



# GREEN HORIZON

*Magazine*

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



## *The* GREEN SURGE *of 2019*

**MOVING  
FORWARD**

**ADVANCING  
ON ALL FRONTS**

## TABLE of CONTENTS

Avoided Issues . . . . . 2  
**SAM SMITH**

The Green Horizon Team. . . . . 2

The Green Surge. . . . . 3

To Stand Up a Stone . . . . . 4  
**ROB SHETTERLY**

Deep Green Declaration . . . . . 6  
**LINDA CREE, STEVE WELZER, ET. AL.**

Bicycles Lead to Greener Pastures . . . 10  
**ARNOLD KAMLER**

Water Privatization—  
 a Twenty-First Century Fight . . . . . 12  
**DENISE BRUSH**

Designing a Green Earthlab (Part 2) . . 17  
**GENEVIEVE MARCUS**

Concepts from Ecology  
 and Systems Theory . . . . . 22  
**JONAH THOMAS**

Late Capitalism Needs a Money Tree . . 24  
**STEVE WELZER**

A New Movement for Ecovillagers  
 (Part 3) . . . . . 29  
**JOEL ROTHSCILD**

“Any Blue Will Do” vs. Trump? . . . . . 33  
**MADELYN HOFFMAN**

As Poland Transitions Away  
 from Coal, There Must be Justice  
 for Its Workers . . . . . 35  
**SEDEN ANLAR**

Moving Forward Through and  
 Beyond the Capitalist Bureaucratic  
 Nation State . . . . . 38  
**JOHN RENSENBRINK**

Sustainers . . . . . 39

www.Green-Horizon.org  
 DONATIONS VIA PAYPAL WELCOME!

## LETTERS

# What We Avoid in Talking About Climate Change

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

There are a number of climate issues that deserve far more attention than they've gotten, such as:

**Population growth:** This is a hugely critical issue that is avoided mainly out of fear of being accused of racism or eugenic imperialism. But the talk doesn't have to be about population control but about population wisdom. It's not state rules that will alter this but a cultural acceptance of smaller families across the world as well as the wider availability of birth control.

**Economic growth:** Our climate crisis is due in part to the elite's assumption that economic growth is a great gift to people. But what if it also destroys the planet? Where are the alternative economic philosophies that reflect the needs of climate calming?

**Transportation:** Not moving around so much is a great way to help calm the climate. Why is this getting so little attention?

Sam Smith  
*Washington DC & Maine*

## THE TEAM

PUBLISHED BY THE GREEN HORIZON FOUNDATION • SUMMER/FALL, 2019 • VOLUME SIXTEEN #39

### EDITORS:

John Rensenbrink: john@rensenbrink.com  
 Steve Welzer: stevenwelzer@gmail.com

### MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF GREEN HORIZON FOUNDATION:

Ted Becker, Alabama  
 Denise Brush, New Jersey  
 Linda Cree, Michigan  
 Greg Gerritt, Rhode Island  
 Darryl! Moch, Washington, D.C.  
 John Rensenbrink, Maine  
 Liz Rensenbrink, Maine  
 Sam Smith, Maine  
 Steve Welzer, New Jersey

Inquiries, submissions,  
 donations, letters:  
**GHM**  
 PO Box 2029  
 Princeton, NJ 08543 USA

**GRAPHIC DESIGN:** Sharon Pieniak  
 www.SharonPieniak.com

**LOGO DESIGN:** Sean Hill

**EDITORIAL ASSISTANCE:**  
 Carla Rensenbrink

**MEMBERSHIP & BOOKKEEPING:**  
 Liz Rensenbrink

**MEMBERSHIP & MARKETING  
 MANAGER, HARDCOPY:**  
 Charlene Swift

**MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS  
 MANAGER, WEBSITE:**  
 Brielle Welzer

Green Horizon Magazine is indexed in the Alternative Press Index, which is available from:  
 Alternative Press Center, PO Box 33109, Baltimore, MD 21218

# The GREEN Surge

It's not often in history that a new social movement emerges based upon a fundamentally alternative paradigm. When that happens it usually takes many generations, sometimes centuries, for the new movement to significantly impact the established society, culture, and affairs of state. Christianity rose prior to 50 A.D. but didn't become the dominant *weltanschauung* of the Roman Empire for hundreds of years thereafter. Socialism emerged in the wake of the French Revolution of 1789-1794; it became a significant political force about four generations later, after its Second International was launched in 1889.

Looking back over the past fifty years we can take note of a somewhat under-appreciated phenomenon: The new movement based upon an ecological worldview has actually advanced with relative rapidity. It was only two generations ago that a fresh constellation of ideas was suddenly "in the air":

From *The Greening of America* by Charles Reich (1970): "There is a revolution coming. It will not be like revolutions of the past. It will not require violence to succeed, and it cannot be successfully resisted by violence. It promises a higher reason, a more human community, and a liberated individual. Its ultimate creation will be a renewed relationship to society, to nature, and to the land."

From *Four Changes* by Gary Snyder (1970): "Since it doesn't seem practical or even desirable to think that force will achieve much, it would be best to consider this a continuing 'revolution of consciousness' which will be won not by guns but by seizing the key images, myths, archetypes, eschatologies, and ecstasies so that life won't seem worth living unless one is on the transforming energy's side."

From *The Movement Toward a New America* by Mitchell Goodman (1970): "When I think of the spirit of the Movement I think of the American Indians who knew how to live in community on this land without destroying its nature or their own."

Such ideas led to action and organization. That key year of 1970 also witnessed the first Earth Day and the inaugural issue

of *The Ecologist* magazine. Then the Movement for A New Society was founded in 1971 in Philadelphia. In 1972 Edward Goldsmith (editor of *The Ecologist*) published his "Blueprint for Survival" and asserted that the greens must bring their message into the electoral arena. With that in mind, he helped establish the Peoples Party, which later morphed into the Green Party of England and Wales. This inspired the foundation of similar parties in many countries. Just a decade later the international political establishment was stunned when a contingent of German Greens got elected to parliament. And now, one generation later, the Green Party has started to outpoll the longtime dominant Christian Democrats and Social Democrats in that country.

This past year much of Europe has been buzzing about "the Green surge." In the elections for the European Parliament held last May the center-right bloc lost 34 seats and the center-left bloc lost 31, but the Greens gained 22 seats. For the first time they came in fourth in the overall vote. Even more significantly, the youth vote (18-30) is going heavily Green in much of the European continent.

Meanwhile, groups like Extinction Rebellion, Transition Towns, 350.org, and Greta Thunberg's "School Strike for Climate" continue to grow. So it's evident that the movement is surging in the broadest sense, as both legs, the activist and the electoral, power forward. Those who say things are not going fast enough need to gain perspective about how social change progresses. The truth is that the "eco-surge" is dramatic, it's timely, and it's accelerating at an historically unprecedented pace. Some of the key articles in this issue show that the vision of a green world and the energy directed toward its realization can provide a basis for optimism. Hopefully, soon (echoing Gary Snyder) life won't seem worth living unless one is on the transforming energy's side.

—SW

# To Stand Up a Stone

ROB SHETTERLY

To stand a stone may be the first creative act; it may also be the first committed act.

I was talking with my friend Roger Kirby recently about his work. He's a painter. He's English and summers in Brooksville, Maine (near me). He told me he's become fascinated with the ancient standing stones located in over 1000 sites around the UK and Brittany. These mysterious stones, often arranged in circles, date from the Neolithic and Bronze Ages four to five thousand years ago. Roger is attempting to make paintings—not depicting the stones so much as how he feels in the presence of them.

In the midst of our conversation, after I had asked him about the significance of the stones, Roger said, “The original human creative act is to stand up a stone.” I thought, What an interesting thing to say and how might that be true?

The stone at rest has been sleeping for centuries. Dreaming since the last ice age. Its placidity may call attention to its beauty and its integration into nature. In some sense might it then be presumptuous to stand up a stone? Intrusive? But stand it up and its role changes. It's invigorated, individuated, inspirited. Has potency. It has ritualized its space. Sanctified, perhaps like an altar without a church. It commands and shapes the space. It focuses attention. Calls the residents of the area to be in relation to it. It teaches a kind of adherence to its posture. It casts a shadow. And the shadow becomes the keeper of time, the arbiter of time.

Its standing role is not to dominate, but remind one to be present, to be conscious, reminds one of one's consciousness. Perhaps it is creative because it is the result of a newly conscious mind, the mind with a will to rearrange nature. Or, perhaps the act of standing the stone up created that new consciousness—the way any truly creative act does. A creative act always challenges one to think and feel, sometimes act, differently in response to it. The landscape with a standing stone becomes a conscious landscape, conscious of its own history in time. The standing stone is the ambassador of the mute world to the conscious world. The messenger, the emissary. It offers a spiritual partnership, a conversation between the land and the mind. It is not destructive or exploitative, rather it's a call to harmony. It anchors. Provides an address, signifies home. The standing stone sounds the awakened land's first clear note of human creativity in relation to nature's. Most of the neolithic stones are in circles, like seasons and cycles, like congregations in conversation, like restorative justice circles, praying, chanting. They amplify the land's heartbeat by sounding the human. The standing stone is the sentry for what is above and what is below. To stand a stone may be the first creative act; it may also be the first committed act. It commits to taking the materials of nature and crafting human identity, community and dignity. I say dignity because the stone seems a declaration of pride. Pride more than egotism. Not separate from but in relation to.

An act of moral courage is like a stone stood up. An act of moral courage rearranges a social space and redefines community. A person standing up resists the mythology and propaganda of violence, of separation, of racism, of dehumanization, of exploitation, of power and of the justified injustice of the status quo. The way a shadowless pasture of conformity and corporate docility becomes redefined by the standing stone of the iconoclast, the truth teller. The paddock of slavery redefined by Harriet Tubman. The field of status quo history reorganized by the standing stone of Howard Zinn's *People's*

The original creative act of the common good is the standing-up person,  
the signal that justice has a heartbeat, the truth that compassion requires courage.

*History.* The long metallic arc of male dominance re-bent by the militancy of Alice Paul. The massive bloom of invisible secrets made visible by the standing stone of Daniel Ellsberg.

The original creative act of the common good is the standing up person, the signal that justice has a heartbeat, the truth that compassion requires courage. The standing stone of moral courage evolves the consciousness of the community. It exposes that power hates ceding control, scorns equality, will do practically anything to subvert real democracy. The standing stone envisions and makes possible the dignity of other stones. The crazed murderers at My Lai discover their shame in front of the standing stone of Hugh Thompson. A poor Palestinian home remains standing because Rachel Corrie's standing, once enacted, cannot be knocked down with a bulldozer no matter how many times the driver runs over her. In jail Camilo Mejia says now he is finally free because he has followed his conscience and refused to continue participation in an illegal, immoral war. His stone stands in prison. He says he was a coward—not for refusing to fight, but a coward for having accepted taking part in the war in the first place, a coward for fighting. Right here in Brunswick, Maine, Bruce Gagnon stands up in the backyard of Bath Iron Works and General Dynamics demanding conversion from warship militarism to sanity and green infrastructure sustainability. Consciousness changes, a community grows. A standing stone is a creative act, a committed act.

William Sloane Coffin said, "Socrates had it wrong; it is not the unexamined but finally the uncommitted life that is not worth living." The standing of moral courage creates its place, its address in history, because it creates value, creates worth. Makes a claim to nobility that would otherwise be preposterous.

Think how power has tried to deface the standing of Chelsea Manning. The more mud they sling, the more hateful graffiti scrawled on her, the more law wielded like shears to cut her

stature down, the taller and more adamant she stands—revealing now not only crimes against humanity but the oppressive crimes committed to make her silent and invisible.

There is a kind of meaning, a claim to stature, in our lives that can only be purchased with courage.

Think of Samantha Smith, a ten year old frightened of nuclear holocaust, who launches a letter like a kite, and she clings to the tail of that kite until, floating above us, she is teaching adults how to recognize the absurd manipulations of the Cold War. A standing stone.

In 1969, Fred Branfman, a young American teacher in Laos, recorded the terrifying experiences of poor rice farmers fleeing from round the clock US carpet bombing on the Plain of Jars. He returned to the US and testified about this Secret War being mercilessly and illegally waged by the US against these voiceless civilians. A standing stone.

Standing stones are cairns. They mark the track of justice and morality in an otherwise baffling and trackless landscape. They are the dots we need to connect. They are the map of the narrative we must tell. Without them both our consciousness and our conscience cannot evolve beyond the propaganda of power. Without them justice has no heartbeat. The original human creative act is to be a standing stone.



**ROBERT SHETTERLY**

is an artist and writer who lives in Brooksville, Maine. Since January 2002 he's been painting a series of portraits he calls Americans Who Tell the Truth. They are of people who, for the past nearly two hundred years, have tried to close the gap between what this country says and what it does. There are now nearly 250 portraits. They travel all over the US. [www.americanswhotellthetruth.org](http://www.americanswhotellthetruth.org)

There is a kind of meaning, a claim to stature, in our lives  
that can only be purchased with courage.

# Deep Green DECLARATION

*This text has been written by  
LINDA CREE and STEVE WELZER  
based upon contributions from  
(in alphabetical order):*

GREG GERRITT

BRUCE HINKFORTH

MARGARET HUMAN

JOHN RENSENBRINK

SID SMITH

HOWARD SWITZER

Disconnect from the natural world has increasingly obscured the truth that the dominant culture's trajectory is leading toward ecocide.

We are at a critical turning point for human civilization. All around us we see a world in crisis—a world facing overwhelming environmental and social threats. Our “way of life” is literally shredding the biosphere we depend on. Greens have been in the forefront of asserting that unless we make a dramatic U-turn and radically reorganize our societies, a human future may not be possible.

As things stand now, humans use 1.7 times as much biological productivity annually as is produced on planet Earth each year. So “Overshoot Day”—which marks the date when human demand for resources and services outstrips what the Earth can regenerate in that year—has progressed from December 31 to August 2 in the last fifty years. Such over-exploitation is impacting the entire web of life on the planet. Wild animal populations are down 60% since 1970, 90% of the large fish are now gone from the oceans, and 40% of insect species are in decline. We are passing limits on deforestation, the phosphorus cycle, climate disruption and numerous other indicators of ecological distress, all of which are completely intertwined with the health of our human communities.

We cannot have infinite economic growth on a finite planet. Yet development in most of the world today is directed towards creating still more economic growth—more stuff for more people. This dynamic has benefited a tiny layer of the population, but for nearly everyone else, even many of those who have had rising incomes and the ability to consume more, the costs in terms of inequality and oppression, degraded oceans, climate chaos, deforestation, chemical trespass, dead zones, and wars is beyond bearing. It is beyond bearing for our communities and for our planet.

## THE NEED FOR A NEW NARRATIVE

Deep Greens are amazed that we're debating issues with the assumption that all we need to do is get rid of corporations and build a power system based on wind and solar, never questioning the industrial mode of production. Many of our political leaders have led us to believe there are no hard choices that need to be made to build a sustainable world. They seem to believe that we are so addicted to our machines, our toys, and our lifestyles, that we cannot recognize them as the very reason for the production of greenhouse gases, the destruction of ecosystems, and the depletion of resources.

Western societies tend to conceive of “Progress” as being a linear movement toward mastery of nature, material growth, advancement of science, and expansion of technology. Disconnect from the natural world, however, has increasingly obscured the truth that the dominant culture's trajectory is leading toward *ecocide*. Instead of recognizing the perils of continuing with business-as-usual, experts offer us more “technological fixes”

which too often come with unforeseen consequences. Our modern reality does not, in fact, define a culture of true progress, but rather one that is, as Native American activist John Trudell has written, “industrially insane.”

There is an analysis which suggests that the growth imperative is a result of capitalist economic relations. Yet the problematic “progress and development” trajectories of our civilization pre-date capitalism and have been evident in every attempt to implement socialism in the modern era. On this basis we believe that the source of the problem goes deeper than simply economic relations.

We urgently need a new narrative. The Deep Green perspective has emerged as *an alternative to all the old ideologies—conservatism, liberalism, nationalism, capitalism, socialism, etc.* The Deep Green worldview questions traditional leftist and environmental assumptions about what needs to be done. Its vision of thoroughgoing social transformation begins with an examination of this civilization’s preoccupation with productivity values, its addiction to technology, its militarism, patriarchy, and anthropocentrism.

