

CounterPunch

TRUMP'S POPULIST VIOLENCE BY JOSEPH LOWNDES

CNN'S SUMMER OF SHAME BY JASON HIRTHLER

NEPAL AFTER THE QUAKES BY BARBARA NIMRI AZIZ

THE RIGHT TO REBEL BY ANDREW SMOLSKI

WALL STREET TERRORISTS STRIKE AGAIN BY MIKE WHITNEY



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In Memory of
Alexander Cockburn
1941-2012



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Taboos and the Church

Floyd and St. Clair's mention of Frances' encyclical last month prompted me to begin reading it. Though I'm not quite done with it, and skipping the religious stuff certainly shortens it, I, too, find it amazing. He really covers a lot. And not to take away from any of it, the glaring omission is any mention of overcrowding and overpopulation of our planet, especially in light of the urgency of everything he takes great care to mention. This is obviously, because of the church's (immoral, in my opinion) forbidding of birth control. I don't know if there is any mention of that in their bible, but the only reason for being against birth control must be their taboo of having sex without any desire for, and in fact taking action to prevent, having children. This is irresponsible and, in my opinion, ridiculous, and for the church to have any credibility and real relevance, that must be changed. And thanks for all your great reporting at CP. Without regular doses of your insights, I'd probably be more beside myself than I am!

Béla

The Wrong Focus

Clearly, most CounterPunch writers don't like B Sanders. I agree that the progressive love fest is as misguided as it was for Obama. The only positive thing Sanders could do is push Hillary in debates. What, do you think is most productive for progressives? My view is that, for whatever

reason, progressives don't have a lot of traction, except on economic fairness issues and Social Security/Medicare. We need to be pragmatic: a person we really like (assuming that the notoriously fractious group known as progressives could unite around anyone) doesn't have much of a chance. Did Nader do any good? Has any third party done any good? The focus on POTUS politics is part of the problem: we are not going to have much of an effect there. Rather than tearing each other apart over the endless question of winnable (Hillary), like (Sanders) or fantasy (Nader), why don't we agree to disagree and focus on getting something done at the local state level?

Ezra S. Abrams

Good Work on Bad News

Thanks for the piece on Santa Clara Pueblo and the insightful comparison with Il Papa. I really liked 'the Hippie Pope' note. The ancient civilizations took thousands of years in most cases to implode. Ours is taking about 200 years, more or less. I live just 5 miles from the Mississippi, in central Wisconsin, just across the river from Red Wing, MN, home of the exploited locals who still make some Red Wing Shoes [most are made in China] and just downriver from a native-owned casino, most generous employer in the region aside from the nuke plant right next to it, on the Prairie Island rez, We have lots of water here, but the well on my farm is 500 feet deep, so we need lots of

electricity to get it. Good soil, plenty of wood, it's hard to see climate change here, so of course most don't believe in it. I think that as the coasts flood and the west dries up, this area of the northern Midwest will be a much-sought haven, but hey, most everyone here has lots of guns we can use to protect our carrots. Regarding the pueblos taking to the cliff tops, there's no doubt they were battling one another over scarce resources. A former ASU professor of mine discovered a fair bit of evidence of pre-Hispanic cannibalism in the area, from coprolites containing remnants of human flesh. Book on it is called *Man Corn, the Aztec name for human flesh*. The Spanish practiced a different, Jesus-endorsed form of cannibalism, as does our beloved government. My wife and I did anthro fieldwork on a small, remote island in Micronesia in the early '70s. Americans had control of the place post WWII, but U.S. presence there was scant aside from changes in dietary habits which were very harmful locally. We were going to return this year just for a nostalgia hit, but a native of the island, Kosrae, who goes back every so often, gave us several discs of recent photos of the place, which is, frankly, now a shithole, much like many of the native reservations here. So, no place is now untouched by our scabrous culture. And we're not going. *Thanks again for your good work on bad news.*

Paul Schaefer

The Sanders Revolution

What drove Bernie's decision to "become a Democrat" for this campaign? He actually thinks he can win, or at least provoke some type of "revolutionary" uprising. When I mention that to Clinton supporters, they call it delusional. That may well be. But he is also, at this point, convinced that he can play an "historic" role, or at least "make history". In 1986, when he ran against Madeleine Kunin, he also thought he could win -- and so did most "Sanderistas." And so did Anthony Pollina when he left the Progressive ticket in mid-campaign and opted to run as an Independent for governor. They both lost. But they also both did better than expected, extended their bases, and set themselves up for victory down the line. For Bernie it came four years later, when he convinced Peter Welch to run for Governor so he could make a second run for Congress. For Anthony, it came with his election to the state Senate. The Prog approach has always been to reject the notion of running "educational" campaigns and instead play to win. In Vermont they often have, but usually by making some sort of arrangement with the Democrats. Bernie really believes that if he can repeat his message often enough to enough people, they will ultimately decide he's right and complete his prophecy. It's worked for him for 35 years, so he finds it easy to believe it can happen again. And his wife Jane, closest advisors and old friends give him constant reinforcement. Delusional? Possibly. But thinking he can win is likely the motivator.

Greg Guma



ROAMING CHARGES

The Rich Boy

BY JEFFREY ST. CLAIR

The year is 1985. Reagan has just been reelected, but Republican fortunes across the country are waning. The Gipper was beginning to show his incapacities and the party itself seemed just as hoary. The hunt was on for new blood and George Clark, the chairman of the New York Republican Party, thought he knew just the man to renovate the GOP: Donald Trump.

Clark rode the express elevator to Trump's penthouse on the top floor of Trump Tower, a kind of Versailles-in-the-Sky. The Republican powerbroker had a simple question to put to Trump: would the real estate titan consider running for governor against Mario Cuomo in 1987? Trump quickly answered. "No. President or nothing."

A disappointed Clark descended the 1,388-foot black monolith, perhaps thinking that Trump's decision was based on his entanglements with Cuomo, an icon of liberalism. As a young lawyer, Cuomo had represented Trump's father, Fred, in some of his sleaziest projects. And when Cuomo ran for governor, the younger Trump was there to bankroll his campaign, certain that Cuomo would return the favors. He was not disappointed. The Cuomo administration interceded again and again on behalf of Trump projects, from the Television City developed to the perennially embattled Grand Hyatt in New York. It is possible to trace Trump's view of the government as a kind of Ponzi scheme to be plundered for his own profit to this fruitful partnership with the Cuomo regime.

Indeed, Trump became so enamored with Cuomo that the magnate privately urged him to run for president. But why didn't Trump thrust himself into the 1988 campaign against Poppy Bush, a man he had ridiculed

as a "waffling weakling"? According to Wayne Barrett's acidic biography, the Donald perceived that he was fatally weighted by a political liability: his Czech wife, the feisty Ivana. "Nobody in South Carolina will like Ivana's accent," Trump told friends. "Plus, she's from a Communist country!"

But Trump had a plan to polish his political appeal: dump Ivana and marry Marla Maples, a vapid beauty queen from Georgia. Trump confided to his bodyguard that Marla was the key element in his Southern Strategy. "They go wild for the glamour down there." Alas, it was not to be.

Now, twenty years, several bankruptcies and two failed marriages later, Donald Trump is back with a new Southern Strategy, which he unveiled in enervating detail at his Alabama Trumpalooza. It was the face of a new and perhaps even more unappetizing Trump, the billionaire populist. For decades, Donald Trump's persona was that of an upbeat pitchman, a huckster for the imperial dream of infinite growth, even when his own fortunes were flagging—especially then.

But now Trump's public mood has soured. His pitches have assumed a dark, fatalistic tenor. He sells fear and white rage, as if he has scented the rot eating away inexorably at the core of the System he helped construct. Of course, he still markets himself as the nation's top stud, the only figure man enough to eradicate the gravest threats to the Republic: Mexican immigrants.

Is Trump's noxious nativism an act, a case of Trump l'Oeil politics? Who knows, but it is certainly a grandiose hypocrisy. The family fortune was built on immigrant labor. His father Fred boasted that his empire of suburban shacks was constructed by laborers

"right off the boat," untainted by union membership. Donald followed the same reasoning at his own construction sites, in the low-wage jobs at his casinos and hotels and for the selection of his spouses.

Donald Trump is a bigot and a pig who uses his boorishness to appeal to other pigs, his targeted demographic of second generation Reagan Democrats: white, blue-collar men, fueled by Budweiser, sexual insecurity and a roiling, if inchoate, resentment toward a political system that has pushed them to an economic cliff. It is a measure of Trump's mystique that these economic refugees are drawn fervently to a man who trademarked the phrase: "You're fired!"

I doubt Trump has read even a paragraph by Guy Debord, but his presidential campaign would thrill the Situationists. Trump for President is the Greatest Spectacle on Earth—or at least on Fox News. Who else has shredded Roger Ailes on his own network? What other Republican has defended single-payer health care? Derided Citizens' United? Inveighed against global trade pacts? Denounced the Iraq War as an act of unparalleled stupidity? It's as if Trump has stepped right off the pages of Ralph Nader's Dickensian romp of a novel, *Only the Super-Rich Can Save Us Now*.

But is the Donald really a class traitor? Hardly. Trump is a post-modern Nero, without the facility for poetry. He is the new master of wrecking ball politics, the rich boy with an ego as big as the Ritz, who delights in busting things up to clear space for pleasure domes for the global elite. The broken lives left behind are just the cost of the deal. There's only one rule for survival: Find a scapegoat and move on. **CP**



EMPIRE BURLESQUE

Nothing Under the Trump

BY CHRIS FLOYD

The candidacy of Donald Trump has caused much consternation among the “serious” commentariat on both sides of that blood-soaked, bone-filled trench known as the political “aisle.” Each day, our jaw-flapping poltroons are disgorging vast bargeloads of pixel and print devoted to the one great burning super-scary question of our time: What will happen if Donald Trump is actually elected president?

Now, I enjoy a good goosing of my heebie-jeebies as much as the next person, but I must admit that I find the horror-show hysterics about this “mystery” a mite perplexing. The fact is, Donald Trump has already been elected president, and served two full terms. There’s no need for tea-leaf readings or Cassandraical conniptions on that score.

Peel back the musty pages of Chronos’ pre-digital record book a few years, and what do we find? A vacuous media celebrity leading the presidential campaign field. A figure with a long-practiced, well-honed professionally polished image as “authentic” and folksy, “one of us.” A man loudly ignorant and proud of it; no hoity-toity pointyhead, no mincer of legal niceties, but a rough-hewn man of action. A proven liar and compulsive fantasist, telling baseless yarns about his own accomplishments and making up specious public “facts” to confirm his followers’ deepest prejudices. A proclaimed enemy to all nuance, to any reality that lies outside the rosy myths of a lost “national greatness” which only he can restore. Hawking brutally simplistic “solutions” to highly complex problems. A blustering warmonger, promising fear and defeat to the nation’s many “enemies,” vowing to “take the gloves off” and show the world who’s boss.

What else? A self-proclaimed “outsider” (despite being deeply entwined with the power structure), gleefully scornful of sissified “political correctness,” basking in his own ballsy courage in telling the “straight truth” — no more coddling of criminals or hand-wringing about civil rights; no more kowtowing to the “victim mentality” of ungrateful minorities and fanatical feminists; no more handouts for lazy losers and welfare queens living large on the government dime. An adamant champion of Big Business, a “disruptor” of the stagnant status quo, ready to take a chainsaw to the onerous red tape that hinders our “wealth creators”.

Meanwhile, savvy “progressives” and opposition party leaders make antic hay of the buffoon, with his delightfully stupid statements and his harsh fringe views that no respectable person could support.

Sound familiar yet? We speak, of course, of Ronald Reagan. He embodied all these Trumpish attributes, and more. He lied about his wartime record, claiming to have liberated a Nazi death camp, when he never left the country during his military service. He was famous for blurting out such idiocies as “trees cause pollution” and “there is no word for ‘freedom’ in the Russian language.” He seemed to have taken his entire knowledge of the global affairs from *Reader’s Digest*, and his understanding of American society from Norman Rockwell paintings.

And like Trump—that virtuoso of the dog-whistles of nativism and white supremacy—Reagan launched his presidential campaign not with a mere whistle but with a cannon blast of raw symbolism, so that no one could mistake his meaning. After winning the GOP nomination on a slogan of “Make

America Great Again” (yes, the same slogan used by Trump), Reagan made one of his first major campaign speeches in Neshoba County, Mississippi — site of the notorious 1964 murder of three civil rights workers by law officers and Klan members. Reagan used the speech to declare his fervent belief in “state’s rights”—the gossamer-thin code word beloved of segregationists who wanted to restore the “natural order” of Jim Crow and white power in the South.

