TURNOUT: In San Francisco, turnout was nearly 53 percent, far higher than the 29.7% percent turnout in the June 2014 primary without RCV. The state primary average this year was 38 percent. A total of 250,868 voters cast a vote, which was far higher than votes for governor and US Senate. The Maine primary drew the most Democrats in Maine's primary history. Republican turnout was higher than in all but one of their gubernatorial primaries since 1998. In Santa Fe, 20,604 voters cast a valid vote for mayor, topping the highest turnout in any recent mayoral election, including the 17,022 votes cast in a comparably contested mayoral race without RCV in 2014. Local news emphasized the high number of candidate debates and overflowing attendance—with many apparently desiring to learn more about the full field.

We're seeing more candidates running with a good understanding of how RCV is grounded in reaching out directly to as many voters as possible. High voter turnout continued the 2017 trend. When all four cities with RCV contests -- Minneapolis (MN), St. Paul (MN), Cambridge (MA), and Takoma Park (MD) – had surges in turnout.

VOTER EXPERIENCE AND USE OF RCV BALLOTS: The evidence from RCV in practice plainly shows that voters are comfortable ranking their choices. This year had extremely low invalidating overvote rates across RCV elections with different ballot designs and systems, including only 0.13% in Santa Fe's five-candidate mayoral election, 0.25% in San Francisco's eight-candidate mayoral race, 0.24% in Maine Democrats' second congressional district primary with four candidates, and 0.34% in Maine Democrats' seven-candidate gubernatorial primary. Voter error that invalidated ballots was far higher in the non-RCV race for governor in San Francisco.

In Santa Fe, a large and representative exit poll found that 94% reported being satisfied with their voting experience, and that their level of confidence in the process was higher than that of

New Mexico voters statewide in the 2016 presidential election. Of those who voted in the mayoral contest, 65% ranked all five candidates, and 88% ranked at least two. In San Francisco, 85.4% of voters ranked at least two. In Maine Democratic primaries for Congress and Governor, nearly nine in ten voters ranked two. All of Maine's RCV winners earned absolute majorities of the first round vote. In contrast, runoff winners in more than half of the 23 congressional primary winners this year actually earned fewer runoff votes than in the first round.

Implementation details varied significantly across the three jurisdictions. Both Santa Fe and San Francisco used equipment that allowed the round-by-round tallies to be released immediately once ballots were processed, meaning that they ran RCV tallies on election night, and RCV results were final as soon as ballots were processed. Maine's election took longer to report final RCV results, because it took longer for the ballot data to arrive in the state capital.

FAIRNESS OF OUTCOMES: HOW RCV CANDIDATES SEEK BROADER SUPPORT: RCV has many benefits, but probably the most intuitive is ensuring that winners earn more support. RCV routinely outperforms either single-choice plurality or two-round runoff election systems by this measure, serving to avoid situations where the winner earned only low plurality or were elected in a low-turnout runoff election. An additional way of measuring success at voter engagement is to consider what proportion of the voters highly ranked the winner. This measure does not affect the outcome, of course, but expands the result beyond the relative support of the winner compared to their rivals.

Every RCV race in 2018 has been won by a candidate who was ranked in their top three by at least 60% of voters. Such levels of support demonstrate that even many of those backing the strongest challenger are comfortable with the winner. Despite a hard fought and extremely close mayoral election in San Francisco, for example, 47% of 2nd place finisher Mark Leno's voters and 37% of third-place finisher Jane Kim's voters ranked the winner London Breed among their top three candidates. Winners in these races are earning a more convincing mandate and have compelling reasons to govern in ways that satisfy more voters.

CONCLUSION: Places with RCV are experiencing healthy, positive campaigns that are drawing relatively high turnout from voters. Voters seem to appreciate the opportunity to rank their choices, and they do so without making serious errors when compared to non-ranked contests. Winners emerge with greater consensus support in their communities and real mandates. It's time to make it a national norm.



ROB RICHIE

is president and CEO of FairVote. His colleagues Drew Penrose and Theo Landsman helped with this article. FairVote is holding a series of regional activist summits in the rest of 2018.

Got Democracy?

JILL STEIN

The 2016 presidential recount was a demand for elections we can trust, that are accurate, secure and just, and free from the scourge of Jim Crow.

The 2016 Presidential recount was not simply a call to retabulate the vote. It was a demand for elections we can trust, that are accurate, secure and just, and free from the scourge of Jim Crow. With democracy increasingly under fire, trustworthy elections are more critical than ever.

As you might remember, the recount initiative was launched several weeks after the 2016 election was concluded. It called for verifying the vote in three states with vulnerable voting machines and statistically unlikely results that begged for verification—including large deviations from exit polls and high numbers of ballots with blank presidential lines. While democracies around the world use recounts as a routine safeguard, the US recounts were fought tooth and nail by the Republican Party establishment and largely ignored by the Democratic Party leadership. In Michigan, political operatives leaned on partisan judges to stop the recount. In Pennsylvania, thousands of voters calling for a recount were thwarted by a bureaucratic nightmare of vague, obstructive rules (requiring at least three voters in each of 9,000+ precincts to file notarized requests by undefined deadlines at unknown locations; all within mere days following the election). In Wisconsin, under-resourced communities of color were denied a reliable hand recount, having their votes recounted instead by machines whose accuracy was in doubt.