Although our situation is dire, we believe it is possible for a society to respond successfully to the threats we face. We know how people pull together after a storm wrecks their town. We need to call on that same sense of cooperation and care in the face of the unfolding crisis.

### GROWTH MANIA HAS LED TO HYPERTROPHY

Capital, technology, and the state have, for centuries, been an interlocking juggernaut fostering toxic industrialism and modes of production characterized by ecological irresponsibility. Meanwhile, the ideology of “development” has brought us to our current ill-fated alienation from nature. The growth mania associated with “progress” has resulted in generalized hypertrophy (institutions and technologies too large to be controlled democratically) and a sense of cultural malaise.

Our key value of *Ecological Wisdom* is derived from the understanding of how regeneration in nature is dependent upon cooperation and upon the maintenance of ecological balance. Ecosystems tend to evolve to a climax state and then remain fairly stable for long periods of time. As evolution continues, equilibrium is established and re-established. Human systems, whether they are economic, social, or cultural, are merely subsystems of the over-arching ecosystem which contains them. Thus, human systems must also strive for equilibrium.

Neither capitalism nor extant socialism have prioritized these vital precepts. This is why Deep Greens tend not to favor the term “eco-socialism.” We believe such a label channels our thinking into old ruts. We also have concerns about the relationship of

socialism to the dominant parts of the old paradigm that stress centralized planning and mass production, as well as a toleration of violence.

The Marxist analysis views all history as a narrative of class struggle that will end in a socialist society. Deep Greens fully support oppressed peoples in their struggles for dignity and equality. For that reason we strongly support unionization, strike activity, community organizing efforts, and worker-owned cooperatives. We share with the traditional left a proactive stance against all manifestations of exploitation, inequality, oppression and domination. Nonetheless, we draw different conclusions about

“the history of all hitherto existing society” and Marx’s posited higher and higher stages of development leading to the ultimate stage of socialism.

Green politics arose on the basis of a “new paradigm” critique of the industrial state. That paradigm is, in some ways, more radical than socialism. It takes the New Left’s desire for a participatory form of democracy and says something novel: scale is an important factor. The huge modern nation-states are always characterized by plutocracy, whether their productive assets are owned publicly or privately. They are never conducive to participatory democracy. That insight is the basis for the Greens’ key value of *Decentralization*. It represents a radically new direction for our civilization, yet hearkens back to the sanity of Indigenous lifeways.

### LIMITS AND BALANCES

Deep Greens acknowledge the concept of limits and the need to bring economic relations into harmony with the natural world. We believe the best way to do this is to transition to bio-regional economies and to return power to local communities.

Bio-regional economics calls on us to come to know our home territory intimately and to try and meet as many of our needs as possible from it, as suggested by the key value *Community-based Economics*. The modern megalopolis is anathema for this vision. Greens should encourage a return to humanly-scaled polities, institutions, and technologies, along with a revitalization of traditional ecological knowledge and rural living skills. This implies a substantial degree of re-localization: local production for local use, local manufacturing, local sales, local recycling whenever possible.

There is also wide recognition that we’re nearing the end of the fossil fuel era, a period of time that allowed for enormous population and industrial growth. Even if we weren’t dealing with the issue of climate change caused by industrial pollution of our atmosphere, we would have to face the reality that the

The problematic “progress and development” trajectories of our civilization pre-date capitalism and have been evident in every attempt to implement socialism in the modern era.

We believe that the source of the problem goes deeper than simply economic relations.

age of cheap and easily accessible energy resources is over. The challenge of scaling down so that we can continue to meet basic human needs will require *creative simplification* and can best be accomplished by working together in small-scale communities.

A transition to greener lifeways will need to be accomplished with great wisdom. For example, the creation of solar and wind farms must be done in such a way as to minimize habitat destruction. The latter is as critical an environmental problem as is climate change and is the major cause of the Sixth Mass Extinction we are now witnessing. No doubt, we need to phase out fossil fuel and nuclear power sources and replace them with clean energy. What comes

on line should be less than what is taken off due to the savings of efficiency and our need to consume less. Clean, alternative energies can replace much of the current fossil and nuclear power we use, but we cannot turn the world's forests, wilderness areas, and rural places into solar and wind farms. The emphasis should be on reversing the trend of increased energy consumption per person. We must be clear that the organization of the economy and the rate of use of resources is going to have to be very, very different.

One of the best things we can do for our future and for the biosphere is to phase out industrialized agriculture in favor of regenerative agriculture. The latter refers to a suite of holistic principles and methods that together have the potential to rapidly restore our rural and natural environments to full health, sequestering vast quantities of carbon, restoring ecological balance

and biodiversity, building soil, and reversing desertification, all while producing more food of a higher quality. It also has the potential to restore agricultural communities to economic independence and security. Greens encourage everyone with any lawn or roof space to grow food for their own families. Those with relevant knowledge should sponsor education and training in horticulture, maintaining orchards, beekeeping, etc.

### AN END TO MILITARISM

We must learn to live within planetary limits, but no new society will be sustainable if it is not based on justice and equality. This is why so much of the Green Party Platform is devoted to issues of social justice, racism, militarism, and poverty. We understand that you cannot heal ecosystems without ending poverty; and you cannot end poverty without healing ecosystems. Neither goal will be obtainable, however, if you do not shut down the war machine!

Our military is the most wasteful industry on the planet and few things cause more immediate and localized harm to communities and ecosystems than war. A country that claims to stand for freedom cannot run an empire without losing its soul, bankrupting its people, and eliminating real democracy. Instead of borrowing money to fund killing people around the world, the United States should abandon its preoccupation with geopolitical hegemony—and save a trillion dollars a year! We could fund an adequate national defense for less than a third of current spending.

Capital, technology, and the state have, for centuries, been an interlocking juggernaut fostering toxic industrialism and modes of production characterized by ecological irresponsibility.

Green politics arose on the basis of a “new paradigm” critique of the industrial state.

The huge modern nation-states are always characterized by plutocracy, whether their productive assets are owned publicly or privately. They are never conducive to participatory democracy.

The savings could allow for a Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI) for all US citizens, help us transition to bio-regional living, supply funds for retraining military and industrial workers, assist in the creation of universal, single-payer health care, aid in the move to alternative energies, and facilitate programs to heal our ecosystems and our communities.

In addition to changing our funding priorities, we need to transfer the power to create money away from the private banking system (that dominates and directs the global economy) to our elected representatives. The monetary system is an awesome power that rightfully belongs to elected governments of, by, and for the people. Today all nations are in debt to the private global banking system which has been given the privilege of creating and issuing our money as debt. We must change this and allow all polities to originate their own money, debt-free, for the general welfare and care of their people and the environment.

#### A QUESTION OF VALUES

Industrial Culture emphasizes “self” and “consumption” as being the main road to the Good Life. This misguided emphasis contradicts the values espoused by the world’s great spiritual leaders and those taught in most traditional Indigenous cultures, where unselfishness and restraint are the values held in highest esteem.

We should learn from the belief of Indigenous peoples that humans and all other creatures are intricately related in the web of life—truly relatives. As part of our family, it’s clear we aren’t meant to dominate and subdue them, but to cherish and share the Earth with them. Deep Greens call for a reduction in human numbers as being necessary for the well-being of humans and all life on Earth, but we also understand that such a reduction must be voluntary and gradual. It can be accomplished gently over several generations by simply encouraging one-child families. As awareness of population overshoot grows, much vigilance will be needed to protect against racist, elitist, or any kind of draconian policies. Long-range vision and a deep reverence for all human life is critical.

Greens recognize that we need a basis of consensus as we move forward. This is where our values come in. Taken together, our distinctive Ten Key Values provide us with an array of fundamental principles. While the trendlines of developmentalist civilization have led to over-centralization, over-concentration of wealth and power, and over-exploitation of natural resources, our values offer guidance for effectuating the much-needed process of changing direction.

Flowing from those values are specific ideas on how we can transform society. Deep Greens take seriously the responsibility to propose solutions and even to help craft legislation. But we are keenly aware that it would be presumptive to claim we advocate from a position of certitude or special enlightenment. Instead, our ultimate objective is to return decision-making power to the people. We support a mixed economy and encourage a healthy diversity in the kinds of communities and economies people fashion over time.

Deep Greens acknowledge the concept of limits and the need to bring economic relations into harmony with the natural world. We believe the best way to do this is to transition to bio-regional economies and to return power to local communities.

#### CHANGING DIRECTION

There are no “instant fixes,” but Deep Greens believe in the possibility of making the dramatic cultural U-turn that will lead our civilization toward the very different direction that’s called for at this historical juncture. We envision a future far lighter on material goods and factories, but much richer in relationships with other people and other creatures, and an enhanced appreciation of the natural world around us. What humanity is facing in this new century is unprecedented, but, together, we can discern what needs to be done, foster social responsibility, restore ecological balances, and realize our vision of a more just, peaceful, and beautiful world.



**LINDA CREE**

resides in the rural/wilderness of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. A retired teacher, she enjoys her family, writing, folk art painting, and the woods and waters of her home territory. She’s been involved with the Green Movement since the mid-80s and is a former Co-chair of the GP-US Platform Committee.

# BICYCLES

## *Lead to Greener Pastures*

ARNOLD KAMLER

Introduction by Steve Welzer:

*"In America today, there are more cars than drivers. Yet our investment in these vehicles has yielded dubious returns. Since 1899, more than 3.6 million people have died in traffic accidents in the United States, and more than eighty million have been injured. Pedestrian fatalities have risen in the past few years. The road has emerged as the setting for our most violent illustrations of systemic racism, combustion engines have helped create a climate crisis, and the quest for oil has led our soldiers into war... When the people of the future look back at our century of auto life, will they regard it as a useful stage of forward motion or as a wrong turn? It's possible that, a hundred years from now, the age of gassing up and driving will be seen as just a cul-de-sac in transportation history, a trip we never should have taken."*

—"Was the Automotive Era a Terrible Mistake?"  
by Nathan Heller in *The New Yorker* 7/29/2019

The above article quotes Samuel I. Schwartz, one-time traffic commissioner in New York City and later chief engineer at the US Department of Transportation, who recently addressed a transportation-innovators summit and was "struck by how little the attendees knew about urban transport, how enamored they were with high tech gadgets... When it came my turn to present, the solution I proposed for trips of less than a mile—and more than half of urban trips are this short—was shoes, available since 1600 BC."

For trips in the range of a mile to five miles we'd do well to employ another mode of transportation that's lower-tech, healthier, and greener than cars. I have in mind, of course, the bicycle.

At the *Mother Nature Network* online, Chris Baskind listed these reasons to use a bicycle for transportation:

- A bike has a tiny manufacturing footprint when compared to a car.
- Bicycles produce no meaningful pollution when in operation.
- Bikes save taxpayers money by reducing road wear.
- You can store a dozen bicycles in a single automobile-sized parking space.
- Bicycling is more efficient than taking a car and sometimes can be faster.
- Bikes cost much less to purchase, maintain, and operate than automobiles.

The platform of the Green Party of the United States notes: "We support a transportation policy that emphasizes the use of mass transit and alternatives to the automobile. Massive subsidies to the auto and fossil fuel industries, as well as an unworkable approach by urban planners, maintain the auto's dominance of our cityscapes." The platform includes these policy prescriptions:

- Create auto-free zones.
- Develop extensive networks of bikeways, bicycle lanes and paths.
- Include bike racks on all public transit.
- Maintain free community bicycle fleets and provide necessary support for cyclists.
- Place a moratorium on highway widening, appropriating funds instead for mass transit and facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists.

So it seems that Greens like bikes. Arnold Kamler manufactures them. We're privileged to hear his perspective...

Millions of people all over the world do their daily commute to work on a bicycle.

The bicycle, a relatively simple human-powered device for transportation, has been around since the 1600s. Today's modern bikes would look like spaceships to the cycling forefathers, but the basics remain the same—wheels that roll and a person providing the propulsion. Through the Industrial Revolution, railroads, automobiles, airplanes, Moonwalks, and the Internet, bicycles remain as a viable alternative for getting from Point A to Point B, as well as a fitness contributor—and, sometimes, just plain old fun! Who can forget their first dose of freedom as a child, pedaling furiously, wind in your face, off to untold adventures? Meanwhile, millions of people all over the world do their daily commute to work on a bicycle. Once dormant ski resorts now have

No fossil fuels are burned in the operation of a regular pedal bicycle.  
In fact, the only thing burned during riding are calories!

a thriving summer business with mountain bike enthusiasts. And did you really have a beach vacation if you didn't ride a cruiser on the boardwalk?

My company, Kent International, has been involved with bicycles dating all the way back to 1909. That year my grandfather, Abraham, opened a bicycle shop on the Lower East Side of New York City. His son, Phil, expanded the business in 1947, supplying bikes and parts to stores all over the East Coast. By 1979, Kent was manufacturing its own bicycles in Kearny, New Jersey.

The current lifestyle trends point to healthier living—less processed food, more natural eating, more exercise. Of course, bicycles fit very nicely into this wheelhouse! Cycling not only provides a good cardio workout, but stress melts away as you ride back in time to your childhood and the pure joy of pedaling. Also trending worldwide are movements for carbon footprint reduction, habitat regeneration, and ecological responsibility in general. Once again, bicycles to the rescue. No fossil fuels are burned in the operation of a regular pedal bicycle. In fact, the only thing burned during riding are calories! There are even devices available to turn a bicycle into a generator, thereby reversing whatever carbon might be produced during manufacture and shipping.

Reducing the number of cars on the road and supplementing them with bicycles relieves traffic congestion, minimizes noise pollution, and improves air quality. One-third of U.S. carbon dioxide emissions are from motorized transport, yet half of all car trips are just three miles or less. Such a distance takes only 15 minutes on a bike. Even a short automobile commute of five miles to work each day can quickly add up to more than a hundred gallons of gasoline over a year. And let's not forget about parking. Parking lots are a major environmental nemesis, in terms of both habitat destruction and global warming pollutants. Their construction means clearing land that was once home to plant and animal life. The removal of trees and complementary vegetation eliminates vital air cleaners that help reduce the quantity of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

My company is embracing the "greening" movement in a number of ways. Our establishment of a new factory in Manning, South Carolina in 2014 has begun a crucial step towards the reshoring of bicycle manufacturing. Not only does that open

up employment opportunities, but, from an environmental perspective, it's significant that the United States has much more stringent pollution regulations than those that apply to overseas factories. Our plant still relies on importing some parts that are unique to the bike industry from overseas, but more of these parts can be fit into shipping containers than can complete bicycles, so we're helping to reduce the number of containers imported.

Our factory in South Carolina has state of the art powder coating utilizing a water-based process eliminating harmful oil and lacquer emissions and byproducts normally associated with traditional painting. The facility is looking to expand into other parts of manufacturing, such as welding in-house and sourcing raw materials domestically, which will greatly contribute to lowering the demand for imported goods. There is hope that more manufacturers will follow suit and bring back domestically made parts, which will reduce ocean freight and overseas dependence for the entire bicycle industry.

So, can bicycles save the world? Well, they're certainly part of the solution mix! Self-propelled transport can contribute significantly to the effort to clean up our planet. Auto transport serves a purpose and is likely to be with us for some time, but the substitution of even a small number of trips/errands via bicycle could make quite a difference in terms of energy consumption and environmental regeneration.

Our thinking process just needs to be reprogrammed a little. Is there anything more ironic than driving your 200-horsepower SUV to the gym three miles away for your workout? The standard response to "out of milk" should become a quick jaunt to the corner on a bicycle. Some quality time with your kids doing something fun that doesn't involve electronics...that's not a bad thing either. Any or all of these facets of bicycle transportation contribute to a better way of life for you and those around you.



**ARNOLD KAMLER**

is the chairman and CEO of Kent International, Inc., based in Parsippany, New Jersey. He acknowledges that China has abused the US in trade matters, but strongly disagrees with the president's strategy of increasing tariffs and has recently aired his opinions on CNN, Fox Business News, and CNBC.

Reducing the number of cars on the road and supplementing them with bicycles relieves traffic congestion, minimizes noise pollution, and improves air quality.

# Water Privatization— a *Twenty-First Century* Fight

DENISE BRUSH

In 2016, the phrase “Water is Life” gained prominence nationally as Native Americans and environmental activists fought to keep the Dakota Access Pipeline from being built. It reminded us all that we can’t live without water. Availability of water has historically determined where people have settled, and access to clean safe water should never be taken for granted.

