

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.