VOTING MACHINE SOURCE-CODE MUST BE SUBJECT TO EXAMINATION

Incredibly, despite years of warnings from experts about the vulnerability of voting machines, there has never been an in-depth examination of voting machine source-code after an election. Such an examination, which should be conducted by computer voting experts, would check for evidence of human error, intentional interference, or tampering—whether by foreign powers, criminal networks, domestic partisans, or corporations that control the voting software.

Given the evidence of cyberattacks on multiple components of the voting system in 2016, as well as the general systemic hacking that has become so commonplace, the need for cross-checking the cybersecurity of our elections is paramount. In Wisconsin, despite the fact that the Elections Commission acknowledged our legal right to examine voting software, the voting machine corporations tried to prevent us from sharing the results with the public. The effort of private software companies to shield this critical component of our elections from scrutiny underscores the need to put the infrastructure of our elections back into the public domain.

After the recount was thwarted in Pennsylvania, we brought litigation against the state for effectively violating its citizens' constitutional right to vote through a double-whammy of dubious paperless voting machines and onerous recount procedures that prevent verification. The suit also calls for an extensive “forensic” examination of voting equipment and software in order to verify the accuracy of the vote.

While democracies around the world use recounts as a routine safeguard, the US recounts were fought against or ignored by the establishment parties.

We've also had to defend the recount from false accusations surrounding the Russian interference investigations. The recount was cited by the Senate Intelligence Committee as a major reason for their investigation of our campaign, along with my appearance at a Moscow conference to advocate for diplomacy. According to Committee Chairman Richard Burr, "She [Jill Stein] was the one that actually initiated a recount campaign. Where'd that money come from? We want to look to see if there's any Russian connections to anything that happened in any campaigns." This is no small irony, given that the recount would have *exposed* interference by Russians—or any other intruder—in critical states, had the recount been allowed to proceed. Unfortunately, the Committee seemed to have responded to a set of politically-motivated smears in its decision to investigate me. Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Glenn Greenwald described this kind of political targeting as "way beyond McCarthyism." Failing to find anything in their investigation that could link the recount or the campaign to Russian interference, Burr and the Senate Intelligence Committee did not seek a follow-up interview.

Although the investigation was unwarranted, we used the press coverage as an opportunity to give valuable exposure to the recount campaign's crucial message on Russiagate—namely, that election integrity is the best defense against election interference from any source, foreign or domestic. Expanding on this theme, we leveraged the intense media interest in the Russia investigation to broadcast an urgent call for a comprehensive defense against the *many potential forms* of election interference.

SOME PROGRESS BEING MADE

Almost a year and a half after the recount campaign first raised the alarm, Congress finally took a significant step in the right direction in March 2018, voting to allocate \$380 million toward improving election infrastructure and security. And there has been important progress in each of the three recount states. This is thanks to public attention brought to problems exposed by the recount, as well as grassroots engagement by concerned citizens, and legal pressure from ongoing recount litigation. As Michigan Senate Minority Leader Jim Ananich said, "Jill Stein's recount showed mistakes and has led to improvements in our election process. Those things wouldn't have come out if the recount didn't happen."

After our efforts revealed the failure of Detroit's voting machines, state officials announced that voting machines across the state would be replaced by the 2018 primaries. Wisconsin soon followed suit, decertifying a voting machine discovered during the recount to have produced inaccurate counts, which was used in 136 municipalities, including all of Racine County. This marked the first time that Wisconsin officials decertified a voting machine, a little-noticed but remarkable admission that the officially reported 2016 election results had been distorted by voting machine errors.

In Pennsylvania, the pressure from our legal challenge to state election laws, combined with tireless grassroots organizing by election integrity advocates, has resulted in perhaps the biggest step forward yet. In April 2018, Pennsylvania's Secretary of State

Despite years of warnings from experts about the vulnerability of voting machines, there has never been an in-depth examination of voting machine source-code after an election.

In April 2018, Pennsylvania's Secretary of State ordered all counties to replace their aging voting machines by the 2019 elections with voting systems that use paper ballots.

This is quite a turnaround...

ordered all counties to replace their aging voting machines by the 2019 elections with voting systems that use paper ballots. This is quite a turnaround, considering that Pennsylvania state officials had previously claimed in response to our lawsuit that the state's voting system was fine and needed no changes.

While important recount battles have been won, there have also been setbacks. Legislation in Michigan and Wisconsin will make it more difficult in the future to use recounts to verify the vote. This can only hurt the cause of election integrity. And, although the Congressional appropriation of \$380 million to replace insecure voting machines is a step in the right direction, 11 of 13 states that use paperless voting machines will still not receive enough money to fully replace them, according to an analysis by the Brennan Center for Justice.