Water law varies by state: laws in the western United States mostly allow whoever used the water first to have the right to continue to do so. In the east, rights to both surface and ground water generally belong to the landowner—as long as they use it in reasonable ways that don’t affect other users. Both approaches produce frequent litigation. The question of whether water is public or private property has not been resolved. Most states permit private companies to bottle ground water and sell it, if the company owns the land that it is collecting water from and adheres to environmental standards.<sup>1</sup>

Municipal water supply usually comes from streams or reservoirs on publicly-owned land. It is then treated and distributed to residents whose homes have access to the system, for a fee. Historically water distribution (and later water treatment) is a publicly managed service in the United States, generally handled at the municipal level. But in the past several decades the neoliberal agenda of deregulation, outsourcing, and privatization has crept into the waterworks field. It’s something you don’t notice unless it

Privatization of water is one of the major issues of the twenty-first century and will be the cause of many political and legal battles to come.

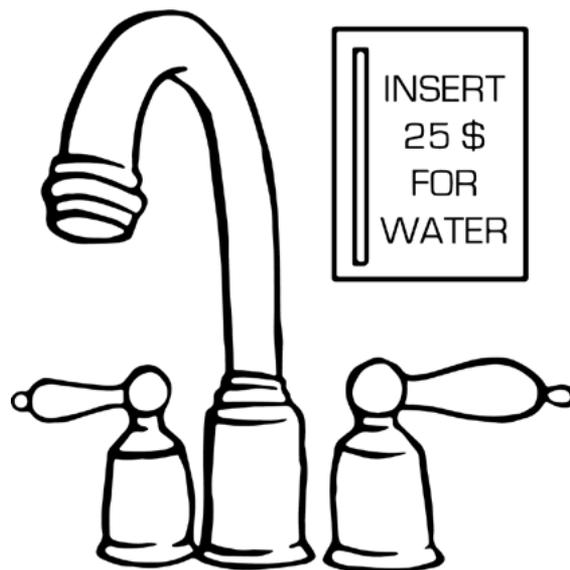


ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF BECCA ROBERTS

happens in your town, so many people are unaware that there are parts of the country where a private company makes a profit from selling you the water that comes out of your faucet. As a new college graduate with a degree in civil engineering many years ago, I was shocked to learn in a job interview that my potential employer was a private water company, because I didn't know such a thing existed.

I volunteer with the South Jersey chapter of Food and Water Watch, a non-profit organization whose mission is to protect our food and water. They have been bringing attention to the issue of water privatization in recent years. We had a victory last year in Atlantic City, which tried to privatize their water system due to their financial situation. The petitions, protests, letters to the editor, and comments at public hearings made it clear that the residents of Atlantic City did not want a privatized water system.

### HISTORY OF WATER SUPPLY IN THE US

Until chlorination of municipal water supply started in the early twentieth century (Philadelphia was the first city to have chlorinated water, in 1913), Americans in rural areas depended on well or spring water from ground water sources, and city dwellers avoided drinking water unless it was boiled for tea or coffee or spiked with alcohol. Sales of bottled spring water began in the nineteenth century, marketed as “mineral water” for medicinal purposes, which actually had some truth to it.<sup>1</sup> Bottled water sales almost disappeared in the twentieth century, before returning in a big way in the 1990s. Today mega-corporations like Pepsi control most of the market for single serving bottled water, although regional water bottling companies are still doing all right selling 5 gallon “water coolers” to businesses.<sup>1</sup>

In the early 1800's, when public water supply began, most water companies were private, according to Scott Masten. As engineers developed the technologies for water distribution and treatment, these functions were taken on by local governments. By 1924, 70% of the water systems in the US were public and 30% were private.<sup>2</sup> Martin Melosi attributes the municipal takeover mainly to the need to assure public safety in regard to fires and water-borne diseases. But economic factors were also at play – providing clean water to residents was a source of municipal revenue,<sup>3</sup> and the introduction of municipal bonds allowed cities to make the infrastructure investments required for large public works.<sup>2</sup>

There are “54,000 public water systems nationwide, of which more than 90% serve localities with less than 10,000 inhabitants”.<sup>4</sup> These systems serve 242 million Americans today, but some do still get their water from private wells. While most public water systems in the United States are owned by local governments, a “public” water system can also be owned by a cooperative or a private company. “[A]lmost 15% of those served by public water systems receive their water from privately owned utilities”.<sup>4</sup> However, “these utilities operate almost half of all

Privatization of government functions began in the Reagan administration in the 1980s and has grown in every presidential administration since then.

public water systems in the country, predominantly in towns”.<sup>4</sup> It appears to be a function of size and population—all the big cities have publicly owned water systems, but many smaller towns and counties have allowed private companies to run their water systems in the past half century or so.

It can be very unclear to consumers who actually owns the system when they are paying bills to a private company. For example, homeowners in northern Delaware have been billed for water services by United Water Delaware (now called SUEZ Water Delaware) for decades. Does United Water own the water supply and treatment system? Or are they under contract to New Castle County? Voters deserve greater transparency.

### GLOBALIZATION OF WATER CONTROL

Unlike most countries, France has had privatized waterworks since the nineteenth century. Two large French water companies, Veolia and SUEZ, started seeking international business opportunities in the 1980s and 1990s as part of the globalization movement [4]. The United Kingdom had publicly owned water systems until Margaret Thatcher privatized them in 1989. One of these companies (Thames) competed on a global level before merging with German RWE.

The European water companies first went into South American countries, but taking over local control of water and raising prices were poorly received.<sup>3</sup> It turned out that the profitable way to privatize water infrastructure in other countries is working with the International Monetary Fund. The IMF arranges loans for construction of water systems that are then controlled by the multinational corporations that built them.<sup>3</sup> The countries end up in massive debt and without control of their water, because privatization is required as a condition of the loan. As a result, many of the residents of these nations can no longer afford to buy their own water.

Instead of getting into the construction business, Veolia and SUEZ chose to grow their business in developed countries such

Every year the American Society of Civil Engineers announces that the US has a huge infrastructure backlog and needs to invest heavily to bring it up to par—and every year no federal money is allocated. Private companies can take advantage by coming in and promising to make the investments—but once the companies have control, the voters lose the power to enforce that promise.

as the United States that already had the basic infrastructure in place, as outsourcing was becoming popular with governments.<sup>4</sup> I doubt many voters realized that their local officials were outsourcing their water systems to private companies based outside the United States, because they still received bills from subsidiaries with American names.

American Water is the largest private water company in the US, operating in 30 states. SUEZ entered the American market by buying United Water in 1997. Then German energy giant RWE bought American Water in 2001.<sup>4</sup> This was made possible financially by a change in the US tax code in 1997, which allowed private companies to finance investments using tax-exempt municipal bonds.<sup>4</sup>

### PRIVATIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Privatization of government functions began in the Reagan administration in the 1980s and has grown in every presidential administration since then. It's a core value of Republican administrations that has been promoted by recent Democratic presidents as well. We're now at the point where we have military contractors in combat situations overseas and companies running private prisons back home. Even federal government libraries (such as at NASA and EPA) are staffed by contractors.

Privatization of government functions prevents accountability to the people, who elected the government and are entitled to oversight. Cardozo Law Professor Paul Verkuil asserts in his 2007 book "Outsourcing Sovereignty"<sup>5</sup> that the current degree of privatization of federal functions violates the letter and spirit of the law and the Constitution and threatens our democracy. The same argument applies to privatization at the state and local level. When municipal government functions are privatized, elected officials lose the ability to make decisions about them and the people lose democratic control and oversight.

Interestingly, the city of Washington, DC, though famous for local government corruption for years, is an exception to the privatization trend. The city created an autonomous water

authority in 1996 which has been very successful in making needed investments in water and sewer infrastructure by issuing bonds, while keeping cost increases low.<sup>4</sup>

### INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND PRIVATIZATION

Since 1980 the US has deliberately failed to invest in infrastructure at the federal level, resulting in the problem being dumped on municipalities. In some municipalities (such as Detroit) poor management and corruption have resulted in bad service to water customers. But the main thing that causes cities to consider outsourcing is simply lack of resources to make needed investments. While infrastructure maintenance needs have increased (the pipes and equipment get older every year), federal and state funding has decreased, and federal regulatory requirements (such as the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1996) cost money to meet.<sup>3</sup>

Every year the American Society of Civil Engineers announces that the US has a huge infrastructure backlog and needs to invest heavily to bring it up to par—and every year no federal money is allocated. Our water and sewer infrastructure is part of this backlog and little is being done about it. An exception is New Castle County, Delaware which has been replacing its sewer infrastructure over the past ten years using voter-approved municipal bonds. But most municipalities are reluctant to raise water prices to cover this needed investment, voters usually vote against additional property taxes, and few federal grants are available. Private companies can take advantage by coming in and promising to make the investments—but once the companies have control, the voters lose the power to enforce that promise.

Private companies say that if they take over, water infrastructure will be managed more efficiently and needed improvements will be invested in. Cash strapped municipal officials unfortunately believe them. It seems reasonable, since the companies will have all that profit (from the higher prices they charge) to invest in improvement. Yet in case after case, the infrastructure improvements never occur. The profit goes to the stockholders

instead. What does happen is that prices go up and people who can't pay lose their access to water. Then people are angry that their government has abdicated its responsibility to ensure its citizens access to water services at an affordable price.

### **PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS**

According to Melosi, water privatization in the US has mainly been through Public Private Partnerships, where the system is still owned by the local government, but private companies run it.<sup>3</sup> For example, the city of Bayonne, New Jersey contracted with United Water in 2012.<sup>4</sup> They immediately began raising water prices 2.5 to 4.5% a year, with the promise of infrastructure investments to come. The residents of Bayonne are still waiting to see those infrastructure upgrades.

In 2011 New York City created a public-private partnership with Veolia Water Americas to meet their objectives for cost savings, energy efficiency, and better management.<sup>4</sup> Veolia is paid primarily on meeting the cost savings, which they have achieved so far through automating meter reading, renegotiating supply and labor contracts, and consolidating the vehicle fleet.

The city of Camden, New Jersey still owns its water system, but it has contracted with American Water to run it and make needed improvements. The CEO of the New Jersey Economic Development Authority testified at a May 2, 2019 public hearing that American Water was one of the companies that benefitted from possibly illegal changes to a 2013 New Jersey law in receiving a tax incentive to move to Camden. Camden suffers from very old pipes which need to be replaced; until they are, public school children can't drink the water in their schools or in many of their homes. The big new office building that American Water built in Camden technically met the capital investment requirement of the legislation but did nothing for the terrible water quality issues in Camden. The tax incentive law was intended to create jobs in distressed inner cities, but American Water took advantage of it for their own profit.

United Water received a 20-year contract to run Atlanta, Georgia's water system in 1998 with promises to take care of neglected maintenance and cut water prices in half. But the city terminated the contract in 2004 due to widespread complaints about poor water quality and insufficient water pressure [4].

That same year, United Water and Veolia bid to run the New Orleans water system. Both offers were rejected after the residents protested, and the system remained in public hands. Apparently, Veolia had previously operated the New Orleans wastewater system and their tenure "was marred by numerous environmental violations, mechanical failures, and lack of regard for the maintenance and long-term needs of the system".<sup>4</sup> That was the year the backlash against water privatization began.

### **FIGHTING WATER PRIVATIZATION**

In the only book I could find on the subject, sociologist Joanna Robinson studied water privatization fights in two locations in the "Global North"—Stockton, California and Vancouver, British Columbia.<sup>6</sup> In the Stockton case, the city council horrified opponents by voting to approve the privatization contract a few weeks before the ballot referendum in which the anti-privatization side won. The opposition filed multiple lawsuits, and after a third vote by the California Supreme Court in their favor, the city rescinded the contract with OMI-Thames and went back to having public water. During the five years the system was run by the contractor, water rates increased, maintenance was postponed, and all the employees lost their jobs.<sup>6</sup>

In Vancouver, the provincial government tried to save money by hiring a company to build a new water treatment plant. Protest was unified and creative. The Vancouver group formed a coalition with local groups with an interest in stopping water privatization, including unions, environmental groups, and anti-globalization groups. They educated themselves and spoke out against the project at public meetings held by the government, dominating them so much that the third planned meeting was never held. The main argument was that privatizing water would make them vulnerable to trade agreements under NAFTA that would cause the city to lose control over their resources.<sup>6</sup>

Robinson framed water privatization as an anti-globalization fight, not just a fight against deregulation and outsourcing. The two case studies she analyzed both involve international water firms, which makes the case for a "global threat to local democracy" stronger. She asserts that "Anti-water privatization movements are linked together through a shared resistance

Joanna Robinson framed water privatization as an anti-globalization fight,  
not just a fight against deregulation and outsourcing.

When water is privatized, it is treated as a commodity to be priced,  
not a human right. This makes it a social justice issue.

to the commodification of water and a common desire for equity in water governance”.<sup>6</sup> Robinson stresses that coalition building can be very effective, and “alliances between labor and environmental movements—united under a common frame and shared tactics—can be a potentially powerful force against the increasing commodification of nature”.<sup>6</sup> This strategy of building coalitions is being used with some success by Food and Water Watch in the United States.

### CONCLUSION: THE RIGHT TO WATER

When water is privatized, it is treated as a commodity to be priced, not a human right. This makes it a social justice issue. The only positive to treating water as a commodity is that it might lead to greater conservation. While the world undoubtedly uses much more water than it did a hundred or two hundred years ago, there is not a sense among scientists that we are in danger of “running out” globally like we are with oil.<sup>3</sup> However, the geographic distribution of water worldwide is definitely changing due to climate change.

The critical question today is who gets to use water, and who needs it but doesn’t have access? In the United States, private companies are buying massive amounts of water for fracking (which then becomes polluted with chemicals) while low-income residents of distressed inner cities like Detroit and Newark are getting shut out of access to clean water. Our ambiguous American water laws allow companies like Perrier and Coca-Cola to come in to Wisconsin, New York, California, and other places and start bottling local spring water and selling it at a profit. It may not be harming the local residents yet if the area gets enough rain or snowmelt, but it sets a dangerous precedent about who has the right to use water, just as fracking does.

The Green Party of the United States opposes water privatization. The following statement is included in the GPUS 2016 Platform:

“Greens oppose the privatization of water and demand that the US government pass strong laws with effective enforcement mechanisms to assure a safe and adequate supply of water for its citizens and all life within its borders.”<sup>7</sup>

The Green Party clearly characterizes water as a human right. The platform also says that it is important to “Ensure that

municipal water and water systems are publicly owned, publicly sourced...”<sup>7</sup> in order to guarantee that right to everyone. As the multi-year California drought made clear, climate change will make water scarcer in many parts of the United States in the future, so it is very important to keep it under public control.

The United Nations, in the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, said that “the human right to water is indispensable for leading a life in human dignity. It is a prerequisite for the realization of other human rights.”<sup>3</sup>

Many people agree with the Greens that it is unethical to commodify water. Unfortunately, there are plenty of people who are fine with it, especially if they can make money from doing so. Privatization of water is one of the major issues of the twenty-first century and will be the cause of many political and legal battles to come.



#### DENISE BRUSH

is the current secretary of the Green Party of New Jersey. She is the founder of Transition Town Glassboro, an affiliate of the international Transition Town movement. Denise has a B.S. degree in Civil & Environmental Engineering from MIT and an M.S. in Library & Information Science from Drexel University. She is the Engineering and Earth Sciences Librarian at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey.

### REFERENCES

- 1 F. C. Chapelle, *Wellsprings: A Natural History of Bottled Spring Water*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005.
- 2 S. E. Masten, “Public utility ownership in 19th-century America: The “aberrant” case of water.” *Journal of Law, Economics, & Organization*, vol. 27, no. 3, pp. 604-654, 2011.
- 3 M. V. Melosi, “Privatization of water: US and worldwide implications” in *Precious Commodity: Providing Water for America’s Cities*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011.
- 4 M. Schiffler, “The United States: Public Water in a Capitalist Country” in *Water, Politics and Money: A Reality Check on Privatization*. CHAM: Springer International Publishing, 2015.
- 5 P. R. Verkuil, *Outsourcing Sovereignty: Why Privatization of Government Functions Threatens Democracy and What We Can Do About It*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- 6 J. L. Robinson, *Contested water: The struggle against water privatization in the United States and Canada*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013.
- 7 Green Party of the United States. GPUS Platform Section III. Ecological Sustainability. Retrieved from [https://www.gp.org/ecological\\_sustainability\\_2016](https://www.gp.org/ecological_sustainability_2016) on 6/20/19.

