

Vol 7, #1

Summer 2020

Justice Rising

Grassroots Solutions to Corporate Power

Featuring AfD's Grassroots Institute

Now is the Time!

Revolutionizing Our Economy, Politics & Relationships with Nature & Each Other

Every one can play a role in cultural transformation from domination to partnership.

Rianne Eisler, pg 1

I hope we shall crush the aristocracy of our monied corporations.

Thomas Jefferson, pg 2

Solidarity economy is being kind, compassionate and in solidarity with each other.

Emily Kawano, pg 4

We must build power in our communities to transform the system to expand equity and prosperity.

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It is time to restructure the economy, with public banks as an essential pillar.

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Now's the time to model the Grassroots Institute mapping project.

Nancy Price, pg 13

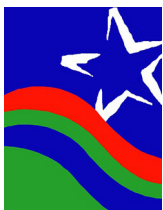
The solution is community self-governance.

Ben Price, pg 19

A Publication of
Alliance for Democracy



"The issue is not issues, the issue is the system." — Ronnie Dugger

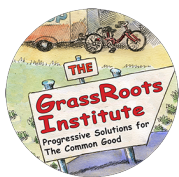


Alliance for Democracy (AfD). Since 1996, AfD has promoted systemic changes focused on liberating our culture, economy and politics from corporate domination and oppressive policies of the wealthy class, whose profits come at the expense of people and are destroying the planet. Working with like-minded groups, AfD is building a people's movement to end corporate rule and develop positive alternatives for transformative justice.

AfD's Major Campaigns Provide Resources for Active and Concerned Citizens



The People's Vote Must Count. To reclaim elections, restore voting rights, and protect our ballots, AfD endorses the Principles of Reform calling for hand-counted paper ballots, needed state and national reforms, and an end to gerrymandering. We need electoral system change now. See pages 2-3.



Grassroots Institute: Progressive Solutions for the Common Good. This AfD project helps communities build popular education programs around Grassroots Solutions to Corporate Power and Building an Economy for the Common Good. See their study guides at www.grassroots-institute.org to start making systemic change where you live. See pages 9-11.



Public Banking. We must end the stranglehold Wall Street has on small businesses, our homes, and our communities. Public banks create public money for the public good. From Massachusetts to California to Oregon, AfD is part of campaigns to create public banks. See page 12.



Local Food Ordinances. AfD supports local resistance to government regulations that serve corporate agriculture and harm local farmers. Town ordinances protecting local farmers and their customers are key. In Maine, 79 towns have already passed ordinances giving them control over their local food systems. See localfoodrules.org & page 20.



Defending Water for Life. Water is a fundamental right for people and nature, not to be commodified or privatized for corporate profit. AfD opposes taking water from municipalities or spring sources for bottling, and supports community resistance, including passing rights-based law that assert system change through the Rights of Nature. See page 19.

AfD Media

AfD's Corporations and Democracy radio program features lively interviews on critical issues you won't hear on corporate-owned media. Listen live on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays at 3:00 PM PDT at KZYX.org They look at how corporate rule is at odds with good public policy on a range of issues. Listeners hear what individuals and communities are doing at the grassroots to build better and more sustainable alternatives. Call AfD's office to air the program locally.

Populist Dialogues was AfD's cable public access program, interviewing individuals on corporate personhood, single payer healthcare, tax policy, money in politics, and more. All programs can be accessed at <http://www.afd-pdx.org/populist-dialogues.html>



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Now is the Time for Systemic Change

by Jim Tarbell and Ruth Caplan

Declaring “the issue is not issues, the issue is the system,” Ronnie Dugger, Alliance for Democracy’s founder, put aFD on the forefront of promoting systemic change to solve the most perplexing problems of our economic and political systems as well as our relationship with nature.

With the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement this summer, it is essential that we imbue our relationship with each other with respect and honor. The existing system of white supremacy comes out of 400 years of global conquest and enslavement of people of color. Systemic patriarchal domination rose in prehistoric times to conquer peaceful partnership cultures of the Mediterranean. It has subsequently been enshrined in religious doctrine. Both of these systems have to be replaced by a partnership culture.

Now, with the world aroused by:

- The failure of our political system to effectively deal with the pandemic and even guarantee that we will have free and fair elections;
 - The failure of our economic system as bankruptcies, evictions and unemployment explode;
 - Our domineering relationship over nature causing climate chaos with starvation and mass migrations; and
 - Our failure to dismantle white supremacy and domineering patriarchy after our country was founded on the principle that all humans are created equal;
- the time has come to assert massive system change.

The world will be different when we emerge from sheltering-in, after who knows how many months or years. Let’s make sure that it is a world that we all want, a world with:

- An empowering, inclusive democratic political system;
- An economic system with equal access for everyone where people can develop to their full potential and income equality is paramount;
- A new relationship with nature that recognizes we are all one and that nature has rights of its own, above the rights of property and equal to the rights of humans;
- A new partnership relationship between each other, where no race or ethnic group dominates over others and where all genders of whatever choice are equal and embraced; and
- A truly classless society where the rich no longer use their money power to dominate our economy, politics and culture.

This *Justice Rising* is dedicated to these visions, along with the system changes that will be necessary to make them come true. JR thanks Ruth Caplan and Nancy Price for all their help putting this issue together.

Let us take heart and use this moment to imagine building a new economy from the ground up with public banks anchoring the soil so new

endeavors can become deeply rooted. We will need a diverse ecosystem of local economies returning nutrients to the economic soil, not a monoculture of Wall Street banks and

investment firms stripping the earth of its mutually beneficial local businesses. And we will need to water the earth with local dollars generated by public banks, not flood it when the high dams of Wall Street banks suddenly break, washing away the nutrients along with our local communities.

As Rianne Eisler says, “Every one can play a role in the cultural transformation from domination to partnership. Working together, we can build the foundations for a more peaceful, equitable, sustainable world.” And as Emily Kawano elaborates, “The question is: can we do better by constructing a more just and sustainable economy grounded in our better angels — our impulses of love, solidarity, cooperation, mutualism, and compassion rather than narrow self interest and competition?”

Let us create a political system that is not powered by corporate money barons, but rather by engaged citizens developing public policies for our common good. Only then can we have a political system dedicated to empowering democracy and making space for everyone’s voice.

Following the principles of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature, let us contribute to the health and integrity of the whole Earth community, recognise, respect and defend the rights of all beings; reject the commodification of Nature; evoke gratitude and humility regarding our place within the universe; and recognize the wisdom and leadership of Indigenous Peoples for their respect for Mother Earth.

Let us continue to come together by rolling up our sleeves and working in our communities and the good earth to grow a new economy and politics for people and nature grounded in the Rights of Nature, not the rights of corporations. Let us live life in fullness, life in splendor; or in the language of Ecuadorian Indigenous leader Luis Macas, *sumak kawsay*.



Let us create a political system that is not powered by money, but rather by engaged citizens developing public policies for our common good.

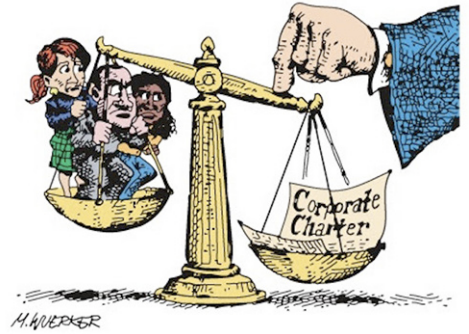
Next JR: Pacifying Violence

Our next *Justice Rising* will take on pacifying violence. Responsible democracy controls violence for the common good. True to our mission, JR will look at the role corporations, as a tool of the 1%, play in the dissemination of violence, including corporate connections to the military and how corporations use the violence of war to gain access to resources and markets. We will also examine how militarized police use violence to maintain the corporate order that protects wealth and power. Most importantly we will lay out how we can pacify our system of violence to serve the common good rather than corporate profits.

Saving Our Democracy

"I hope we shall crush in its birth the aristocracy of our monied corporations which dare already to challenge our government to a trial by strength, and bid defiance to the laws of our country."
— Thomas Jefferson 1816

by Jim Tarbell



graphic: Matt Wuerker

Time has come to separate corporations and state. As Marjorie Kelly points out in her seminal book *The Divine Right of Capital*, the democracy revolutions ended the divine right of kings, but they never vanquished the divine right of capital. The rich owners of capital use corporations, the supreme form of capital aggregation, to hold the same sway over public policy that divine-right Popes and priests held over Europe for centuries: sending soldiers off to war; impugning non-believers; and controlling a huge percentage of the wealth and power.

The wealthy class asserts their political sway through their:

- Overwhelming financial contributions to political campaigns;
- Lobbying and supporting pro-corporate public policy makers;
- Corporate-funded, non-profit think tanks that develop public policies beneficial to the wealthy, to the detriment of the common good;
- Revolving door between corporations and senior policy-making positions, which has reached a peak in the current administration with almost every member of the cabinet and the President himself a corporate owner, executive or lobbyist; and
- War on democracy declaring that corporate money spent on campaigns is free speech and can not be regulated, which has been embraced by their Supreme Court appointees.

Depredations of the corporate overlords have left us with a deteriorating climate system, a highly polluted planet, depleting resources, continual war, and both economic and social inequality. The global majority are wage slaves, street vendors, or part of the vast army of unemployed that keeps corporate costs down.

The democracy revolutions ended the divine right of kings, but they never vanquished the divine right of capital.

So how do we implement a separation of corporations and state?

- We start out by getting money out of politics.
- We institute publicly-financed elections where all qualified candidates receive an appropriate sum of government money to carry on their campaigns.
- We revert back to the era when the petition clause of the US Constitution that gives people the right to redress the government for grievances meant living humans complaining about harmful government actions, not fictitious corporations using this clause to swamp our government with lobbyists and pro-corporate think tanks to create pro-corporate public policy that benefit the rich.
- We need to create a proud army of civil servants dedicated to the common good, where the notion of serving the public is respected as a noble and critically important life calling.
- We enhance this by criminalizing the revolving door in all directions, preventing corporate comrades from serving as public policy making officials and preventing public policy making officials, from using their knowledge and connections made as a public servant to benefit corporate profits.
- We support Move to Amend's 28th Amendment, ending corporate personhood and money as speech, and declare victory in the war corporate elites have declared on democracy.
- We reverse two centuries of Supreme Court rulings that have empowered corporations and their wealthy owners, executives and well paid professional henchmen.

Dartmouth College v Woodward, decided a few years after Jefferson made his plea to crush corporate power, is the first decision that needs to be reversed. That court ruling took corporations, which are rightly a creation of the government, and subordinate to it, and made them equal to government. Over the next two centuries, the Supreme Court made corporations superior to citizens. It gave them rights reserved for living humans in the Bill of Rights. It declared that money is equal to speech and that limiting corporate money in our politics limits corporate free speech rights.

