

CounterPunch

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EUROPE'S REBEL CITIES BY DANIEL RAVENTÓS AND JULIE WARK

HILLARY'S MOTHER COMPLEX BY RUTH FOWLER

WHEN PROGRESSIVE ISN'T ENOUGH BY ANDREW SMOLSKI

THE LEGACY OF JAPANESE INTERNMENT CAMPS BY LEE BALLINGER



Starring Henry Kissinger and Hillary Clinton !

CounterPunch

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Gone With The Drones by Nick Roney



In Memory of
Alexander Cockburn
1941–2012

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Food Not Bombs in Syria

Given the current situation in Syria, perhaps our friends in power could develop some new tactics to change the nature of the horrible war and ongoing bloody death, going forward. Maybe those countries with Air Power (Syria, NATO, Russia) could start dropping 'Cluster MRE's' on the population still alive in the country. Of course, the people that we're actually trying to kill will get some of this food too, but the poor beleaguered survivors may get some as well. The bad people will always eat, at any cost, and the natives will starve, terrified. While I'm quite certain that the NATO forces are duplicitous, they could improve their image by dropping actual food rather than explosives, on the people that they 'accidentally' kill every day. I really feel for the Syrian survivors and I am quite ashamed that my tax dollars are going towards killing them.

The least we could do is feed some starving people who really need help, through bombing, which is what we do the best.

Regards, C. Jones

What a Mess

People are voting for utterly revolting, disgusting thugs out of sheer reaction to the other utterly disgusting, revolting thugs.

This happened in India where nearly a third of the population cast their votes for Modi - but actually they were voting against somebody. The BJHP are any day a worse bunch of %\$\$&%^* than the \$%^** Congress. But people were so sick of the things the latter had

done. A similar point might be made on the BREXIT vote (and I am no admirer of the EU). On the US, I find it hard to be excited by the prospect of either of them winning. Sometime, though, the mould is broken and it's not a bad thing, and sometimes it can be a terrible thing.

Who knows what it will bring here? But it was good to see Sanders own folks booing him as he tried to sell them Hillary.

What a fuckin mess the world is.

P. Saineth

Happy Birthday Wavy

Loved Donnelly's tribute article to Wavy Gravy's 80th birthday. He is such a great man for so many reasons, but my favorite reason is his brilliant succinct, persuasiveness, as when he convinced Michael Lange (Woodstock festival promoter) not to eject the Woodstock "squatters" before the beginning of the actual festival. As the story goes, Wavy was in charge of security and MC at the festival when Lange called a meeting on how to evict the squatters on the festival grounds, since there were already about 50,000 and it was only the Monday before the Friday opening. There were a couple of protest arguments from staff when Wavy said "Michael I know you are making a movie of this festival. Do you want it to be a GOOD movie or a BADDDD movie?"

Twenty minutes later Lange came back and said "let them stay". To me, Wavy is one of the very few in the pantheon of genius in the twentieth century. Up there with Einstein and Chomsky. Happy birthday

Wavy, and may you and your spirit live forever!

Jim Mulligan

Nate Parker and Rape

Dear Mr. St. Clair:

I just read your August 19 comments on the rape accusation against Nate Parker. As a woman and a sexual assault survivor, I am very disappointed.

Our society fails to take violence against women seriously. Only 3% of rapists spend time in jail or prison, so it is hardly surprising that Parker was acquitted.

Do you understand the importance of believing survivors, who are routinely disbelieved and blamed? Do you know that the trauma of rape can affect the survivor for the rest of her or his life (i.e., longer than 17 years)? Can you see how your comments imply that a man's career should take priority over female health and safety?

If you have not already, please read some of the articles by Black feminists who take the rape allegations seriously. Thank you.

Jennifer Rowe

The Brexit Debacle

Dear Ms Bohne.

Apologies for this unsolicited email. However, I felt compelled to express my sincere appreciation for your <CounterPunch> article of 13 July titled <Amazing Brexit: Identity and Class Politics>.

As someone living in the <Midlands> in England who voted to leave the European Union, using it as a vote against the spread of neo-liberalism, the subversion of worker rights

and as a protest to interventionist overseas wars. I found the conduct of the national media in vilifying <leave> voters as xenophobic and or racist, quite alarming although not at all surprising.