# Designing a GREEN EARTHLAB

*Editor's note:* This is Part Two of a two-part series. Part One appeared in the Winter/Spring 2019 Issue under the title, "A Future for Everyone?"

## TRANSLATING EXPERIMENTAL CITY VALUES INTO DESIGN OBJECTIVES

GENEVIEVE MARCUS

How can we eliminate poverty and violence at the same time as we strive to preserve the planet? And how do we go about realizing everyone's fullest potential? The Experimental City Institute (ECI) has integrated the thinking of experts from many fields and proposes that we experiment with the following design objectives to implement its three Values as a starting point:

- A) An Earthlab must provide a guaranteed means of basic survival for everyone in the Experimental City. This would eliminate the current problem of poverty and insecurity from which many other problems arise, especially crime and violence.
- B) It must be an environment that provides multiple lifelong opportunities for learning, growth, and self-expression. An Earthlab will explore what the next stage of human evolution will be as we are increasingly being replaced by machines who can think faster and more comprehensively than we can. What will we need to learn or know? We foresee the future possibly emphasizing human creativity instead of financial gain. This transition would be revolutionary.
- C) Equality will be studied in numerous ways throughout the experiment. Feeling less than others is another major cause of many social problems. The Experimental City as an entity will hold the formal perspective that the value, the importance of every individual in the City is equal. If I think George is more valuable than Peyer, that is just my personal view and has no effect on either person within the perspective of the City.

These objectives, then, are the cohesive purpose of ECI; its design and evaluation criteria. Every proposed solution whether economic, medical, or architectural, must, to the best of our combined knowledge, manifest these values and goals. How to translate them into specific designs will, of course, produce numerous proposals. It is hoped there will eventually be many experimental Earthlabs exemplifying these values throughout the world.

## THE CITY SIZE

Many studies show that people are happier in small cities than in large ones. The experimental cities should be small enough so that every inhabitant can feel they have an equal voice, that their voice is as important and powerful as anyone else's. Population size will contribute to our study of equality. It will also tend to diminish the isolation

experienced in large cities where many do not even know their neighbor. We propose a population size of 30,000-50,000. This may seem large for a "small" city. Therefore, it has been suggested that the City could be subdivided into "villages" of perhaps 1,000 each. This would also provide the advantage of allowing more City designs to be tested simultaneously. It would also enable the testing of the relationship between the villages and the larger City as a whole.

## THE INHABITANTS

Four conditions will apply to all inhabitants:

1. Each must agree to support the Value System described above.
2. Once they are accepted, they will become \*equal owners\* of the City. Considering themselves owners of the entire City tends to induce a caring for its condition just as one does one's own home. It will also broaden our studies of equality.
3. To further encourage a sense of ownership, the inhabitants will participate on the Design Team in one of the systems to create their City.
4. A membership fee will add to the sense of ownership and provide financial resources for the City's construction. The fee will be the same for all inhabitants to reinforce the sense of equal ownership. For those who wish to live in the City but are unable to afford the entire membership fee, other arrangements may be available such as sweat equity where the inhabitant participates in the actual labor of building the City without compensation.

We will seek equal numbers of women and men as well as a representative proportion of ages, races, ethnic groups, and religions.

## THE CITY SYSTEMS

The City will be divided into systems, such as Economy, Management, Food, etc. Each system will be designed by Design Teams composed of City residents who are skilled in the specific area. They will receive assistance from voluntary outside experts in each area. The final design will be discussed and approved by the community as a whole.

The Earthlab will employ a holistic approach to its design. Only recently has the public become aware of the interconnection

of all systems in a habitat. For example, the use of chemicals in manufacturing and medicine contaminates the water supply which then affects the food supply. The design of the economy determines whether people will have their basic needs met or instead promotes violence and crime to compensate for their lack. And so on.

In order to employ a holistic approach, it is usually necessary to design from the ground up. We use a matrix to show the interrelationship among the various systems as designs are proposed to better anticipate positive or negative effects of a specific design on the other systems.

All the City designs will be approved and tested by the inhabitants in real life. As problems emerge, the Design Teams will be constantly available to improve on the original design. That is, the designs and the City, itself, will continuously evolve to better fulfill the City's objectives. Of course, all cities evolve through redevelopment, new laws, etc in an attempt to solve problems, but in this case, the redesigning will be ongoing, democratic and conform to the preset values.

## 1. THE ECONOMY

### • Land Ownership

A major experiment with equality will be the City ownership. Every inhabitant will own an equal share of the entire City. However, these shares would be symbolic rather than practical because the City as a whole would manage all the property, land, and resources. Thus, each inhabitant could rent the type of housing that suited their taste, but no one could buy or sell a house or land because the City belongs to everyone. This is another experimental means of discouraging inequality by the massive accumulation of personal wealth through land and property acquisition. If your house is bigger than mine, that is a function of personal choice, not class distinction.

### • Basic Needs

This first City economy will also experiment with the concept of Semi-Self-Sufficiency. With Self-Sufficiency, the City itself will provide for its basic needs. The inhabitants will produce the City's basic food, shelter, clothing, education, health care, etc. In that way it is less likely to need outside support and will have more freedom and creativity to experiment.

The design of the economy determines whether people will have their basic needs met or instead promotes violence and crime to compensate for their lack.

“We have it in our power  
to begin the world over again.”

—Thomas Paine  
*Common Sense*, 1776

To ensure that everyone has the financial resources to provide for their basic needs, everyone will participate in managing the City. This would be their Basic job. There would be a database of work needed to manage the City, ranging from medical to educational, to construction, etc. Every Basic job would pay enough to provide for the employee's basic needs. Some jobs might require more hours or suffer from a shortage of applicants. These jobs would pay more. Job selection would be entirely a matter of choice, including apprenticeships to learn new jobs. Basic jobs would require perhaps 10 hour a week. To minimize the number of mandatory work hours, the City will study the use of robots, 3D printing, and other developing technologies that are replacing or assisting human labor.

Moreover, as robots take over more and more jobs, Earthlab residents will always have guaranteed employment. In addition to guaranteeing jobs, equal ownership and management of the City may create a strong sense of community sorely lacking in many places today.

The Basic economy is an alternative to the Universal Basic Income concept. While an income is guaranteed, employment is also guaranteed and required.

#### • Beyond Basic Needs

The City will have a Double Economy. The Double Economy offers flexibility. If someone wants to write a book or has some other special interest, he or she can choose a Basic City job requiring minimum hours and spend the rest of their time working on their project. Or if someone desires something requiring more than a basic subsistence salary, they can choose either a higher paying Basic job or more hours, *or* they can join the Second economy.

The Second economy is for those who want to produce or acquire something beyond the Basic Economy income, like producing a personally designed style of furniture or clothing or buying an expensive guitar. They will be able to start their own business or work for others and earn profit up to a prescribed limit. Profits above a democratically agreed on upper limit would revert to the City for maintenance. A universal upper limit on personal income such as this is expected to alleviate the massive income disparity problems we have today.

The Second economy is also another way to fulfill the value of encouraging each individual to reach their fullest potential and self-expression. The City would assist them by renting them space and equipment for their business. If the business fails for any reason, it would be easy to return the space and equipment to the City and try something else. With more and more basic work being done by robots, there may be a significant number of private businesses reflecting the new creativity. Many of the villages may also produce special products for the Second Economy.

#### • Money

The Experimental City would have its own digital monetary system that would be translated into other currencies when used outside of the City. Work credits would be stored on the City computer system which would function as its local bank. Perhaps the equivalent of credit cards would be the form used within the City.

In addition to providing basic individual needs, the design of the City must fulfill the first value and be protective of the environment. All the systems must be sustainable according to the best knowledge available.

## 2. GOVERNMENT (MANAGEMENT)

The work of this Design Team is to find ways to implement the decisions of the inhabitants, to keep things running efficiently (managing). Communication technology throughout the City will facilitate ongoing participatory democracy. As an example, the City might consider the following four-part government:

- A. Fifteen General Coordinators. An interdisciplinary group whose purpose is to coordinate the other systems of the City. Terms may be two years during which assistants may be trained as replacements. Anyone is eligible to work as an assistant to earn required work-credits. If a System in the City has a problem or a need, it is the job of the Coordinators to help find a solution. The concepts of management and coordination replace government.
- B. Design Teams. (a continuation of the initial design method). Each System will have its own Design Team. They will do research, planning, problem-solving, and train successors in their specific areas. All the design teams will be coordinated to form an effective whole system by the General Coordinators.
- C. Managers. Design Team Managers will see to it that their System contributes its part to the whole City (gets the job done). The manager will be responsible, knowledgeable and experienced. He or she will also train new managers.
- D. Barometers or Antennae. This team of about 6 will monitor the entire group of Systems; alert to spot problems as well as strong points, especially whether they are living up to the City values and protecting the environment. This job may rotate every six months to maintain a fresh perspective.

## 3. ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

Agriculture, transportation, water, shelter, waste-recycling, open space, recreation, community spaces.

### • The Civic Center

One plan is to use the center of the City for community purposes: businesses, food markets, classrooms, health care, gymnasiums, movies, art exhibits, concerts, athletic fields, etc. To conserve space, appropriate events such as movie theaters and storage may be built underground.

### • Villages

As mentioned earlier, decentralization of the total population into smaller villages is proposed to encourage a sense of community

lacking in most cities today and considered a significant source of physical and emotional problems. The villages may surround the civic center.

The villages would contain residences of various types including individual family homes, and diverse group buildings. A village might also have its own commons. They might have numerous individual and community gardens where exotic foods and flowers of choice would grow and may be sold. These small villages might be designed in various styles; some rustic, others modern. There are numerous types of sustainable architecture which can be tested and modeled in the various villages.

Individual homes could be selected from a data base of various sizes and designs. Once selected, the house would be constructed by workers in the community or in some cases, the prospective residents, themselves, perhaps assisted by robots or 3-D Printers. As mentioned above, these homes would be rented for as long as desired instead of owned. It would be easy to move to different homes or even different villages in the City.

Surrounding the residential area would be the bulk of the food production, the farmland. In addition to nuts, fruit, vegetables, and grains, there might perhaps be some poultry, a few goats, and possibly a fish pond, depending on the decisions of the community. Villages could produce some of their own food as well as contributing or selling some to the City. The entire City might be surrounded by a tile or brick wall to protect the crops from foraging animals and for privacy.

Depending on the size of the land, much of the City would be traversed by foot, bicycle, or other small vehicles. Somewhere in the City there might be a communal garage with several City cars that inhabitants could use when they wanted to travel outside of the City. There would also be a few vehicles especially for transporting heavy or large furnishings or equipment.

## 4. ENERGY

All sustainable types of energy including conservation. The use of solar-based paint on the walls, solar cell window panels, clothing containing solar cells, and other new developments would be implemented on an ongoing basis.

## 5. WASTE MANAGEMENT

State of the art methods available at the time. One attractive example is a large aquarium containing fish and plants that cleans used water and makes it available for reuse. There might be such an aquarium in each village. One of the Basic jobs would be to replicate and create new recycling applications. The goal is 100% recycling.

Depending on the size of the land, much of the City  
would be traversed by foot, bicycle, or other small vehicles.

## 6. HEALTH

The City would have its own integrated holistic Health Clinic as well as internet access to remote specialists not available in the City. The emphasis would be on prevention and health maintenance both for the individual and the community. Indigenous medicine from around the world would be available.

Disease would include violent behavior, crime, and, drug addiction. From this perspective we can explore the idea of using ambulances and health personnel to manage disruptive physical and emotional behavior and completely eliminate police and jails. We would explore new approaches to mental health such as Electromagnetic Stimulation as well as Music and Art therapy.

## 7. FOOD

Production, processing, distributing. Organic. Care of poultry, goats, and fish unless the City votes to be vegetarian or vegan. The Food Design Team would be responsible for producing basic food, but individuals could supplement the supply with village or personal residential gardens as part of either the Basic or Second Economy. Roofs and building walls may be used to grow food. This type of City design would greatly diminish or eliminate the distinction between rural and urban living.

## 8. LEARNING

Learning centers, mentors, apprenticeships. The City would invite visitors to examine the experiments and perhaps take classes in some of the new approaches being explored in the City. There would be a variety of learning styles to support individual differences. Education systems might be reinvented to accommodate new realities resulting from advanced information and technologies. There may be greater experimental integration with other cultures for learning and creativity. Learning would continue throughout life.

## 9. COMMUNICATION

The City would run its own communication system and perhaps produce seminars and videos of its progress and make them available to other populations. Both its successes and failures would be helpful to other communities dealing with the same social and environmental problems. As Earthlabs are built around the world, they could be in regular contact with each other for information, support, collaboration on projects, etc.

## 10. DECISION-MAKING, PROBLEM-SOLVING, GOAL-SETTING

Group and individual. A problem-solving community. Any group of humans can expect to have disagreements from time to time. The Experimental City would consider this normal and work diligently on new ways to deal with them. Goal-setting and decisions would be constantly evolving. New problems would be considered challenges to find solutions.

## 11. THE ARTS

Aesthetics, communication, self-expression. New uses of the arts will be explored in all of the other City systems. Arts education would be encouraged because it is known to stimulate creativity and with the current changes occurring in human civilization and technology, creativity may become a critical resource. Arts might be integrated with health and all environmental design.

## 12. PHILOSOPHY

Values, agreements, community self criticism, overview. While we expect a good life, the first population, especially, would also consider themselves students and researchers hoping by their efforts to help others throughout the country and world find new solutions to the problems we have never been able to solve.

## EXPERIMENTAL CITY 2 AND BEYOND

Experimental Cities hopes it can find and disseminate positive solutions to worldwide social and environmental problems that have been tested by people in real time and have been found to work or not. In this first experiment, we seek to solve the following problems: Poverty, homelessness, inequality, pollution, crime, violence, isolation, insufficient health care, joblessness, and personal meaning in today's world.

By learning to live cooperatively and care about the earth and our neighbors in a population of this size, by anticipating and working with the profound changes many see on the human horizon, we offer this as a way for people to solve their problems together rather than waiting for large cumbersome governments. If a growing number of Earthlabs form all over the world, they may eventually replace impersonal, crime-ridden, impoverished large polluting cities and come to resemble the many nodes connected by one Internet. They may form a digital global headquarters where any city can ask for information or help with experiments. They may produce a newsletter reporting on progress addressed to all Experimental Cities, but to the entire general population as well. Soon people may eventually be able to vote to become Earthlabs in their state. Then, perhaps small cities based on humanistic values instead of fear and greed can learn to live peacefully where large cities and nation-states cannot.

We suggest that Earthlabs first be formed as nonprofit educational corporations. They can be part of universities, constructed on private property, land trusts, government property and other public land as grants.



**GENEVIEVE MARCUS, PH.D.**

is a co-founder of the California Green Party. She and her husband, Bob Smith, formed Experimental Cities, Inc. as a nonprofit research and educational institution to seek positive solutions to social and environmental problems afflicting all large cities. She is also a Musicologist, a university lecturer, a Relationships Counselor, an author, and an editor of journals in several fields. Her mission is to spread these concepts to a general audience.

# Concepts from *Ecology* and *Systems Theory*

JONAH THOMAS

Here are some concepts from systems theory and from ecology that are worth paying attention to.

## BACKUPS

Sometimes things fail. Complex systems tend to fail sometimes, it just happens. Every now and then you will have to reboot your computer. Because complicated systems fail occasionally.

So in general, we want backups.

We had no backup for the US banking system when it failed in 2008. So the US government let some banks fail and pampered others. We wound up with fewer and bigger banks, less backups than before. The system will fail again sometime, probably when we don't expect it. We need backups.

Our money is created by the banking system. We have no backup for that either.

We have a lot of businesses that are TBTF (Too Big To Fail). Businesses the economy depends on, without sufficient backups.

We have no hint of a backup for the US government.

In general, backups have a cost. The effort we put into creating backups could instead go to increase production without backups. For essentials, the backups are worth the cost.

We want to create local and regional economies that can meet some of their own needs, with regional and local governments that resolve many of their own issues. The local economies serve as backups for each other. Local and regional governments could create their own local currencies and create local banks in those currencies, and the national dollars and national banking system will be a backup.