We have to separate corporations and state to save our democracy. Now is the time to do it.

Separating Corporations and State

For further information on separating corporations and state, check out the following issues of *Justice Rising* at afdjusticerising.org

- [The Next Millennium: Global Corporate Empire or Popular Governance](#), Winter 2005-06, Vol 1, #3
- [Courts and Corporations vs. Our Common Good](#), Spring 2010, Vol 4, #4
- [Money in Democracy, Part 1: Reclaiming Our Elections](#), Summer 2011, Vol 5, #2
- [Money in Democracy, Part 2: Who—or What—Occupies the Government Control Room?](#) Winter 2012, Vol 5, #3
- [Money in Democracy, Part 3: Policymakers—Committed to Public Values or Corporate Agendas?](#) Spring 2013, Vol 5, #4
- [World Citizenry Takes On Corporate Global Rule](#), Fall 2013, Vol 6, #1

Voting Rights and Election Justice

Without the right to vote, there are no other rights, Thomas Paine, American revolutionary
by Nancy Price

For years, a national movement to rectify corruption in our electoral system has been needed. In the spring primaries, voter suppression, uncounted mail ballots, and election security issues were common. Most alarming, the current super-charged partisanship in Congress and some states has raised the stakes even higher. And, the administration's attacks on the Postal Service, and baseless claims of voter fraud, add to the nagging fear of election chaos and viral infection while voting in person. On top of that, personal protective equipment (PPP) must be available for poll workers, and touchscreen machines must be disinfected and minimally used to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

In March, Congress allocated \$400 million for state and local elections. Most officials say that is insufficient. They are desperate to fund effective election security measures, sufficient polling places, poll worker and voter safety. While the House-passed HEROS Act allocates \$3.6 billion for emergency election support, as of this writing, the Republican Senate is balking.

Young voters are joining the drive for system change in the electoral process as a major group of the expected 17-million or more voter surge in November. As the most racially diverse and tolerant cohort of voters in history, they have already organized the nationwide March for Our Lives for school safety; joined Greta Thunberg to tell world leaders they want climate change addressed now, before it ruins their lives and the planet; and recently marched and protested for racial justice and against police brutality. Most of all, they are alert to how politics and policies impact their lives. As a result, they are registering voters and signing up to be poll workers.

In our Fall 2016 issue of *Justice Rising: The People's Vote Must Count*, we advocated for hand-counted, paper ballots and hand-counted audits of the electronic vote, as the best practice for a verifiable, transparent and accurate election because:

- Two manufacturers make 80% of the election machines, ballot-marking devices, scanners and vote tabulators, as well as memory cards;
- Corporate "proprietary software" can be "hacked" to falsify election results;
- Corporate lawyers negotiate lucrative maintenance contracts, which provide inadequate maintenance, leading to critical breakdowns and long lines that discourage voters;
- Corporate engineers can insert malicious software when performing repairs during voting.

Election Security must be effective. All voting technologies and tabulation systems must:

- Be disconnected from the Internet to avoid vote tampering, hacking and foreign interference;
- Scan voting machines and tabulators for malicious software that flips or deletes votes;
- Ensure voting machines produce human-readable paper ballots;
- Supply sufficient emergency back-up paper ballots for voters to hand mark;
- Print hard copy back-up of electronic poll books;
- Implement 24/7 video monitoring of all ballot tabulation areas;
- Conduct post-election, risk-limiting audits of paper ballots.

Privileged, white politicians and partisan election officials must not systematically suppress votes, especially of people of color and the poor by:

- Closing polling places in rural areas and urban communities of color, leaving voters stranded;
- Forcing voters to wait in 6-8 hour lines;
- Publicizing misleading information or changing registration requirements and mandating voter ID's they may not accept anyway;
- Systematically purging voters of color from rolls, who must then use a provisional ballot, which may not be counted;
- Not recognizing the voting rights of felons;
- Failing to update voter addresses so that workers and students, who frequently move and change addresses, do not receive ballots or voting information.

This is all revealed in the prize-winning documentary *Suppressed: The Fight to Vote*, about Georgia's 2018 governor's race.

Nancy Price is the national Co-chair of the Alliance for Democracy



Young voters are joining the drive for system change as a major group of the expected 17-million or more voter surge in November.

Electoral Reform Needed

1. Create a National Bi-Partisan Election Security Commission
2. Pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Act and restore voting rights to felons
3. Establish a National Voting Holiday
4. End the Electoral College
5. End gerrymandering

In all states, voting districts are redrawn every 10 years after the census. Work now to pass a state reform measure to prevent gerrymandering. See campaignlegal.org/issues/redistricting. There is also a Federal Redistricting Reform Act to set up independent commissions to draw fair maps. See commoncause.org/actions/end-gerrymandering-now

Solidarity Economy

Building an Empowering, Equitable & Sustainable Future

An edited, updated excerpt from a Next System Project Podcast with Emily Kawano.

The question is: can we do better by constructing a more just and sustainable economy grounded in our better angels — our impulses of love, solidarity, cooperation, mutualism, and compassion?

Wellspring Cooperative

Wellspring Cooperative is a non-profit in Springfield, Massachusetts, which lost its manufacturing base. It is definitely a hurting city—high unemployment, high poverty, facing all those kind of problems. Wellspring Cooperative is working to build a network of worker-owned cooperatives in Springfield's underserved communities. It's about job creation and wealth building, so that the worker-owners are able to build their wealth and assets as the businesses grow and prosper.

We have five co-op businesses in our network: Wellspring Upholstery is an upholstery cooperative that serves the institutional market; Old Wooden Windows is a women-owned window restoration cooperative; Jumping Jack Hoops is a hula hoop co-op that makes and sells hula hoops and does workshops for fun, fitness and therapy; Wellspring Harvest is a quarter acre hydroponic greenhouse that grows greens; Greenlove Eco-cleaning is going through the co-op conversion process and has joined our network. Farm Bug is a craft-cannabis co-op that is in formation that is also part of our network. There are other co-ops in the pipeline, including plans to build a national childcare co-op in partnership with three other co-op developers: Co-op Cincy, Cooperation Jackson and Cooperation Santa Ana. Our hope is to have a network of a hundred businesses, employing thousands of people to really shift the economic base in Springfield.

Confidence in our dominant economic system is shaken to the core. The pandemic and the uprisings for racial justice have dovetailed to lay bare the limits and failures of capitalism. The question is: can we do better by constructing a more just and sustainable economy grounded in our better angels — our impulses of love, solidarity, cooperation, mutualism, and compassion rather than narrow self interest and competition. This system would include cooperatives, participatory budgeting, community land trusts, social currencies, and unwaged or non-monetized economic alternatives, such as care work. These are all valuable economic activities not premised on capitalist profit maximization; so let's embrace them!

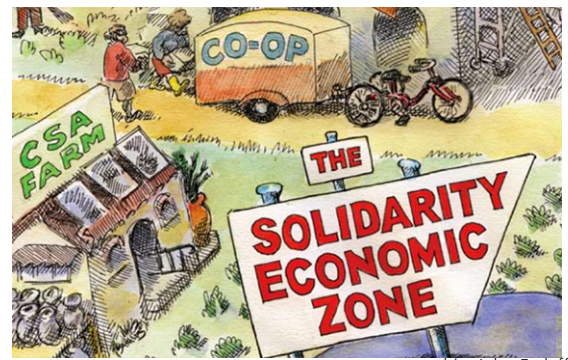
Solidarity economy (SE) connects all of these activities as a coherent system. We are committed to looking at what exists across the board, raising awareness and recognizing each other as co-builders of an alternative that is building a better world.

Anybody can practice SE every day. Whether you're raising children or doing volunteer work or taking care of your elders, you're engaged in SE.

Solidarity economy is a way of being and relating to each other by being kind, compassionate and in solidarity with each other.

Cooperatives are a major backbone of SE, whether we're talking about worker, producer or consumer cooperatives. Many cities are investing millions of dollars supporting worker cooperatives as a strategy for inclusive economic development. Cooperatives promote economic democracy, local control and ownership.

Wellspring Cooperatives, where I work, has three strategies for cooperative development. We began by leveraging the joint purchasing power of the big institutions like colleges and hospitals. Much like the Evergreen Co-ops in Cleveland.



graphic: John Fadetf

We have also utilized a more bottom up approach by developing an educational co-op certificate program called Co-op Boot Camp that is open to people who have an idea and are interested in starting up their own co-op.

Our third co-op development strategy is conversions — transitioning a conventional firm into a worker-owned cooperative. This is a huge opportunity, as the “silver tsunami” of baby-boomer, small-business owners approach retirement without a succession plan. Their option to sell the business to their workers can provide a range of benefits — tax breaks, protecting the business and doing right by their workers.

SE is also well developed in other parts of the world. Portugal and Spain have SE Ministries. There are even more countries that have national framework legislation in support of SE, which requires the government to support SE initiatives. Whether it's trade, some kinds of subsidies or tax breaks, the bias should be that the government tries to support the development of SE.

Imagine life within the SE where you are a co-owner of a worker co-op within biking distance, though you often work from home. You live in an affordable and diverse co-housing community land trust (CLT), where your kids go to a worker/parent-owned childcare cooperative and the CLT generates its own solar/wind energy. You shop at a co-op grocery store, and grow, prepare and preserve food with the co-housing garden/food crew. You meet many of your other needs — haircuts, healing treatments, home repairs/remodelling, through time banking, bartering, and skill shares. Between self-provisioning and lowered expenses, you can work half time and spend more time with family, friends and in pursuit of your passions. Now, imagine this microcosm is connected up with other SE nodes, including SE value chains. These are SE businesses sourcing inputs, financial services, sales outlets through other SE businesses, using social currencies, etc. The future world already exists. Now is the time to build and connect up the pieces.

Emily Kawano is Co-Director of Wellspring Cooperative and serves as Coordinator of the US Solidarity Economy Network.

Resist & Build

Preparing the World for System Change

by Jim Tarbell

The Solidarity Economy Network was ready for this historic moment for change. Before the pandemic, they planned to gather a dozen or more key national groups working on system change at the Highlander Center in Tennessee on March 19-22 for a Summit on Resist and Build. Then the pandemic intervened and they moved to Zoom.

Their goal is to “build a collaborative process for system change.” They are a collection of groups that, along with AfD, are leading the movement for system change. They include:

- The Democracy Collaborative that facilitates the Next Systems Project;
- The New Economy Coalition that gathers a vast swath of systemic change groups to their Common Bound Conferences;
- Cooperation Jackson, which is developing a cooperative solidarity economy in Jackson, Mississippi, facilitating black lives taking charge of their future;
- Business Alliance of Local Living Economies, now known as Common Futures, that has been in the vanguard of the localization movement;
- Transition USA that has been helping communities transition off fossil fuels, living in balance with resource limits, and building equity for all.