Such comparisons aren’t exact, of course, because in some respects, times have changed since then—mostly for the worse. One of Reagan’s other main objectives—dismantling the New Deal —has largely come to pass, with the eager assistance of regulation-cutting, corporate-cuddling “New Democrats” like Bill Clinton. (Thus Reagan’s fear-mongering tropes about “welfare queens” have given way to Trump’s Mexican “murderers and rapists.”) The Soviet bogeyman has gone (although, nostalgically, Russia is back in the cross-hairs); its place in the scarifying roster has been taken by the even more useful and protean Islamic extremism —which Reagan, following Carter’s lead, did so much to empower back in the day. The gains of the Great Society era, such as voting rights, are now dying on the vine, to the general indifference of the bipartisan political elite. The more aggressive military stance and increased war spending sought by Reagan has now metastasized—again, eagerly supported by both parties.

So what would “an America governed by Donald Trump look like?” Well, the wars—overt, covert, proxy —would keep raging. The intrusive Terror State would keep growing. The rich would get richer, the poor poorer. Minorities and evil foreigners would continue to be demonized and scapegoated. The bipartisan destruction of the few programs undertaken in the past to help forge a fairer society would go on. **CP**



DAYDREAM NATION

Carry My Heart to Wounded Knee

BY KRISTIN KOLB

I'm in flight from Salt Lake City, and I've had a seriously harrowing summer. There is no other way around it. So please let me spill my diary all over you.

Utah. The land of one of my heroes, Ed Abbey, arid and pure and raw. The sunset lit up pink and orange hues I had never imagined tonight, just from the airport tarmac.

Abbey saw me through a lot of pain, via his books, *Black Sun* and *Desert Solitaire*. At one point, he wrote, and I seared it into my heart, like a black sun blazing, "If my decomposing carcass helps nourish the roots of a juniper tree or the wings of a vulture—that is immortality enough for me. And as much as anyone deserves."

That juniper tree is pretty much my root and stalk these days. My cancer treatment was supposed to be "over," now it's continuing, and continuing, and just when I thought I had my life back.

I've been commuting every other week to a hostel in Vancouver sponsored by the Cancer Society—say what you want about them being big NGO shills, but they rock. (And thank you, the government of Canada, for, at least, a million dollars worth of health care.)

I've moved back to the USA, where I am a citizen, thankfully, and mucho hat tips to my friends, Bob and Susan, with whom I live among tall fir trees and persnickety chickens in a very lovely house.

But I'm uninsured, going through a divorce, scared, and I'm still ill. It's also really weird that I wrote about uninsured musicians who have died, just one month before I was diagnosed with cancer, in this magazine. It's all really strange.

Being back in Seattle is also odd, it's like a yuppie wet-dream I will never

experience. I live in a neighborhood of craft houses, with, three blocks away, a cozy, pricey, Portlandia-esque farmer's market—complete with cowgirls in faded boots and teeny-tiny mini skirts and worn straw hats selling grass-fed, organic, garlic-fennel-pork sausage for \$10.00 a pound to hungry, middle-aged men—and there is the new organic grocery store that anchors also-new condos shoving up the skyline by ten stories going for \$2,000 a month. It's called the "Evil Empire" in the hood, among the yuppies who moved here before the store opened, thus hipster cred, you know.

All of my 30 and 40-something friends are on their career tracks, or shedding their former selves in mid-life crises, or bummed about their ex-girlfriends, sexting too much, grumpy, loving their kids, worrying about stuff, like Clinton versus Sanders—things I, honestly, no longer care about. Seattle is a house of cards.

By the time this article is published, I wonder if the stock market will transform Seattle's dream world into a dystopia, if Amazon.com already hasn't.

You have your health? Cherish it.

So, I'm on a plane. I'm on my way to the Pine Ridge Reservation, to try to sniff out a story. We'll see how it goes. It might go nowhere. It might go somewhere. It's a dream come true for me, though, to visit this sacred place.

I might talk to some AIM members, some grandmas, see a rodeo or a Pow Wow, hear some women sing, eat some fry bread, camp, look at the stars.

I'm so lucky to be able to visit Wounded Knee, to offer wildflowers to the graves of the worst massacre site in the history of the United States, where more than 300 native Americans were slaughtered in 1890, to pray and

meditate on the horrid violence that was inflicted that part of the West, and left, indeed, a deep psychic wound of broken promises. I'm humbled and grateful to pay homage to those who really did lose their lives without any reason.

My cancer might have a reason—my choice to dose myself with hormone-heavy birth control for years, my past weakness for drugs and alcohol, the constant stress and poverty of a 15-year, loveless marriage—but there is no excuse for what occurred at Wounded Knee. It's a haunted place.

I worry about cancer? Pfft. Try being an Indian. The violence is daily, through guns and alcohol and drugs and suicide and poverty and despair, things I know about, in my own way, although I am a white woman. As my friend said to me yesterday, "Let's go to the Rosebud Reservation fair, but we need to leave before dark, because that's when people get drunk and shoot off their guns and they do not like white people. Trust me."

I'm looking at an old photo on my laptop as I land in Rapid City. It's from the AIM Occupation of Wounded Knee in 1973. I see a Lakota man, with braids hanging down his back, wearing cargo pants and a wool-flannel shirt, and he brandishes a gun. He watches over six white men with their hands above their heads. His profile is strong, proud, and stern. Theirs, the white men? The ones negotiating for the U.S. government? The bureaucrats? Cowardly.

The photo is an old, romantic reminder of Wounded Knee. But it's also an inspiration.

Please, carry my heart to Wounded Knee. Leave some wildflowers there, on the site of the massacre. Let me gaze at the sky, wide and open. **CP**



GRASPING AT STRAWS

Wall Street's Terrorists Strike Again

BY MIKE WHITNEY

What if I told you that the only thing that's been driving the market higher for the last two years is a vile, but legal practice that extracts money from gullible pensioners and transfers it to the pockets of fat cat corporate CEOs and their voracious shareholders. What I'm talking about is stock buybacks, which occurs when a company repurchases its own shares to boost executive compensation and reward shareholders without adding anything of productive value to the business.

Buybacks represent big money, roughly \$7 trillion from 2004 to 2015 according to data from Mustafa Erdem Sakinc of the Academic-Industry Research Network. In 2015 alone, companies are expected to spend "\$914 billion on share buybacks and dividends, or about 95 percent of earnings" according to Bloomberg News. In other words, the money that is going towards repurchases and dividends currently exceeds the amount that the companies are making in profits.

How do they do that?

They borrow it. In fact, most of the money that goes into buybacks is borrowed via the bond market from small investors who foolishly believe that their money will be put to good use by talented entrepreneurs who want to develop their companies and build for the future. But the money doesn't go into developing companies for the future. It goes into the bank accounts of wealthy businessmen and their shareholders. This is the great deception that underlies the buyback phenomenon, that is, that when an investor buys a bond, he buys it with the tacit understanding that the money will be used for some constructive purpose and not simply divvied up by shady CEOs

who think they've won the lotto. This is why Senators Elizabeth Warren and Tammy Baldwin think the Securities and Exchange Commission should get involved and treat buybacks like market manipulation.

But there's more to buybacks than merely pulling the wool over investors' eyes. Keep in mind, that the vast sums of money these companies have borrowed requires regular debt servicing which limits their ability to expand operations, hire more employees or improve productivity. Buybacks undermine a company's future prospects by piling on more debt and pushing balance sheets deeper into the red. The damage these corporate bosses are doing to their companies is serious and quantifiable.

Buybacks are likely to come under greater scrutiny following August's stock market bloodbath that wiped out more than \$2 trillion in market capitalization in less than a week. Unusual trading activity in the last half hour of each day from August 20 to August 25, indicated that the giant corporations that had been propping up the market through buybacks, were suddenly pulling back, driving the market deeper into negative territory. The trend peaked on Tuesday, August 25, when the Dow Jones was whipped by a historic reversal which saw the index rise 441 in the morning only to plunge backwards in the late afternoon to a 205 point loss on the day. Analysts at CNBC attributed the ferocious selloff to "the listed companies themselves", that is, the companies that are listed on the S&P or Dow and who have "been pretty much the only buyer of this rally that most everyone

else—individual investors, pension funds, macro hedge funds—has sold." (CNBC)

The above statement confirms what many have said from the very beginning, that the fundamentals are weak, stocks are in a bubble and the rally is a fraud. As the analyst clearly states, "the only buyer of this rally" is the companies themselves, and now even they are selling.

But, why? Why are these corporate behemoth's bailing out now?

Because their borrowing costs keep going up. This has nothing to do with the Fed. As everyone knows, the Fed has kept rates locked at zero for six years. But corporations don't get their money from the Fed. They get it from the bond market where yields have been rising sharply. And the reason they've been rising is because jittery investors have been demanding early redemptions and hitting the exits. That's caused record outflows and higher rates which makes it more expensive for CEO's to buy back their own shares. And, as I said earlier, these companies have been the only thing driving the market higher.

There's one last thing that readers need to know about buybacks: Where the money comes from.

It's coming from "massively underfunded public pension" funds. That's right, Wall Street is pilfering the retirement money of elderly public employees right under the nose of the SEC, and no one is lifting a figure to stop them. According to Brian Reynolds, Chief Market Strategist at New Albion Partners, "Pension funds...have to make 7.5%," so they are putting their money "in these levered credit funds that mimic Long-Term Capital Management in the 1990s." Those funds, in turn, "buy enormous amounts of corporate bonds from companies which puts cash onto company balance sheets."

This whole fiasco has "financial crisis" written all over it. **CP**

The Populist Violence of Donald Trump

BY JOSEPH LOWNDES

The steady rise in Donald Trump's political fortunes among Republican voters is a phenomenon no one expected, and that no leader in his party seems to want. He is not sustained by the resonance chamber of right-wing media, think tanks, and churches. Indeed, Trump is opposed, not only by the GOP elite and sites of conservative opinion-formation such as National Review, but even FOX News—an institution that can usually be counted on to celebrate candidates who indulge racism and immigrant-bashing. Yet Trump's base continues to widen, pulling in an ever larger number of Republican voters. In some ways Trump represents one side of a longstanding rift among Republicans—one between racial populists and economic conservatives, yet in another way he transcends it.

White populism has been key to Republican fortunes since the 1960s. As a young strategist for Nixon in 1968 Kevin Phillips, watching former Alabama governor George Wallace's meteoric rise, understood that building a hegemonic party would require transforming the GOP from being seen as "the party of the rich" to being the party of working and middle class whites—and that this would require the forging of new political identities, and understanding "who hates whom." Nixon began using the terms silent majority, forgotten Americans, and Middle America to describe an aggrieved white majority squeezed by both the unruly, dependent poor below and government elites above. Meanwhile, Phillips sought ways to link up various groups—white southerners, urban ethnics, western populists, and middle-class dwellers of the emergent Sunbelt—into a new majoritarian voting bloc. After the 1968 election, Phillips wrote that what he called the emerging Republican majority "spoke clearly . . . for a shift away from the sociological jurisprudence, moral permissiveness, experimental residential, welfare, and educational programming and massive federal spending by which the Liberal establishment sought to propagate liberal institutions and ideology."

Yet populism always sat uneasily with conservatives who sought primarily to pursue economic libertarianism. William F. Buckley, founder of National Review magazine a central figure in the rise of modern conservative movement from the 1960s through the 1980s was deeply suspicious of populism. In 1968 he attacked Wallace on his television show *Firing Line*, and warned fellow conservatives, "Wallace is appealing to those to whom Mr. Goldwater appealed, to whom Mr. Reagan appealed. But I think he is appealing to them as an imposter. Because I think that Mr. Wallace's prin-

ciple franchise comes from people who are concerned over the race issue. He is using the rhetoric of conservatism for anticonservative purposes." The tension between the populist right and the elitist, self-consciously libertarian right remained across the 1970s. Phillips broke with Buckley and the National Review in the mid 1970s. Feeling betrayed by both an economic and political elitism he saw in National Review, Phillips – who began calling Buckley "Squire Willie" continued down a road toward a more left-leaning economic populism afterwards.