Ideally, local areas should be able to feed themselves, and other regions with surpluses provide backup. Some regions can't do that, but we can hope for them to make a start at it.

## RESPONSE TIME

It inevitably takes time to respond to changes. The slower the response, the more likely that the situation we are responding to will have changed before the response is made, and we later see why our response is inappropriate and change it again—late.

For example, during the Iraq war it took the US military 6 months to recognize that their current strategy was not working. So every six months they came up with a new plan to deal with the consequences of the last failed plan. Then it took 6 months to notice that the new plan had failed, and how it had failed, and present a newer plan to deal with that. They were always behind.

The military created a dogma around what they call the OODA loop. (Orient, Observe, Decide, Act.) If you can do that faster than your enemy, very likely you can win from that.

In general we prefer to have smaller entities. Smaller businesses, local governments, etc. Problems show up faster, and responses are faster. At least potentially. So we intend that giant corporations must split themselves into smaller ones. And when they grow too big they must split again. When corporations are small enough, they will not overpower state and local governments. Then we can let smaller governments have significant power.

## POISONS

Not just humans but every kind of organism tends to degrade its environment. It converts useful nutrients into waste products. Etc. If it does that faster than other parts of the ecosystem convert them back, then its population shrinks. This is part of why nothing grows without limit.

We are poisoning ourselves, and our environment too, in novel ways. We have to stop that. We must stop as much as we practically can of the new pollution, and clean up what we can of existing pollution. We must slow the approval of new plastics and other new organic chemicals, as we look for better ways to find out which of them poison us and other parts of the ecosystem. This is a challenge because we will eventually need new plastics, etc., from biological sources when those from fossil sources become less available. The newer ones will inevitably not have had as much opportunity for testing.

Mining wastes are currently an unsolved problem. We take rock which is particularly rich in special materials and crush it to powder. We extract as much of the special materials as feasible, and then we have mine tailings which typically contain heavy metals, etc. Stored aboveground, they leach poisons into the water. Stored beneath the water table they do the same but slower, and the metals persist in our aquifers. Ideally we would store them as impermeable rock, but that looks expensive. Similar problems come from coal ash, which contains heavy metals and also carcinogens. The USA created around 130 million tons of coal ash in 2014, and is looking for safe cheap ways to store it. The Green Party has no current plans for dealing with mining waste or coal ash, except to make less of them.

## PLANNING

We have a challenge: We have to plan ahead. But things will not go as we expect.

Traditional capitalist systems were not planned. Here is a reason that could work: Each individual businessman made his own plans. If he could figure that next year will be pretty similar to this year, and have it come true, then he could do OK. He couldn't plan better than 5%, and mostly he didn't need to. When the economy grows around 3% a year, mostly it doesn't take a lot of planning.

When things change faster, we have to plan. But when things change fast, there are lots of ways things can go wrong. We can't

expect our plans to work well. We will have to improvise. Try to create flexible plans that can be adapted.

We currently produce around 8 times as many food calories as we need to feed the US population. As a rule of thumb, this takes about 10 times as many kilocalories of fossil fuel as we get back as food. We have some leeway to use farming methods which may not be as "efficient" in terms of yield per acre, but which still produce more food than needed for much less fuel. We must use less irrigation, less pesticide, less herbicide, less fossil fuel. It's a challenge but it may be possible.

We need renewable energy, and currently our production is more than 6% of the energy we produce. (This may seem too high. Total energy inputs are about 100 quads, and energy outputs are about 33 quads not counting co-generation of needed heat. Renewable outputs were about 2.1 quads in 2018, though 1 quad of that was from hydro which probably cannot be expanded much.) We need considerable expansion but not as much as it first looks.

Food and power are two problems that we can plan for, and probably get adequate results though not what consumers would prefer. We have plans for a collection of other things that will probably go so wrong that solutions need to be planned. Our plans are plausible, but when you plan for the unknown you can never be sure your plans can be modified well enough to fit what happens.

No one else even thinks about the coming challenges. They assume we will muddle through.

We used 38.2 quads of energy to make electricity, and we made 12.9 quads of electricity, producing 25.3 quads of heat that was mostly wasted. (Though some of the heat did get used for cogeneration.) About 2/3 of the input energy was wasted. The estimated solar power input was less than 1 quad, less than 1% of the energy inputs. But this is a bogus number, inserted into the diagram to be compatible with the others. Typically our solar panels got only 18% efficiency. Less than a fifth of the sun's energy that hit the solar panel was used, but we don't measure the energy of the sunlight. We measure the energy the solar panel outputs. Similarly we don't measure how much of the wind is wasted by windmills.

The 1.2 quad of solar and wind energy produced was more than 8% of the 12.9 quads of electricity we used. That's a little bit of good news.

We have a big job coming up, but not as big as it first looks.



**JONAH THOMAS**

has a background in biomathematics and population genetics. He first joined the Green Party when Bernie Sanders lost momentum. Some of the Ten Key Values and much of the platform inspired him with their ecological wisdom.

# Late Capitalism Needs a Money Tree

STEVE WELZER

Howard Schneider in Reuters 8/7/2019: *“With interest rates stuck at historically low levels and inflation weak, central bankers wonder if they have the tools to weather the next downturn, and what can lift the economy if they don’t. To MMT adherents, that is emblematic of a system that needs changing in favor of one where Congress simply spends what is needed to ensure full employment and adequate demand, the Treasury writes the checks, and the Fed prints the money to cover them.”*

\* \* \* \* \*

Our “golden age of progress”  
has been based upon  
an accumulation of debt  
and under-funded future  
obligations.

Statistically, these seem like relatively good times. Infant mortality rates have been declining. Life expectancy around the world has almost doubled in the past century. Medical and hygiene advances have saved many lives. Recent decades have witnessed a general decline in violence and improvement in regard to most measures of health, education, and welfare.

However, when examined more carefully, we can see that the socio-economic and vital statistics conceal significant “externalities” and disparities. For example, while the world’s GDP increased substantially since 1970, there has been a vast die-off of the creatures with whom we share the earth. And, as we know, economic growth has benefited the wealth/power elites disproportionately. GDP may be rising, but so is inequality.

Perhaps less recognized is the fact that our “golden age of progress” has been based upon an accumulation of debt and under-funded future obligations. This is a worldwide phenomenon, but let’s focus on the United States: In 2018 dollars (i.e., adjusted for inflation) Gross Domestic Product was about \$4 trillion in 1970. The total of public and private debt in that year was \$2 trillion, half of GDP. By 2018 the GDP had gone up by a factor of five to \$20 trillion. But the total of public and private debt had soared to over \$70 trillion, *more than three times GDP*. Debt increased by a factor 35 over that span of time!

Regarding under-funded obligations, one example among many is the pending crisis involving pension and retirement reserves. According to a 2015 analysis by the World Economic Forum, there was a combined retirement savings gap in excess of \$60 trillion, spread between eight major economies: Canada, Australia, Netherlands, Japan, India, China, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

It would take very high levels of economic growth to meet the expectations of future retirees, to enable student loans to be paid off, to cover corporate and consumer debt, etc. Toward that end the world’s central banks have been pushing down interest rates hoping to spur growth. Low rates have been the norm for over a decade.

In financial circles the benchmark public debt instrument is the US Treasury note of 10-year duration. Historically its yield has been between 3% and 7% with an average of about 5%. But since 2011 it has been under 3%. The dividend yield of S&P-500 equities has been even lower.

Pension funds usually project returns of approximately 8% to achieve the investment goals that will enable retiree payouts. That figure is based on an expectation of 10% return from stocks and 5% return from bonds. A 60-40 ratio of stocks to bonds gives a total portfolio return of 8%. That's geeky stuff, but the important thing to understand is that there has been an *expectation of* and a fiduciary *need for* 8% return on investments. Late capitalism has lately been returning no such thing.

Policymakers have become concerned about the degree to which financial obligations are underfunded worldwide. Meanwhile, Greens—*paying attention to a deeper level of “obligations,”* i.e., the imperatives for ecological sustainability—point out that remediation requisites are even more “underfunded.” Environmental depletion, pollution, and exhaustion is actually another kind of debt.

### THE ILLUSION OF PROGRESS

So: the relatively good times have been built upon a not very good, not very solid edifice of depletion and debt accumulation. How and why has this pattern of social and ecological irresponsibility developed...and mostly been ignored?

Industrial capitalism flourished between 1750 and 1950. The economy soared, though in a kind of “two steps forward, one step back” fashion. The steps back, from a GDP standpoint, were a consequence of geopolitical and economic systemic instabilities—wars, revolutions, depressions, inflations. One response to the traumas and instabilities (and inequalities) was the growth of the socialist movement during the first half of the twentieth century. This motivated the power elites to make very deliberate efforts to stabilize the system after World War II.

It took the elites a while to recognize that government-based management of the system was in their interest. Most sovereign federal governments were relatively *laissez-faire* during the early period of capitalism. National-level budgets were constrained. Revenues for public finance flowed predominantly to municipalities, states, and provinces.

In Europe, by 1800, there had started to be a trend in the direction of centralization. This was a factor in the vigorous debate between Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson in the newly established United States. Hamilton wanted to see a higher degree of federalism, with a goal of having the country become a world power like England. Jefferson advocated localism, sovereignty for the states, and a minimalist central government that would refrain from geopolitical entanglements. But the *zeitgeist* favored Hamilton's inclination. Later in life even Jefferson succumbed to the siren song of great-power aspirations when he became president.

It took the elites a while to recognize that government-based management of the system was in their interest.

The trend toward overweening federalism advanced in a gradualistic way. During the first half of the nineteenth century the central government was still relatively unobtrusive and fiscally frugal. It got by on revenues just from excise taxes and tariffs. By the latter half of that century its growth would require much more in the way of revenues; so there was a push for income taxation. It eventually resulted in an amendment to the constitution in 1913. After that, both expenditures and revenues expanded at an accelerating rate. But they more or less expanded in tandem. Except during years of major wars, running significant deficits was viewed as problematic. It was considered indisputable that, like a household or a business, government, over time, should strive to balance revenues and expenditures in order to avoid a build-up of debt.

There were debates about whether or not the government ought to be more proactive in terms of national economic management, but in our country, until the time of the Great Depression, the consensus still favored a relatively free-market orientation. For example, rather than stimulative fiscal policy (deficit generation) the Progressives of the early part of the twentieth century advocated trust-busting and monetary inflation to bolster the economy and address inequality (inflation so that farmers could more easily manage their debts).

In Europe, the dramatic growth of the socialist movement motivated many countries to institute more extensive social welfare programs. There was less pressure for such in the US, but the need to build out the infrastructure for the industrial state forced the American government to take some steps in the direction of economic management.

The Depression motivated bigger steps.

### INTERVENTIONS TO SAVE THE SYSTEM

Between 1930 and 1935 the elites were alarmed about the growing resentment toward a system that had seemed to collapse. During prior decades the writings of Marx and other European socialist theorists had been translated into English. By the time of the Great Depression radical ideas had reached a critical mass of circulation, even in the US. Workers were aware that Marx had described how the capitalist system tends toward instability and impoverishment; how he stipulated that progress will mean moving on to socialism, the “next higher stage of history.” The

Keynesianism was a theoretical basis for greatly increased government engagement with the economy; but there had still been an idea that the government should balance out revenues and expenditures over periods of time.

1917 Bolshevik insurgency in Russia was a watershed in that regard. By 1935 socialists could point to a whole sequence of real-world events to make a case that the revolutionary epoch had arrived. Left-wing parties experienced waves of growth. The elites decided that they had better pay a lot more attention to managing the system in order to ameliorate instability. They turned to Keynesianism as a theoretical basis for greatly increased central government engagement with the economy.

John Maynard Keynes had said that proactive deficit spending could keep effective demand from collapsing as it did during the Depression. The acceptance of this doctrine led to a major transition of policy. Deficit spending was no longer considered an impropriety; rather, it became viewed as a policy tool. But a temporary one. There was still the idea that the government should balance out revenues and expenditures *over time*. If deficit spending was enacted when the economy was in danger of contracting, then surpluses should be run during periods of expansion.

Keynesian-inspired deficit spending became orthodoxy after WWII. Growth was stimulated, but governments tended to ignore the specification to run surpluses when the economy was robust. Spending kept unemployment low and profits high. Given the green light to run deficits, politicians in power couldn't resist abusing the privilege. For a while, during the 1960s and 1970s, the consequence was inflation—not only in terms of profits, which the elites desired, but also in terms of wages. The latter was considered problematic. It was viewed as a cause of cost-push inflation and a potential *constraint* on profits. Corporations responded by off-shoring production.

The term “late capitalism” refers to the period of globalization. It has resulted in a number of new phenomena. In particular, two trends relevant to our current discussion have been: (1) the additional manufacturing and mining capacity in Asia, Africa, and Latin America that has led to a general state of productive

over-capacity relative to demand; and (2) the associated lower wage rates which have suppressed wage levels throughout the system. Both of these consequences are deflationary, as was evident in the Great Recession of 2007-2009. During that crisis the central banks got concerned that a 1930s-type of depression might be unfolding. They initiated extreme counter-measures such as zero rates of interest on the instruments they control directly (like the US Federal Funds rate) and unprecedented purchases of bonds with the objective of lowering yields. The latter policy was given an obfuscatory name (“quantitative easing”) to deflect attention from how radically the banks were expanding their balance sheets through bond purchases.

These measures seemed to work for a while. Economic contraction was reversed and deflation was avoided, but the unconventional fiscal and monetary policies failed to generate truly strong rates of growth. The tepid post-crisis expansion since 2009 has not allowed the central banks to reduce their balance sheets, normalize interest rates, or end their extraordinary monetary interventions. What has transpired is that they've produced *a very selective kind of inflation*—not in consumer prices, but rather in elevated prices of financial assets. This has exacerbated inequality, because the Top 10% own almost 90% of privately-held stocks and bonds.

Billion-dollar fortunes have been spawned while wages have stagnated. It's obscene, of course, but it also will be ultimately counterproductive. The general valuation of the stock and bond markets normally has some relation to the underlying productive economy. By 2019 it reached an unprecedented hyper-level. The disconnect can't continue. It's not likely that stronger economic growth will resolve the disparity. Rather, the valuation of financial assets will start falling again when the boomlet ends.

### WHO, IN DEBT, HASN'T DREAMED ABOUT HAVING A MONEY TREE?

Keynesian-inspired fiscal policies have generated an enormous amount of sovereign (governmental) debt in all the leading economies. For example, over the last twenty years the national debt of the United States has increased 320%—from \$5.7 trillion in 2000 to \$18.2 trillion in 2019. During the same period GDP (from which tax revenues are derived) has gone up about 100%.

Looking at their household finances, a couple might say: “We've been having trouble matching income and expenditures. At the rate things are going we're going to drown in debt.” According to a 2017 GOBankingRates survey, less than half of Americans (43 percent) have as much as \$1,000 in their savings accounts. Forty percent have trouble matching income and expenditures at least one month per year and thus have to incur credit card debt. Does that seem irresponsible? Well, the federal government hasn't matched annual income and expenditures since 2001!

Every once in a while the government runs a surplus, but the preponderance of deficit years assures that the national debt keeps growing. 1835 was the only year in history when

the country was debt free! Either Uncle Sam needs lessons in household parsimony or he needs a money tree.

Or he needs to embrace MMT.

### JUST PRINT IT

“In terms of managing the system, we need to go beyond Keynesianism. Unless and until we are fully utilizing the productive capacity of our economy, pay no mind to revenues; just print money and spend it.” So say advocates of Modern Monetary Theory.

Don't tax. Don't borrow. Don't worry about balancing revenues and expenditures. Don't think in terms of deficits at all. Think, instead, about systemic stability and about achieving a full employment economy.

Yes, they say, the federal government could act as if it has a money tree. It can approach expenditures that way because it issues and controls the kind of money it taxes and spends. This would not apply to state governments or to countries that are “not sovereign” in regard to the issuance of their currency (i.e., the value of their currency is pegged to the dollar and thus they can only print an amount that retains that peg).

There is a lot of complex technical stuff written about it, but the bottom line of the movement is actually simple—MMT'ers say: “Why should we have people unemployed while productive assets are not being fully utilized? Under those conditions everyone suffers. Naturally, the unemployed suffer the most, but we all suffer to the extent that economic output is below its optimum potential. So: move those unemployed people into under-utilized sectors and get the economy humming!”