Almost all of these groups educate and train people to build a new economy and future. As coalitions or networks, they have a broad reach to implement system change, which concentrates on expanding and supporting solidarity economies.

They use their monthly Zoom gatherings to construct a movement that resists the depravities of the current systems and creates new systems to replace the old, ensuring a vibrant and fair future



graphic: 350 South Florida

for people and the planet.

They have four specific objectives in coming together. They want to:

- Strengthen and build relationships among national groups working on system change;
- Sharpen their analysis of post-capitalism vs. reform capitalism system change;
- Articulate a collective position on resisting the maladies of the current system of monopoly capitalism; and
- Build alternatives for a vibrant future.

Their discussions range from the importance of building new systems driven by love and compassion, to an awareness that conservative forces are aiming to rewrite the US Constitution to take us back to the eighteenth century. The growing urgency of the moment, and their joint desire to help the world move into a sustainable, equitable future, makes their efforts vitally important.

One of their first efforts examined how our present economic/political/medical systems' response to the pandemic differs from how a social-democratic economy or a social solidarity economy would have operated during the pandemic.

The chart below is an abridged version of their conclusions. The differences are so dramatic that they clearly illustrate the need for everyone to become involved in system change.

One of their first undertakings was to examine how our present economic/political system's response to the pandemic differs from how a social-democratic economy and a social solidarity economy would have operated during the pandemic.

Three Different Systemic Responses to the Coronavirus Pandemic

Our Present Money-Fueled Democracy

- No prior planning for Covid 19 due to disregard by the White House.
- Insufficient, under-funded testing due to self-serving, administration.
- No guaranteed health care.
- Poor and marginalized people suffering the most.
- Frontline workers endangered for cost cutting reasons.
- Procurement of essential supplies turned into an E-bay bidding war between states and local entities.
- World travelling business people spread Covid as part of the global supply chain.

Social Democracy

- Guided planning based on human needs.
- Private production and profit motive make meeting needs impossible.
- Healthcare access would be shared and universal.
- Poor and marginalized people are protected by social safety net.
- Better funded, public hospitals would protect frontline workers.
- Government compels private industries to produce for PPE and ventilators.
- National supply chains spread disease nationally.

Solidarity Economy

- Efficient, collaborative regional and local planning.
- Solidarity for the common good ramps up testing in light of emergency.
- Community driven healthcare provides medical services to everyone.
- Worker-led health care concentrates on the most vulnerable and marginalized.
- Frontline workers would control their own job safety.
- Peer to peer collaboration provides needed supplies.
- Local supply chains would slow spread of the virus.

Bargaining for the Common Good

by Lily Ryan

In February, thousands of janitors in the Twin Cities walked off their jobs. This strike, led by members of SEIU 26, was far from ordinary. Community members from groups like the Minnesota Youth Climate Strike, MN350, and Sierra Club joined with SEIU 26 to demand healthy jobs and a livable planet. Together, this coalition waged what may be the first formal labor strike to combat climate change, showing the power of bargaining as a force for the common good.

Collaboration between labor and community organizations, termed “Bargaining for the Common Good (BCG)” is not new. At its height, the American labor movement bargained expansively, and unions centered the concerns of both workers and their communities as they bargained with employers. More recently, public-sector employees, particularly teachers, have taken up common good bargaining, recognizing the power of partnering with communities in coalitions to win at the bargaining table and, more importantly, integrating broad community demands into union contracts. In the face of a struggling labor movement, increasing stratification of wealth, austerity and reductions in public services, Bargaining for the Common Good has emerged as a powerful tool to give voice to workers and communities.

Successful Bargaining for the Common Good campaigns begin long before negotiations start at the bargaining table. The power of these campaigns stems from partnerships between unions and community organizations. In recognizing an alignment of values and interests, union and community partners work together to design demands and campaigns focused on transforming whole communities and centering racial justice. As the campaigns have developed, they have forged new and powerful partnerships to take on entrenched, monied interests in a broad fight for working families and in particular communities of color.

BCG Campaigns

BCG campaigns in education have gained the most traction in recent years. Thousands of teachers and staff who are members of local unions in cities across the country have partnered with community organizations to fight for themselves, their students and communities. In Los Angeles, teachers, supported by a diverse community coalition, struck in 2019 for racial justice and educational equity. Later in 2019, the Chicago Teachers Union led a strike of school employees to challenge the buyout of Chicago and fight for a range of fixes to the challenges facing Chicago’s students, from smaller class sizes to more affordable housing.

As the BCG movement continues to grow, network partners have created a tool to build transformative campaigns at the local level by collecting union contracts from across the country and mapping them by industry, expiration, and type. This map serves as a tool for activists to build stronger campaigns at the local, state, and national level in order to coordinate



graphic: Bargaining for the Common Good

demands for the common good as we work to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The map also includes information on grassroots worker organizing campaigns and new unionization activity as well as state and municipal budget cycles to contextualize labor union and worker organizing as part of a broader fight. Anyone who would like to view the map can visit BCG’s website at www.bargainingforthecommongood.org/

As our communities confront the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic crisis, our movements should look to the examples of coalitions in Chicago, St. Paul, and other common good campaigns across the country, for a blueprint of how we can win the fight for the cities and communities our families need and deserve. Now as millions of educators face the terrifying choice between losing their jobs or returning to classrooms only to endanger themselves, their students, and their communities, the model of past BCG campaigns is increasingly relevant to their collective struggle.

Before COVID, many of our communities were already in crisis, facing the combined threats of climate change, unaffordable housing, and the privatization of public services. The pandemic has dramatically exposed these inequities and injustices. We must use this moment to come together and build power in our communities to expose those who continue to benefit while we suffer. We must also transform the system to expand equity and prosperity.

Our country and our movements already look very different only a few months after the ground-breaking strike in Minnesota. Yet, now, more than ever, brave, bold, and innovative campaigns like those of SEIU 26 and their allies give us a pathway for broad progressive change that will lead to the future we all deserve.

Lily Ryan is an organizer at the Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor at Georgetown University.

In the face of a struggling labor movement, increasing stratification of wealth, austerity and reductions in public services, Bargaining for the Common Good has emerged as a powerful tool to give voice to workers and communities.

Visioning the Future

by Ruth Caplan

Let us come together across race and class to imagine a General Agreement on a New Economy, (GANE) funded by a network of local and state public banks. And then let us roll up our sleeves and start working the good earth to grow a regenerative economy for people and nature in all its vibrant colors.

Back in the 1990s, the anti-globalization movement was in full swing. The Alliance for Democracy was born with the mantra, “The Issue Is Not the Issues, The Issue Is the System.” The Economics Working Group brought together activists and academicians to imagine a new economy based on the principles of full employment, equity and environmental sustainability. They produced the General Agreement on a New Economy. This paradigm resonated with Karl Polanyi’s theory of embedding the economy in the society, a far cry from Wall Street and their sycophants calling the shots.

GANE is grounded in local sustainable communities, placing these in a larger system of community federalism to ensure equity of resources and avoid a movement with an upper middle class perspective. GANE begins with a community visioning process, inspired by Chattanooga, TN, to establish community needs linked to an environmentally and socially sustainable future, not just individual needs so readily manipulated by the marketeers.

Once community needs have been democratically identified, there is the potential for creating work that responds to these needs and that derives its meaning within the community context. But how to pay workers livable wages and to bring together the needed resources? GANE suggests shared savings, local pension funds invested in community banks, local philanthropy, local currency. Public banks are a key to unlocking needed funds.

Public banks are essential, but can’t do all the heavy lifting alone – too much of the economy races around the globe as the billionaires further enrich themselves.

- Amazon, Apple and Microsoft are each worth more than \$1 trillion
- Jeff Bezos is worth \$145 billion and Bill Gates \$106 billion

What if, when Jerome Powell, head of the Federal Reserve, says “The one thing I can absolutely guarantee is that the Federal Reserve will be doing everything we can to support the people we serve,” he is referring to you and me, to our communities, and to all the low-paid workers who serve us?



graphic: Robert Lanphear

What if, as Nicholas Kristof, writes in the *New York Times*, “the Zillionaire Giveaway, which gives retroactive tax breaks worth \$135 billion to wealthy real estate developers like the Trumps, while a single mom juggling two jobs gets a maximum \$1200 stimulus check,” had gone to creating farmer and small business cooperatives?

And finally, as Chuck Collins writes in *Yes!* “What if we built up and shifted our consumption to the place-based economy, strengthening local food systems and enterprises.

“What if we realized that the things we are doing to care for one another in a pandemic are the things we should be doing every day, and we organized the economy to put the care and flourishing of people at the center?”

This pandemic sends a warning shot around the globe: there is no time to lose, for climate chaos is fast approaching and a new economic system must be in place. The lockdown has challenged us to be creative, to be caring, to focus on the true nature of happiness.

We must develop the political muscle to get legislation through Congress to tax the rich so our communities can survive and thrive by making our tax dollars work for our communities, through public banks.

To read more about GANE, go to www.greenecon.org

Ruth Caplan is the co-chair of the MA Public Banking Campaign and was the first Afd Co-Chair with Ronnie Dugger.

GANE is grounded in local sustainable communities, placing these in a larger system of community federalism to ensure equity of resources.

Chattanooga

In the 1980s Chattanooga was the most polluted city in the nation. The polluting industries had departed, leaving high levels of unemployment and despair in their wake. A few citizens refused to despair and formed Chattanooga Venture, initiating a visioning process that drew people together across race and class to envision a new future for the city. The city then mobilized in ways that had been unimaginable: building a fresh water aquarium with local venture capital; starting a battered women’s shelter with volunteers; ending racial redlining by preserving and rehabilitating an historic African-American neighborhood with federal funding.

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Jim Tarbell

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JUSTICE RISING is a publication of **the Alliance for Democracy**, whose mission is to end the domination of our politics, our economics, the environment, and our culture by large corporations. The Alliance seeks to establish true economic and political democracy and to create a just society with a sustainable, equitable economy.

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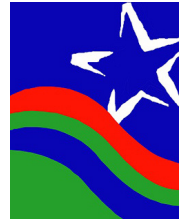
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Clockwise from upper left: This Partnership graphic comes from Threatening-guru40. The graphic of solidarity economy system-change is from the cover art by John Fadeff for our *Justice Rising on Building an Economy for People and Nature*. The Mother Earth image is from

pagaian.org in an article commemorating Bolivia's putting the Rights to Nature into their Constitution. The graphic of people cutting down the web between Wall Street and the US Government is from the cover art by Peter Veres for our *Justice Rising* issue on *Money in Democracy, Part 1: Reclaiming Our Elections*.

Justice Rising



Who knew that our purchasing patterns have so much power? Within three weeks of people sheltering in, not driving gas-guzzling cars and flying from here to there, they changed the world we live in. They cleared the smog-choked skies of megalopolises around the world. They brought fossil-fuel corporate executives to their knees begging for help from the American taxpayers. Most importantly, they slowed the looming depletion of our limited natural resources.