ELECTION INTEGRITY AND THE OVERALL REFORM OF OUR ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Greens are aware that the integrity of our elections has been under assault for years, as votes are increasingly denied, degraded and otherwise interfered with, especially for communities of color. The Supreme Court's Citizens United decision flung wide open the floodgates of big money that has been corrupting our elections for decades. The Shelby County decision of 2013 gutted key sections of the Voting Rights Act and worsened voter suppression already underway through tactics like voter ID laws, voter purges through Interstate Cross Check, cutbacks on early voting, elimination of same-day registration, and gerrymandering.

Voter choice in the United States has long been suppressed by a system that limits alternative parties and independent candidates through restricted ballot access, media blackouts, exclusion from debates, and first-past-the-post elections that encourage people to vote against what they fear, rather than for what they value. The Cambridge Analytica-Facebook scandal unveiled the abuse of private data on a massive scale for the purpose of microtargeting vulnerable individuals for mass manipulation and military-style psyops.

The recount initiative has called for a nonpartisan Emergency Commission on Election Protection and Voting Justice to oversee immediate and longer-term solutions. Such a Commission could advance many urgently-needed solutions. We must end voter suppression schemes and ensure the constitutional right to vote for everyone. We need a rapid transition to paper ballots,

cybersecurity best practices, universal rigorous post-election audits, and routine post-election recounts as warranted. To begin addressing the abuses of big data, privacy protections must be created for personal data and online communications. In the rush to guard against propaganda and fake news, however, we must ensure that the rights of free speech and political opposition are restored and protected.

We can break the stranglehold of big money on our elections by establishing public financing for political campaigns and free air time for ballot-qualified candidates, which would greatly reduce the cost of political campaigns. We can expand voter choice and end fear-based elections through Ranked Choice Voting, which liberates voters to show their preference for what they really want instead of feeling that they need to vote against what they dislike. And we can ensure that the electorate is informed about the greater range of choices they've been clamoring for—by creating a new presidential debate commission not controlled by the two establishment parties.

To effectively deal with foreign election interference, we must address the fact that the US is not only a victim of election interference, but a leading perpetrator of it as well. Given our track record, it is simply unrealistic and unethical to expect other countries to respect the sovereignty of foreign elections unless we commit to doing so as well. Effectively ending election interference requires international diplomacy and treaties.

The Emergency Commission would provide consistent long-term public education, advocacy and watch-dogging to overcome resistance to the reforms required to achieve truly fair elections. Establishing this Commission is a critical first step toward restoring Americans' confidence in our democracy with a voting system we can trust—one that is accurate, secure and just.



JILL STEIN

A human rights defender whose experience spans four decades of domestic and international education and activism, Jill Stein was the Green Party nominee for President of the United States in 2012 and 2016. She is an organizer, physician, and environmental health advocate. Jill is currently working with the Green Uprising PAC (greenuprising.org) to build political resistance and support local Green candidates in fighting for radical progressive, sustainable solutions that are critical for the future we deserve.

Review by Bob Hawk:

Democracy in Chains, The Deep History of the Radical Right's Stealth Plan for America

by Nancy MacLean, Viking Press 2017

American politics seemed to undergo a dramatic shift at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century. A concerted national effort was underway to disempower labor unions, undo environmental protection rules, suppress voter turnout, rewrite tax codes, and privatize many public resources such as public education. Those actions appeared to focus on reducing the authority and reach of government and limit the ability of the electorate to protect their rights.

In her book, *Democracy in Chains*, MacLean asserts that the aggressive shift in libertarian activism was the result of a stealth movement to “save capitalism from democracy” that began in the fifties and sixties. It was a secret campaign that was quietly funded by millions of dollars from the Koch brothers and a large network of wealthy donors, including the Cato Institute, the Heritage Foundation, Citizens for a Sound Economy, Americans for Prosperity, the Club for Growth, and many more. MacLean’s book documents the origins and rise of the Radical Right whose agenda was to change and lock up the rules of government so that the majority, the “takers,” could no longer dictate policies that adversely affected the power and privilege of the minority, the “makers.”

IDEAS TAKE SHAPE

The first part of the book examines the influences on the chief architect of the movement, James McGill Buchanan, a Southerner. Early mentors included Frank Knight and F.A. Hayek (author, *The Road to Serfdom*), Buchanan’s professors at the University of Chicago and zealous advocates of the market order. Buchanan was personally affronted by the ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*. The Supreme Court’s use of the 14th Amendment posed a threat not only to State’s rights, but to his idea of social order built on “individual liberty.” He perceived the ruling as an overreach by the federal government to engineer society and a weapon that could be used in the future to change other areas of the status quo.

“To Buchanan, what others described as taxation to advance social justice or the common good was nothing more than a modern version of mob attempts to take by force what the takers had no moral right to: the fruits of another person’s efforts.” (p. xxii)

In 1956 Buchanan was appointed chair of the economics department at the University of Virginia (UVA). He set out to develop two economic theories, “public choice theory,” that maintained that government officials acted in their own best interest, i.e. getting re-elected, by following the will of the majority, and that the only way to combat that was to alter the rules of government so that those officials couldn’t act on the will of that majority. Using the leverage of position at UVA, and later at Virginia Tech and

MacLean asserts that the aggressive shift in libertarian activism was the result of a stealth movement to “save capitalism from democracy” that began in the fifties and sixties.