Although Reagan was able to retain relative unity in his coalition, the split between the populist and mainstream right eventually re-emerged. The presidency of George H.W. Bush, who conveyed the image of a more privileged elite committed to the central role of the US in building a cosmopolitan "new world order" helped nurture a renewed populism outside the party. In 1992 former Nixon speechwriter and columnist Pat Buchanan ran a campaign that eschewed the idea of the US as an empire, attacked banks and big business, courted labor through protectionism and opposition to immigration, and excoriated feminism, gays and lesbians, and multiculturalism. Buchanan, who as a former speechwriter for Nixon one of the rhetorical architects of the silent majority, often wore a tweed cap and fashioned himself as a scrappy working-class Irish American outsider on the campaign trail to Bush's wealthy WASP New England pedigree. He referred to the Republican primary contest as "St. Theresa's versus the Redskins," invoking a contest between a Catholic parochial school and Washington D.C.'s professional football team, repeatedly attacked Bush's manhood, and his class background. In an insurgent gesture anticipating the Tea Party, he repeatedly called Bush "King George." H. Ross Perot also harnessed populist energy as an outsider in that year's election, but with neither the ethno-national identity fostered by other conservative populists, and therefore without a cultural basis to tap into.

George W. Bush was strong a focal point of populism on the right during his time in office. The 9/11 attacks and Bush's pugilistic response, and his belief in unbridled executive power ultimately cemented his image as a virile, masculine "decider." Unlike his father, he successfully conveyed a man-of-the-people persona in his Texan drawl. Yet popular exhaustion with Bush's two wars and an economic crash of historic proportions depleted his populist appeal.

An insurgency both within and outside the Republican party initially aimed at federal mortgage lenders, and overweening state power more generally opened the possibility for new articulations of rightwing populism from a group that could nurture a sense of angry outsidership. Yet the emergence of the Tea Party in 2009, in the wake of the Great Recession and the election of the first African American president, was perhaps the death rattle of the white populist political formation—one finally rent by its contradictions.

The Tea Party movement evinced the thundering antistatist fury of its forebears in its attacks on the stimulus package, Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), the auto industry bailout, health care reform, and in attacks on public-sector workers. Both the rage and confusion of this movement speak to an identity in decline. At once, the Tea Party movement railed against Wall Street and defended unbridled markets; championed libertarianism while expressing communal (nationalist) longings; attacked government while fiercely defending Medicare and social security; posited racist conspiracies about Obama while making icons out of conservatives of color like Herman Cain and Ben Carson. No longer a social movement, the Tea Party acts merely as the right flank of the GOP.

Long under strain, in the first decades of the 21st century, white populism has begun to unravel. Large sectors of the U.S. population are falling out of the middle class, and awash in debt. Conservative Republicans, and neoliberal elites generally, having achieved fundamental political aims of deregulation, defunding public functions and concentrating the vast majority of wealth at the very top strata, appeal less to whiteness as a basis of political support, and indeed have begun using racial tropes to describe both sections of the white working class and the expanding population of the white poor.

In the 2012 presidential election, Mitt Romney statistically included a large minority of white Americans in his division of the country into makers and takers. National Review now publishes articles about white middle and working class decline with titles like “The Big White Ghetto.” Charles Murray, the chief racist of American sociology, has now moved on from derogating black folks to talking about the cultural and genetic deficiencies of the ever-increasing white poor.

Into this breach strides The Donald with the staples of right-wing populist rhetoric that mark his campaign: an Us vs. Them distinction, anti-establishment plain-spokenness, deep resentment toward perceived outsiders, and perhaps most of all, rage. In surveys, the characteristics Trump’s supporters most respond to is truth-telling at whatever cost. The

power of transgression is key for right-wing populism, as it promises an exciting form of boundary-crossing and even violence. “Ballsy” is a common phrase used to describe him, and this masculine trait is further echoed in his descriptions of America—like his presidential rivals—as weak and cowardly. This is key to his anti-immigrant rhetoric, which rests on the idea of mass exportations and wall-building. Trump criticized Bernie Sanders for giving over the microphone to Black Lives Matters protesters saying, “That will never happen with me,” Trump said. “I don’t know if I’ll do the fighting myself or if other people will, but that was a disgrace.”

This urge to violence toward protesters easily recalls that George Wallace in 1968 who regularly invoked as a way to point out the weakness of his rivals. He threatened to run

over any demonstrator who lay down in front of his car, and recommended that the “activists, anarchists, revolutionaries and Communists” who caused civil unrest “be thrown under a good jail.” Lyndon Johnson, Wallace said in one speech, “wanted a crime commission report to tell him why they were burning cities down. Well I could have told him why

they were burning them down like you could - because you let them burn them down!” It also echoes Pat Buchanan’s “Culture Wars” speech at the 1992 GOP convention when he compared opposition to feminism, gay rights and pornography with the federal troops called in to quell the Los Angeles riots that year, exhorting his party to “take the country back block by block.”

But the violence of racial populism can be more than just rhetorical. Two white men made news when they severely beat a homeless Latino man with a pipe and then urinated on him, and justified their acts by reference to Trump. The candidate, rather than denouncing the assailants, pointed to the passion of his supporters. Commentators were aghast, but such brutality itself can forge political identifications for candidates whose campaigns are fueled entirely by a politics of friends and foes. The Wallace campaign, for instance, purposely held rallies venues that were too small in order to encourage fistfights between protesters and supporters.

The other transgressive element of Trump’s campaign, closely associated with violence is physical revulsion, a feeling



TRUMPALOOZA IN MOBILE. PHOTO: NBC NEWS.

he often tries to invoke among his followers. The fact that Trump has described women as “disgusting” or as “fat pigs” has done nothing to slow his ascent, and indeed it may play a role in attracting more support. This too echoes former prior populist campaigns on the right, and they are meant to evoke not merely anger but loathing or abjection. A notorious commercial in Buchanan’s 1992 campaign produced showed slow-moving images of a film depicting gay black men in chains, with a voiceover criticizing President George H.W. Bush for allowing the National Endowment for the Arts to fund such art. On the campaign he would tell audiences, “I’d clean house at the NEA...If I am elected, the place would be shut down, padlocked and fumigated.” After Democratic candidate Martin O’Malley acknowledged criticism for his stumbling response to a Black Lives Matters protest at the national Netroots convention this year, Trump said, “[H]e apologized like a little baby, like a disgusting, little weak, pathetic baby, and that’s the problem with our country.”

If Trump is a populist, however, he is an extremely unlikely one. The Trump brand is primarily associated with enormous wealth and luxury, not modesty and hard work. Wallace at least bestowed dignity on those he sought to represent – “this barber, this bus driver, this beautician.” Buchanan was a fierce opponent of free trade agreements and saw himself as a working-class representative of labor. Indeed, Trump talks not like a worker but like a boss. Or perhaps more accurately, he talks like a boss in a proletarian accent. This gives perverse evidence perhaps, of neoliberalism’s total absorption into American political culture today. In a campaign season where, according to the *New York Times*, candidates all avoid using the term “middle class” because this once inclusive American identity now only reminds voters how quickly it is disintegrating, people are drawn to the star of a show called “You’re Fired.”

Trump supporters appear not to care that their candidate would be willing to abandon the Republican Party if he does not get the nomination. That may reflect a feeling that this party has already abandoned them. But what does Trump offer besides a promise to purge the country of immigrants? In an era of inevitable decline—decline of economic security and decline of empire—both of which are experienced as the simultaneous erosion of masculinity and whiteness, disgust and self-abasement are perhaps all that is left of rightwing populism. Maybe the rage that fires the Trump campaign is ultimately a form of self-loathing, a deep belief in the national weakness that Trump can’t stop talking about. That remains a dangerous scenario. **CP**

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Get Up, Stand Up International Law and the Right to Rebel

BY ANDREW SMOLSKI

“Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social, and cultural rights, indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.”

– Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Any reasonable interpretation of Article 22 makes clear that the law has a much more expanded jurisdiction than merely the regulation of market activities, the legal position of the already powerful capitalist class. It would also make clear that the State has a substantial amount of responsibility it is shirking continuously, contemporarily and historically. Rather, the current social system produces a brutal endemic deprivation unleashed by neoliberal austerity motivated by a savage global capitalism; a vicious, rationalized machine maintaining the power of a sociopathic mafia through the brute force of militarized, police-surveillance states and imperial, neocolonial projects. This mafia no longer has the ability to imagine even the mildest welfare State as possible, nor does the technocratic bureaucracy see humans as beings, only as quantified inputs. Such a destructive, counterproductive system brings to the fore a reexamination of the right to rebel, a right all the more necessary while staring at the tip of the greenhouse economy’s nuclear bomb.

Odd to say the “right” to rebel, as such a legal right existing automatically negates the law itself, as rebellion is to negate the existing order. Yet, it remains true, and necessary, that we maintain, if not a legal right, a moral right to rebel. The history of such a right, how it operates concretely, is what concerns me here. If a collective is to wield such a right, is it legal? What about just? Are there other options? Have we fetishized rebellion, forgetting that political violence is still violence, that it includes within it death and mayhem, even if done for a better world? These are important questions for a world bent on its own destruction and in desperate need of fundamental transformation. Rebellion is not just ok, but is essential to overcoming the current crises and being able to create a world that descriptively matches Article 22’s normative declaration.

So, being that the law is fundamentally about how to create a more just order, if the established legal order is one which

supports and continues tyranny and oppression, can such an order maintain its sovereign relationship to the represented? Or, making rebellion central, shouldn't an oppressive order expect to face rebellion? The brief history of these questions offered here is built around the United Nations' formal legal codes, as well as those of the nations which constitute that body. That history is connected to a much larger history of domination, both nationally and internationally, and to colonial and decolonial philosophical lineages, all of which recognize some sufficient justification for the inalienable/inherent rights of humans against such domination, and considering oppression incongruent with a peaceful, just order.

The Charter of the United Nations (adopted 1945), as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (adopted 1948), are built on the idea of self-determination, peace, security, and the ability to lead fulfilling lives. Because of such objective morals, the question, in the most abstract sense, can be answered in the affirmative. In some form, whether informal or formal, there exists a right to rebel against the established legal order, whether morally or for social optimization. However, based on the legal arguments and statements of these documents and those who constructed them, this legal right is a phantasm in terms of enforceability, regardless of being fundamental. As well, it is a right, such that, it is only actionable in a self-justifying manner, being that if it fails, there is no other form of redress available.

In its most restricted form, rebellion is considered the result of bad governance, such as in the Preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law." Here, rebellion is against the failure of the law, the law that does not measure up to its objective moral principles, a wholly unethical law, despicable like Thucydides' maxim of might makes right. But, this doesn't state whether rebellion is supported, only that it should be expected in situations where tyranny and oppression exist. It definitely doesn't assert rebellion as necessary to assure Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We know from the historical record, that the right to rebel in the Preamble was hotly debated; because, what authority truly wishes to grant its own annihilation? According to Johannes Morsink's *Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Origins, Drafting, and Intent*, the right to rebel in the Preamble was a logical outcome of Article 21, which stated "the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government". Within the liberal tradition, and especially in the anarchist and socialist traditions that followed, the people themselves were sovereign, not the government, whose sovereignty was only the result of its constitution by the people. It was much more in the fascist and stalinist traditions that the State itself was the only sovereign, the absolute representation

of the spirit of the people.

Even though the people were the ultimate sovereign, delegates to the Commission on Human Rights proclaimed an authoritarian need to restrict rebellion. They banished it to the confines of the State, and thus attempted to rule out violent insurrection. That is, they placed the law prior to the just order in a hierarchy of what was the basis for human rights. While this legal approach became the standard, it was not the only proposition. The Cuban delegation, rebellion's champion, proposed the more forceful, "Every human being shall have the right to resist any form of oppression." The USSR, with Eleanor Roosevelt's assistance, were in opposition to such a full-throated championing of rebellion in the Declaration. Roosevelt's argument was that granting such a right, "would be tantamount to encouraging sedition". Thus, the right to rebel was written in the negative and castaway to the Preamble, rather than being its own article.

Such conservatism is typical. In American history the revolutionary fervor of the Declaration of Independence is lost once we arrive at the Constitution, which no longer includes any reference to the people's sovereign, self-determinate right to overthrow the system. There is also the El Salvadorian case, a country's whose constitution directly states that "the right of insurrection shall in no case produce the abrogation of the laws", which as Morsink notes, is qualifying the right in a way as to make it nil. Although, in some cases, such as the German Federal Republic, a constitution does concede to its citizens the right of resistance, but only to reestablish the prior legal order, which is a direct reference to Nazism's parliamentary takeover and destruction of the Weimar legal order. As such, the Preamble's right to rebel is weak, constrained, and altogether left to fight against the unjust order as if it were a just order.

This is because the UN Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as Tony Honoré states, "sedulously avoids [that] the right of self-determination can be vindicated by rebellion." The UN Charter is a state-centric document, and thus works to preserve the current order of things without too much disruption. This is also true for the clear majority of member-states' constitutions. The UN supports smooth, orderly transitions, within a framework of state capitalism. Rebellion itself, according to General Assembly Resolution 1541 of 1960, is only to either produce a nation-state, or to join one, but never to create something outside of the UN's framework. Hence, even Article 21 and Article 22 are about creating a state capable of supplying economic, social, and cultural rights.