What was much more distressing to me was the reaction from the so called left, including journalists and commentators, of whose work I have followed and respected for many years, in labeling middle-Englanders or northerners in their words, in the same fashion. Labels such as small minded, backwards etc. This referendum has created quite an uncomfortable atmosphere within this country, even among friends when the the topic is touched upon in conversation, and many leave voters have found themselves feeling isolated and wavering in their convictions when faced with almost daily rebuke from the media and liberal commentators alike.

CounterPunch's pieces reaffirm my particular beliefs and political convictions. Your article in particular was written with such perspective and expressed so eloquently how myself and others feel at the moment and in the wake of the vote, that I wanted to express my gratitude.

I will endeavor to share your article with as many people as possible, and thank you so much again for your insights.

Yours Sincerely,

David

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ROAMING CHARGES

Mountain of Tears

BY JEFFREY ST. CLAIR

Slow-burning, life dies like a flame,
Never resting, passes like a river.
Today I face my lone shadow.
Suddenly, the tears flow down.
— From “Cold Mountain,”
by Han-Shan (Trans. A. Kline)

I’ve made this same climb up the rugged northeastern slope of Mt. Hood every year since we moved to Oregon. This year was expedition 26. The route is challenging to the point of being cruel. It’s even more demanding on an aging body that has spent far too many years bent over a Macintosh.

The trail up Cooper’s Spur, a sharp ridge plunging off the volcano’s pyramidal peak, is steep and treacherous. The slope is coated in fine steel-gray volcanic ash, ground down over the centuries by snow and ice. You take two steps up and slide one step back. The trail zigzags its way ever-upwards, gaining more than 3,000 feet, in dozens of switchbacks through ash and scree to a place called Hieroglyph Point, where the path finally peters out. According to mountain lore, Hieroglyph Point was named after a boulder featuring “mysterious markings.” In fact, the markings aren’t mysterious and they aren’t hieroglyphics. They are beautiful kanji characters carved into the rock, like the poems of Han-Shan, by Japanese climbers who summited Hood via this precarious route in 1908. This is the highest spot on the mountain that you can reach by trail. But having reached 9,000 feet, I usually scramble even further up the 45-degree slope to the Chimneys, a near vertical passage through dark basalt to the summit.

From several vantages, the exposure along the deeply incised canyons that flank both sides of the Spur is extreme, dizzying. The sense of vertigo is en-

hanced when the winds pick up, as they tend to do in the afternoon, whipping around the summit at speeds of fifty to sixty miles an hour. Two years ago, I watched as group of four climbers a few hundred feet above me where blown off the Spur and into a boulder field, escaping largely unscathed. Others haven’t been so lucky. This is the most lethal quadrant of a deadly mountain. Since 1980, at least 28 people have perished on and around Cooper Spur, many of them plunging headlong onto the Eliot Glacier 2,500 feet below, their corpses emerging months, sometimes years, later in the milky waters of glacial melt. Tears of the mountain, climbers call it.

The Spur itself is a massive moraine, formed by the advance and retreat of an ancient glacier. This is a testament to the power of ice and water to sculpt and shape landscapes on a vast scale. That transformative force is diminishing, year-by-year, as a warming planet works inexorably to eradicate mountain glaciers from the Earth.

When I first climbed Cooper’s Spur in the early 1990s, much of the ridge was still under snow well into August, the route visible only by following stone cairns and wooden posts. By 2005, these high slopes on Mt. Hood were clear of snow by mid-July, if not earlier. This spring, after a blistering run of days in April, the snowpack on Cooper’s Spur had melted off by early May, exposing the mountain’s largest and most vulnerable glaciers to at least six months of unrelenting sun.

Even following a stormy winter of heavy rains and mountain snow, Oregon’s snowpack was reduced to 56 percent of normal, a trend that has been getting worse for the past two decades. The story is the same up

and down the Cascade Range, from North Cascades National Park on the Canadian border to Mt. Shasta in northern California. One consequence of the dwindling snowpack is the fact that the soggiest part of the country is now facing the likelihood of water shortages. The prospect of diminished snowpacks and early melt-offs is even more dire for the stressed salmon and trout that spawn in the mountain’s small rivers and streams.

On my descent, I stopped at the elegant stone climber’s shelter built seventy years ago, which has somehow survived rockfalls and avalanches, to get a little relief from the scorching sun and near 100-degree temperatures. Refreshed, I took a detour, making an awkward glissade down the sandy slope into Eliot Canyon for a close up look at Oregon’s largest glacier. On the floor of the canyon I traversed numerous small terminal moraines, the traces of the glacier’s accelerated retreat. Eliot Creek was gushing, a white roar from the late afternoon melt.