To what extent has the Buchanan/Koch libertarian movement been successful in decimating our foundational notion of government being of, by and for the people?

George Mason University, Buchanan started to organize a cadre of like-minded operatives.

During the next decades, Buchanan drew into his orbit members of the Mont Perlerin Society (MPS), Colgate Darden (son-in-law to the founder of the American Liberty League, Irene du Pont), Gordon Tullock (co-author with Buchanan of *Calculus of Consent*), and Wilson E. Schmidt, then President Nixon's deputy assistant secretary of the U.S. Treasury. Private funding started to roll in to support public choice scholarships at UVA, specifically from the William Volker Fund (whose President, Harold Luhnow, was a vehement opponent of the New Deal), and from the Scaife Family Charitable Trusts while Buchanan was at Virginia Tech.

IDEAS IN ACTION

By the early seventies, Buchanan came to realize that it was "necessary to convert people of power in domains that mattered: politics, business, the media, and the courts" (p.116). Simultaneously, Buchanan's colleagues and free-market libertarians such as Professor Henry Manne (head of the Law and Economics Center at the University of Miami) and future Supreme Court Justice, Lewis F. Powell Jr., focused on mobilizing corporate America to transform law and politics to ensure that the "protection of and enhancement of corporate profits and private wealth (become) the cornerstones of our legal system" (p. 126). Those efforts were funded by many corporate donors as well as by the Olin, Scaife, and Smith Richardson Foundations.

Charles Koch, CEO of the second-largest privately held company in America, was also influenced by the Mont Pelerin Society through the works of "Baldy" Harper, who later founded the Institute for Humane Studies (IHS) to locate and cultivate leaders for the fight for economic liberty. Koch, an ardent advocate for private schooling and voucher programs nationwide, himself was admitted to the MPS, and became a financial backer of IHS. It was during the mid-seventies that Koch met Buchanan, both of whom went on to lend financial support and intellectual support, respectively, to the Cato Institute, a libertarian training institute to develop the disciplined cadre whose "full-time devotion to the cause, as a militant minority of foot-soldier ideologues, would assure purity and continuity while building the ranks and expanding the cadre's influence on others" (p.140).

"For this new Cato's mission was also one of demolition: it sought nothing less than the annihilation of statism in America" (p.141).

The movement was expanding beyond the theoretical confines of the university to an activism that would insert those foot-soldiers into positions of power, such as Reagan's budget director, David A. Stockman, Reagan's adviser, Edwin Meese III, and Stephen Moore, Reagan's research director of the Commission on Privatization. Graduate students from Buchanan's program at George Mason University (GMU), supported by funding from Koch and the Scaife Family Charitable Trust, would be tapped to fill positions in the administration. Buchanan's colleague at GMU, Henry Manne, former dean of GMU's School of Law, had provided summer legal training in applying free market economic analyses to legal decision-making for law professors and federal judges. The program was so successful that by 1990, "40% of the U.S. federal judiciary had been treated to a Koch-backed curriculum." (p.195)

Buchanan's focus now was on permanently changing the rules, i.e. the Constitution, "so that public officials would be legally constrained from offering new social programs to the public or engaging in regulations on their behalf even when vast constituencies were demanding them" (p.184). He realized after the failure of the Kemp-Roth tax cut and the push to end Social Security, however, that a frontal attack would not work. The strategy became a long game of "a kind of crab walk, even if it required advancing misleading claims in order to take terrain bit by bit, in a manner that cumulatively, yet quietly, could begin to radically alter the power relations of American society" (p.177). This included a media campaign of generating mistrust and misinformation among the public in the viability of Social Security, the effectiveness of government, the "job-killing" effect of environmental regulations, the failure of public education, "socialized" medicine fear mongering, and tactics of divide and conquer. The buzzwords became individual savings accounts, single-rate flat tax, right-to-work laws, and school vouchers.

THE FALLOUT

To what extent has the Buchanan/Koch libertarian movement been successful in decimating our foundational notion of government being of, by and for the people? Through ostensibly separate organizations Buchanan's agenda is being pushed forward. Koch-funded and sometimes Koch-staffed state-level think-and-do tanks exist in all fifty states and are affiliated with the State Policy Network (SPN) to coordinate efforts to prevent state governments from responding to the demands of the "takers." Tea Party activists are pushing to pass the legislative agenda of Americans for Prosperity and Freedom-Works. Right-to-work laws have been passed in four former free states between 2012 and 2016: Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, and West Virginia. Mandatory arbitration agreements are restricting citizens' constitutional rights to sue in court, a quasi-privatization of the Justice System. GOP-controlled states have passed "preemption laws" denying local governments the right to adopt policies that depart from the model being imposed by the libertarian network-dominated state legislatures, such as Florida's ban on enacting sensible gun laws, or, in other states, bans on raising local minimum wages, or protecting LGBTQ citizens. Gerrymander districts are creating a supermajority of reliably controlled states that are needed to hold a constitutional convention to lock in forever the rules that would give dominance to the privilege and power of the takers.