On the public policy side, the federal response to the pandemic displayed their ability to pass out huge quantities of cash, establishing the real possibility of a guaranteed income that we all may need in an age of growing artificial intelligence and production automation. While sheltering in has caused chaos for parents now home schooling their kids, and the pandemic has put all essential workers in danger and caused massive economic hardship, for many it ended their stress-filled anxiety from high-speed life styles and reawakened the importance of relaxation and calm in their lives. It provided us the opportunity to reconnect with our families and understand a common bond we have with all humans and nature.

Think about what we could do if this life style went viral after the COVID-19 pandemic reduces to a common cold. We could use it to create a political movement leveraged by consumer abstinence that cries for public policies that; stabilize or reverse climate change; make the air we breathe good for our health; guarantees the water we drink and play in invigorates our lives; and regenerates the soil of our fields with the nutrients and micro-organisms that are so important for producing healthy food. Such a political movement could restore all of earth's natural systems that pollution and irresponsibility in the search of profits have degraded.

Such a political movement must be a great ethnic mixture of young and old, rich and poor, and look like a joyful celebration of the abundance of life. It would also give us an understanding of the depravity and destructiveness of an overly indulgent consumer culture and acknowledge how consumerism is a cultural construct to feel safe and good about ourselves. Now is the time to change our political and economic systems as well as our relationships with nature and each other.

Our Chance to Change the Story, Change the Future

by Carrie Durkee, June 2020

Slow down, walk, don't run
Change the tempo
Watch for detail.
It will appear.

A fluctuation in the foundation
Makes us feel uncomfortable, off balance
Where is the familiar?
Old assumptions have got to go.

Where is the downbeat in the rhythm of the pattern
That makes us feel safe?

Question, adjust, and revise
Habits
Routines
Impulses
Desires.

And simultaneously,
How wonderful to know
It is in the realm of possibility

To alter and rearrange
The shape of our thoughts
Just from a change of pace
And the plasticity of our being.

Shifting,
Tectonic plates shifting
How to value who we are
What we choose to do,
Continue to do,
Or not.

The invisible is more powerful than all of us.
The opportunity for change is here now.
Explore the clues,
Nurture empathy,
Heal the pain,
Seed ideas.

Pursue wholeness as we travel along the path
Of our new story that we are creating.
Carry on.



graphic: Applied Alliance

The Grassroots Institute

Building Community in an Era of Alienation

by Carrie Durkee & Jim Tarbell

System change requires a strong community to support it. Now, however, the pandemic inhibits our intermingling with friends, associates and neighbors, while broadening our distrust of everyone. In the process, our sense of community dwindles. Set inside a social system based on race and class, an economic system that promotes self-serving individualism, a political system where almost half the eligible voters fail to participate in elections, and a traditional cultural narrative entitling us to dominate nature to satisfy our selfish needs, personal alienation is rampant and our need for community is huge.

In the middle of the last decade, we joined together with other Northern California Coastal compatriots to form the Grassroots Institute (GRI) to envision a path for our future centered on community, reclaiming our commons and creating solutions for the common good. GRI bases its actions on building relationships and connections. In these times, we need to find ways to heal collectively by seeing and feeling the pain of the oppressed to rectify our culture and create justice and equality. We have to work towards healing all of the wounds: the deaths from racism, the disfigurement of sexism and the scars of homophobia. We also have to change our relationship to nature to understand that we are all part of nature, and that when we destroy nature we destroy part of our families, our communities and ourselves.

We highlight the intersectionality of these issues to understand how one influences the other. We have to think about the results for individuals and the broader culture and what needs to change. We have to look at where we need to leverage our power, how that can be accomplished and create the first step. In these times, we can see and feel the pain of black people more clearly than ever before. Now, more people are seeing, thinking, acting, talking, looking for change, making changes, having conversations, and learning to trust each other.

This is a huge opening to spread creative ideas, listen, think, allow change, reach further, and make other connections to different people in other circles of interest. We need to take time to understand the intersectionality of the injustices that are felt by people because of a combination of their unique identities. The potential for a deep and lasting change in

consciousness has arrived. Now is our time to act, to create new practices. Let's get

into the river and start paddling. The future is in our hands more clearly than ever.

Early on in our Grassroots Institute work, we realized the importance of creating community where people learn to respect each other and cooperate in teamwork to achieve designated goals. The most thrilling part of our gatherings is the lively social interchanges that bubble throughout all of these experiences. With GRI workshops held across our region, geographic and social divisions recede and a new community grows. Our approach heals the alienation that is so endemic to our economic and political systems, and so evident in our relationship with nature and each other.

GRI values that tie us all together include:

- Cooperation, not competition;
- Being are one with nature;
- Partnership relationships, not hierarchical relationships;
- Equality and equity for all;
- People powered democracy;
- Peaceful, non-violent coexistence;
- Public policies driven by human needs, not market forces;
- Decentralized, local control;
- Healthy Planet, healthy people.

This year we are engaging in a series of workshops entitled *Elections 2020: Creating Our Future*. Our goal is to elect policy-making officials who create public policies supporting our values and goals of instituting systemic change for a sustainable and vibrant future for both people and the planet. We need strong communities to make this happen. See our website at Grassroots-Institute.org



photo: Carrie Durkee

Now is our time to act, to create new practices. Let's get into the river and start paddling.



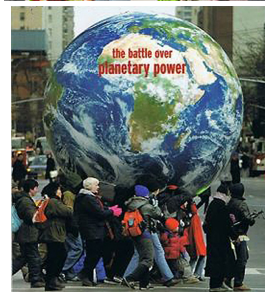
graphic: Geri Morisky

Courses of Action to Revolutionize Our Economy, I

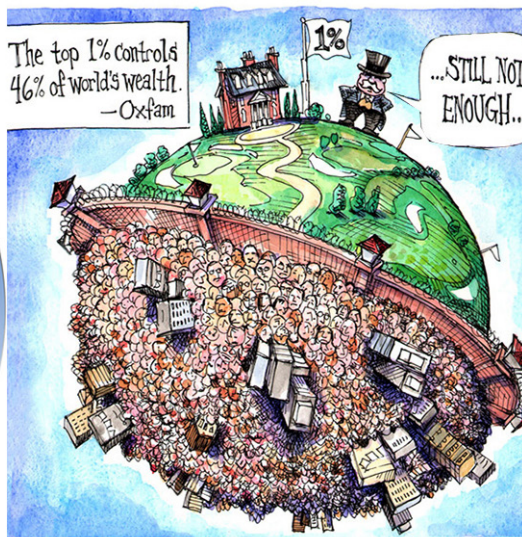
Grassroots Solutions to Corporate Power

<http://www.grassroots-institute.org/grassroots-solutions--corporate-power.html>

by Carrie Durkee and Jim Tarbell



graphic: People's Grocery



graphic: Matt Wuerker

Use the Grassroots Institute's study guide, *Grassroots Solutions and Corporate Power*, to educate your community on: the historic roots and current condition of our money-powered politics; our elite-based economy; our nationally alienated relationship with nature; our historically poor relations with each other; and how to make systemic change to our economic and political systems as well as our relationships with nature and each other. We learn from history, think strategically about the future, take collective action for further ideas and agitate for change. The AfD's publication *Justice Rising: Grassroots Solutions to Corporate Power* is the basic reading material for this course.

These workshops present practical directions that system change can take to create a world built on equal political participation, prosperity for all, a vibrant and strong environmental system and a global coming together of consciousness that benefits both people and the planet.

The first section of the course on money in democracy looks at how rich, white males established our political system to benefit their interests. Since the beginning, they have used money, courts, lobbying, think tanks, the revolving door and violence to ensure that public policy benefits them personally, rather than the common good. It talks about the rise of Wall Street and the takeover of our elections by the robber barons, beginning in 1896. The workshops educate on: getting money out of politics; instituting publicly financed elections; transparency; separation of corporations and state; fair, audited and verifiable elections; and an end to voter suppression. This section also includes groups implementing systemic political change, including

Move to Amend, the Sunlight Foundation and the National Election Defense Coalition.

The second section focuses on the economy, and looks at how wealthy London stockbrokers designed our economic system on self-serving, false assumptions and an irrational dependence on the market. It shows that market failures have caused our most severe global problems from inequality, ethnic and racial oppression to climate change, global pollution, and resource depletion. Learn here how public banks, the solidarity economy, public control of our money supply, localization, and ecological economics are the economic systems of the future. The Next System Project, The New Economy Coalition, the Solidarity Economy Network, and more are highlighted.

Section three on our environment outlines how our political and economic systems are destroying nature. Our grassroots solution is to understand that we are part of nature.

This section also looks at our need to reclaim our natural and cultural commons from corporate policy makers pushing privatization, as well as how agribusiness is destroying our soil and wasting our water. We cover the farmers and communities of the local food movement that are working to solve this problem by building more soil and protecting our water. We also discuss protecting ourselves from the corporatized health system by instigating universal health care. The Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, Local Rules for Local Food, and Health Care Now! are all part of the solution.

The last section brings the global down to the human scale. It traces Wall Street's take over of US imperial foreign policy and gives an overview of the global elite and the tools they use to maintain their dominance through corporate media and military violence. It covers the oppressive "free" trade agreements, and their use as global governance, along with the role the World Economic Forum, the Trilateral Commission, and the Council on Foreign Relations.

These are juxtaposed against a 5000-year timeline, which starts with peaceful, Mediterranean partnership cultures that date back thousands of years. That timeline then transverses through the decline of the first democratic cultures and the onslaught of the use of violence for social domination, into the rise of money power, and then revolving back around to the rise of democracy, Age of Aquarius, and the rise of the Global People's Movement. The study guide ends with the rise of Earth consciousness, world citizenry, International Worker's Rights and the Rights of Mother Earth.

Politics & Relationships with Nature & Each Other

Building the Economy for Our Common Good

<http://www.grassroots-institute.org/mapping-the-economy-for-the-common-good.html>

by Carrie Durkee & Jim Tarbell

Grassroots Institute's workshops and *Study Guide for Building the Economy for the Common Good* move with an open heart that takes us from a broad leaning and action approach to a specific collaborative action. They build relationships, community and the future. We often start off singing Melanie DeMore's great system change anthem *Put One Foot in Front of the Other and Lead with Love* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJEFXpS_xPs). We include inspiration, fun, dance, yoga and singing, surprise, joy and happiness as part of this process. We are designing for the future while being in the present.

Defining the Economy for the Common Good in your area is your first task. For that you need to compile a list of systemic problems that need to be addressed in your community, followed by a list of their causes and actions that organizations can take to instigate systemic solutions to those problems. We provide lists that can catalyze this process and help you identify local organizations taking actions leading to systemic change.