The Eliot Glacier has lost more than 140 feet in thickness over the last century and has retreated more than 1,000 feet from the first photos of the glacier taken in 1901. Across the Pacific Northwest, glaciers have retreated by more than 50 percent and the pace of retreat is quickening. Dozens of northwest glaciers have disappeared entirely, including ten of Oregon’s 45 named glaciers, along with hundreds of other smaller once perennial ice and snow patches.

The headwall of the Eliot Glacier is iridescent, a shimmering blue that casts an eerie glow in summer moonlight. As I approached the wall of ice, I was struck by waves of coolness emanating from the glacier. The face of the glacier was deeply fissured and I could hear it rumble and crack, as if the mountain itself was moaning at the loss of ice that had coated its flanks for the last 20,000 years.

We live in a time when essential elements that have shaped life on our planet are vanishing before our eyes. **CP**



EMPIRE BURLESQUE

When Dissidents Turn

BY CHRIS FLOYD

O dark dark dark, they all go into the dark, the vacuous, vacuumous void of the imperial penumbra: the rock-ribbed dissidents, fiery oppositionists, staunch anti-imperialists, eminent afflictors of the unjustly comfortable; the lifelong exposers of ideological bullshit, distinguished voices decrying repression and hate, chairmen of many activist committees, generous denouncers of profiteering, brave and battered souls who put their bodies upon the gears of the odious Machine again and again—all go into the dark. They bow their heads and say to the Machine, at last: protect us.

This year has seen depressing recurrences of a syndrome first exhibited—in typically brazen form—by Christopher Hitchens in the first days after 9/11: stalwart figures of political dissent submitting reluctantly (or in Hitchens' case, gleefully) to the power of the militarist American state as the only force capable of mounting a last-ditch defense of humanist values against the imminent, overwhelming existential threat of Islam.

Some of these coat-turning figures are the usual “reformists” and careerists whose “dissent” was always epidermis-deep; their submission to the state rates nothing more than bemused scorn. But what of someone like Bill Blum, who has informed and inspired so many of us for decades with his uncompromising insights into the true nature of the odious Machine as it has chewed its way around the world, killing millions, spouting lies, fomenting extremism, repressing freedom at home and abroad?

If Blum too could succumb to Hitchenitis, would such a blot not seem “like a second fall of man”? And yet it has come to pass. The terrorist atrocity

in Nice was apparently the last straw for Blum. After that horrific attack—by a mentally troubled, wife-beating, doped-up wretch who, it seems, might have been preyed upon by Islamic extremists in the same way the FBI picks troubled souls to foment terror plots it can then ‘foil’ (or not)—Blum declared that it was time to drop “political correctness” and “support Western military and economic power to crush the unspeakable evil of ISIS.”

Well, I suppose if the wielders of “Western military and economic power” were not actively pursuing—with copious amounts of energy, arms and money—strategies which they know exacerbate the “radical Islamic terrorism” that Blum apparently believes everyone but he and Pam Geller are too PC to mention, there might be the sliver of an argument in this position. A specious argument, to be sure —“the problems caused by violent Western intervention can be solved by more violent Western intervention”—but an argument nonetheless.

But as Blum himself has detailed with devastating accuracy over the years, the United States and its allies have enabled such forces for decades.

And it has been evident for years that their main objective in Syria is regime change, not the defeat of ISIS. It's also been evident—as Blum has documented—that they don't give a rat's ass about “radical Islamic terrorism” except as a means to advance their foreign and domestic agendas: supporting it here, opposing it there, ignoring the monstrous consequences and laughing all the way to the bank.

But Blum doesn't stop with supporting military action against ISIS. He wants a full-bore campaign of domestic

repression launched against all Muslims within reach of those ever-benevolent Western powers. Blum says Muslim culture “must be severely curtailed. The West must oversee the classes in Islamic schools in France, the UK, the US, et al ... Even if it means sending spies into the classes, outfitted with recording devices. The teachers of these classes, if they have any connection at all to anything smacking of radical Islam ... should be fired.”

And even if, as in many cases, “the perpetrator of some horrible terrorist act was not even religious or never attended a mosque,” it doesn't matter, says Blum. The mere fact that they might have been “raised in the atmosphere” of “Muslim culture or environment” is enough to justify subjecting every Muslim to repression, surveillance or even “purging.” (This despite the fact that Muslims are, overwhelmingly, the chief victims of radical Islamic terrorism—and of “Western military and economic power” as well.)