"In the two years after Republican candidates swept the 2010 midterm elections, ALEC-backed (American Legislative Exchange Council, funded by Koch and other corporate donors) legislators in forty-one states introduced more than 180 bills to restrict who could vote and how (to) reduce the political influence of low-income voters and young people" (p.231).

CRITIQUE

Critics have attacked MacLean's book because of misuse of sources, misquotes, and for over-emphasizing the importance of Buchanan's economic theories on libertarian thinking. David Bernstein, George Mason University Foundation Professor at the Antonin Scalia Law School, in particular takes issue with much of Professor MacLean's book. It is beyond the scope of this book review to verify if those critiques have merit. It seems to this author, however, that MacLean's detractors are missing the forest for the trees, bogging down in minutiae and denying the reality of the Radical Right's stealth campaign to decimate constitutional democracy. One wonders if the critiques are indeed part of a campaign to discredit the author and the call to alarm that the book raises.

In truth, the Radical Right have already successfully achieved many of their goals. The Supreme Court has ruled that corporations are to be regarded as citizens (Citizens United) and therefore able to contribute to political campaigns. Mitch McConnell suspended the Senate rules to pack the Court with

In truth, the Radical Right have already successfully achieved many of their goals.

a candidate compatible with the Right's interpretation of the Constitution. Inexperienced but right-wing ideologues are being confirmed at a rapid pace into judicial positions. The Republican majority passed the biggest tax cut to corporations in history. Betsy Devos, Secretary of Education, pushes her agenda of vouchers and privatization of schools. David Schulkin, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, under pressure from the Koch-backed Concerned Veterans for America, is fired because of his opposition to privatizing the VA. Scott Pruitt's goal is to systematically decimate the EPA, trashing rules and regulations that limit corporations' ability to maximize profits at the expense of the Commons. And Trump is regularly calling for the end of the 60% rule in the Senate to enable quicker passage of the Right's agenda.

Perhaps the most ominous warning in Professor MacLean's book is the revelation that the libertarian/corporate cadre succeeded in pushing through its agenda in Chile under Pinochet, and it is only a matter of time before it irreversibly succeeds here. "For it was Buchanan who guided Pinochet's team in how to arrange things so that even when the country finally returned to representative institutions, its capitalist class would be all but permanently entrenched in power" (p.155).



BOB HAWK

is a retired organic farmer and ecologist, and still active homesteader on his 54 acres in Walden, Vermont. He received a B.A. in Political Science from Bowdoin College in 1968, a Diploma in German Studies from the Interpreters Institute of the University of Heidelberg, Germany in 1971, and a B.S. in Environmental Studies from Johnson State College in 2007. He is also a founding member and 10-year Board member of a regional land trust, Northern Rivers Land Trust.

The Need for Universal Basic Income

MAYNARD KAUFMAN

This is a book review of *The War on Normal People* by Andrew Yang. The subtitle more accurately describes the book: *The Truth About America's Disappearing Jobs and Why Universal Basic Income is Our Future*. The book was published in 2018 by Hachette Books.

The first two parts of the book describe the many forms of automation that are already replacing workers: "artificial intelligence, machine learning, self-driving vehicles, advanced robotics, smartphones, drones, 3D printing, virtual and augmented reality, the Internet of things, genomics, digital currencies, and nanotechnology" (p. 70.) The book argues that this electronic revolution is more comprehensive and affects more workers than the industrial revolution in agriculture that reduced the number of farm workers.

The main argument of the book is that these new developments already are curtailing the opportunity of jobs for many people and will increasingly continue to do so. The effects on workers are, to say the least, demoralizing, and the middle part of the book describes the social effects of massive unemployment. The first part of the book details where automation is replacing workers; he calls it "The Great Displacement." For example, as self-driving trucks evolve some 3.5 million truck drivers, and another 7 million workers that serve the needs of truck drivers, are at risk of losing their jobs (p. 45). Virtually all routine jobs could be replaced by artificial intelligence, including much work by medical doctors.

ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS A MONTH FOR EVERY ADULT

After a detailed and thorough review of the loss of jobs and its corrosive social effects, in the first two parts, the author argues for his solution in part three: a universal basic income (UBI) of one thousand dollars a month for every adult. This is not quite enough to live on and is not likely to destroy the incentive to earn more. He also gives convincing reasons why our government can afford this large expenditure, and proposes it be done through a value-added tax. He sees UBI as a kind of human capitalism, which would maximize human well-being and fulfillment. Proposals for a universal basic income, which Andrew Yang also calls a "Freedom Dividend," and others have called a guaranteed annual wage, have a long history and wide support, and now, as globalization and automation continue to reduce jobs for Americans, it should become law.