We modeled our mapping process on the US Solidarity Economy Network's map of Solidarity Economy enterprises across the country. Their mapping concentrates on mapping co-ops and worker-owned businesses. We include non-profits, government agencies, political associations and local businesses that take political, economic, environmental, or social actions to implement systemic change.

The workshops follow a step-by-step process for gathering and organizing data about your local institutions on a spreadsheet, which can be used to construct a map locating each organization, with popup boxes describing how they operate and what economic, environmental, political and social actions they are taking to implement systemic change.

There are many sophisticated mapping programs you can use for this purpose. We used Google Maps because it is easy. You can also use this mapping process to map almost anything in your community from your local food system to consciousness raising organizations dedicated to systemic change.

You can also use this process to move beyond mapping to creating a documentary on systemic change happening in your community now. Your final product can inform your community about what organizations already exist working on systemic change, and what type of help they need from the community to fulfill

their mission. You can also use the map to network all of the organizations on the map together so that they can support each other and collaborate in furthering their efforts toward systemic change.

The exciting thing about this project is that it highlights what systemic change already happens in your community, and presents models of how our systems and relationships can work in the future to create a world that is politically fair, economically beneficial for all, good for the planet and empowering for everyone.

You can also use this process to determine what problems are not being solved by existing local institutions, and then work on creating institutions to help solve systemic problems. This might include starting a community land trust, or pushing for the creation of a public bank. Or you could help people start their own worker-owned businesses or community co-ops.

These workshops teach us how to think strategically about the future, and to take collective action to promote change. It helps everyone celebrate the commons we have and reclaim the commons that are being privatized. It teaches us that systemic change is an ever-evolving, ever-growing process. Use our study guides for free to strengthen systemic change in your community and let us know if we can help.

It took us over two years to launch our map at a grand gathering that packed our community center. We talked about building co-ops and worker owned enterprises and hosted an intense community discussion about building our economy for the common good of all of us. You can do it too — this guide shows you how.

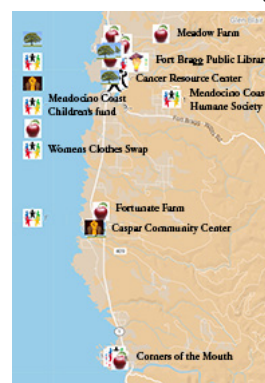


Melanie DeMore leading a sing-along of *Put One Foot In Front of the Other*.

Sustainable Economics



Mapping the Existing Common Good Economy



Fulfilling Community Needs



photo: Lyndsey Scott

Public Banks to the Rescue

by Ruth Caplan

As the corona-fueled, economic wildfire races across the country devastating small businesses, closing desperately needed child care facilities, and leaving 44.7 million people with student loan debt adding up to \$1.56 trillion — all while the Fed bails out Wall Street with zero interest loans — it is time to restructure the economy, with public banks as an essential pillar.

Public banks have the potential to:

- Finance essential infrastructure;
- Ensure clean affordable water for all residents;
- Get people to work with minimum carbon expenditure;
- Create solar and wind farms;
- Provide affordable housing;
- Support local organic agriculture;
- Create cooperatives.

Much has been written about the Bank of North Dakota (BND), the only public bank in the US. But in this Republican stronghold, which takes great pride in its public bank, little is said about its history spearheaded by Arthur C. Townley, former organizer for the Socialist Party of America.

On May 15, the *Washington Post* reported that BND was key to small business success in securing loans through the federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). They pointed out that, “Small businesses there secured more PPP funds, relative to the state’s workforce, than their competitors in any other state — more than \$5,000 per private-sector worker.

“In the program’s troubled first round, the state put business lenders in the rest of the country to shame.

In California, a highly energized statewide organizing campaign passed state legislation enabling localities to create public banks.

The ABC’s of Public Banks

- Created by law as repository for government funds.
- Require a government charter to operate.
- Require initial investment to capitalize the bank.
- Government deposits plus capitalization allow bank to make loans.
- Loans are assets of the bank because they are owed to the bank.
- Deposits are liabilities of the bank because they have to be paid back on demand, eg, when state workers need to be paid.
- Loans are made to finance local needs like infrastructure, affordable housing, expanding local businesses, modernizing farms.

Interest paid by borrowers funds bank operations, with excess returned to the government treasury to lower taxes or fund much needed programs.

“Much credit goes to the century-old Bank of North Dakota, which — even before the PPP officially rolled out — coordinated and educated local bankers in weekly conference calls and flurries of calls and emails.

“‘They’re behind the scenes, supporting us,’ said Christie Obenauer, president and CEO of Union State Bank in Hazen, ND. When a client needs a loan above her



graphic: Massachusetts Public Banking

lending limit, for example, she can cover the full value needed by selling BND a slice of the loan. If she did the same with a major private lender, she would have to worry about the competitor using that relationship to lure away the client. But BND is a public institution, not a competitor.”

The modern public banking movement got its start with the Occupy Movement after the 2008/09 crash. Many local campaigns have sprung up across the country and the Public Banking Institute (www.publicbankinginstitute.org) was created to connect these efforts and provide resources. Here is a sampling:

- In New Jersey, Governor Phil Murphy created a task force to create a public bank. See www.bankingonnewjersey.org/
- In California, a highly energized statewide organizing campaign passed state legislation enabling cities and regions to create public banks. Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland and many other cities are preparing to apply for state approval to establish public banks. See californiapublicbankingalliance.org/
- In Massachusetts, a campaign, co-chaired by AfD’s Barbara Clancy and the author of this article, is promoting a bill to create a state public infrastructure bank to work with municipalities. See masspublicbanking.org/
- In DC, public bank advocates, joined by the DC Reinvest movement, got a feasibility study funded, but the Mayor has refused to release it. See www.DCpublicbanking.org
- Santa Fe and New Mexico have active campaigns at aflep.org/what-is-a-public-bank/ So does Colorado. See coloradopublicbankingcoalition.org/
- Other states, including Oregon and Washington, are campaigning for public banking.

The National Public Banking Alliance (publicbanking.us) recently formed to advocate for more radical reform in line with the Green New Deal and to promote use of funding from the Federal Reserve to capitalize public banks.

Finally, the campaign for public banks needs to be complemented by a campaign for postal banks to liberate the unbanked from payday lenders and to make banking convenient no matter where you live. These were once very common in the US. Their time has come again.

Making Trade Work for People & Planet

by Nancy Price

The world erupted in the 1990s against corporate-driven free trade agreements, designed by the wealthy to expand their power and reach. On January 1, 1994, when the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) entered into force, Indigenous Zapatistas rose up in Southern Mexico. Met with violent repression, their spirit inspired popular movements of Indigenous and tribal communities, people of color and the poor elsewhere to rise up against racist neo-colonialism, capitalist exploitation of their labor and destruction of nature for raw materials.

In 1999, four years after 123 nations had signed the World Trade Agreement, 50,000 workers, teachers, students, farmers, environmentalists, and civil society groups from all over the world marched in the "Protest of the Century" to shut down the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Seattle, chanting the same, "This is what Democracy looks like," heard recently at #BlackLivesMatter in Portland.

Protests against the corporate-driven free trade agenda have continued to the present, including against the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Their push for cash crop exports from third world countries destroys peasant farmers, while their push for privatization of water and utilities devastates the poor. Protests were also mounted against agribusiness' pushing genetically modified crops and chemicals on farmers and consumers around the world. A large mobilization in late 2003 in Miami led to collapse of the 34-country Free Trade Area of the Americas negotiations.

At present, the WTO has grown to 169 countries and the US has signed 14 trade agreements with 20 countries that are:

- Anti-democratic and profoundly racist;
- Exploiting of women and girls who work in textiles, clothing and electronics industries;
- Based on destructive extraction of raw materials;
- Reliant on private security and state police to protect corporate property and profits, with land defenders disappeared and killed;
- Dependent on long, climate-damaging, air and ocean supply chains;
- Increasing costs for the poor due to privatization of essential public services;
- Commodifying all aspects of culture and nature for profit.

Now, the pandemic is exposing how fragile the global, corporate trade system is, with its

privatization of healthcare; off-shoring production of essential medicines and medical equipment; and competition for supplies leading to rising costs, and countries imposing export restrictions threatened with trade dispute lawsuits. Leaders in trade and finance are calling for a pause in all current trade agreement negotiations, a moratorium on corporate cases against governments, and an easing by IMF on debt repayment by developing countries whose export economies are collapsing.

Transforming Global Trade Policy: Before NAFTA 2.0, the new United-States-Mexico-Canada Free Trade Agreement, entered into force, fair trade advocates were alarmed it was little improved. Thus, in Spring 2019, Democrats in both houses of Congress spent months improving it: eliminating the corporate investor-to-state (ISDS) dispute process on most industries, and strengthening labor, environmental, and pharmaceutical provisions and enforcement rules, and discussion of renewal after six years.

Re-Localization: Now is the time to model the Grassroots Institute mapping project, to embrace the new forms of economic enterprises led by women, Indigenous Peoples, people of color, unions, worker cooperatives, small-scale farmers and groups meeting local needs. Rather than global trade, we need to develop community sourcing to meet local needs based on principles of a circular economy. We must also use innovative solutions to waste and recycling, based on the carrying capacity of the locale or region and the Rights of Nature.



Embrace the new forms of economic enterprises led by women, Indigenous Peoples, people of color, unions, worker cooperatives, small-scale farmers and groups meeting local needs.

Beyond NAFTA 2.0

In July 2019, *Beyond NAFTA 2.0: Toward a Progressive Trade Agenda for People and Planet*, edited by Ethan Earle, Manuel Pérez-Rocha, and Scott Sinclair, advocates for the same types of trade policies promoted by WTO protesters in Seattle two decades earlier. It calls for a "radical transformation of the rules" to give "priority to Human Rights and the Rights of Nature over corporate rights," and a "new world trade system based on partnership and sustainability, equitable distribution of benefits, and respect for the Earth's ecological limits." It also calls for countries in the Global South having rights to prioritize local and national economic development for all citizens, providing access to good jobs and high-quality universal public services. Most importantly, trade agreements would combat climate change, protect Labor Rights, and set high standards for the regulatory framework with binding, enforceable obligations between countries, rather than the usual "race to the bottom."

Now is the Time: Revolutionizing Our Economy, — Groups —



Cooperation Jackson is the realization of a Just Transition vision decades in the making. Its roots lay deep within the struggle for democratic rights, economic justice, self-determination, particularly for people of African descent in the Deep South, and dignity for all workers. They are working to replace the current socio-economic system of exploitation, exclusion and the destruction of the environment with a proven democratic alternative built on equity, cooperation, worker democracy, and environmental sustainability to provide meaningful living wage jobs, reduce racial inequities, and build community wealth. See Cooperationjackson.org

Center for Partnership Studies' mission is to catalyze movement towards partnership systems on all levels of society through research, education, grassroots empowerment, and policy initiatives. CPS' programs focus on promoting

Human Rights and nonviolence, gender and racial equity. They offer classes on building a Partnership World with Rianne Eisler, and Changing Our Story, Changing Our Lives: Riane Eisler's Cultural Transformation Course. See Centerforpartnership.org. You can also go to <https://rianeeisler.com/> for her course Partnership 101.