They say: Clearly the private economy can't do it. The history of the capitalist system shows that without government expenditures unemployment varies in a cycle. Rarely does it drop below three percent; at times it soars to over ten percent. What a waste! The MMT'ers would have government spend enough to reduce involuntary unemployment to zero at all times. Surely, there's lots of work to be done. Super-fund sites need to be cleaned up. Affordable housing needs to be built. A whole backlog of infrastructure repairs is pending. Commercial buildings could use energy retrofits. Solar panels need to be deployed.

Implementation of a Green New Deal, alone, could eliminate all involuntary unemployment. The MMT'ers say: If the electorate indicates approval of a Green New Deal and the cost will be \$30 trillion over the next twenty years, let the government print \$30 trillion to fund it. Pay no attention to raising revenues to cover the expense.

*Pay no attention to raising revenues to cover the expense?!*

Most people would say: WTF! MMT'ers say: Why not?

### FROM THERE THE DISCUSSION GETS PRETTY TECHNICAL

Mainstream economists critique MMT by claiming that the value of the currency would fall and/or interest rates would rise and/or government expenditures would crowd out private sector

Either Uncle Sam needs lessons  
in household parsimony or he  
needs a money tree.

investment...and/or “just print” is just outrageous. Naturally, MMT'ers have formulated answers to all the various critiques. Notably, they are very explicit about how to deal with the inflation potential of money printing. Once an economy has been stimulated toward the achievement of full employment, the government has to monitor for excess demand. Demand beyond supply capacity could, indeed, generate inflation. At that point it would be appropriate to raise taxes or issue bonds in order to remove excess liquidity from the system.

In other words: Taxing and borrowing are not needed to raise revenues. Rather, they are tools to use to dampen inflation tendencies when such arise.

Critique and counter-critique about these ideas has been going on within the confines of the academic journals for several decades. The controversy came to prominence when a leading MMT advocate, Stephanie Kelton, Professor of Public Policy and Economics at Stony Brook University, became an advisor to Bernie Sanders' 2016 presidential campaign.

The technicalities of the discussion are likely to cause the eyes of any non-economist to glaze over. And it's likely that no one will ever know who's right until the theory is put into practice in the real world. But the elites are becoming attuned to the possibility that MMT can solve problems regarding debt and under-funded obligations. Keynesianism had opened the door to acceptance of continual deficit spending. MMT could be the “next big thing” in terms of salvational policy revolutions.

### THEY'LL KEEP TRYING TO SAVE THEIR SYSTEM

Management of the unruly system has been an issue since at least the Depression of the 1930s. Left-liberals have long advocated substantial government intervention. The power elite conservatives were dragged kicking and screaming toward realization of the necessity to be proactive. During the twentieth century it was the specter of socialism that motivated them. Now it's the specter of low-returns capitalism, unfunded future liabilities, and the potential for a debt deflation crisis.

Fiscal policy, tariffs, subsidies, monetary policy, quantitative easing, currency manipulation: The dynamic toward increasing management of the system continues unabated. Arguably, MMT

is the next logical step. Printing money for expenditures without regard to revenues is a radical post-Keynesian notion. So is the insistence upon an always-full-employment economy. Adam Smith would shudder at the idea of a capitalist economy so managed and manipulated, so centralized. But it might well come to pass. Only then will we know whether Stephanie Kelton is justified in saying that the government can always afford new programs because it can issue currency without taxing or borrowing—or Bill Gates has it right when he describes MMT theory as “crazy talk.”

What’s certain is that the elites will try to skew systemic benefits in their direction no matter what theories or policies are *au courant* at any point in time. Greens will continue to need to work toward the creation of a world where money

trees are not needed, where the “money changers are driven from the temple,” and where power elitism, plutocracy, corporate domination, and ecological irresponsibility are viewed as sorry historic artifacts. We should have no delusions about monetary management of any kind under conditions of late capitalism.



**STEVE WELZER**

A co-editor of this magazine, Steve 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 formerly served on the Steering Committee of the Green Party of the United States. Steve holds a Master’s degree in Economics from Rutgers University.

He lives in East Windsor, NJ, and is pursuing a project to establish an ecovillage in that state.

*Rensenbrink, continued from page 38*

occupied by Senator Susan Collins. It is led by an outstanding peace and environment activist, Lisa Savage, who has formed an Exploratory Committee and plans to announce her bid within weeks. Her decision to run is in no small measure due to the fact that the election for the seat she seeks will be run in accordance with newly won rules of Ranked Choice Voting. The outlook is positive for un-seating Collins and promoting in Maine (and the country at large) a powerful drive for localization and community thriving. So that action here is both for local resilience and for national action to de-fang the capitalist bureaucratic monsters astride the U.S. nation-state.

At the state level, I continue to be active on the RCV front as I have been for two decades. The work is unfinished. Though we’ve won RCV for federal races, there still remain the hurdles that prevent RCV from being adopted for Governor and legislative (both House and Senate) seats. Obtaining RCV for these races is crucial if the Maine Green Independent Party can truly become a herald and front-runner for fundamental change in the country. We have received as much as 35% in two- and three-way races and lesser but substantial vote totals (from 5% upwards to 10% and 20%) in legislative and gubernatorial races, as well as fielding successful candidates for local non-partisan offices. RCV removes the spoiler effect that has dogged our best efforts and thus liberates the voter to vote their conscience, able to abandon their fear of putting into power a candidate they fear and despise.

At the local level, I feel that my non-political work has been unqualifiably wonderful and effective. I have teamed up with others, including a leading local developer and many creative activists, my wife Carla among them, to found the Cathance River Education Alliance (CREA). CREA conducts hands-on, nature-based learning for twenty years now, and going strong, for thousands of school children from area schools on land that had been clearcut and now after many years is a beautiful and nature-awakened Preserve. Just a few weeks ago, the roadway leading into the Preserve was named Rensenbrink Way. I am still beaming.



PHOTO BY JAMES MCCARTHY

John Rensenbrink cutting the ribbon September 24, 2019 at the dedication of the newly named Rensenbrink Way, the entrance to the Cathance River Education Alliance Preserve which he co-founded for hands on, nature-based learning in Topsham for Maine midcoast area schoolchildren and teachers.

I can’t end this recital without mentioning my work, together with Steve Welzer, in founding and persevering with the *Green Horizon Magazine*. In a way, this unites for me all the levels of action in which I’ve been and still am engaged. Right now Steve and I are switching roles. He will be taking on the chief responsibilities for producing the Magazine, recruiting and editing the articles, raising money and the many things in addition on which our continuity depends. I will contribute and pitch in.

I wanted to provide a kind of map for action in this essay, make a call for action at all levels, and indicate the things I do to illustrate an attempt to walk my talk.



**JOHN RENSENBRINK**

Co-editor of *Green Horizon*, John lives in Maine, is professor emeritus of government at Bowdoin College, co-founded 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).

# A New Movement for Ecovillagers, *Part 3*

*This is the third and final part of a series focusing on innovative ways to foster places of equity, integrity, and sustainability.*

## HOUSING IS THEFT. LONG LIVE COMMUNITY LAND!

The year is 1650, nearly two centuries before the French anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon will cry “Property is Theft!” Amidst a civil war among different landowning elites, new communities sprout across England in defiance of the very idea of landowning. Radicals known as the Diggers, squatting on vacant tracts, tear down fences to build common houses and vegetable plantings. They give free food to anyone willing to join this collective act of cultivation.

Believing in a connection between social, spiritual, and ecological well-being, the Diggers declare that “true freedom lies where a man receives his nourishment and preservation, and that is in the use of the earth.” In this understanding, to “commune with nature” and to “commune” with each other are, together, what make a place home and make a person whole.

The Diggers’ Shire-like communes are, of course, broken up violently by the landowning classes, but not only by those most powerful. Much as in later chapters of history, even property owners at the bottom of that pecking order take up arms against the threat of egalitarian ideas.

Capitalism is on the rise. Many are choosing a new system of private property over the old system of serfdom. Many more find this choice is made for them. While the Triangle Trade makes entire communities of kidnapped Africans into the property of plantation owners, fences slice across England’s old Commons and entire communities of subsistence agrarians are forced from ancestral lands into cities. There they encounter a “freedom” that appears not to lie in the use of the earth. It is the freedom to make *money*—by, for instance, laboring 80-hour weeks weaving textiles from slave-grown cotton. This freedom has some allure because money can theoretically be exchanged for anything. However, without the old Commons, one’s money is most likely needed for food, no longer grown by the community one no longer has, and for a strange new commodity called *housing*.

The Diggers didn’t have housing. The countless villages lost with enclosure of the Commons didn’t have housing either. They had *houses*. *Housing* is a byproduct of private land plus capitalist labor markets, wherein the bodies of workers (whether rented or stolen) need to be *housed* when they’re not working. It happens this makes an irresistibly profitable business for the minority who own all that private land. Migrants always need somewhere to live, and who wouldn’t fight for the right to sell a product everybody needs?

Thus begins centuries of struggle over housing. Subsidized housing, public housing, company housing, affordable housing, redlined housing, substandard housing, a housing crisis. When we speak of “housing,” we refer always to the storage of people displaced involuntarily—by war, enslavement, enclosure, poverty, ecological destruction, or persecution—and dispossessed from their ancestral community’s land. We don’t speak of “housing” for capitalism’s upper castes, because they don’t need housing. They’re the ones still with land.

JOEL ROTHSCHILD  
*Ecovillagers Alliance*

What had nourished  
and preserved human  
community for thousands  
of years were places  
where sustenance and  
shelter were secured  
through a sustainable  
web of relationships,  
lifeways, and collective  
wisdom grounded in  
shared habitat.

Being a renter has many advantages.

It's all the more beneficial when one's "landlord" is a Community Land Cooperative.

The Diggers were not utopians, they were conservationists. They saw the destruction of the kind of place that had nourished and preserved human community for thousands of years—the kind of place where sustenance and shelter were secured through a sustainable web of relationships, lifeways, and collective wisdom grounded in shared habitat.

The Diggers saw the pathology of privatization, poised as it was to colonize the earth: that though it may offer housing of every shape and size, it can do so only by removing community from the land. To choose private ownership of land is thus to choose for community not to exist as it did for our ancestors. The subsequent centuries of mass displacement confirm this grim prediction thoroughly.

So if "housing" is part and parcel of the system that brought us slumlords and climate change, why bother with housing at all? How can we reclaim *community land*? How can we become the ancestors the Diggers tried to be for us?

### DIVEST, REINVEST, SOLIDARITY

It's crucial to respect the awesome power standing against community land. The capitalist conception of property, designed for dispossession and accumulation, fills our laws, our institutions, and our minds. Nowhere on Earth is beyond its influence. This anti-communal power must be purposefully diminished, and a broad base of pro-communal power must be built, if we want community land to flourish and survive.

To be effective, we should follow the lead of today's climate organizers, themselves following the Civil Rights and Labor movements, and commit to taking three steps together:

- STEP 1:** Withdraw the power we give to anti-communal forces.
- STEP 2:** Find the contributions we each can make to foster the re-establishment of community land.
- STEP 3:** Build pro-communal power with other movements aligned against our common oppression.

Divest, reinvest, solidarity. All three are strategically key, yet the first is rarely addressed by advocates of community land. How can you *divest* from anti-communal forces?

For starters, quit using communes as a punch line. Certainly, the history of communes offers cautionary tales about abusive power, race and class privilege, and poor living conditions. To identify these ills with communes, though, is to feed the myth that private land solves any of them. Privatization *hides* harms, it doesn't heal them. Furthermore, we should acknowledge that successful, mature communes such as Acorn and Twin Oaks

provide their members with enviable food, shelter, physical and mental health, livelihoods, and support for children, at a fraction of the cost and environmental impact of any neighborhood yet devised by capitalism. Writing them off is a great service to the mythology of private land.

If you have wealth, remove it from private land and its institutions. Don't hang on to stock in businesses that use your money to take land and mine, cut, drill, or otherwise extract its riches. But, also, don't give your money to banks that use it to finance private land and its exploitation. It's the same system!

The toughest and perhaps most important divestment we must make is from our own privately-held land and buildings. For many, this property is *home*. For many it is also our single greatest gift to the system of real estate capitalism. If you own your home, try asking yourself: would I feel 100% comfortable selling my house for less than market rate, for no reason except to not raise the cost of housing for others? If the answer is no, then the system has you right where it wants you.

### RESISTANCE AND RESILIENCE FROM THE LAND UP

The good news is, divestment is liberating. The "American Dream" of homeownership asks individuals to take most or all of our liquid assets to become amateur real estate speculators and property managers, with decades of interest to pay. What a burden just for secure shelter!

As we discussed in Part 2, being a renter has many advantages, foremost flexibility and sharing property management's risks and responsibilities. Tenancy is all the more beneficial when one's "landlord" is a Community Land Co-op ("CLC") wherein each member can own as much or as little equity as they choose, while voting equally on decisions impacting the neighborhood.

For those who already own real estate, that asset could be a profound contribution to the re-establishment of community land. Let's say I own my home or place of business, I trade it to a CLC for its value in equity shares, then I rent that very same place back from the CLC. Even if the rent I pay, offset by the dividend owed to me from the co-op, is equal to what I paid before in mortgage, taxes, and maintenance—so no one has moved and the cost is the same and it looks like nothing has changed at all—still, I have radically advanced the cause.

Now other co-op members can buy the equity formerly owned by my bank. Landscaping, planting, water management, an electric microgrid, high-speed internet, and more can be integrated across my old property line. Fences can come down. The CLC's local democracy for budgeting, development, and land use decisions can include one more piece of the neighborhood, in perpetuity.

CLC holdings won't be sold to speculators, developers, or gentrifiers. They won't be "flipped," or suddenly cost double the price. Market shocks won't periodically liquidate the neighborhood's real estate for the easy picking of outside investors.

Part of what I pay for my place now helps maintain the neighborhood's Commons—the shared commercial kitchen and banquet hall, guest rooms, dance and yoga space, theater, library, kid's den, storage, free store and so on that make it possible to live very well on a smaller individual footprint. Part of what I pay for my place also feeds the CLC's Resilience Fund, giving our co-op the means to keep neighbors in their homes during hardship, and to ensure old heating and cooling equipment is replaced with the green alternatives that may cost more up front but serve us all better over time.

Most importantly, as a Community Land Co-op gains ownership of land, its neighborhood gains security as a place for community. CLC holdings won't be sold to speculators, developers, or gentrifiers. They won't be "flipped," or suddenly cost double the price. Household and business equity in the neighborhood will naturally tend toward more equitable distribution among members, without recourse to paternalistic state or philanthropic programs, and market shocks like the Great Recession won't periodically liquidate the neighborhood's real estate for the easy picking of outside investors.

Democratic ownership of land such as a CLC provides every party to a neighborhood with different ways to reinvest in community. A neighborhood resident who owns private land can trade that property into the co-op. A resident who rents from the co-op can pay a little extra or trade "sweat equity" to gradually build their investment. A neighborhood business can contribute in the very same ways. Non-residents who become co-op members can contribute as "social investors," reducing the community's dependence on outside lenders. Community and family foundations can do the same, contributing through program-related investment.

Traditional housing co-ops rely on most of real estate capitalism's conventions. Units are bought and sold and typically financed with bank debt. They also focus narrowly on *housing*, rarely bringing together the commercial and residential constituents that add up to a neighborhood, and rarely bringing together residents with the non-residents whose wealth is needed to provision adequate real estate. We can be more inclusive, more relationship-based, and more resilient.

By moving away from capitalist institutions and including a greater diversity of members, we can use Community Land Co-ops to restore power to the web of relationship—that is, to community itself. Community land isn't waiting for a state policy, or an angel funder, or an NGO it can rely on. It's merely waiting for us to rely on each other.

## REPARATIONS THROUGH COMMUNITY LAND

I am frequently privileged to connect with other social movements' organizers. What they see in the movement for democratic community land is most often a way to make housing more affordable and to stabilize it against gentrification. In short, they see a way to prevent previously displaced people from being displaced yet again. It is clear that continued displacement harms the communities and even the ecosystems that most social movements aim to heal.

Now what if democratizing community land could be a healing process in and of itself? To make this personal, I am Jewish. Our community is one of few to have received Reparations, specifically state and corporate reparations paid to Germany's victims in the *Sho'ah* (Holocaust). With tensions rising sharply between Jewish and European communities today, it's debatable how much those billions of euros produced real healing between the descendants of fascists and the descendants of their victims. Meanwhile, there is an opportunity for Jewish participation in a more relationship-grounded sort of reparations that could perhaps feel more meaningful in the long run.