TWO MAJOR WEAKNESSES

Unfortunately, there are two major weaknesses in the way Mr. Yang makes his proposal. The first is that his vision neglects climate change as caused by burning fossil fuels. Neither term is in his index. Instead of self-driving trucks, more freight may be shipped by rail. But we do live in a time when human labor may be replacing some energy-intensive machines. This is especially important in agriculture and food production and distribution, which uses the most energy, as much as ten calories for each calory produced.

This leads to the second weakness in Mr. Yang's proposal: a UBI could indeed buy hope for people who lose their jobs, but it fails to provide hope for a planet threatened with climate change. It could easily be designed to help people, who are liberated from urban jobs, to find new independence as they resettle rural America and raise food to replace our obsolete and energy intensive industrial food system. There are growing numbers of people who would enjoy farming, but can not afford to buy land. A UBI could help to make this possible. Or it could be proposed in conjunction with a New Homesteading Act.

Many writers are optimistic about the possibility that more automation could make our future more prosperous. (See the recent book by Thomas L. Friedman, *Thank You for Being Late*). This would certainly support a UBI. But even if the new wealth were not shared by all, so that workers remain poor, the UBI should be a national policy. It would help to open new possibilities to mitigate the oncoming of climate change.



MAYNARD KAUFMAN

retired from teaching courses on Religion and Environmental Studies at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo some years ago. He has also been a part-time organic farmer and organized Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance in 1991.

Ultimate Solution to the Water Crisis: *Desalination*

Recently a local US Postal agent overheard us—my wife and I—bemoaning the looming crisis of state, national and global water shortage. He intervened, “Worried about rising sea levels? Drink it!”

Of course, he was absolutely right. Desalination is the answer, turning salty seawater into fresh drinking water, piping it to where it is needed, in homes and for agriculture, and using virtually limitless solar energy to drive the system.

NEW ADVANCES IN SOLAR AND DESALINATION TECHNOLOGY

It wasn't always that way, but the day may not be far off when a gallon of clean water in some parts of the world will cost nearly as much as a gallon of gasoline. The idea of desalination isn't new. For example, Navy warships have long met crew shower needs by means of small-scale steam condensation technology. But that methodology could not be scaled up for high volume civil, industrial and agricultural purposes.

Today, a more potent technology, once dismissed as insufficiently effective, too expensive and detrimental to the environment, is rightly getting a new look and a new life. It makes use of new solar technology with hundreds of times the potential for producing the necessary electrical, chemical and mechanical energy to do the job. Of the many new desalination technologies now available, the most successful have been variants of “seawater reverse osmosis,” pushing salty or contaminated water through special membranes, emerging as safe and potable fresh water. Some critics still question the technical and economic viability of such methodology, but they better think twice.

The answer to such critics is provided by Israel, a country which, according to *Scientific American* (July 2016), “Proves the Desalination Era is Here.” The article summarizes the situation this way: “One of the driest countries on earth now makes more freshwater than it needs.”

With a population of some 9 million people, Israel needs about 600 million cubic meters of fresh water a year (beyond what's naturally available). Existing and proposed desalination plants in Israel can provide almost 800 million cubic meters at approximately \$30 per household per month—about half the average cost of conventional public water supply per household in the USA.

DESALINATION IN THE US AND WORLDWIDE

The US is home to a number of first-rate innovative desalination companies. For example, Pure Aqua Inc. provides a range of cutting-edge osmosis desalination systems, from small to medium-sized production facilities, not only in the US but also in foreign countries such as Algeria, Angola, Bangladesh, Canada, Egypt, Iran, Israel, Qatar, UAE, and Venezuela. This is summarized in a booklet titled “How the World Gets Purified Water.” However, some of our most innovative companies in this field are at risk of so-called “free market” corporate raiding and patent infringement by the likes of China, South Korea and Russia. These US companies need our protection and nurturing.

In Florida, a state which suffers simultaneously from too much and too little water, as well as from polluted water and sewage problems, the use of these new cutting-edge water treatment technologies, powered by solar energy, could help clean up the

ANTHONY PIEL

...the day may not be far off when a gallon of clean water in some parts of the world will cost nearly as much as a gallon of gasoline.

In California, for example, San Diego County has recently invested in a new \$ 1 billion desalination program which is expected initially to cover the drinking water needs of some 3.5 million people in the county for about \$75 per household per month. This price can eventually be reduced..

water entering into, being stored in, and exiting from, Lake Okeechobee in the center of the state. This could facilitate sending cleansed fresh water South via natural, environmentally-friendly, treatment landscapes to the Everglades, where the water is needed, instead of East and West to pollute our lagoons and coastal waterways. Networks of medium-sized and smaller treatment plants and equipment can help to solve sewage and septic system waste treatment and disposal problems, as well as provide fresh water for community and agricultural purposes. These proven “osmosis” technologies, “Made in America,” and powered by the sun, constitute just one component of a complex water management strategy, one that can make an impressive contribution to human health and development in Florida and other states.