Nor is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights a legally binding document, but rather utilized to interpret the conservative Charter of the United Nations, which clearly recognizes the need for human rights to maintain international peace and security, but not explicitly the right of insurrectionary self-determination to achieve those rights. The Charter

actually centralizes the power to decide on the justness of a cause in the hands of the imperial, hegemonic powers of the UN's Security Council as opposed to some more democratic formation. Due to this, the Preamble's right to rebellion is of such a shallow nature as to make it unable to provide the necessary remedy for tyranny and oppression. It is the farce of Kant's maxim, "disagree but obey," switched up to be, "rebel but don't".

However, the delegates to the Commission on Human Rights who developed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights clearly recognized the extreme cases for which rebellion was automatically necessary. Costa Rican delegate Alberto Canas noted the importance of even parliamentary constrained rebellion to end the tyranny of "Nazi and fascist governments". Yet, many delegates did not honestly believe after the Nazi atrocities that parliamentary approved means could actually end a death-state like the Nazis. Think of the El Salvadorian priests brutally murdered by death squads supported by the US government and military, or the Black Panthers brutally murdered by the political police in the US, the FBI. In both instances, parliament is a corrupt organization with a *raison d'être* of administering the violence. As such, most states work exactly counter to the spirit of Article 21 and Article 22, and definitely work to actively quell just rebellions, as well as the more pacifistic civil disobedience and parliamentary means.

The French delegate René Cassin stressed that many other delegates were acting as if rebellion would be the first type of redress. Against this "slippery slope" argumentation, Cassin pointed out that "the right to resist acts of tyranny and oppression could be recognized only in the case where such acts were practiced by a regime and systematically," after he had called upon other delegates to recognize the right to rebel being "based on the noble principle of 1789". It is ridiculous to think that citizens do not first try the parliamentary route and then afterwards the route of civil disobedience. The question, which Cassin makes implicit, is what do we do when those avenues fail or are non-existent? That is why possessing the right to rebel, the right to reconstitute the existing order, is pivotal.

It is in Cassin's spirit, the spirit of '89, '71, '68, that in the extreme cases of apartheid and colonialism, the General Assembly has passed resolutions that clearly delegate to self-determinant collectives the right to violent rebellion. Such resolutions, like Resolution 2465 of 1968, state that such acts like apartheid are crimes against humanity, with specific reference to "the illegal racist minority régime in Southern Rhodesia", and "Reaffirms its recognition of the legitimacy of the struggle of the colonial peoples to exercise their right to self-determination and independence, notes with satisfaction the progress made in the colonial Territories by the national liberation movements..." It is in such resolutions that the root meaning of rebellion becomes clear, bellum or war. This

means rebellion is always circumscribed within the discourse and act of war, as well as in the discourse and act of justice.

As such, the rebel must be compliant with the laws of war and humanitarian laws, acting as a privileged combatant. This also means not fetishizing rebellion as a simple event, but understood as part of violent conflict within an existing system of international law and a metaphysical moral universe. War, even if just, is not a first reaction. Unless, you're a twisted empire who must dispense with the current arsenal to justify further circulation of capital flows through the military-industrial complex, the dark side of Keynesian economics. War happens because parliamentary (or diplomatic) maneuvering and pacifist recalcitrance no longer function to redress grievances. War is a matter of self-defense against an aggressor.

Understanding rebellion as linked to war, the rebel exists in a grey area in terms of international law. A difficulty arises for the rebel as to whether or not international law makes him/her a privileged combatant. The rebel is unlikely to have a standard uniform, professional training, and have knowledge of the rules of war. The rebel is also likely to be embedded within the civilian community, and targets may or may not be "legitimate" targets in terms of the laws of war. Also, if it is the entire social system which is rotten, then what exactly is a neutral civilian? Systematic oppression, the bar set by Cassin, increases the numbers involved, and also brings into the debate prosecution of structural or institutional violence.

The current legal order does not permit directly any of the central questions for rebels fighting from a disadvantageous position of power, economically and militarily. As such, acts by rebels that contravene laws of war and humanitarian laws, especially because they are inherently political, can be deemed terrorist acts without proper sociohistorical context elaborating the structural and institutional machinations producing the tyrannical and oppressive system. Rebels have to make their case to delegitimize narratives labeling them terrorists, and thus legitimating their acts as those of legal insurgents. That is, they also fight from disadvantageous cultural and symbolic positions.

Following Jan Klabbers, at least since the 1874 Brussels Projects of an International Declaration Concerning the Laws and Customs of War "resistance troops [were] among recognized belligerents as long as they respected the laws and customs of war." Yet, recognized as belligerents is not the same as privileged combatant, as we well remember from the crude arguments made by the US government during the War on "Terror" (ongoing, never ceasing) about lawful vs. unlawful enemy combatants. The ambiguity aids governments' in constructing narratives with labels like "terrorist" to discredit political movements against tyranny, to criminalize resistance.

Following Klabbers a bit more, the Additional Protocols of 1977 of the Geneva Conventions sets as the line between legal or illegal insurgent, and thus whether a freedom fighter or a

terrorist legally, at whether or not non-state entities “exercise control over part of [a] territory in such a way that they can engage in military operations” and also not applying to insurgents in “situations of internal disturbances and tensions, such as riots, isolated and sporadic acts of violence and other acts of a similar nature, as not being armed conflicts.” Again, this returns us to the state-centric nature of the UN Charter, because it is about whether or not a group can constitute a nation-state. It also means that a historical movement trend must exist establishing the non-state entity as more than a rebellious whisper.

According to all this, we know the Palestinians have the right to rebel against the colonial order they exist under, they have the right to be labeled privileged combatants who exercise control over part of a territory, that they are resisting systemic tyranny, and that they are engaged in a slow-burning armed conflict with the Indonesian government. This could also be said of the Zapatistas, the Kurds, and countless other collective organizations fighting for independence, whether violently or non-violently. If it could not be said for these groups, then Article 21 and Article 22 are nothing more than words, and all these definitions nothing more than vane, prostrations of technocratic-lovers of faux-justice.

As an aside, it does need to be recognized that the UN does not seem to deal with class oppression in terms of its framework in any direct manner. Against the savage global capitalist system we have one of the severest flaws in international law’s interpretation of the right to rebel. It does not discuss or allude to class war or class-based rebellion. Article I of Chapter I of the UN Charter states, “promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion”, which has nothing about class-based deprivation and oppression. Nor does it justify or allow for rebellion based on class. The UN, while granting human rights, does not in any substantial manner attempt to provide these rights outside of a state capitalist framework. Article 21 and Article 22 become shams in light of the interstate capitalist framework of this transnational body’s human rights philosophy.

With all of that, this discussion is ongoing, and needs further elaboration. As Valerie Morkevicius has pointed out, “what the West desperately needs is a new theory of just rebellion”. We must be able to actually understand this inalienable right to rebel, to resist, to fight back, to topple and uproot as something that is not a matter to be thrown out drunkenly. We should not treat it as if it would go off like clapping after a show. Nor is it a right to be written off, being that it is literally the most powerful weapon any population has against tyranny and oppression. Our right to rebel is our right to make us who we believe we are. Rebellion is to no longer accept the endemic deprivation caused by a rapacious system that forces so many to produce the extravagant lives of so few, a few who are filled with disdain for all those who sacrifice.

Understanding the conservative nature of the right of rebellion according to the United Nations, even including the anti-colonial, anti-apartheid right to self-determination, still highlights clearly that power systems are not oblivious to the fundamental and inalienable ends-in-themselves which are human beings and collectives. As Noam Chomsky has pointed out on several occasions, many times it is not about getting new laws passed, but getting the State to enforce and follow the laws it already has on the books. If it refuses to do so, then, as this article has made clear, the people should invoke their legal right to rebel and constitute themselves as privileged combatants. If they win, then the rebellion justifies itself in relation to the new, more just, legal order.

Pachamama tells us, her children, it’s OK to rebel, just the power systems would rather you not. Fuck them. **CP**

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CNN’s Summer of Lies

Three Fictions to Live By

BY JASON HIRTHLER

In his bestseller *Cat’s Cradle*, Kurt Vonnegut introduced a concept called ‘foma.’ Foma were “harmless untruths.” The book’s rhyme-making Calypso guru, Bokonon, advised human beings to live by the foma that made them “brave and kind and happy and wise.” The idea that we all get by on a series of helpful fictions shouldn’t be hastily dismissed. Much in the media suggests that we do indeed subsist on a surfeit of falsehood. The ‘father of public relations’ Walter Lippmann, said as much in his infamous work, *Public Opinion*, in which he described how news organizations essentially mediated the world for readers who didn’t have the ability to be eyewitnesses to every major event on the planet. The mediated news inevitably served the interests of the media owners. Largely because of that, unfortunately, it isn’t exactly foma we live by, but rather more harmful untruths that not only implicate us in America’s crude foreign policy but lead directly to the death and displacement of millions of people in nations unable to resist American might.

In the States, there are a handful of media organizations that mediate reality on half of what Chris Hedges calls the “oligarchic corporate elite.” For instance, millions of people watch and read CNN on a monthly basis. These people also tend to absorb news from other mainstream outlets like The New York Times and MSNBC or FOX News. Like these other

house organs of state fiction, CNN perpetuates falsehoods in dizzying volumes that no left-leaning content production house can match. This is a central technique in the arsenal of state propaganda—controlling the flow of information. This is best done by owning the distribution channels and flooding them with misinformation. The corporate elite own the channels, the state provides the false storylines, and the corporate-owned media disseminate it. In this the American system is second to none. This summer CNN has produced a trifecta of false narratives that perfectly align with the interests of the financial elite.

Revanchist Russia

A July 11th article, “Military Provocations Prove Putin Is Playing With Fire,” accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of “playing a dangerous game,” alluding to Russian jets that were “approaching” U.S. air space near California and Alaska. The flight path of the jets were said to be both a “warning” and a “bit of bravado” by a Russian leader who—by this point the reader has doubtlessly concluded—is reckless and wields power with a wanton hand. The article then unfolds the broader context of various Russian “provocations” over the past year that are evidently shaking Europe to its core. Especially following “the invasion of Crimea,” which is added to various “unnerving military drills” and “incursions” into NATO air space.

Moscow should certainly be asked what Russian bombers were doing above the English Channel last May, for the first time since the Cold War. Or what its planes were doing as far afield as the coast of Portugal in October. Last fall, Russian jets and bombers were been spotted over the Black, Baltic, North seas and the Atlantic Ocean. A Russian submarine that popped up in the Swedish archipelago. None of the flights or appearances violated any NATO sovereignty, but their appearance was a form of power projection. But the question of why the Russians were behaving like this is never asked.

The article quickly moves on to say that the United States has taken steps to “allay such fears” in Europe and “preposition tanks, artillery and other military equipment” in Baltic states. The article devolves into a finger-pointing pastiche that blames the Russian “government’s propaganda machine” for convincing Russians that the heightened tensions between East and West are all America’s fault. The authors credit Putin’s popularity in Russia (some 89 percent of voters elected him in the last election) is due to the propagandistic notion that he is “standing up against an American threat.” President Obama is said to face a difficult decision, having to preposition military artillery in order not to leave “allies vulnerable” before a “regime” willing to use force to “advance its territorial, strategic and political ambitions.” It then blames the “head of [Putin’s] security council” for repeating the “false story” that the Ukrainian conflict was instigated by Washington. The article concludes, or merely reiterates, that Putin is “playing

with fire.”

This is an excellent example of the technique of offering consequences but not causes. Thomas Paine famously accused Edmund Burke of doing just this in his polemic against the French Revolution, citing actions of French citizens but not their government instigations. Removing causes from the picture permits the establishment authors to characterize the U.S. and Europe as innocent bystanders acted upon by some perfidious foreign force. In fact, the reverse is often true, hence the need to eliminate first causes from the story. By whitewashing preceding actions of the United States, the authors strengthen its victim status. By transferring the responsibility for aggression to Russia, they further demonize a foreign power already held in suspicion by the average reader.

Looking into causes would require delving into the broken agreements between Russia and the United States after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. It would mean examining the sordid history of NATO’s eastward march in the 1990s. It would mean investigating the circumstances of the Ukrainian coup in 2014. Doing that would reveal the fingerprints of imperial action behind nearly every provocation between East and West since the end of the Cold War. The authors know better. They should. Their jobs depend on it.