**CENTER FOR
PARTNERSHIP
STUDIES**



US Solidarity Economy Network connects diverse organizations, and projects in the shared work of building and strengthening regional, national and international movements for a solidarity economy. Solidarity economy is about systemic transformation, and already exists in the form of worker-owned businesses, consumer and production co-ops, community land trusts, public banks, alternative currencies, the care economy and much more. See their map of the US solidarity economy at solidarityeconomy.us. You can also see the international solidarity economy at riposs.org.

Next System Project uses bold thinking and actions to address systemic challenges like economic inequality, racial injustice and climate change. They function as a research and development lab for political-economic alternatives for a better future, with the networks that can make them real. Their website at thenextsystem.org has a plethora of information. Their effort is headed by Gus Speth, Dean Emeritus of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and Gar Alperovitz, author of America Beyond Capitalism: Reclaiming our Wealth, Our Liberty, and Our Democracy. See <https://thenextsystem.org>



The Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival is rising for justice demanding that the 140 million poor and low-income people in our nation are no longer ignored, dismissed or pushed to the margins of our political and social agenda, and that the interlocking injustices of systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation, the war economy/militarism and the distorted moral narrative of religious nationalism all be ended. They rise to build power, moral activism, voter participation, and to lift the voices of poor and low income Americans with a vision of love, justice, and truth for America that says poverty can be abolished and change can come. See poorpeoplescampaign.org

Move to Amend came out of a broad-based gathering of pro-democracy groups in the Fall of 2009, and went live on the day the Supreme Court handed down their decision in January 2010 to allow the wealthy class to spend unlimited amounts of corporate money on US political campaigns. Their US Constitutional amendment declares that corporations do not have constitutional rights, which corporations have used to plunder our democracy, and that money is not speech. Their petition has been signed by almost 500,000 people and multiple states and cities including Los Angeles and New York have passed resolutions supporting Move to Amend. See movetoamend.org



Women's Earth and Climate Action Network works with women globally to examine interlocking systems



WECAN
Women's Earth & Climate Action Network, International

of oppression, and the need for a regenerative economy that prioritizes communities and a right relationship with people and nature. They want people to live in reciprocity with the earth and with each other, where people give what they have to share and receive from others without concern for equal value. For more information, see www.wecaninternational.org

Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF) provides communities with education, tools and legal advice to create Community Rights ordinances that give power back to the people, so they can protect their own communities. CELDF works with communities facing fracking, pipelines, factory farms, and other threats that have no way to stop these harmful projects. CELDF realizes it will take a people's movement to establish rights for humans and nature over the systems that control them, and is now at the forefront of that movement. See CELDF.org



Books — Politics and Relationships with Nature & Each Other

by Jim Tarbell

As we revolutionize our politics, economy and relationships with nature and each other, it is important that we have some basic guides for this project and understand the context we find ourselves in. Here are six books to help us down this very important path.

The first one is Rob Hopkins' *From What Is to What If*. Rob wrote the book to put imagination back at the heart of thinking about the future and the future we might create. He suggests we think like a child in full play — creative, imaginary and fun. He wonders what would happen if we approached the future with the magic of nature filling our hearts. Then he goes on to point out how we and others would see the world differently if we expanded the use of our imagination.

Fritjof Kapra imagined many things about systems and the future. His book *Web of Life: A New Scientific Understanding of Living Systems* is a classic on systems thinking and system change. He looks at the whole system, and disputes the

Cartesian thought that life is a machine made from a few integrated and independent parts. For Kapra, life is a system of inter connected and inter dependent phenomena, with human life as one strand. The book is a thorough explanation of what happen when systems — like our current politics, economy, and relationships with nature and each other — get out of balance. He points out that in nature a system out of balance can change quickly, dramatically, and destructively. To avoid any such calamitous shift, he advocates that we embrace an earth consciousness and understand that male domination and our domination of nature largely cause the imbalance we experience. We have to use our imaginations to move away from that pattern.

Rianne Eisler's classic book *The Chalice and the Blade* presents a historical analysis challenging the current narrative that all human societies have been

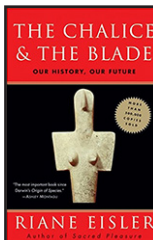
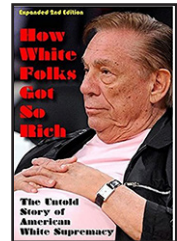
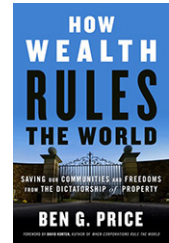
male dominated, war-like and oppressive. Using an impressive list of sources, she brings to life a prosperous prehistoric Mediterranean culture that shows no archeological signs of male domination or war. She points out that these cultures were much more of a partnership culture between genders that produced peaceful and harmonious relations with nature and each other. And they were cultures that covered a wide swath of the planet and may go back 30,000 years. She suggests we adhere to the practices of partnership that those living systems used to maintain stability for so long.

Ben G. Price in his book *How Wealth Rules the World* takes up the conversation by pointing out that much of the imbalance and domination in the world comes from wealth concentrating power in corporations and centralized governments, leaving the working stiffs enslaved to debt, and communities unable to protect their air, water and soil. After a long, thorough and fascinating history of how wealth has aggregated power for itself and how communities have had their power stolen from them, he approaches the future warning that electing progressive leaders or trying to regulate the harms caused by corporations will not return stability to our political, economic, environmental or social systems.

He advocates rewriting our state and federal constitutions so that the power rests in our local communities which is the best and most reliable democracy we have.

Meanwhile, the book *How White Folks Got So Rich: The Untold Story of White Supremacy* by a group of scholars known as Reclamation Project presents horror stories of the treatment blacks have received at the hands of white wealth and power. It is an incisive and brutal account of all that blacks have endured. From slavery and the reimposition of slavery under the Jim Crow laws, and the systemized wage slavery since, they have built the wealth of the United States, while being left in poverty, prohibited from accumulating wealth, and subject to lynchings and unprosecuted white on black violence. Elijah Muhammad advised that, "the suffering forced upon us by White America justify our demand for complete separation in a state or territory of our own." Or better yet, let's create a partnership society and solidarity economy like Cooperation Jackson, where we can all live in peace.

After that reality check, we roll into Greg Palast's latest enlightening investigation on the US electoral system, *How Trump Stole 2020*. Palast is the venerable master of researching the subterfuges, suppression and outright theft of votes that is so prominent in the US electoral system. In his latest book, he points out that Trump has already won the election, which is still months away, unless we can stop him. This is the story of the great Georgia voter purge by now-Governor Brian Kemp paying the way for his 2018 election. The always entertaining gumshoe detective, Palast uncovered the heist after months of effort, only to discover that the "virus" had spread to 17 other states. Sound familiar? Time to stamp out the "virus" and change our whole partisan controlled system of voting.



This 'Equity' Picture is Actually White Supremacy at work

by Equity in Education Coalition

Dominant and oppressive narratives about people of color bleed into this picture: people of color are less than and thus, need more.

We've all seen this picture, right? In a picture-is-worth-1,000-words kind of way, this image simplifies the profound difference between equality and equity. From this picture, people have actually begun to understand that treating everyone equally doesn't lead to equity, and, in fact, equal treatment often perpetuates and justifies racial hierarchies. Yes, this picture has taught us a lot.

But, it's time to move on. This picture — the noble imagery of the equity movement — is white supremacy at work.

Sorry folks. But it's true.

First and foremost, the shortest boy is positioned as the problem. He needs multiple boxes to see over the fence. He's the one who is the pathology: he's literally less than the others. The shortest boy is — by sheer presentation alone — not whole, not normal, especially compared to the tallest boy. And because he is shorter he is seen as the problem, he needs more help. He is by fact, needy.

Dominant and oppressive narratives about people of color bleed into this picture: people of color are less than and thus, need more.

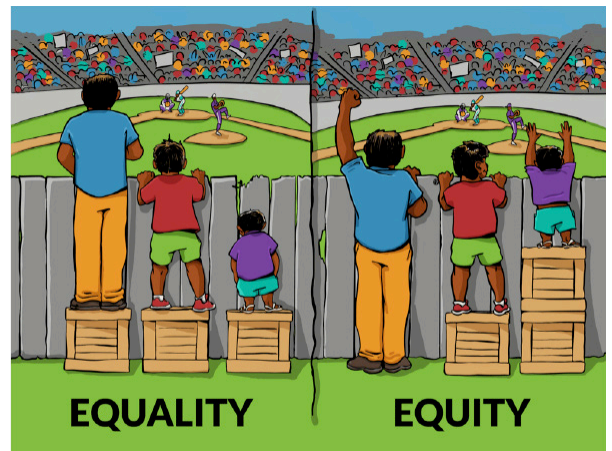
This is white supremacy. This feeds into the oh-so-familiar racist politic — people of color have little to offer, and yet take so many public resources. Heard that before haven't you?

Even those who "center equity" feed into this framework — people of color need our resources because they're too broken to have their own.

Corporate White Supremacy

Undermining the Ground Others Stand On

Since the inception of corporations in the 1600s, their white owners and managers have used corporations to undermine the foundation that most of the people of the world need to survive. The royally sanctioned armies of the very first corporation, the British East India Company, used violence in the 1600s to steal resources and economic power from the people of South Asia. The giant slave trading corporations stole lives, the cultural soul, and human energy of millions of Africans to build the wealth and estates of the white upper classes. The first industrial corporations in the US stole the lives and earning power of immigrant women so severely that they revolted by starting some of the first unions in this country. Huge land development corporations enticed Europeans and North American colonists to occupy and conquer all of North America, depriving the aboriginal people of their land, lives and livelihood. The damage to the ability of the global majority to survive at a humanly decent level needs to be healed if life on the planet can be vibrant for anyone in the future.



graphic: Equity in Education Coalition

Volunteered with that organization maybe?

It is high time to rid ourselves of these white supremacy-laden "equity" ideas, and actually recognize the full humanity and capabilities of people of color.

Imagine if you will, three people — all the same goddamn size. The ground beneath them slopes, buckling beneath one person so significantly that person cannot see over the fence at all. The foundation on which these people stand is unequal, and that foundation, might we even say systemic difference, leads to some being able to watch the baseball game, while others cannot.

Yes, the person who is on the slope requires a box or two to stand on, but it is only because they are on lower ground to start — not because they are shorter to begin with.

As useful as the picture was in starting conversations around "Equality vs. Equity," we are basically blaming the person for being short, when in reality, we aren't standing on a level playing field to start. We aren't "allowed" to stand on a level playing field.