In California, for example, San Diego County has recently invested in a new \$1 billion desalination program which is expected initially to cover the drinking water needs of some 3.5 million people in the county for about \$75 per household per month. This price can eventually be reduced, as it was in Israel. Similar plans are being made for major population centers in California such as Los Angeles and San Francisco. Eventually, large diameter pipelines can be extended inland to meet drinking water and agriculture needs, not only throughout California, but also serving parched states such as Arizona, Nevada and New Mexico.

COST/BENEFIT OF INVESTMENT IN DESALINATION

It is estimated that with the development of still more efficient technologies, and taking advantage of economies of scale, the average investment cost of a standard desalination plant or system to cover 5 million persons could be reduced to \$100 million. At this rate, the initial investment cost of covering all of California's 40 million citizens as well as fruit orchards and other agriculture needs, which could total some 3 billion cubic meters of fresh water a year, might come to about \$1.5 billion. After that, water supply will begin to pay for itself.

These are big numbers. How can the US and individual states afford such costs? Under the concept of “Pay-Go,” we should either find offsetting budget savings, or legislate more equitable

income tax rates, which is unlikely. The fair taxes not paid to the US government (for ideological or self-interest reasons) far exceed the needed funding for nationwide safe water coverage.

Consider the comparative costs of the popular idea of a manned space flight to Mars. Just building the rocket ship would cost about \$6 billion. But the total ten-year program costs including hardware, software, fuel, the cost of keeping astronauts alive en route to and on the Red Planet, and their safe return, have been estimated by NASA to total over \$100 billion. That's probably greater than the total investment cost of providing for the fresh water needs of every parched state or county in the USA.

We don't balk at the cost of a manned flight to Mars, which a robot could do at one-tenth the price, saving some \$90 billion. So, why do we balk at state and nation-spanning water desalination and purification, which not only filters out salt, but also microbes, pesticides, fertilizers, metals and other impurities from our water supply?

The safe disposal of these by-products, however, must be carefully managed, to prevent leakage back into the environment. The use of solar energy to drive the conversion plants and push the water through an extensive network of pipelines will save money and other resources such as oil, and reduce CO 2 and other greenhouse gases and emissions in the air, land and water. It will provide jobs. Potentially it's a win-win opportunity for everyone..

The solution to the national and global water crisis seems clear: Desalination is the way to go, just as our local postman said. It's affordable. We can't afford not to. We have the funds. Mars can wait. The three essential ingredients for success are (1) Understanding, (2) Good Planning, and (3) Political Will. Let's save our little Blue-Green Planet. After all, there is no Alt-Planet B. Certainly not on Mars. Let's put the needs of our American citizens and the health of our Planet Earth first.



ANTHONY PIEL

is former Director and General Legal Counsel of the World Health Organization. E-mail: lbhpiel@gmail.com

Letters

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Re: Linda Cree, "Keeping it Real: the Green Path to Alternative Energy", GH, Issue 36 (Winter/ Spring 2018)

I agree with much of what Linda Cree argues in her essay, particularly that Greens should challenge the centralized corporate-driven model of renewable energy creation, and its energy wasteful appetite driven by profit. Our imperative task is to confront the need to curb fossil fuels, rapidly and radically, while implementing a prevention program to avoid climate catastrophe while there is still time. Greens, ecosocialists and the broader climate justice movement must continue fighting for a just solar transition, including a strong protection regime for ecology, workers in the solar industries, and the communities impacted. Further, democratic control of a publicly-owned decentralized wind and solar power should be our priority. Nevertheless, the now exponential creation of a global wind/solar energy infrastructure should be welcomed even with all the problems as a result of corporate control. While the ecosocialist movement is still too weak to prevent the deficiencies in these solar projects, as the global climate and energy justice movement gains strength, then the opportunity to create a sustainable and just solar transition will grow. I speak as an ecosocialist: we cannot wait for the end of the rule of capital to start building this renewable infrastructure; it will be too late! But building this renewable infrastructure must be coupled with the elimination of fossil fuels, starting with those having the highest GHG footprint, namely coal, natural gas (methane leakage to atmosphere) and non-conventional petroleum.

Here is my big disagreement with Linda Cree's message: quoting with approval Richard Heinberg of the Post-Carbon Institute, she says "[T]he world uses an enormous amount of energy currently; only if that quantity can be reduced significantly, especially in industrial countries, could we imagine a credible pathway to a post-carbon future." I addressed this issue in an earlier article in GH (Issue 26, 2012, Fall/Winter 2012, 10-13). (I assume Linda Cree did not read my contribution or has ignored it, since it is not mentioned in her article.) "Especially in industrial countries", she writes, but we must make a clear distinction between energy wasteful U.S. and the global South, where energy poverty is the reality for most of humanity. There is a robust relation between per capita energy consumption below a necessary minimum and life expectancy; most of the global South has lower than world standard life expectancy (see the graph posted on our website, <http://solarutopia.org/>).