How it serves the oligarchic corporate elite: Russia and China are the major threats to U.S. economic hegemony. They are together moving fast to kick-start the “New Silk Road” project that promises to be the economic engine of the world economy in the 21st century. Corporate America is loath to be left out and the American state is using its military muscle to wedge itself into the picture. Creating reasons to disrupt Russian economic growth and siphon off its financial wealth in troublesome border conflicts will theoretically help stall the swift advent of the Silk Road.

Nuclear Iran

A July 20th article entitled, “Nuclear Deal Could Transform Iran” produced a similar steam of uninformed drivel. After making a few laudatory remarks on the benefits of the accord, it notes that the sanctions which may be lifted under the agreement have led to a “severe deterioration in the ability of the Iranian people to pursue their economic and social rights,” according to the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran. At this point it might be noted how entirely unnecessary and actually criminal these deleterious sanctions were. The implication throughout is that it is the Iranian regime that has selfishly permitted these sanctions to occur thanks to its stubborn refusal to relinquish its path to extreme violence (nuclear weapons).

The authors then note, regrettably, that this nuclear deal alone will not stem the tide of Iranian troublemaking in the Middle East. The West will have to work hard “to resolve the challenge that Iran poses to stability in the Middle East.” It continues, “The reality is that the Iranian regime will only

truly change its behavior after a democratic transition, where more accountable Iranian leaders will assume power and play a more constructive role among the community of nations.” Hopes are raised for a resurgent pro-democracy movement freed from the scourge of sanctions.

Both of the above scenarios remove the chief instigator from the story. In fact, it is the United States that has applied damaging sanctions to Iran without cause. The Iranians did nothing but exercise their rights under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). There is no evidence it was pursuing a nuclear weapon. If the Iranian people suffered from the sanctions, it was at the hands of the West, not Tehran. And it is the U.S. that has largely destabilized the Middle East through its consecutive invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Yet Iranian support for Shia political actors through the region is presented as the destabilizing force in the region. This support is only destabilizing in the context of American and Saudi animosity toward Shia politics, notably Shia independence.

Again, America is pure as the driven snow, drawn into a parlous conflict by its sense of nobility and desire to help its allies. Iran is the hostile power to be constrained. It is precisely the same construct that is used with Russia: portray the aggressor as the victim and the victim as the aggressor.

How it serves the oligarchic corporate elite: Iran is a long-standing enemy of the U.S. state, ever since the Islamic Revolution overthrew the torture regime of the Washington-installed Shah. Ever since the U.S. has been seeking means by which to integrate Tehran back within the purview of American power. Given the dying U.S. economy, the numerous debt bubbles (derivatives, credit card, student loan, etc.) bound to burst, the quagmire of Syria and Ukraine, Washington is in no position to take on Tehran. Better to temporize while at the same time disarming Iran and creating an ever-more intrusive framework by which to implicate the Islamic government when Washington is freed to readdress Iran’s lack of subservience. It may also profitably use Iranian energy as a wedge with which to separate Russia from Europe, an ongoing Western project in accord with the ‘permit-no-new-rivals’ diktats of the Wolfowitz foreign policy plan outlined for the Clinton administration in the early 1990s.

Unstoppable ISIS

Finally, an August 3rd article titled “Syrian rebels backed

by the U.S. will have air cover, source says” produces a third false narrative of American foreign policy. The thrust of the article is that “Syrian rebels backed by the United States will now have air cover if they come under attack.” The piece relates the al-Nusra Front attack on the 30th division and members of the New Syria Force—both trained and armed by the Department of Defense—as a first instance of need for air support from the anti-ISIS coalition. The tired trope of “U.S.-backed moderate rebels” is unfurled once again to ensure readers that Washington has no contact with evil al-Qaeda or ISIS factions, a fact already demonstrated on multiple occasions. Likewise, administration officials declined “to get into the rules of engagement,” as though this were strictly the purview of the State Department.

Once more, we see the same portrait—America doing their damndest to defend the fragile communities of the Middle East, beset as they are on all sides by frothing Arab Islamists and demonic regimes with no regard for their own populations. Were the facts consulted, readers would learn a few quick points. First, that providing air cover to U.S.-trained jihadists constitutes an invasion of a sovereign country twice over—on the ground and in the air. It is astonishing that this fact is so scrupulously avoided throughout the piece. As if international law, U.N. Charter, and the Nuremburg Trials did not exist or had never occurred. Readers might also come to know that ISIS is regional scourge



WOLF BLITZER. PHOTO: CNN.

being built and sustained thanks to the jihadist highway established by Turkey that permits the steady flow of weapons, funds and fighters across the Turkish border into rebel-torn Syria. Turkey is ostensibly America’s ally in the so-called fight against ISIS. Readers would also learn that the weapons that wind up in extremist hands largely flow from allies Saudi Arabia and Qatar, to whom the U.S. sells its arsenals knowing full well where they end up. Likewise, ISIS itself is largely composed of former Ba’athist military men with a grudge, having had their army dissolved by temporary Iraqi Viceroy Paul Bremer more than a decade ago. Thus observers would recognize that ISIS is a consequence of Western intervention and could easily be cut off from its lifeline of jihadists, weapons, and funds if only the West simply desired as much. This knowledge would call into question whether the West really wanted to destroy ISIS, a useful line of inquiry.

How it serves the oligarchic corporate elite: The U.S. cannot influence or control the flow of Middle Eastern and Central Asian energy resources without an active presence in

the region. Primarily a military presence that can destabilize, divide, and diminish the capacities of any potential regional rival such as Syria or a Shia-dominated Iraq to pose roadblocks on the path to U.S. hegemony. ISIS is a terribly convenient excuse to reengage the region at scale, and to permit allies such as Turkey to act as a proxy destabilizer.

Correctives & Conclusions

So there you have it. In a span of a few weeks, in these and countless other seemingly benign articles, establishment media has thoroughly demonized Russia, Iran, and presented ISIS as a justification for forceful reentry into the Middle East. It will soon employ the ISIS alibi for an extended stay in Afghanistan. Within the American mind, these countries blend into a half-conscious vision of evil against which are ranged the standard bearers of Western liberty. That we swallow this poison pill is a testimony less to the effectiveness of media propaganda than to our own credulity. And perhaps as well to our cultural history as a nation steeped in the oppositional dynamics of a Manichean worldview, in which Good and Evil are unmistakable and locked in permanent conflict.

All this is not to forget the myriad faults of the other actors in the conflict. Russia and Iran and Syria and ISIS are all crude and corrupt in their own fashion. Russia's Boris Yeltsin sold off his nation's patrimony and opened its gates to the wolves of predatory capitalism that wrecked a generation of Russian hopes. The federation's wars on Chechnya demonstrate that it can be a typically and brutally repressive state when threatened by independence. The inflexible ethics of Tehran subject citizens to a wide range of repressive measures, religious minorities in particular, while Syria is indiscriminate in its attacks on the so-called rebels, sweeping up innocent civilians in the general bloodbath. And ISIS needs no corrective. Sordid, murderous, delusional, monotheistic, exclusionary, misogynistic, homophobic, illiterate. A thesaurus of such adjectives would barely do them justice.

But we cannot edit our own culpability out of the story, as CNN does. The U.S. is a champion destabilizer in the region. We have done so not from innate noble desires to protect the vulnerable, much as the construct of American exceptionalism admonishes us. Governments act out of naked self-interest. America's self-interest, as defined by the oligarchic corporate elite, is their own outsized avarice. The false image of the U.S. as innocent bystander needs to be torn from its scaffolding and replaced with an unflinching critique of our own actions in the world, one in which the rapacious greed of America's parasitic oligarchs is finally exposed for the slow-motion corporate coup d'état it actually is. **CP**

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Prospects for a New Nepal Life and Politics After the Big Quakes

BY BARBARA NIMRI AZIZ

June 30, 2015

Earthquake reconstruction will dominate politics in Nepal for the immediate future. But Nepal's problems are far deeper than anything humanitarian relief might rectify. Indeed promises of billions of dollars in more aid could actually sink Nepal deeper into a crisis of democracy, dependence and corruption.

Not long before earthquakes struck Nepal in April and May, a wide spectrum of its population had mobilized, finally, to put an ultimatum to their government. The demand:--draw up a constitution as you have been charged, and prepare for an election.

For more than seven years the country's fledgling democracy has been frustrated by squabbling political parties and weak leadership. More than 30 parties are registered in Nepal, five of which are major, although alliances of minor players play a gadfly role, thwarting policy decisions by the majors.

Nepal has no elected representation, neither in parliament nor at the municipal level in Village Development Committees. (VDCs would theoretically assess needs and administer assistance.) The multi-party cabinet is successively headed by prime ministers unable to rise above their party interest and political bickering.

A nationwide strike was scheduled for mid-April and organizers expected mass protests and possible violence.

The threat fizzled; nothing happened. But it was not because of the earthquake on April 25th a few weeks later. Today, no one can say precisely why the strike didn't materialize. But in the weeks following the first seismic upheaval and the second on May 12, no Nepali could deny that their country was leaderless and its administration paralyzed.

A constituent assembly (CA) with 601 members created after the last election in 2007 is assigned the task of drawing up a constitution to embody the ideals of the new republic and steer its hard won democracy. This mission has consistently eluded the CA which meanwhile functions as a quasi-parliament, with members devolving into competing party interests when faced with anything consequential. Deadlines for the promulgation of a constitution pass without progress. Ministerial and other powerful posts are assigned according to party quotas, or compromised by threats from competing heavyweights. In a recent example of this anarchy, the party that exercises control of the Ministry of Tourism removed the seated minister and appointed a new one with no input from the prime minister or the CA.

Without a constitution there's no national structure (e.g.

states or provinces within which voting constituencies would be defined), no clarity on the powers of elected officials, from the president to VDC chairs, and no rules regarding who can stand for election and who can vote.

The earthquake has shamed Nepal's leadership. In the ensuing humanitarian crisis the nation firstly needed firm, moral guidance, and secondly a responsible administration to manage emergency services and reconstruction. It had neither.

The lives of hundreds of thousands were suddenly in jeopardy; the entire nation was traumatized and whether or not they were directly impacted by the catastrophe everyone sought assurance and attention. With roads impassable, whole towns crushed, many hospitals, schools, and offices unusable, Nepal faced an unprecedented crisis. The Nepal Army and police forces which are traditionally independent of civil governance sprung into action, taking over air services, drawing on military medical resources and working with foreign rescue teams. They saved many lives and reassured distraught citizens that someone cared.

Even though parts of the capital including some government buildings were damaged by the quake, conditions were not so catastrophic to account for the government's incapacity to mobilize assistance. While hundreds of thousands slept in the streets or fled the city and security forces attended to rescues, concrete action by the administration was feeble. The limit of Nepal's government was shamefully apparent. Instead of acting, leaders convened and quantified; ministers announced compensation for victims, cancelled exams and classes, and released tallies of damaged structures and human casualties along with estimated reconstruction costs.

Perhaps due to the ubiquitous use of cell phones across Nepal, details of damaged rural localities were transmitted to the capital and published (although the figures were unconfirmed). As news of heavy damage outside the valley reached Kathmandu's middle class, thousands of able-bodied citizens mobilized resources and delivered help to hard hit villages. Private companies came forward to help. Foreign-based Nepali communities sent funds and supplies through

personal channels inside the country. Within a week international agencies set up relief distribution centers, joined by local NGOs who shifted their attention to emergency services. Those actions further pointed up the failure of Nepal's leaders. When they declared that all donations be channeled to a PM's earthquake fund, response was weak.

Related to the dysfunction of the central authorities, local VDC's were crippled and supplies distributed through official channels were subject to party politics. For example, individual party functionaries somehow secured relief supplies-- some shipped from India overland, some commandeered at the airport—and distributed through party channels to their own members. Take the case of a relief delivery from an Indian source to Lumbini, the historic Buddhist birthplace in Nepal;

when objections were raised that Lumbini was unaffected by the quake and requests made to direct the shipment to Gorkha or Sindapulchowk districts where people were in desperate need, the donor refused and supplies were reportedly returned to their source. Another account describes how a well known party official (a member of the Constituent



YOUNG GIRL AMID RUINS IN KATHMANDU. PHOTO: UNHRC.

Assembly) independently arranged for a truckload of relief (reportedly illegally diverted from an aid convoy arriving from India) to a lightly affected area where her own supporters resided. Accounts from different quarters told of desperate villagers fighting over supplies which, when they did arrive, were not distributed according to needs.

It may have been at this point when some Nepalese, all staunch republicans who would never call themselves royalists, began to seek an alternative to Prime Minister Sushil Koirala and his cabinet. One possibility:-- the Nepal Army might declare a state of emergency and temporarily assume control. Another option was returning the deposed king. Rumors that the former monarch was in India implied that he may have been exploring Indian support for a comeback. For decades India has played a key role here, either backing incumbent kings, or his opponents, or other political aspirants.