In fact, we are — by reason of policy, practice, prejudice, and bias — forced to stand on a lower level ... AND then told we should be happy to be near the game at all. All while not given enough boxes to see over the fence.

The unequal ground we are forced to stand on is the aspect of the picture we need to change. Understanding that those boxes are necessary because of the sloping ground is key to undoing white supremacy. With this new picture, let us decolonize the rules of where we stand and why.

That is equity.

The Equity in Education Coalition is a Washington State civil rights organization focused on revolutionizing education so that a child's race and zip code are not the predicated factors in defining their success. We envision a future where the opportunity gap is eliminated — a future where every child of color achieves success from birth through their careers.

Privilege Perpetuates Oppression

by V. Spike Peterson

In this fraught year of clearly mounting crises, resistances to oppression and demands for social change are mounting. We need to understand the power relations that underpin these crises, reproduce oppression, and thereby obstruct systemic social change. What we lack are studies of privilege, which is the structural corollary of oppression: each is a product of and produces the other. Social transformation is stymied when those with privilege do not – or will not – recognize and take responsibility for how they are advantaged and how they reproduce inequalities, sometimes consciously but also, unconsciously.

To clarify: Studies of oppression prioritize documenting, and demanding accountability for the immense suffering caused by intentional acts of stigmatization, discrimination, exclusion and violence. This crucial work enables us to “see” the scale of human harms but not the institutionalized, internalized patterns of thought and action that underpin and enable the unconscious and habitual reproduction of social systems, including their oppressive dynamics. Without attention to social structures, we are unable to “see” how systemic power relations and social patterns reproduce inequalities, even when that is not consciously intended. Similarly, when hierarchies are institutionalized, being privileged or oppressed has less to do with individual actions or intentions than how one is structurally “positioned” within a social system. Those who are privileged may recognize and even actively protest how “other” groups are oppressed, yet fail to register the corollary of how this systemically benefits privileged groups. Individualist thinking misleads us: it presumes oppressive consequences are solely an effect of willfully harmful intentions, rather than a systemic effect of institutionalized and reinforced patterns of thought and action favored by those who benefit most.

Privilege is structural, but also complicated: sites of privilege differ — racism, heterosexism, nationalism, ableism — the advantages of privilege vary — self-esteem, authority, security, resources — and contexts always shape which forms of privilege “matter” and how participants interact. But the crucial point — and what makes privilege systemically powerful and problematic — is that in every case those who are privileged can, and do, take for granted unearned advantages that load the odds in their favor and at the expense of those not favored. This effectively, and often dramatically, tilts the playing field so that those who are oppressed must participate (by definition) in a relentlessly “uphill struggle” and with fewer advantages or resources.

While oppressed groups cannot afford to ignore power relations, those with privilege enjoy the extraor-

dinary advantage of “choosing” whether and to what extent they “notice” injustice, “bother” with critical reflection, or

engage in fighting oppression. For those who choose activism the challenges vary. Systemic transformation logically requires that those with privilege “lose” all unearned advantages, including presumptions of “natural” superiority and entitlement.

For example, racism's history centers on Western imperialist powers brutally exploiting the land and labor of “Others.” This domination is legitimated by evolutionary narratives of “white” (European) superiority, and characterized by oppressive cultural and spatial segregation. Similarly, male domination over and exploitation of women's reproductive, productive, sexual, and emotional labor is legitimated by religious and “scientific” claims of male superiority. It is characterized by legislatively defined and enforced male heterosexual/familial/household arrangements.

Thus any systemic transformation towards a fair and just society primarily entails whites “losing” dominance in political and economic power. It also entails males “losing” their privileged male “identity” and their vast unearned benefits of sexual/gendered divisions of desire, labor, authority and power in private as well as public domains.

Analyzing complex systems of privilege and how we all participate is a daunting challenge, but one we cannot avoid when a fair and just society is our goal. Given their disproportionate share of decision-making power, those with privilege are pivotal for shaping how — or whether — lasting change occurs.

V. Spike Peterson is a Professor of International Relations at the University of Arizona with appointments in the Department of Gender and Women's Studies, Institute for LGBT Studies, and the Centers for Latin American and International Studies.

photo: Kristen Inbody

In every case those who are privileged can, and do, take for granted unearned advantages that load the odds in their favor and at the expense of those not favored.

The Partnership Model

Excerpted from an article by Rianne Eisler, in Kosmos: Journal of Global Transformation.

Cultural transformation requires accurate stories about “human nature.” The message of many stories we inherited from earlier times is that dominating or being dominated are our only alternatives. But findings from neuroscience demonstrate that, though we humans have the capacity for cruelty and violence, we are actually “wired” more for empathic and caring relationships.

Spreading this knowledge about human nature requires a concerted effort. The struggle for our future is not between religion and secularism, right and left, East and West, or capitalism and socialism, but within all these societies between traditions of domination and a partnership way of life.

These changes in language and stories have enormous implications for all aspects of life, including spirituality and morality. Rather than being used to coerce, dominate, and all too often kill, morality is imbued with caring and love. Spirituality is no longer an escape to otherworldly realms from the suffering inherent in a domination world, but an active engagement in creating a better world right here on Earth — a world where peace is a normal state, rather than merely an interval between wars.

Every one can play a role in the cultural transformation from domination to partnership. Working together, we can build the foundations for a more peaceful, equitable, sustainable world.

Pandemics and Protests

Media's Role

by Diana Coryat



graphic: Digital Vault

We are confronting a global scale health crisis, unprecedented unemployment, racialized police brutality and state violence in multiple forms and geographies. Multi-racial popular uprisings led by Black women and youth, sparked by the filmed murder of George Floyd, bring increased demands in the U.S. and internationally for racial, social and economic justice. Between pandemic and protest, capitalist logics are being upended; people are yearning for more sustainable ways of living. In South America, this is referred to as *Buen Vivir* (good living). It does not refer to the capitalist “good life”; it is an indigenous principle that points towards living in greater harmony with other humans and all living beings. Just as *Buen Vivir* has become a global aspiration, in the US progressive movement narratives are spilling outside of activist circles and becoming more widespread throughout society. Black Lives Matter and other grassroots movements have made this political moment possible.

After the horrific death of George Floyd, ongoing protests have emphasized systems and structures that desperately need to be transformed; they have also illuminated our resiliency, strength, and creativity. Hundreds of tangible changes have already been set in motion, including unprecedented dialogue about white supremacy as a key underlying condition.

There has been little analysis about the media's role in all of this. We need to acknowledge all that is wrong with “the media.” Like the fact that:

- Corporate media continues to expand;
- The Internet is dominated by the most profitable corporations in the world;
- Social media titan Facebook has refused to take responsibility for disinformation, misinformation and polarization that has taken place on its unregu-

lated platform;

- Hedge funds have bought and defunded hundreds of local media outlets;
- Journalists worldwide are injured and murdered for documenting injustices.

But while we need to redouble our efforts to advocate for a broad range of communication rights that are essential for democracy, let's recognize all the ways in which ordinary people, grassroots media makers, professional and citizen-journalists are building people-powered media, working outside of the corporate system, and hacking it from the inside. In spite of pervasive anti-democratic forces, folks working in the name of media justice and all forms of justice have reframed the debate to the extent that sweeping change seems possible.

My local, community-supported radio station, KZYX, has done an amazing job of covering how the global pandemic impacts our rural county. So has Mendocino Voice, one of the first media co-op models in the US. And while we need to build our own platforms, we are using what is available. George Floyd's murder was recorded on at least one person's phone, and then circulated by hundreds of thousands of individuals across corporate platforms (this is a collective hacking of the system). While the government and much of mainstream media have framed the protests as violent, our media have covered hundreds of peaceful demonstrations that have been disrupted by police violence. In Minneapolis, Unicorn Riot, a media collective operating since 2015, has covered the protests with respect and knowledge of local communities. In our words, rhythms and images, we have shared outrage, grief and tears, as well as concrete proposals and new social imaginaries.

This is not a new story. Autonomous, justice-focused media have been around for centuries in one form or another. But we are more ubiquitous than ever. Find a group near you that is part of the media justice movement (See mediajustice.org). Collective, grassroots efforts are rarely well-funded or given due credit for their labor. Seek it out, support it, amplify it, create it!

Diana Coryat teaches at Mendocino College and Universidad Andina in Ecuador. She co-produces Mendolatino, on KZYX and works with Ojo Semilla, a community media project in Ecuador. She co-founded Global Action Project, a youth media organization in New York City and has a Ph.D. in communications from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Let's recognize all the ways in which ordinary people, grassroots media makers, professional and citizen-journalists are building people-powered media, working outside of the corporate system, and hacking it from the inside.

Media for Systemic Change

Corporations and Democracy began interviewing authors and activists on the upper class' use of corporations to dominate our politics, economy and culture, 22 years ago. It helped organize the protests against the WTO in Seattle in 1999. It has built also built awareness that the influence wielded by affluent corporate managers over our public policies, environmental degradation, resource depletion and economic inequality is a huge systemic problem that needs to be changed. You can listen live on the 2nd and 4th Fridays at 3 PM PDT, or to past shows at KZYX.org.

MediaJustice is building a powerful grassroots movement for a more just and participatory media — fighting for racial, economic, and gender justice in a digital age. They boldly advance communication rights, access, and power for communities harmed by persistent dehumanization, discrimination and disadvantage. They envision a future where everyone has sustained and universal access to open and democratic media and technology platforms. See mediajustice.org

Capitalism is Killing the Earth

Community Self-Governance Can Save It

by Ben G. Price

Our climate crisis has its roots in René Descartes' famous declaration, "I think, therefore I am." If thought is proof of existence, then the thoughts that create the proof have importance. So much so that challenging someone's thoughts seems an attack on their lives.

No wonder it is difficult to create positive change through persuasive argumentation. People find it harder to separate themselves from untrue ideas that they have been socialized to believe, than it is for them to learn and act upon better information. Thus, people resist understanding that their fossil fuel-dependent lifestyle is causing mass species die-offs and possible human extinction. They see these facts as existential threats.

The "scientific method" espoused by Francis Bacon is another philosophical paradigm with unconsciously assimilated beliefs that block rather than facilitate solutions to ending our energy production induced climate crisis. Bacon taught that Nature is an inert machine that can be taken apart, understood, in fact enslaved and used to elevate humanity above the rest of the natural world.

This philosophy resulted in ecocide and subjugation of peoples globally, all to make possible the European conquests that account for so many of the harms and horrors for which we now seek solutions. Colonizers found license to plunder in decrees like the Doctrine of Discovery and the Law of Conquest, issued by papal fiat in eager support of Christopher Columbus' lascivious wanderings. With imperial "manifest destinies" pursued with genocidal and ecocidal violence, the world was transformed into "property" by laws giving monopolizing privileges to the few and exclusionary deprivations for the many. The concept of community and self-determination was obscenely violated far and wide.