My ancestors were chronically displaced for centuries. Then in the US something strange occurred. American Jews found ourselves bumped one rung up from the bottom of the racial hierarchy. We went from being denied any place to live but the "ghetto" (Italian for Jewish housing) to being permitted not only to live there but to own property there too. Then we were even allowed to move out into some "nice neighborhoods" while keeping those old "inner-city" properties as rentals. The upshot today is descendants of the chronically displaced American Jews owning many of the homes of the chronically displaced Black and Latinx Americans. In many cities, like Baltimore, Philadelphia, and most famously Brooklyn, these neighborhoods are gentrifying rapidly. As the old landlords sell out to developers, residents are ever more vulnerable to displacement.

What if we came together right now and stopped history from repeating? Every party to this scenario comes from a long history of displacement! Community land could be a deeply felt common cause. It could be healing for everyone involved, and it could forge relationships of durable solidarity between victims of common struggle.

Social movement organizations already exist to hold ally-ship between American Jews and people of color. The movement for community land should be helping those organizations facilitate the conversion of Jewish-owned rental properties into Community Land Co-ops, so the residents can become part owners and resist

## Non-residents who become co-op members can contribute as “social investors,” reducing the community’s dependence on outside lenders.

displacement. Where these CLCs can also incorporate neighboring commercial and industrial properties, residents would finally have a direct democratic voice in land use decisions for neighborhood polluters, and environmental injustices could be addressed as well.

That is merely one example. The truth is, *most* communities today live in exile from community land. We have each played roles in each other’s harm, roles assigned to us by the racial, sexual, gender, and class divisions fueling capitalism. We have, therefore, a great abundance of opportunity for healing relationships in collaboration to re-establish community land.

### HOUSING IS THEFT. LONG LIVE COMMUNITY LAND CO-OPS!

The year is 2019, four centuries into the privatization madness resisted by the Diggers. And we are still resisting.

After years of research and planning, the Community Land Co-op is more than a theory. Where I live, in the city of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, we have a few homes purchased and a founding CLC membership of tenant-owners and non-tenant-owners making democratic decisions together, guiding the present and future of our land and buildings. Equity purchasers are earning dividends and aspiring equity purchasers are making agreements with other co-op members to acquire equity of their own. Renters on the block are talking with their landlords about incorporating their homes, and co-op members are talking to owner-occupants on the block about incorporating *their* homes.

A business plan is forming for our CLC to acquire an old industrial building and make a Common House. The commercial kitchen would help community food entrepreneurs develop their businesses during the hours when we aren’t making family-style neighborhood dinners, and the community guest rooms would be run as B&Bs by tenant-owners looking to offset their rent. The makeshift theater in one house’s living room, the self-serve speakeasy and lounge in another’s basement, and the tool library and kids’ den in another’s garage—all amenities we’re sharing across the block—could find more comfortable quarters and be more cooperatively managed.

To gain efficiency in our accounting, property management, and other business functions, as well as to ensure liquidity for co-op equity holders when they need cash, our Community Land Co-op would be better off in a peer network of CLCs across the region. As it happens, the CLC in Lancaster is only the first in this movement. Neighborhood organizers are rallying people and identifying land and buildings. Brooklyn, central New Jersey, or Philadelphia could be next.

Everything we’re doing is open source and meant to be replicable wherever people want to organize democratic community land.

We started an organizing nonprofit, called the Ecovillagers Alliance, to provide free online learning and a legal brain trust, and to work with local groups forming study circles. When enough study circles have formed across the region, we will hold the first Mid-Atlantic Assembly for Community Land Co-ops.

With the plight of the Diggers in mind, we are proceeding with equal parts caution and audacity as we develop inside and outside ways of relating to capitalist power. Inside the co-op, we can work with local restorative justice facilitators to implement harm-reducing and healing approaches to safety and conflict resolution. Perhaps I will see a day when no one on my block ever feels a need to call the police!

Outside the co-op, we are all owner-operators of a private business, the business that owns our community’s land and buildings. Outside the co-op, that is to say, we are the capitalist legal regime’s most protected class.

Inside the co-op, we are all members who vote equally and trade equity and earn dividends. No individual member owns the land, the co-op does, therefore no one can preempt anyone’s voice or confiscate anyone’s home. Inside the co-op, that is to say, we at long last have democratic community land.

Building and sustaining this protective container calls on each of us to divest our wealth, our skills, and our minds from an ever-harmful system, and to bring them into an intentional, cooperative web of relationship. Some can contribute property, some can commit to being wonderful long-term neighbors. Some have great community businesses, some have great social networks. Some can crunch spreadsheets, some can knock doors. What are your gifts?

To reiterate our debt to the prophetic Audre Lorde, the master’s tools will not dismantle the master’s house. But with genuinely democratic tools, the master’s house could be reclaimed as a fine Commons for all of our children. It’s time to create this legacy together.



#### 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.

# “Any Blue Will Do” vs. Trump?

Let's face it: The US political system is dysfunctional. Of course, this is nothing new. Most of us who are Green became so because we already understood this fact—either as we were becoming aware of this nation's politics or after we allowed ourselves to hope that a new charismatic political figure would somehow break the mold and show us that we could trust the mainstream political parties to answer our needs—even once in a while!

Whether the issue is a seemingly never-ending support for war, getting big money out of politics, the winner-take-all system utilized by the US for almost all elections, confronting climate change and protecting the environment, providing quality medical care for all, ending homelessness or unemployment, or addressing the ever-growing gap between the richest and the poorest among us—it's readily apparent that whether we elect a Democrat or a Republican nothing much seems to change.

In this era of political polarization and partisanship, the attacks on those of us who dare to present another choice increase in stridency and viciousness with each election cycle. The first presidential election I voted in was in 1976, so the 2020 election will be my twelfth, and while the arguments against running as an independent or a Green get recycled every four years, it is clear to me that a willingness to suspend critical thinking in order to play defensive politics—otherwise known as voting for the “lesser of two evils”—has not only brought this country to the point of collapse, it has endangered the security and sovereignty of the entire world.

In 2018, I ran as the Green Party of New Jersey's candidate for US Senate against incumbent Robert Menendez (D) and Republican challenger Bob Hugin. While I received more votes than any of the other five independent candidates in the race (25,150 votes), I can only imagine what might have happened under other circumstances. Senator Menendez's 2018 corruption trial made many loyal Democrats reluctant to vote for him. During the primary nearly forty percent of voters cast their vote for one of his challengers. But that vote for an opponent of Menendez was considered safe because in a Democratic Party primary only a Democrat would emerge as a victor. Casting a protest vote was not only tolerated, it was encouraged. In the general election, however, all Democrats were expected to rally behind Menendez, and most of them did.

I do understand the strategy behind voting along straight party lines, no matter who the candidate is. But I strongly disagree with it. How does it help to vote party over platform—or party without regard to positions on the issues?

This year, in a reversal of the 2016 presidential primaries, the Democrats are fielding a profusion of candidates, more than 20. Each of us ought to think carefully about our options. Would any of the Democratic candidates on the primary ballot take a strong position on the issues that deeply concern us? Unfortunately, it seems this no longer matters. While there may be a difference of opinion today over which candidate has the best chance to defeat Donald Trump, many will vote for whomever the nominee is, as long as he or she represents the Democratic Party. Critical thinking is frowned upon—and so our country may find itself governed by a Democrat who is only marginally different from our current president. How disheartening it would

MADELYN HOFFMAN

While there may be a difference of opinion today over which candidate has the best chance to defeat Donald Trump, next November many will vote indiscriminately for whomever the Democratic Party nominee happens to be.

A willingness to suspend critical thinking in order to play defensive politics—otherwise known as voting for the “lesser of two evils”—has not only brought this country to the point of collapse, it has endangered the security and sovereignty of the entire world.

be to wind up with another president who supports war and a bloated military budget, bolsters capitalism (but will perhaps advocate a few ineffectual regulations), pretends to be in favor of combating climate change, shows no commitment to providing Medicare for All but instead will continue to reward private insurance companies with increased profits—in short, another administration that disappoints progressives on the full panoply of vital issues.

If we could get beyond the “Any Blue Will Do” mantra and give some deeper thought to the dilemma we face, the necessity of finally breaking the chains of the “only-two-serious-choices” system would become apparent. The burgeoning movement for Ranked Choice Voting would swell. Those wanting to see change would understand that our winner-take-all electoral system puts voters’ backs against the wall and removes the ability to choose a candidate truly aligned with one’s political position. It leads to deep divisions within the political parties and between the political parties—as well as blistering attacks on those who still dare to promote a different alternative.

When progressive Democrats engage in such attacks, it makes them sound authoritarian and, actually, *undemocratic*. They wind up doing the work of the oligarchy—quashing efforts to make any kind of deeply transformational change. Case in point: In the 2018 election, given my nearly twenty years of working for peace, one of my main campaign issues was to call for an end to all the wars the US has initiated or backed since September 11, 2001. This includes an 18-year war on Afghanistan, a 16-year war on Iraq, an 8-year war on Syria, an 8-year war on Libya (leading to the return of the slave trade there), decades of support for Israel against the Palestinians, increasingly strident threats of war against Iran, three years of support for a horrific Saudi-led war on Yemen, and ongoing attempts to engineer a coup in Venezuela. Well, I was told by so-called “progressive democrats” that the issue of war was a *distraction*.

A distraction? How could the fact that more than \$700 billion is spent annually on wars overseas be a distraction? Those wars

cause death and destruction in each country the US invades, while stealing billions of dollars from our communities—money that could be spent on public education, infrastructure repair, health care, environmental protection, housing, veterans’ benefits, and so much more. These types of expenditures are essential to the welfare of the country, yet during my campaign many considered the issue of militarism a *distraction*. Is it because both Democrats and Republicans support war?

When I appeared with Ralph Nader as his vice-presidential running mate in New Jersey in 1996, he would say: “The problem with the lesser of two evils strategy is that you are still voting for evil. The candidates become lesser and lesser, as well as more and more evil.” My own experience as a voter over the years seems to bear that out. Has the US by now accepted that the president determines when we go to war, not Congress? Have many voters given up trying to elect an anti-war candidate, now considering the issue a *distraction*? Are progressives on the road to concession regarding one alternative-view issue after another—a comprehensive ecosocialist Green New Deal? universal single-payer health care? getting big money out of politics? a more-inclusive electoral system? tuition-free college? Can these objectives be disregarded or jettisoned as “distractions from the only thing that really matters”...defeating Republicans?

Is the progressive democratic “program” narrowing down to such tragic minimalism?

A beacon of hope is that the Green Party continues to push for transformational policy changes, despite the fact that many wish it would simply disappear. It remains steadfast, not on account of “ideological purism” or refusal to become “practical”—but rather because the Greens are not prepared to accept that the “only ethical choice” in today’s elections is to vote for a deeply flawed Democrat or Republican.

Greens say that our aspirations must be better than that. It’s time to finally open up the system to “more voices and more choices” as Ralph Nader advocated. It’s time to acknowledge that the political constraints we face are leading this country in an ominous direction—toward a stagnation and self-preoccupation that could thwart all efforts to bring peace to the world and to mitigate the environmental destruction of the planet. We can and must stop settling for *any* “lesser evils”; we can and must vote our hopes rather than our fears.



**MADelyn HOFFMAN**

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

# As Poland Transitions Away from Coal, There Must Be Justice for Its Workers

SEDEN ANLAR

*In December 2018 the former coal-mining town of Katowice, Poland, was the site of COP24 (Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention—i.e., the 24th UN Summit on Climate Change). Ninety-six countries gathered with the intent of forging a more comprehensive plan to deal with climate change. During the conference, Seden Anlar of the Big Green Politics Podcast interviewed Milka Stępień, the secretary-general of Zieloni (the Polish Green Party). Below is a condensed transcript of the interview.*

**SEDEN:** Thank you for coming onto the podcast, Milka. I'm sure you're a bit tired like me, because we were both on the COP24 Climate Justice March yesterday. We shouted, we marched, we resisted. So, to begin, I want to get your opinion on that experience. What was your personal reason to be there, and how do you think it went?

**MILKA:** My very personal reason is my daughter. I have a four-year-old daughter, and I'm worried about what her future will look like. This is actually one of the main reasons why recently I've gotten so strongly involved in Green politics.

On a wider scale, we wanted the Green presence to be as high as possible, so we tried to get as many Greens from Poland, from Europe, and globally to be there, and show how important this issue is for us—that it's our priority at the moment.

I think the march went pretty well. It was about trying to change things that are very difficult to change. I think a lot of the time climate activists and Green politicians are depressed about how slowly things are going. So sometimes we need the energy from marches like this.

**SEDEN:** I guess it's important to think about what we had expected from that march as well. One, yes, we were trying to tell the participants of the summit: we're watching you, we're here to put pressure on you and the whole process. But what I found more interesting than that, was the people watching *us*—on the pavements, through their windows, on their balconies—while we were marching. If some of them googled why we were there, instead of just buying straight-up the state propaganda, then I think that's a win.

**MILKA:** I think so, too. In Poland, awareness of climate change is quite low. We've had many years of denialist propaganda here. I think one of the biggest things we have to work on is making people realize that it's propaganda, and that we really have a lot of work to do right now.

**SEDEN:** At the UN Summit, the participants were greeted with a shrine of actual coal; and different products made from coal—coal made into soap, coal made into earrings—while the Polish coal miners' band, dressed in smart black uniforms wearing traditional miners' caps, played for the delegates arriving at the convention center. And when you look at the sponsors of the event, you see coal companies! Considering all these factors, can we expect real results and actions coming from the summit, or is it all just symbolic?

**MILKA:** If the point was to show, "okay we're moving away from coal, but we want to thank our predecessors for what they did for the region," that would be fine. You have coal mining museums in the region and that's exactly what they do. Unfortunately, this symbolism was not about that. It was pretty much emphasizing what the Polish government was saying publicly regarding the *continuation* of coal. You had the Polish president, Andrzej Duda, talking about how we have enough coal for another 200 years of exploitation, and so on.

So, this is where the issue stands, and this is where you have the strong feeling of dissonance between what the COP summit should be and what it has turned out to be. And I think this, unfortunately, will show that the summit will probably not achieve any significant results. There were at least some minor hopes that the Polish government would be forced to have a more ecologically-minded message and actually tackle climate issues. They've chosen, instead, to skirt around them and to stick to the idea that we are maintaining coal as our main source of energy.

**SEDEN:** I guess what we were hoping to see was a statement that would imply that, yes, coal was part of our history but it's not going to be part of our future. But just a few days before the summit, Poland's Ministry of Energy published a draft energy policy projecting to 2040. It said that the Ministry of Energy plans to invest in *new* coal capacity next year. The same

document stated that Poland's first nuclear power station will be launched in 2033 and five more will follow. Why is a state that has been dependent on coal striving to become dependent on nuclear?

**MILKA:** That's a complex question. The PEP—Polish Energy Policy 2040—is a very strange document. It's a draft document and a lot of groups will be sending in their comments. The Polish Greens think it should be completely rewritten because it's very bad. In terms of coal, generally, the whole issue with the Polish approach is that it's mythologized or considered to be the basis of our energy security. This is primarily because until recently it was the only form of energy we had on our own, that we did not have to import from another country.

But things have changed, so the PEP is not actually based on facts. Because if you look into the specifics of Poland's energy sector, we are importing large amounts of coal from Russia at the moment because the remainder of our hard coal is very low quality and it is extracted at a very large depth. It's extremely expensive to extract this coal, and, in fact, if you look at it from the perspective of the economy, there's no possibility that we will have enough coal for 200 years of extraction and exploitation—we probably just have enough for another 30 years.

This is something that Polish geologists talk about extensively. If you speak with various people who know about our coal deposits, they will tell you that we'll be backing out of coal anyway. So why doesn't the government admit it? Well, notice who was sponsoring COP24: You had coal companies and energy companies that are state-owned. The government is very much afraid of losing control over the energy sector, so this is why they are afraid of diversification and energy that would be in the hands of the citizens.

They are also afraid of moving away from coal because then they will become dependent on gas. They're not very trusting of Europe, especially of Germany. I think this is a result of a very bad decision made by Germany to introduce the Nord Stream [an offshore natural gas pipeline from Vyborg in the Russian Federation to Greifswald in Germany] which bypassed Poland.