By early June two factors precipitated renewed calls for action. One was growing intolerance for the dysfunctional Constituent Assembly; Nepal's governance crisis had to be

addressed. The other was the approaching summit of earthquake reconstruction donors; their generosity might be conditional on confidence in the leadership and in political stability. (A military takeover, even temporarily, was out of the question.)

These factors are linked by the role India plays in Nepal: India is the primary donor and facilitator of relief and development² and it's unarguably a player in any change in Nepal's leadership. There is hardly any political figure – Marxist, Maoist, Congress or royalist – who did not study in India or live there (often in political exile) and enjoy India's financial support. Although most Nepalese openly express resentment of India for its economic, political and cultural domination of their land, no alternative can be imagined.

On June 13th Nepal's five main party leaders announced a unity deal to urgently draw up a constitution and move swiftly towards an election. Committees set to work preparing a document based on sixteen points agreed on by the coalition. Although much skepticism is voiced in the Nepalese press, many are hopeful of progress. One positive outcome of the earthquake will be the production of the long awaited constitution, to start. Citizens believe that once this obstacle is breached, an election will follow and Nepal's democracy will become functional.

Earthquake relief could bury Nepal in yet another layer of political debris

Commitments from the donors' conference will be generous. Physical damage from the quake is limited, and manageable; hospitals, schools and temples will be rebuilt; the victims are finite and can be helped to regain some normality within a year; trekking routes and hotels essential for tourists' pleasures can easily be repaired too.

There's little doubt that the world will provide Nepal with abundant aid, with many charities and agencies competing to help Nepal reclaim its heritage and reawaken its renowned charming personality. International support will also be forthcoming because Nepal is an experienced player in the game of global development politics

Nevertheless, Nepal frankly does not need more charity. The country is already overburdened with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of every color and shape, all there to help. Indeed the plethora of charities and technical experts at work there may explain how government incompetence continues year after year and why corruption is endemic. Government responsibilities are taken up by NGOs and foreign assistance programs which build Nepal's roads and bridges, educate its promising youths, protect its women, teach medicine and tourist management, winemaking and tree pruning, install hydro-electric plants and guard forests. If an NGO teaches women pre-natal care, why should the health department do it? If an NGO promotes fruit production, why should the ministry of agriculture?

From the earliest days of earthquake relief activities, some citizens asked if charities were not assigning an unreasonable portion of their budgets for staff costs and at the same time publicizing their benevolence. Those questions may be based on long experience with Nepal's charity industry.

Uncontested is the deluge of data accompanying all development operations. The UN-Nepal's tracking (on May 12th, eighteen days into the crisis) of earthquake assistance is dizzying. Hundreds of agencies working to assist the needy can be reassuring, but bear in mind as you peruse these documents that each agency is obliged to quantify its work too. (These reports will become much denser in preparation for the donor summit.)

"Nepal is an NGO farm", said an agency official summing up the state of affairs in 2010. Yes, regular NGO presence in Nepal is an industry. Although as far as I can determine, this industry is not included in any evaluation of the economy. Compared with remittances from the estimated 3.5 million low-skilled Nepalese laborers working in Malaysia and Arab Gulf states --the history of migrant economy itself is a focus of NGO studies-- NGO and iNGO-generated activities could constitute an equally significant part of Nepal's economy, certainly more than tourism. Why is this industry not factored in?

A glimpse at Nepal's charity industry

Estimates of the number service agencies in Nepal range from 20,000-34,000, with funds for their operations largely originating abroad. With a population of 28 million, this translates into one NGO (or iNGO) for roughly every 1,000 citizens. A leading researcher in the country remarked to me a decade ago that "Nepal never refuses an offer of aid whether or not it is needed". This principle has become more entrenched since then.

While the putative targets of these services are impoverished and needy people, along with vulnerable forests, rivers and mountains, the immediate beneficiaries are those agencies' staffs (expatriate and local) and contractors. (Foreign experts are joined by thousands of capable, motivated Nepali graduates.) Granted, over four decades that the industry has mushroomed, health services improved, literacy increased, and roads and electricity reached many rural areas. Nevertheless Nepal remains near the bottom of nations ranked according to development indicators.

Given the extraordinary attention to Nepal's migrant labor industry, we should compare its benefits and growth (through remittances from laborers working overseas) to Nepali families receiving services from NGOs. Which offers the most sustained long term benefits NGO employment impacts elsewhere: it's so lucrative that trained individuals often abjure government service, including in education, to take up NGO jobs, perhaps with hopes to enter the international arena. NGO personnel constitute a distinct class; they are

the patrons of shopping malls, clubs and restaurants, rental properties and private schools. In turn they employ an attendant class of cooks, gardeners, drivers, etc. in their homes and offices. From this lower skilled group emerge some of 1,500 laborers who depart daily in search of better wages overseas.

June's International Conference on Nepal's Reconstruction in Kathmandu has reportedly pledged 4.4 billion dollars. Undoubtedly this will thicken and expand NGO activity for the foreseeable future.

Buried inside data

Apart from how increased aid will impact governance, the skimming off of talent, aid dependence and endemic corruption, I suggest a serious, more fundamental condition exists here which supports this economic dependence and exploitation: it is a growing preoccupation with data and data collection, not intelligence data but data generated by development bureaucracies. Nepal is in danger of being buried in information overload, an endemic condition highlighted in the rush to quantify the recent earthquake.

"We want to apply for grants. But first we need data," explained a Nepali expatriate concerned with attracting foreign assistance. Perhaps she was too candid with me. But I interpret her simple formula as more than NGO and iNGO jargon; it's symptomatic of what I suggest is a "culture of quantification" that pervades many spheres of Nepali life. Data accumulation has become a behavior pattern that now wraps the country in a web of inexhaustible facts.

From the earliest days after April's earthquake, along with photos and testimonials, Nepal's newspapers printed pages of data generated by government ministries and private and professional bodies. Random examples extracted from sources I perused between May 4 and May 12, 2015 illustrate this:

- Tribhuvan International Airport (by May 10) received 494 rescue related flights, with cargo and charter trips coming from 38 countries: 87 from China, 42 from US, 32 from Israel, 19 from Ukraine, 18 from Algeria, etc.
- 129 sniffer dogs arrived from 34 foreign countries...
- One artist reports a loss of her artwork of 2,500,000.00 NR (Nepali rupees; 100 = \$US 1.00).
- 3 bulldozers are deployed on the Araniko Road (main hwy to Tibet/China).
- 24.8 million NR and \$US 2,879.00 are retrieved from the debris around the collapsed Bank of Kathmandu.
- (by May 10, barely 14 days after Day One) Nepal-based consulting firm Siddharthinc offered an economic impact assessment of reduced GNI (gross national income), calculating growth rate for FY 2015 dropping from 4.6 to 4.2. and reporting economic losses in Dhading (47%), Kavre (34%), Rasuwa (73.4%), and the other 10 most affected districts. (Nepal has 75 districts nationwide.)
- The Sagarmatha (Everest) Pollution Control Committee office reports licenses for summit attempts were granted to

358 climbers of 42 teams for Mt. Everest and 12 teams of 118 climbers for Mt. Lhotse... noting how many million rupees the ministry collected from these licenses.

- May 10. Together with Nepalese Army aviation, pooled aircraft of the Chinese, Indian and USA, had lifted 3,246 civilians to safety and delivered approximately 615 tonnes of life saving relief to remote areas. Foreign Military Medical Teams treated 20,188 people in various locations.
- From foreign embassies (e.g. Malaysia, Qatar)... a report that 700,000 Nepalese workers were granted leave to help their families.
- 10 days after the first quake we have a notice that "12,483 classrooms in 4,389 schools are destroyed". (The only source of these data is a government ministry spokesman.)
- The day following the May 12 earthquake, it's reported that one third of the 28,400 books at Kaiser National Library are damaged.
- May 10, it's announced that 400 engineers from the Department of Roads have been dispatched to inspect bridges; (not to be outdone) the Ministry of Housing reports it has deputed 327 engineers to inspect homes.
- Newspapers list the daily number of surgeries, general and major, at each of Kathmandu's main hospitals; papers also report the number of bodies taken to Kathmandu's main burning ghat at Pashupati --e.g. 249 bodies April 27; on May 6, 10 of the 43 cremated were quake victims.
- Human casualties--dead and injured-- are updated daily, as are the number of homes destroyed and partially damaged, with buildings given as much prominence as the human toll.

Perhaps these details demonstrate the efficiency of cell phones across Nepal. However useful and however accurate they may or may not be these figures demonstrate a national penchant for quantification. One asks: how, by May 7th, anyone could assess the number of private homes damaged in these far-flung villages at "200,552, with 186,285 partly damaged" when according to press sources, effective government assistance in most damaged areas was not yet underway? (Paralleling quantification in the press are relief reports by Nepal's United Nations office cited above.)

Are these data presented to show the public that something is being done? Are they proof of the scale of damage? Are they meant to provide a scientific basis for foreign assistance? Or, do they assure donors of the competence of teams on the ground?

They serve all these aims. But I argue that this data collection is itself a language belonging to a "development culture" that may serve itself more than its putative beneficiaries. For a country ranked so low in social and economic indices of quality of life, one finds an extraordinary abundance of books and reports documenting Nepal: coffee table photo albums, ethnographies, calendars of religious festivals, temple architectural plans, lexicons for Nepal's multitude of languages,

demographic and ecology reports, trekking maps and river and road surveys abound. Most are in English but Nepal has an abundant library of Nepali literature. Moreover, since free speech was won after 1990 and expanded following creation of the republic in 2007, citizens can follow news and events in a plethora of daily and weekly newspapers in English and Nepali. Democracy also fostered the founding of almost three hundred local radio stations across Nepal.

Examining material available from the extensive private library of my hosts in Kathmandu, I wondered if Nepal's population of 28 million (that of New York and New Jersey combined) might be one of the most intensely documented nations globally. This is more alarming given Nepal's reputation as an inaccessible region, a mysterious land of monastic retreats and silent yogic practitioners.

Researching details from among the 124 recognized languages of Nepal for an earlier story, I consulted the latest survey of Nepal's population:-- the Norwegian-funded four volume "Social Inclusion Atlas of Nepal". This 2014 publication is a dazzling, graphic and numerical tabulation of Nepal's population in each of the country's 75 districts. Volume one identifies all Nepalese by caste and ethnic groups (each with their subgroups), and by religion and language. A second volume measures and compares health and education; a third, household facilities and occupation—again with differences noted from district to district, distinguishing among the multitude of language and ethnic groups in each. It's comprehensive but hardly definitive since today Nepal's population is in a highly dynamic phase. Thus, this survey provides the basis for migration studies, another field of documentation busily quantifying labor migration patterns within Nepal and to foreign markets. One among many books devoted to this is *Migrant Workers' Access to Justice at Home* with more pages devoted to its 396 footnotes than to data analysis. It draws on statistics from World Bank, UNIFEM, Nepal Central Bureau of Statistics, Centre for the Study of Labour, Amnesty International, International Organization for Migration, and Nepal's Ministry of Women and Human Rights Commission among other institutions.

Is proliferation interfering with real democracy?

Perhaps Nepal's 30+ political parties and its dozen daily newspapers is also an expression of the belief that abundant documentation is an expression of democracy and achievement, namely that 'more' demonstrates genuine involvement. Just as Nepal has charged 601 people with crafting a constitution. That task becomes more difficult by the month because Nepal has experienced a surge in identity politics. New ethnicities and quasi constituencies emerge demanding representation: high and low caste, hill farmers and lowland residents, each of the language groups, and each religious sect. If (low caste) dalit have a quota, why not (high born) Bahun as well? If Gurung language speakers have a quota, why not

Thakali speakers, and Rai speakers and Newari speakers? If there is to be a Muslim quota, why not Buddhist, and why not from each of the Buddhist sects as well? Competition among so many 'identities' for representation in the constitution has made the concept of federalism unwieldy, and thus far impossible to resolve. Constantly emerging constituencies are in part responsible for the proliferation of competing political parties.

One wonders: Is the current free-for-all at the political level somehow a manifestation of an fundamental economic free-for-all that prevails across Nepal. **CP**

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Adventures in Xenophobia

Legacies of the Chinese Exclusion Act

By DAVID MACARAY

Even a cursory look at the legislative history of the U.S. will reveal that the harshest, most restrictive, and unequivocally "racist" anti-immigration law ever passed by Congress was the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. What this remarkable piece of legislation sought to do was exactly what its name implies: Exclude all Chinese laborers from entering the United States.