Our resulting, "scientific" industrial society is wrapped in a legendary system of magic called "capitalism." It has rocked the natural world to its foundations and molested whole continents with its invisible hands. It is hard to deny that a minority of humanity has engineered, and a growing plurality is complicit in this catastrophe.

Addressing climate change systematically requires rejecting our deceptive cultural myths, overcoming our own untested beliefs, and purg-



graphic: CELDF

ing our minds of premises that program us to destroy and be destroyed. There has always been resistance, but it has never been enough. Today we exist in an age of upheaval. People revolt over what are truly existential threats. We must understand where we went wrong and correct the errors of the past.

The solution is not better rules about how much a privileged minority can legally poison Earth and all of us. It is not more consumer goodies for the masses, nor better "regulation" of the forces of violence or the rate of destruction. The solution is to return to every community a power and authority to decide their way in the world, to empower their creativity and capacity to choose, at their discretion and without preemption, how their communities will nurture their own people, while refusing to become resource colonies or occupied lands for the accumulation of wealth and power.

Then, these communities can be woven together, from the bottom up, to form a more decentralized fabric of governance. The solution is community self-governance, limited only by the dictum that in so governing no community of people may deprive another of the same grace, nor may they do enduring harm to the natural world.

Ben G. Price is the National Organizer for the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund and author of "How Wealth Rules the World: Saving Our Communities and Freedoms from the Dictatorship of Property."

Addressing climate change systematically requires rejecting our deceptive cultural myths, overcoming our own untested beliefs, and purging our minds of premises that program us to destroy and be destroyed.

Rights of Nature

Environmental degradation is advancing around the world. The United Nations has warned that we are heading toward "major planetary catastrophe." For this reason, there is a growing recognition that we must fundamentally change the relationship between humankind and nature.

Making this fundamental shift means acknowledging our dependence on nature and respecting our need to live in harmony with the natural world. It means securing the highest legal protection and the highest societal value for nature through the recognition of nature's rights. See <https://celdf.org/> for more information.

Want A Strong, Resilient, Local Food System? Tag, You Are It!

by Matt Drewno

A local food economy is about more than just supporting your local farmer — it's about changing consumption habits, managing local resources sustainably, protecting our ecologies and increasing access to local organic food. Ask yourself, how could we feed ourselves if we could not import food? The answer I come up with is: tag, you are it!

We need more local farmers who understand sustainability as a holistic concept. Currently the UN says we have less than 55 years of soil remaining. Because of erosion caused by mechanized tillage, we are losing soil at 18-40 times the rate it is being created. We don't just need more farms, we need more farms that truly understand sustainability.

The US is only 5% of the global population, yet consumes 25% of its resources. It is next to impossible to sustain a truly local food system for a city like Los Angeles, with over 7,000 people per square mile, if we continue to consume as most Americans do. We need to define what a local food system looks like in each of our communities and include the health of our soil, water and ecosystems in the process. We need to make farming, gardening and consumer decisions which reflect an ethic of conservation.

During World Wars I and II, the Victory Gardens movement demonstrated the effectiveness of localizing the food system through home and community gardening. A strong home and community gardening culture increases access to local food, brings people together, saves money and enhances community health. We need to understand that there is no food security if our neighbor is hungry and no food sovereignty if people lack the access to grow their own food sustainably. Community resilience is not something you can buy!

Biointensive Agriculture can microscale the human footprint of agriculture, minimize water, fertilizer and energy use, while increasing yields, growing soil and sequestering carbon. It's a technique, which can be used by both farmers and gardeners in any climate and to grow soil and strengthen our local food system.

Land and resources need to be made accessible and affordable to small organic farmers,



photo: Victory Gardens for Peace

and incentives need to be created for consumers and farmers to keep food local. Farmer's Markets and direct marketing models such as the CSA Model (Community Supported Agriculture) nurture the relationship between small farmers and consumers.

In a resilient local food system, independent and locally managed cooperatives store and preserve our food. This includes canning facilities, fermenters, cold storage, dry storage and facilities to protect grain and root crops. Local facilities can transform community waste into compost to restore soil nutrients on our farms.

Poverty is on the rise and will require increasing local food bank capacity to distribute food to those who cannot afford it. Local media efforts should highlight these efforts and encourage the transformation. Opportunities for celebration, community service, volunteerism and compassion are an essential component of all local food economies.

The challenges we face are the opportunities we've been asking for. A strong home and community gardening culture, an increase in small scale farmers and networks of local cooperatives can help the transformation of scarcity into abundance. As we work towards a more just, local food system, we must understand that our most important resource is people. By making this a joyful and inclusive process, we can develop the integrity and commitment necessary to sustain this effort. This process of community transformation is our responsibility and the change is up to us — What kind of future do you want to create?

Matt Drewno runs the Victory Gardens for Peace Initiative, a project of Ecology Action - a 501(c)(3) non-profit helping individuals worldwide empower themselves to grow healthy food while conserving resources and building soil. For more information contact Info@Victorygardensforpeace.com or visit www.growbiointensive.org.

A strong home and community gardening culture, an increase in small scale farmers and networks of local cooperatives can help the transformation of scarcity into abundance.

Sumak Kawsay

Indigenous Wisdom to Save the Planet

An edited excerpt from a 2010 talk by Luis Macas

Sumak Kawsay originates at the center of community life, is the essence of the community life system and is explained in the exercise and daily practice of our communities. It is the vital part of our civilizational matrix, which is still in force, despite the violent interruption of colonialism and the aggression of the capitalist model. Sumak Kawsay's true meaning, comes from Quechua. Sumak, means fullness, greatness, the just, completely, the superior. Kawsay is life in permanent, dynamic and changing realization. It is the interaction of the totality of existence in movement. Life understood from the integral is the essence of all vital being. It is the permanent construction of all life processes in which it manifests itself: harmony, balance, internal and external to the entire human and natural community.

When translating the two concepts of Quechua into Spanish, we appreciate that the meaning of Sumak Kawsay is not exact. It cannot be translated as Good Living, because when translating this into the original language it means Alli Kawsay, which relates to what is good, to what is desirable, to conformity. Therefore, Alli Kawsay does not keep the same meaning as the Sumak Kawsay. They do not correspond, either semantically nor as a thought. The Sumak Kawsay when translating as Good Living, diminishes its true meaning.

Sumak Kawsay is more than Good Living. It is life in fullness, or life in splendor. It expresses the supreme life in the community system.



So, the resistance and validity of the Sumak Kawsay is a proposal to overcome the disastrous current system and build the community system. We believe that it cannot embed, or incorporate into the present development model, nor can it be an appendix to this system. It will be necessary to fundamentally transform the old existing State structures and institutions and build a new one — but made with our hands, with the hands of the people. It is not a proposal for indigenous people, but for all humanity. We consider it to be a construction of a life option for everyone.

Luis Macas is one of the founders and is the past President of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE). He led the growth of the indigenous movement into the most powerful political force in Ecuador, ousting two presidents and writing Sumak Kawsay and the Rights of Nature into the Ecuadorian Constitution.



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Why You Should Care

White Male Supremacy is Destructive

Corporate CEO's and white supremacist, good old boys in the White House and throughout the administration, create an unequal, violent, corrupt and polluted world where men earn more than women, and whites earn more than people of color. Corporate pollution and destruction of our climate system are due to their putting profits ahead of the planet and ability to defuse climate change public policy. They also drive a violent, imperial foreign policy and the militarized violence so dominant in our police forces.

Dominance over Nature Threatens Survival

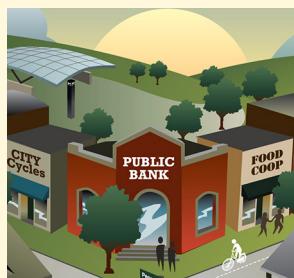
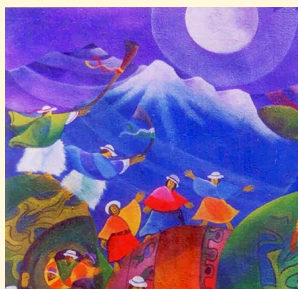
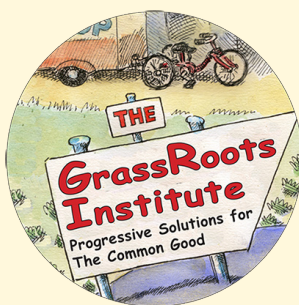
Our religious and philosophical beliefs that humans are superior to and have a right to destroy nature to promote our own well being are leading us down a road to environmental collapse that could end life as we know it. Changes in the climate, accelerating rates of species extinction, acidification and pollution of our oceans, privatization of our water commons and depletion of our natural resources are all destabilizing the historic balance that we all depend upon for our survival.

Our Economy is Unfair and Unsustainable

The pandemic makes it clear that our current, self-serving, privatized, corporate-driven, economic system can not provide for both the health and the economic well being of everyone at the same time. While we are forced to shelter-in to avoid the depravities of the virus, the overlords of our privatized monetary system are failing to support families that are experiencing record high unemployment, looming evictions and an economic collapse while the rich thrive in a record high stock market.

Money-Driven Democracy is a Failure

Money power floods political campaigns with corporate cash, while funding efforts that depreciate and suppress your vote through gerrymandering, purging voter roles, voter ID laws and partisan control of the electoral process. Strategies of corporate executives wreck our democracy by spending nearly \$3 billion annually on lobbyists, funding public-policy think tanks and revolving their people into high-level government positions to manipulate public policies for the good of their shareholders and the detriment of everyone else.



What You Can Do

Create A Partnership World

Work to create cultural transformation by understanding that human nature is about cooperative, empathic and caring relationships based on love, peace, equality and sustainability. Make all of your relationships partnerships that are cooperative and non-hierarchical. Check out the Grassroots Institute work on pages 9-11 in this JR and start your own community transformation to generate the systems changes we need to survive.

Change Our Relationship with Nature

Work to implement the right of our communities to protect their air, water and soil by giving legal rights to natural systems so they have standing in our judicial system. Join AfD's Defending Water for Life Campaign to end the corporate privatization of water, particularly bottled water, which robs water out of community water supplies and costs thousands of times more than publicly supplied water, while also polluting the planet with plastic.

Build the Solidarity Economy

Support and join co-ops, worker owned businesses and public efforts to create an economy for the common good for everyone. The key part of that is promoting public banks that can finance solidarity economy enterprises to make sure that both the healthy and economic well being of everyone is taken care of. Check out the AfD's Public Banking Campaign and join an effort near you.

Join the People's Vote Must Count

Be part of AfD's effort to make sure our elections are fairly done and that the results reflect the will of the people. Through AfD's community-based "People's Vote Must Count" campaign, you can be part of a national network of citizen activists working to implement paper ballot voting to stop election theft and restore transparency and public oversight. Only with your efforts will we have the democracy we all deserve.