And why do they want nuclear energy? Because they want centralized power sources. They want to exchange a centralized energy sector based on coal by another based on the atom. You can also see this in the example of wind power. In the PEP 2040, they're talking about building offshore wind power. This is quite expensive in terms of initial investments so would probably be done by state-owned energy companies. At the same time the PEP 2040 talks about getting rid of *onshore* wind turbines. The government hasn't been very helpful in supporting people who want to invest in wind turbines—so over the last couple of years we've actually had a fall in the number of new wind turbines in Poland. This is because of legislation that was introduced in 2016 by the current government. It all shows that they are afraid they will lose control over the energy sector. And this, of course,

goes against current trends—because current trends are heading towards *decentralized* energy: people producing their own energy and creating networks made up of small energy plants or creating your own personal energy at home.

**SEDEN:** What about Poland's strong mining labor union. Does that play a role in political power, not being able to take them on?

**MILKA:** Yes, especially because their protests are not as peaceful as ours. The main protests were linked to the Silesia region where they have strong unions, and over the years there have been a couple of protests which were very violent. It's also a huge electoral base. At the same time, over the past thirty years, you've had the whole hard-coal mining sector restructured, which means basically there have been a lot of losses in jobs; and a lot of it was done without much preparation, so you didn't have a just transition in most cases.

What's been going on is that the mining sector has been restructured without the authorities actually saying it publicly. For example, right now we have 21 hard-coal mines, 12 of which will be closed down within the next couple of years.

**SEDEN:** When we try to address Poland's unique history with mining, "just transition," like you mentioned, often comes up as an issue. I guess at this point it's used as a tool to slow down the whole process of transitioning into a green economy. I was wondering how Greens can frame their position in a way that will allow them not only to offer substantial solutions and policy proposals for a just transition but also to keep the process going, no matter what, at the same time.

**MILKA:** I'm currently working on that in my region. It's a lignite mining region. Since 1990, it's lost about 70% of its jobs in the mining sector and the coal-fired energy sector. My region has one of the highest unemployment rates and one of the highest migration rates. That's very typical for a coal mining and energy plant region. But at the same time, for the last thirty years it's pretty much been left to itself, there's been no plan in place about what to do.

One of the things I try to do is to make sure all of the people who should be involved in the process are involved. This is what I'm working on right now, because a lot of the time the authorities tend to ignore people who they don't think are very important in terms of electoral voices. So you don't really have, for example, the farmers from the region invited, even though they have been really hit by open-top mines.

In terms of green policy, I think we need to push for a just transition that makes sure that everyone involved in the process is taken into account and knows what's going on. That includes miners, because one of the things I've heard from local miners is "okay, we understand that we're going to be moving away

from coal.” They know in general what’s going on because it influences them directly, but they want to know *specifics*—when are we closing down the mine, when are we closing down the energy plant, what should we do next? And this is something that I’ve been trying to push forward in my region.

A lot of the people on the ground are more knowledgeable than the politicians I’ve met. The people know about climate change, they know about emissions, they know about the issues with coal and coal prices at the moment, and they need a timeline, a timeframe. They need to know what will happen to their jobs, to their families, to the region. So, I think from our perspective what we need to push for is a “justice fund.” I know the European Greens are working on a “just transition fund” that would help regions like mine, which would go towards very specific goals, so the money wouldn’t be spent on green-washing for example (you get a lot of green-washing attempts in Poland). It would be spent specifically on the needs of these people who are in the region.

The Greens look at things on a more comprehensive scale, and that’s what we can bring to the table. A lot of what you hear from other political actors on the scene is very much focused on the economy, on business. It shouldn’t be all about that. A lot of these issues are social issues, a lot of these issues are about making people feel safe and assuring them that they are part of the process.

**SEDEN:** This sounds like an issue that Greens are taking on and working on, but it also sounds like it’s a core issue of civil society. It’s grassroots, so what kind of actions are the civil society organizations taking? And are you, Polish Greens, cooperating with them?

**MILKA:** Yes, very strongly. Most of the Polish Greens are *rooted* in civil society. I’m involved in two local organizations. One of them is a feminist organization and the other one focuses on participatory democracy. The background of most of the Greens in Poland is like that.

There’s been—and I think this is always an issue—there’s been a bit of distrust between NGOs and those of us who decide to go into politics. There is fear about mixing these two. On the other hand, when you’re doing mostly activism and you’re working within NGOs, at a certain point you reach a glass ceiling where you can’t go any further because the politicians are not listening to you. That’s why a lot of the people who start out in these organizations eventually go into Green politics.

I personally work with organizations that deal with the energy transition and climate issues. And we’ve developed a lot of trust between each other. I think the main thing is to be very upfront about how we can connect these different things—being very direct about who you are, why you’re in politics, and about why you need to find common ground and work together—because we do have the same aims.

**SEDEN:** Poland just had local elections and the Greens can be said to have done moderately well. Would it be correct if we said a Green Wave is now taking place in Poland, or will be soon—and, if so, what are the Polish Greens doing to build a structure based upon this wave so that it won’t fade away?

**MILKA:** We’ve been working on a plan for the past two years. We’re happy that we managed to make a bit of a splash in the election. It wasn’t a huge success, but from our perspective it was a step forward.

So, the Green politics movement in Poland is growing. I think there are probably about twice as many members as we had even a year ago. It’s not just connected to the election but also to green issues becoming more important. Like I said, we’ve had a lot of very bad ecological decisions in Poland over the past couple of years, so this has made people notice how important these issues are from the political perspective.

Next year we have both the European parliamentary elections and our Polish parliamentary election. So, it’s going to be very intense. We are preparing, and we hope that next year we will be able to say we have our first Polish parliamentarians. And hopefully we’ll also be able to join the European Greens in the European Parliament. But at the moment it’s very hard to say exactly whether we will be running independently as our own election group or whether we will have to go into some sort of coalition—because the political scene in Poland right now is quite complicated and changing very rapidly.

In regard to building enduring structures, our co-chairs—Marek Kossakowski and Małgorzata Tracz—are traveling around Poland and helping people set up local structures. Over the course of the next two months we’ll probably have another fifteen new local groups. This shows how quickly we’re growing.

A lot of people are interested in what we’re doing. Last year we prepared a very broad program—the Polish Greens Program—which is the basis for all our recent political work. It shows how we always prioritize addressing climate change and the energy transition, fighting for the earth and for an environment in which we can live and be healthy.

*For the full audio version of this interview, check out the Big Green Politics Podcast online. Meanwhile, here’s an update: On October 13 the Green Party of Poland had notable success in the national parliamentary elections. It ran candidates as part of the Civic Coalition, which altogether received 27% of the popular vote, good for second place. As a result, three Greens were elected as Members of Parliament.*



**SEDEN ANLAR**

is the host and co-producer, along with Julia Lagoutte, of the Big Green Politics Podcast, which provides an environmental and feminist angle on global politics and news. The podcast features interviews with Green thinkers, politicians and activists.

# Moving Forward *Through* and *Beyond* the Capitalist Bureaucratic Nation State

JOHN RENSENBRINK

A few brief glimpses for action on things local, statewide/provincial, national, and global.

The global is the problem. The local is the solution. Action must be at both levels. What about the nation state? The national level grips people's attention, a crazy-quilt capitalist bureaucracy in bed with corporate behemoths. The outstanding and much quoted German political philosopher Max Weber put it this way, as he looked ahead between the two World Wars of the last century: "It is," he said, run by "specialists without vision and voluptuaries without heart." But he failed, as have so many fine thinkers, to pin point the source of that fatal anomaly. It is the growth addiction inherent in capitalism and in the souls of capitalists. We must know by now that perpetual capitalist "growth" without end is truly crazy, totally at odds with our planet and its rules and requirements.

Can we imagine action aimed at what is now finally recognized as a global or globalized, "inter-national" problem? Can we imagine a great turning in which action at the local (and regional-state/provincial level) together with action at the global will yield a politics and culture that shreds the growth-crazed bureaucratic capitalism of the nation-state system?

Peering back in history, I'd say the visible onset of inevitable bureaucracy (caused by the onrush of capitalism) was the creation of "Independent Regulatory Commissions" in President Wilson's administration. They were hailed as a big help to the common man, but it was really an attempt to find the answer to the everlasting reach for market dominance and profit by the seemingly unstoppable drive of capitalist businesses. They were needed, desperately needed, to save capitalist businesses from the relentless predatory capitalist habit of eating each other up.

And so it continues to this day. The predatory spirit now symbolized and promoted by a vicious narcissist in the White House is still expending itself. It will have spent itself before very long and the whole unreal edifice of nation-state capitalist bureaucracy will come tumbling down.

## AN ASSIST NEEDED: FROM US

But it needs an assist. From us, ordinary tax paying folks and attentive citizens. We have formed a huge and (if pulled together) formidable ensemble of organizations dedicated to "change the world." Among them is the Green Party. Not to lead them (is my strong caveat), but to help them, arouse them, push them a little if necessary, to focus on the inner cause of the problem as I have sought to describe it and to act from that focus. This sort of thing can only be done, I believe, by education and persistent

electoral action at all levels local, state (or provincial), national, and global. Aim for power through elections, show to all groups and organizations that are aiming to "change the world," that a resolute political electoral force can be successful: that is, able to unseat the denizens of the bureaucratic capitalist nation state *and* be a help and catalyst for the ever greater success of the creative economy and community building that is already in place in so many places and can be, will be, models for the similar emergence of local strivings for liberation in all other places in the world.

## DIFFERENT LEVELS, DIFFERENT KINDS OF ACTION

But here there is a question totally relevant to taking action. At which level are you about to take action? The action at the national level is to undo what is there. Action at the local level and state and global level is both to resist the constant encroachment of the capitalist bureaucratic state and allied mammoth corporations that stem from it and, more importantly, to foster and work with people and organizations and group actions that are building a new and/or renewed economy and community of self-reliance and resilience. These are the foundation stones for our survival and renewal as a species on this planet.

To come back to where I started, that the problem is a global one and the solution is a local one.

I may be sounding as if I am preaching. If so please forgive. I do want to say to friend and foe that I am walking my talk. I am active at all the levels to which I speak in the above paragraphs.

## SEEKING TO WALK MY TALK

At the global level I am working to re-structure and renew the Global Greens. In a letter to all the 100 Green Parties of the World on behalf of the U.S. International Committee, Maggie Zhou and I are urging their enfranchisement as voting members of the Global Greens. We urge this as a fundamental step to achieve dialogic unity among them. This can lead to concerted action by them to resist the pro-corporate policies and practices of the ruling capitalistic elites in the world including the capitalistic elite in China masquerading as socialist. Equally important, their enfranchisement as members of the Global Greens can lead to their stronger and stronger support for local self-help and community self-reliance and resilience so crucial to their and the world's survival. This is a long shot but worth the effort.

At the national level I am part of a Green Party team in Maine in the first stages of launching a campaign for the U.S. Senate seat

*Continued on page 28*



# GREEN HORIZON

## GREEN HORIZON FOUNDATION SUSTAINERS FOR THE 2018/2019 CYCLE

Tony & Melba Affigne, Rhode Island  
Albert Anderson, Massachusetts  
John Anderson, Massachusetts  
Steve Baker & Katy Dolan, Florida  
Richard Barringer, Maine  
David Bath, Florida  
John Battista & Justine McCabe, Connecticut  
Ted Becker, Alabama  
Dee Berry, Kansas  
Antonio Blasi, Maine  
Denise A. Brush, New Jersey  
Bowdoin College Library, Maine  
Peter Broeksmit, Illinois  
Lisanne Budwick, New Jersey  
Rick Burrill, Pennsylvania  
Caron Cadle & Ray Remshardt, Florida  
J. Roy Cannon, Delaware  
Jonathan Carter, Maine  
Dana Cary, Maine  
Roy Christman, Pennsylvania  
Don Crawford, Illinois  
Linda Cree, Michigan  
Richard & Debra Csenge, Utah  
Bob Dale & Jean Parker, Maine  
Christine DeTroy, Maine  
Jacqui Deveneau, Maine  
Joseph H. De Rivera, Maine  
Budd Dickinson, Hawaii  
Romi Elnagar, Louisiana  
Paul Etxeberri, Nevada  
Richard Evanoff, Japan  
Bud Feder, New Jersey  
Jean Galloway Fine, Maine  
Charles Fitzgerald, New York  
Olenka Folda, Maine  
Tom Foote, Maine  
Walter & Francine Fox, Pennsylvania  
David & Melissa Frans, Maine  
Bruce Gagnon & Mary Beth Sullivan, Maine  
Greg Gerritt & Kathleen Rourke, Rhode Island  
Paul Gilk, Wisconsin  
David Greenwood, New Jersey  
Christopher Greuner, Massachusetts  
Gil Harris, Maine  
Holly Hart, Iowa  
Robert L. Hawk, Vermont  
Michael Heichman, Massachusetts  
Douglas Holden, Wisconsin  
Fred & Hadley Horch, Maine  
Clare Howell, Maine  
Carol Abhi Hudson, Florida  
Brenda Humphrey, North Carolina  
Dwayne Hunn, California  
Gus & Joan Jaccaci, Maine  
Patricia Jackson, Maine  
Christopher Jones, Colorado  
Kanab, Utah City Library, Utah  
Maynard Kaufman & Barbara Geisler, Michigan  
Charles Keil, Connecticut  
Brian Kent, Maine  
David & Peg Krosschell, Virginia  
Jim Krosschell & Cindy Dockrell, Massachusetts  
Paul Krumm, Kansas  
Ellen La Conte, North Carolina  
Tammy Lacher-Scully, Maine  
Paul Loney, Oregon  
Hector Lopez, Connecticut  
Margie & Bruce MacWilliams, New Jersey  
Maine State Library, Maine  
Audrey Marra, Maryland  
Linda Martin & Mike Cornforth, Washington  
Elaine McGillicuddy, Maine  
Brent McMillan, Indiana  
Raymond Meyer, Iowa  
Al Miller, Maine  
Daryl! L.C. Moch, District of Columbia  
Judith Mohling, Colorado  
Terry A. Morgan, Maine  
Jason Murray, Maine  
Dan Novak, Rhode Island  
Michael Ochs, Pennsylvania  
Harry Olmstead, Iowa  
Jon Olsen, Maine  
Barclay & Esther Palmer, Maine  
Rosalie Paul, Maine  
Andrew and Marianne Donahue Perchlik, Vermont  
Karen Peterson & Jeffrey Steinert, Arizona  
Anthony Piel, Connecticut  
Suzan Preiksas, New Jersey  
Joshua Roy Pritchett, Georgia  
Virginia Rasmussen, New York  
Richard B. Reisdorf, Minnesota  
John & Carla Rensenbrink, Maine  
Liz Rensenbrink, Maine  
Kathryn Rensenbrink & Jon McMillan, Maine  
Greta Rensenbrink & Kat Williams, West Virginia  
Rob Richie & Cynthia Terrell, Maryland  
Barbara Rodgers-Hendricks, Florida  
Jeanne-Marie Rosenmeier, California  
David Schultz, Minnesota  
David Schwartzman Washington, DC  
Evelyn Seberry, Michigan  
Robert Sellin & Natalie West, Maine  
Brian Setzler, Oregon  
Charles M. Sexton, Florida  
Mac Sexton, Florida  
Wendy and Mark Skinner, Ohio  
William & Ursula Slavick, Maine  
Sam Smith, Maine  
Thom Speidel, Washington  
Hersch Sternlieb, Maine  
Stephen Swift, Massachusetts  
Charlene Swift & Trish Duffett, Maine  
Jeff Taylor, Iowa  
David Thompson & Leslie Pearlman, New Mexico  
David & Marilyn Tilton, Maine  
Victoria Tredinnick, New Jersey  
John C. Van Pelt and Karen Blaisdell, Maine  
Rhoda Vanderhart, Alabama  
David Volwrath, Tennessee  
Andrea Walsh & Andy Davis, New Hampshire  
Brielle Welzer, Maryland  
Steve & Laura Welzer, New Jersey  
Sue West, Maine  
David Whiteman, South Carolina  
Julia Willebrand, New York  
Paul Woodruff, Texas  
Margaret & Peter Zack, Maine  
Steven & Marsha Zettle, Pennsylvania



Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 493  
Portland, ME

GREEN HORIZON FOUNDATION  
P.O. Box 476  
TOPSHAM, ME 04086