One can trace its pro forma antecedents as far back as 1790 (a mere three years after ratification of the Constitution), the year the U.S. adopted its first set of "immigration rules," which laid out the process by which any person (more accurately, any "free white person") could apply for U.S. citizenship. Basically, all it required to become a citizen in 1790 was two years of residency.

Every country in the world that recognizes geographical "boundaries" (wouldn't that be every country?) is eventually going to have to come up with an appropriate set of criteria defining what citizenship is. Either a person "belongs" to a particular country or he doesn't. In the case of the United States, the criteria covering who "belonged" here were first laid out in 1790.

For an examination of the Chinese Exclusion Act, one needs to move from the East Coast to the West Coast and jump ahead more than half a century in order to focus on the 8-year span stretching from 1848 to 1855—the years of the California Gold Rush and the period that represented the first large-scale immigration of Chinese workers to North America.

The California Gold Rush. It's no exaggeration to say that the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill (located in Coloma, California, approximately 40 miles east of Sacramento), in 1848, changed everything.

The discovery of the Mother Lode led not only to the migration to California of an estimated 300,000 people, mainly men, from all over the country, it also led to a huge influx of itinerant Chinese laborers seeking employment. That set the stage for all that followed. Alas, it also led to something far more cataclysmic than racial discrimination: The decimation California's Native Americans.

The state with the largest number of tribes isn't one of the Great Plains states or Oklahoma. It was (and is) California. And in the mid-nineteenth century with 300,000 additional people now scouring the mountains and valleys, looking to strike it rich, California's Native Americans were seen as both an obstacle and a threat. Accordingly, they were murdered in unprecedented numbers.

That said, the discovery of gold also brought with it some benefits. For one, it led to California being granted statehood in record time. Typically, that administrative process took a while, but with so much potential wealth just waiting to be incorporated into the U.S., everyone agreed that the bureaucratic rails could be greased.

On December 5, 1948, President James K. Polk announced to Congress that gold had indeed been discovered near Sacramento. And without having spent even one day as a territory, California, the former Mexican possession ceded to the U.S. just two years earlier under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, was put on the fast track. In 1850 it became the 31st state in the union.

Once the Gold Rush ended, and prospecting was reduced to the hardscrapple enterprise it always had been, these Chinese workers—who had never been “accepted,” only “tolerated”—were suddenly regarded not only as an annoyance but as a scourge. As reviled as the Indians were, the Chinese were considered even more loathsome because, unlike Indians, they were seen as competitors.

Chinese laborers were forcibly driven out of the gold fields. Many of them fled to the cities where they found low-wage employment as kitchen or laundry workers, while others landed jobs on public works projects, including construction of the First Transcontinental Railroad, which began in 1863 and ended with the driving of the ceremonial “golden spike” at Promontory Summit, Utah, in 1869.

In any event, by the 1870s, the economic landscape had changed for the worse. With the country in the throes of the post-Civil War recession, Chinese laborers, widely reputed to be willing to work for “coolie” wages, were now scorned. To be sure, this hostility was partly generated by old-fashioned racial bigotry and ignorance, but also by the not-altogether irrational fear that Chinese workers would “ruin” the job market.

It was an ugly time. In the early 1870s, a fellow named Denis Kearney, a pompous, self-styled labor leader, formed The Workingmen's Party of California, a singularly one-dimensional political entity whose entire platform boiled down to getting rid of all Chinese laborers. Indeed, the group's evocative, if primitive, slogan was, “The Chinese Must Go!”

As virulently racist as this political party was, it was not only accepted by the general (white) public, it enjoyed the support of California's governor at the time, John Bigler (a former Ambassador to Chile, appointed by President Buchanan), who shared the Workingmen's fear that Chinese immigrants would eventually drive down wages to the point where workers couldn't earn a “white man's livelihood.”

This odd juxtaposition is worth noting. On one side, you had a ragged, populist (yes, openly racist and xenophobic, but still “populist”) political party aligned with the staid and Establishment-minded Democratic governor of California in calling for the expulsion of Chinese laborers.

And on the other side you had California employers clinging to the seemingly enlightened view that we should accede to what President Lincoln called “the better angels of our nature,” and allow altruism and human compassion to guide us. In short, any able-bodied man who wished to work—no matter what his national origin—should be allowed to do so. Power to the people!

Of course, that was hogwash. There was nothing remotely enlightened about it. To California's employers, immigrant labor meant lower wages, and lower wages meant fatter profits. That's why, despite demonstrations and public protests, few of these business owners—even those aligned with Governor Bigler—were inclined to complain about the influx of “coolie” labor.

Which brings us to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (founded in 1912), long a bastion of knee-jerk patriotism and Republican conservatism. To the surprise and horror of many, the Chamber of Commerce has sided with the most liberal wing of the Democratic Party in advocating “free and open immigration.” It's true. As ideologically counter-intuitive as it seems, the Chamber wants to throw open the door to Mexico and all points South. Power to the people!

That it would come down on the side of liberals in regard to immigration shouldn't surprise anyone. After all, the Chamber is nothing if not a booster for increased profits, which is why it has supported every anti-worker trade agreement to come down the pike (including NAFTA and TPP), and why it advocates open immigration. Anything to suppress the workers' standard of living.

Back to California. As a run-up to passage of the Exclusion Act, and years before the establishment of either Kearney's Workingmen's Party, or the founding, in 1876, in Sacramento—close to the site of Sutter's Mill—of an organization boldly calling itself the “Supreme Order of Caucasians” (guess what its platform was), Californian had already placed



ANTI-CHINESE EDITORIAL CARTOON, SAN FRANCISCO, 1892.

Chinese laborers squarely in its crosshairs.

As early as 1858, the California legislature made it unlawful for any member of the “Chinese or Mongolian races” to enter the state. Although this blatantly discriminatory law was struck down by the State Supreme Court (1862), it was a clear indication of the tenor of the times.

Whether driven by xenophobia, economic panic or a mixture of both, anti-Chinese hatred was now loose upon the land. Responding to the alarming increase in violence directed at Chinese immigrants in California cities, the U.S. Congress, in 1878, attempted to pass an omnibus version of an “exclusionary” law, but it was vetoed by President Hayes, who considered it too vague and transparently racist.

In 1875, the U.S. Supreme Court (in the case of *Henderson v. Mayor of New York*) sweepingly ruled that all state laws governing immigration were unconstitutional. It was a landmark decision. The high court declared that from this point forward immigration law would fall exclusively within the jurisdiction of the federal government. To California, the Chinese question now transcended simple immigration. It had morphed into a “states rights” issue.

In accordance with the Supreme Court’s ruling, Congress passed the 1875 Page Act, the first federal immigration law in U.S. history, one that specifically barred immigrants who would be considered “undesirable.” Among those classified as “undesirable” were any Asian male who came to the U.S. as a forced laborer, any Asian woman who intended to engage

in prostitution, and all people who were regarded as “convicts” in their own countries.

Four years later, in 1879, California got creative. It adopted a new Constitution, one intended to both skirt the 1875 Henderson decision and address the Chinese problem. Accordingly, one of its chief provisions wasn’t so much about “immigration” per se, as it was about residential rights and employment. It gave the state government the final say as to who was allowed to reside within the state’s boundaries and who wasn’t (as if it were a “human zoning” matter).

So hostile was California toward Chinese immigration, its new Constitution banned the Chinese from seeking employment with any California corporation, or with any municipal, county or state agency. It also stated that “no native of China” would ever be allowed to vote in the state of California. That provision remained on the books all the way until 1926.

Even after the landmark Chinese Exclusion Act became federal law, California continued passing anti-Chinese statutes, many of which were found to be unconstitutional. One example was San Francisco’s Bingham Ordinance of 1890, a forced segregation measure that was eventually struck down in federal court.

The Bingham Ordinance didn’t pull any punches. San Francisco knew what it wanted, and Bingham was the way to get it. This ordinance required all Chinese to move into a specific area of the city within six months or face imprisonment. Anyone who wonders how San Francisco’s “Chinatown” came

into existence, this is how.

Besides being viewed largely as a response to “immigration fatigue” and the alarming levels of civil unrest in California and other Western states, the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act can also be interpreted as a natural point in the evolution of anti-Asian domestic policy. Indeed, the Act followed in the footsteps of revisions made, in 1880, to the Burlingame-Seward Treaty of 1868.

Briefly, the 1868 Burlingame-Seward Treaty not only cemented formal and amicable relations between the U.S. and China, it also enhanced that relationship by acknowledging China’s right to “*eminent domain*” over all of its territory, and by awarding China “*most favored nation*” status. It also ever-so-cautiously encouraged Chinese immigration.

Although California was in turmoil over what it saw as a “Chinese invasion,” the U.S. government (and China) had their eyes on the bigger picture. The Burlingame-Seward Treaty was ratified in Washington D.C. in 1868, and approved by Peking in 1869—coincidentally, the same year the First Transcontinental Railroad was completed, the Knights of Labor were founded, and the first “professional” baseball team (the Cincinnati Red Stockings) was formed.

While the 1880 revisions to Burlingame-Seward (revisions ordered by President Hayes) maintained the treaty’s general theme by reaffirming America’s promise to dutifully enforce the rights and due process of those Chinese immigrants already here, they did make a significant alteration. The revisions suspended (but didn’t prohibit) Chinese immigration.

The revisions were simultaneously both profound and a trivial, an example of one of those very delicate diplomatic tweaks that only the parties to the treaty can fully appreciate. In any case, two years later, any adjustments to Burlingame-Seward, trivial or otherwise, became irrelevant. The Exclusion Act reversed the entire treaty.

The Chinese Exclusion Act was signed into law by President Chester A. Arthur, on May 6, 1882. In 1880, the population of the U.S. (then consisting of 38 states) was listed at 50,155,783. The three largest urban areas were, in order, New York City, Philadelphia and Brooklyn (which didn’t become a NYC borough until 1898). Between the years 1880 and 1890, more than 5.2 million immigrants, mainly Europeans, entered the country.

It’s been stated countless times that the U.S. is a “nation of immigrants.” Obviously, unless your ancestors were Native Americans, you had to have come from somewhere else. That reminder has been expressed on so many occasions, it has become a cliché. And while it’s undeniably true that the U.S. is a “nation of immigrants,” it’s also undeniably true that it’s a nation of “reaction” to immigrants.

Even after passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act—even after all Chinese were barred from entering—West Coast racial hatred persisted. As Jeffrey St. Clair has noted, a group of Chinese workers was brutally murdered in 1887, in

Oregon’s Hell’s Canyon, on the Snake River. In fact, in 2005, this notorious site, in deference to Chinese-Americans, was renamed “Chinese Massacre Cove.”

As useful (indeed, necessary) as immigrant labor has been throughout American history, immigration has, traditionally, been resisted, resented and feared. Not surprisingly, that response has been largely a function of simple arithmetic. A few hundred non-white laborers working among us is fine, but let there be tens of thousands of them—let the area be teeming with them—and we have a problem.

Ironically, a common complaint about immigrants is that they stubbornly resist being assimilated into the general population, that they are standoffish and reluctant, obviously preferring to live with “their own kind” rather than becoming an integral part of the culture.

Even ignoring the obvious fact that newly arrived immigrants, sensing trepidation or hostility in their “hosts,” will naturally be more comfortable among familiar faces, people ignore the fact that immigrants (re San Francisco’s Bingham Ordinance) have been the victims of statutory and *de facto* segregation, basically being funneled into what amounted to “ghettos.”

Arithmetic aside, there has also been much speculation as to why the Chinese were singled out for such explicit and wholesale discrimination. One theory suggests that (besides being “recognizable” in a way the Irish, Germans and Poles were not) because China, unlike Europe, didn’t have a history of self-determination or defiant social activism, the Chinese were an easy target.

In short, their own history worked against them. China had no Magna Carta, no proud tradition of collectivism or labor unions, no history of embracing Lockean political philosophy, no record of peasant mobs storming the palace and assassinating the King and Queen, all in the name of establishing a “People’s Government.” Granted, Mao changed all that in 1949, but in the 1880s, rural civil disobedience on a grand scale was alien to them.

Conversely, newly arrived Europeans who were discriminated against didn’t go down without a fight. Irish Catholics, who began emigrating to the U.S. in tremendous numbers following the Great Potato Famine, may have been systematically stereotyped and victimized once they arrived, but they fought back with impressive fury.

Interestingly, speaking to that point, the very first strike in American history occurred in 1619, in the Jamestown, Virginia colony. Remarkably, that’s more than 150 years before the U.S. was even a country. A group of Polish carpenters went on strike in response to being told they wouldn’t be allowed to vote in a colonial election because, technically, they weren’t actual “residents,” just independent contractors.