In a recent update of my 2012 discussion in GH, I critiqued Stan Cox's arguments presented on his website *Green Social Thought* regarding the same subject, with views very similar to those of Linda Cree, Richard Heinberg and others mentioned in this selection:

'Cox says, "at least in affluent countries, it would be better simply to transform society so that it operates on far less end-use energy while assuring sufficiency for all. That would bring a 100% renewable energy system within closer reach and avoid the outrageous technological feats and gambles required by high-energy dogma. It would also have the advantage of being possible."

This position is further described as the need for "a regulated, low-energy economy". This goal is similar to what has been championed by others, namely Ted Trainer of the Simplicity Institute whose views I have critiqued, as well as Derrick Jensen (e.g., 2012) both arguing that the world must radically reduce its consumption of energy. Cox quotes Loftus et al. (2015) saying "They concluded that it would be "premature and highly risky to 'bet the planet'" on the achievement of scenarios like those [e.g., Jacobson group's 100 percent renewable plan]. Actually, it would be their alternative, a shift to a low-energy global economy which would be a suicidal choice for humanity, a transition that would condemn most of the world to a future of energy poverty even worse than at present and forgo the chance of creating the clean energy capacity to bring the atmospheric carbon dioxide level down below 350 ppm (it is now 400 ppm).' (Schwartzman, 2018).

Yes, as Linda Cree says, appropriate siting of renewable energy supplies is a real issue. A global transition to wind/solar power supplying even more energy than the present unsustainable infrastructure can be achieved with a much smaller environmental/ecological footprint and land area than at present, by highly efficient photovoltaics on rooftops, wind turbine arrays in the ocean and utilizing a small area of deserts for concentrated solar power.

My son Peter and I provide a systematic discussion on these issues and much more in our book in press.

• *A 100 Percent Renewable Energy Transition: Wishful Thinking or Imperative Goal?* by David Schwartzman, January 30, 2018. Posted at www.cnsjournal.org/a-100-percent-renewable-energy-transition-wishful-thinking-or-imperative-goal/

percent-renewable-energy-transition-wishful-thinking-or-imperative-goal/.

- *100% Renewables: 'Wishful Thinking' or an Imperative Goal?*, by David Schwartzman, Oct. 24, 2017, Posted at: <https://medium.com/insurge-intelligence/100-renewables-wishful-thinking-or-an-imperative-goal-9879a8947d1b>.
- Schwartzman, Peter and Schwartzman, David (2018, in press) *The Earth is Not for Sale: A Path out of Fossil Capitalism to the Other World that is still Possible*. WordScientific, Singapore.

David Schwartzman
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

THIS IS CODE RED! *Green Horizon* serves an essential role in sharing informative, Green thoughts and ideas to its readers. However, without political action stemming from that political awareness, that discourse is just blather.

Many readers are aware of the extreme threat to the last vestiges of a so-called "government of the people" and our current, meager social safety network posed by the radical right libertarians who are financed by the Koch brothers, corporations, and other so-called "non-profit" foundations (see the review of "Democracy in Chains" in this issue). But what about their neighbors and residents in their towns and cities?

I urge you, the reader, to share your awareness of that pernicious, stealth campaign in letters to the editor of your local papers. Feel free to photocopy my article, or to use any part of

it in your letters. The books, *Dark Money* by Jane Mayer, and *Democracy Inc.* by Sheldon Wolin, are additional sources of good information.

Bob Hawk
New Hampshire

TO THE EDITOR:

I am writing to say how pleased I was to read the articles in the current issue of *Green Horizon*. They were exceptional, and the issue concluded with two insightful reviews of two important books.

But I want to focus on the article by Linda Cree. Her very timely discussion of how Greens might best think about the importance of renewable energy in a time of climate change raises an issue that we must all take more seriously. The fact that she links the likelihood of more home work, as jobs are being lost to globalization and automation, to the need for a guaranteed basic income is a prescient insight. As a bioregional thinker she understands and affirms the need for local self-reliance much better than a new book on the need for a universal basic income just published by Andrew Yang.

I will attach a review, including my critique, of Yang's book. I agree with the need for a universal basic income, but it must be, as Linda Cree said, "carefully crafted" to deal with the issue of climate change and not just help people buy more stuff.

Maynard Kaufman
Bangor, Michigan

A Survey of Alternative Sex

From Sam Smith's Undernews

June 19, 2018

Buzzfeed - LGBTQ adults in the United States are mostly women, religious, and under 40 years old, according to a new survey conducted by Whitman Insight Strategies and BuzzFeed News.

The poll, taken by 880 LGBTQ Americans across the country, is one of the most thorough surveys of its type, asking more than 100 questions about gender, sex, politics, family, and discrimination.

...The poll finds that gay men have more sex than lesbian women, while other findings may be more surprising: More than half of LGBTQ Americans are Christian, and nearly half of all LGBTQ people identify as bisexual or queer.

...Nearly half — 46% — of the LGBTQ population identifies as bisexual, which then skews heavily female, younger, and tends to be more racially diverse.

...Overall, LGBTQ people are 67% white and 33% nonwhite, which is close to the national census figures.

...More than two-thirds of respondents across generations said coming out made them happier.



GREEN HORIZON

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