These master craftsmen hadn’t come all the way from Poland to the New World to be treated disrespectfully. Accordingly, they refused to work unless they were given the

same rights as any other Jamestown resident. After due consideration, the town fathers wisely reversed themselves and allowed the Poles to vote.

It will surprise many to learn just how sophisticated “labor collectivism” was in colonial America. Check out the timeline of American labor protests, and you’ll discover that more than half a dozen strikes occurred in the colonies before the year 1700. There’s no denying it. Those early European immigrants had a well-developed sense of individual rights.

Another theory suggests that it wasn’t China’s history or political philosophy that made them such easy targets so much as it was the “Chinese personality” itself. Of course, those two phenomena are interwoven. While it’s a broad generalization, it can be said that Confucian societies don’t function in the same way Western societies do, especially when it comes to “civil liberties.”

In fact, when it comes to the application of civil liberties, there’s a significant difference. While vociferously demanding one’s rightful “place at the table” may have been greeted with cheers in an Irish tavern or union hall, that same behavior would not only have not appealed to Chinese immigrants, it would have embarrassed them.

Journalist James Fallows has noted that Confucian societies don’t regard lawsuits in the same way Western democracies regard them. By and large, Confucian societies take the view that “saving face” is more important than getting “one’s rights.” In any event, it’s a safe bet the 200,000 lawyers in my home state of California would respond to that cultural mind-set with two words: Screw Confucius.

The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act was an unqualified success. In addition to suspending Chinese immigration for a period of ten years, it prohibited those Chinese already living in the U.S. from ever attaining citizenship. With one stroke of the pen, every Chinese person residing in America was told they could never become citizens, no matter how long they lived here.

Also, presumably to demonstrate that this law wasn’t discriminating solely against the Chinese—and taking its cue from the Page Act—a “head tax” was levied on all new immigrants, and the Act specifically barred “lunatics” from entering the U.S., along with anyone deemed unable to care for themselves.

From 1882 to 1892, virtually no Chinese laborers entered the U.S. The prohibition was spectacularly effective. And make no mistake, this move wasn’t aimed at immigration in general; it was all about the Chinese. There were no limits whatever on Latin American immigrants.

Because Hispanics were regarded as “similar to us” in the sense that, even though Spanish-speakers, they were of our hemisphere, they shared a common border, and like us, they were founded by European Christians, we didn’t fear or resent them taking our jobs (not yet).

Even those few Chinese who were acknowledged to have

“valid” clearance went through enormous red tape to be admitted. And then, because the quarantine had worked so effectively, in 1892, Congress decided to extend the Exclusion Act. They extended it for an additional ten years, bumping its expiration date to 1902.

It’s been suggested that Congress wanted a 20-year ban all along, but fearing they couldn’t get the full twenty, settled on ten. While the Act was supported by many, including labor unions (even the Knights of Labor endorsed it, fearing businesses would use low-wage Chinese workers as leverage), there were influential people—largely those still harboring moralistic, abolitionist sentiments—who saw the Act for the naked racism it was.

But then, in 1902, with moralistic objections having faded into the background, and people being more or less open to the argument that we’d probably be better off without any more Chinese, the Exclusion Act was made permanent.

No more Chinese workers would be permitted to enter. Not now, not ever. As stunning as that was, the only labor organization to openly oppose the extension was the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World), who came out against it the moment the union was founded, in 1905.

Incredibly, the Chinese Exclusion Act stayed on the books for 61 years. It wasn’t until 1943 that it was repealed, with passage of the Magnuson Act. After Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, the U.S. reassessed its position and now viewed China as our friend and ally, and Japan as our mortal enemy.

But even with its repeal, the quota for Chinese entry visas was limited to a miniscule 105 per year. It wasn’t until 1965, with passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act, that Chinese immigration increased significantly.

As for the energetic Chamber of Commerce (the biggest lobbyist in the world), some years ago it began actively lobbying against workers in China being given a raise in pay and improved working conditions. That seemed bizarre at the time. Why would the Chamber of Commerce care what happened half a world away?

The answer is that the Chamber feared that an increase in the wages of Chinese factory workers would result in increased wholesale prices to American retailers. And this increase could conceivably—maybe, possibly, somewhere down the line—result in a few pennies of diminished profits.

So not only is the U.S. Chamber of Commerce committed to suppressing workers’ wages in its own country, it wants to suppress them everywhere. No Child Labor Left Behind. Thus, in a sense, even with the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act having been relegated to history’s trash heap, Chinese laborers remain in America’s crosshairs. **CP**

David Macaray’s latest book is *Night Shift: 270 Factory Stories*, is available at Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

CULTURE & REVIEWS

Brother Can You Spare a Dime?

BY LEE BALLINGER

Clothing is nice. Clothing is hip. Clothing is peaceful. The ritual of new clothes for school. Clothes sitting neatly in a drawer or hanging in a closet, smiling back at you. “That’s a nice dress.” “That suit is sharp.”

Clothing is also blood-stained, dangerous. Clothing is death. Textile factories were the driving force of the Industrial Revolution and it was the slaves who picked cotton who made the textile industry possible. The textile industry made other crimes inevitable: child labor, factory fires, brown lung and strikers murdered at picket lines.

At the heart of it all was and is cotton. Despite the end of slavery and sharecropping and the rise of synthetic fabrics, cotton is still king. As Andrew Brooks writes in *Clothing Poverty: The Hidden World of Fast Fashion and Second-hand Clothes* (Zed, \$21.95), “After food crops, cotton is easily the world’s most farmed plant.”

King Cotton is still very cruel to its subjects. Today, cotton-growing accounts for nearly a quarter of all agricultural insecticides used. The result is poisoned water, land, and people. Cotton is very thirsty, requiring, according to Brooks, “1,320 gallons of water per pound grown.” Water extraction from the Amur Darya and Syr Darya rivers in Central Asia for cotton irrigation has led to the near-disappearance of the Aral Sea.”

Once cotton becomes clothing and that clothing is sold, that’s only the beginning. Hundreds of thousands of tons of used clothing are collected and re-sold each year—nearly one in four

garments produced finds new life in the used-clothing market. One reason for the heavy turnover is that new clothes are often designed to quickly become old clothes. “In the 1990s,” Brooks writes, “the Spanish chain Zara pioneered a production approach based on short batch orders with a two-week turnaround from design to retail. Zara launches 11,000 new items a year.”

Used clothing is exported from the West back to the global South, sometimes to the very countries that manufacture new clothes for export, where those who make the clothing can’t afford to buy it.

The used-clothing industry has become inseparable from big time charities which collectively are now so large they constitute a charity industrial complex. Over half of used clothing sold is donated to charities by the average citizen and, while it may then be given away as a further act of charity, there’s a good chance it will be sold instead. In any event, as Brooks notes, “The lines between charity and commerce are becoming blurred.”

Charities and NGOs operate at the very heart of the used-clothing business. For instance, Oxfam, which feeds poor people in 94 countries, is the second largest used-clothing collector in its home base of Great Britain and retails clothes through 700 shops. Oxfam has its own processing plant in northern England called Wastesaver. “The plant has the appearance of a factory; there are conveyer belts dictating the tempo of work, time cards, and gantries for managers overseeing the work. Wages are paid but some workers are volunteers. “

“Many other charities operate in partnership with commercial operators,” writes Brooks, “who pay a royalty fee to use the name of the charity and collect second-hand clothing directly

from the public.”

Every year a mountain of apparel is produced for the two teams playing in the National Football League’s Super Bowl. According to NFL rules, the apparel of the losing team cannot be sold in the U.S. Rather than destroy it, the League donates 100,000 tons a year of this obsolete merchandise each year to World Vision, an evangelical Christian charity. World Vision distributes it for free and claims that its work is key to breaking the cycle of poverty. However, billions of people are poor because a few are billionaires and, in order to break the cycle of poverty, we need to break the cycle of wealth.

While workers around the world who make clothing are paid as little as a dollar day, the heads of clothing empires are multi-billionaires. Amancio Ortega, former chairman of Inditex, which owns the Zara brand, is the third richest person in the world with a fortune of \$57 billion. Christy Walton is the eleventh richest with a fortune of \$35.4 billion. The twelfth richest is Stefan Persson, chairman of the Swedish multinational clothing chain H&M, with a fortune of \$28 billion. These individuals each have personal wealth which exceeds the annual GDP of many of the countries where the clothing they sell is produced. Meanwhile, the NFL’s cozy deal with World Vision nets the League a sizeable tax deduction, perhaps enough to cover NFL commissioner Roger Goodell’s \$44 million annual salary. World Vision head Richard Stearns is a former CEO of Parker Brothers Games and Lenox, Inc.

Why do we even have charities? Charities exist because there is so much need in the world. We are aware of it and our first instinct is to respond, to help another human being. We do so for all the right reasons, but also because the response to donate time or money is so ingrained in us. We don’t see other possibilities so we choose the one that’s always and immediately offered. At the same time, many of us participate in organizing the giving. There are thousands

of benefits every week in America to help people facing everything from a health care crisis to foreclosure. We organize or participate in crowdfunding efforts for similar purposes. Despite the limits of the charity approach, the fact that so many of us come together

Regardless of motivation or cause, those who promote charitable efforts want to touch us where our hearts are pure, where to be informed about suffering causes us to reach for our wallets. But that emotional process can also be filled with contradictions, as rap

immediately.

Charity as the concept of one outstretched hand grasping another gives hope to humanity. Charity as an institution is, in a modern world of unlimited abundance, an outdated relic. Charity as a means to give a moment's



CHILD LABORER IN A CAMBODIAN CLOTHING SWEATSHOP. PHOTO:

for essentially similar causes may ultimately turn out to initiate or expand important social movements.

On the other hand, charity as an institution serves as a buffer which protects a neoliberal system while it dismantles the social safety net. Charity can also be just a hustle. It provides six-figure incomes for a growing class of charity executives who never, ever allow the recipients of charity to say anything beyond “Thank you, give more.” Bono, an avid hustler for his own charity, has gone to meetings in Africa and told Africans who disagree with him to sit down and shut up. Those who control the discussion want to keep their stuff and continue to ride high in a system of winners and losers where the game is fixed.

star Kendrick Lamar explores on “How Much a Dollar Cost” on his new album *To Pimp A Butterfly*.

The song is set in a gas station where a homeless man not only asks for a donation but tells the rapper that he expects him to give it. The first response is one of resentment. Why am I this brother's keeper? Then comes anger, guilt, and embrace. Kendrick Lamar provides no answers because, in a world where governments deliberately keep people from what they need, there aren't any, at least not in the short run. All responses are understandable, if not downright inevitable. Bubbling underneath it all is the reality that even in the rare case where enough money is exchanged to solve a problem, two more problems take its place almost

solace to the poor sets the bar far too low. We need to set the bar high—the elimination of poverty. That will be the greatest gift of all. **CP**

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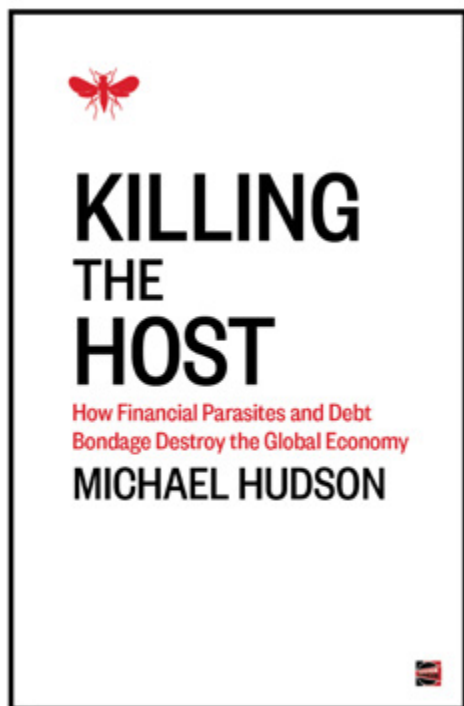
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KILLING THE HOST

How Financial Parasites and Debt Bondage Destroy the Global Economy

BY MICHAEL HUDSON

In *Killing the Host*, economist Michael Hudson exposes how finance, insurance, and real estate (the FIRE sector) have seized control of the global economy at the expense of industrial capitalism and governments. The FIRE sector is responsible for today's extreme economic polarization (the 1% vs. the 99%) via favored tax status that inflates real estate prices while deflating the "real" economy of labor and production. Hudson shows in vivid detail how the Great 2008 Bailout saved the banks but not the economy, and plunged the U.S., Irish, Latvian and Greek economies into debt deflation and austerity. *Killing the Host* describes how the phenomenon of debt deflation imposes punishing austerity on the U.S. and European economies, siphoning wealth and income upward to the financial sector while impoverishing the middle class.



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