Blum says he knows all about Western atrocities—Iraq, Vietnam, Hiroshima—but ISIS is worse than all of this, presumably because of that irredeemable “Muslim culture or environment.” So we must now support the Machine—the “culture or environment” of American militarism—that perpetrated those atrocities in order to destroy a group that would not exist without the interventions of “Western military and economic power.”

We must take it on trust that after decades of the brutal, inhuman, murderous operations documented by Blum, this Machine, this murderous system, will now save our “values” from destruction.

I'll continue to read (and re-read) Blum's work with respect and attention, as always. But it's sad to see him enter this shadowland, where the shade of Hitchens is sitting by the wraith of Whittaker Chambers and chuckling, “What took you so long, Bill?” **CP**



EXIT STRATEGIES

Performance as Protest

BY YVETTE CARNELL

As I write this, I am considering how many more Colin Kaepernick stories I'll be forced to endure in the coming days. There is Kaepernick's act of protest in choosing not to stand for the national anthem, then there are the various scattered reactions to his protest. Although symbolic acts of resistance are not without some value, the importance of millionaires taking stands against their patrons is vastly overstated.

Almost 50 years after the black power salute at the 1968 Olympics, urban communities are exploding with a rage only understood by communities in total collapse. From Ferguson to Baltimore, and most recently Milwaukee, poor black communities are rebelling against the degradation they shoulder and the logic through which their condition is misunderstood. Though not analogous, white permanently poor communities, like Appalachia, have among the lowest voter turnout rates in the country.

Still, American notions of protest are conditioned by our relationship to celebrity. Lacking any strong sense of class identity, the outlook of most Americans can best be described as that of perennial strivers. Members of the privileged class stir in us rumblings of enriched possibilities. When a celebrity speaks, we listen. We listen even harder when that celebrity just happens to be right.

In defending his protest to reporters, Kaepernick roasted both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. Clinton has, Kaepernick said of the email scandal, "done things illegally" adding, "If that was any other person, you'd be in prison." The quarterback then dismissed Trump as "openly racist".

On the topic of police misconduct, Kaepernick made an appropriate comparison:

"There is police brutality. People of color have been targeted by police. So that's a large part of it and they're government officials. They are put in place by the government. So that's something that this country has to change. There's things we can do to hold them more accountable. Make those standards higher. You have people that practice law and are lawyers and go to school for eight years, but you can become a cop in six months and don't have to have the same amount of training as a cosmetologist. That's insane. Someone that's holding a curling iron has more education and more training than people that have a gun and are going out on the street to protect us."

Kaepernick's protest and thoughtful explanation of his reasoning led to a deluge of headlines: "Colin Kaepernick 'very happy' to have players join national anthem protest"; "Police officers threaten boycott over Colin Kaepernick national anthem"; "Colin Kaepernick's birth mom shames him on Twitter."

And then other celebrity ballers began chiming in, some taking clear stands, whereas others removed any doubt as to their own vacuousness. Boomer Esiason was predictably disgusted at Kaepernick, while the winner of the unintelligent utterances award went to Panthers quarterback Cam Newton, who impishly observed, "Who am I to say 'Colin, you're wrong'? And who am I to say 'Bro, you're right?'" opening the door for chief sports bloviator Stephen A. Smith, and a host of other writers, to lay waste to Newton's second foray into the favored black celebrity pastime of clumsily evading the issue of race.

My problem with celebrity is that covering Kaepernick means it's only fair

to cover Cam. And if the media covers Kaepernick and Cam, then it is also obliged to report on actor Don Cheadle calling Donald Trump a "POS". The truth is that it's just not worth it to cover any of them.

Kaepernick's \$1 million dollar donation to activists was generous, but societies aren't structured around charity as mechanisms for wealth redistribution—and for good reason. Allowing millionaires and billionaires to determine which initiatives get funded and which go lacking puts nations on the fast track to neofeudalism.

Furthermore, taking sides over Kaepernick is performance as protest. Real transformative politics necessarily muffles voices like Kaepernick's because his influence is proportional to both his celebrity and ability to amass capital for billionaire NFL owners. In the absence of a political arrangement that affords agency to the working class, we are left with no other option but to deputize a millionaire pig-skin chaser to act as mediator between his ruling class bosses and the unwashed horde.

This is only an option for a country where Democracy has failed. We are a country where real choice is replaced by spectacles devoid of any material benefit for average Americans. In such a country, the revolution may not be televised, but apparently it can be purchased. Kaepernick's jersey sales have skyrocketed to number three since his protest began. The quarterback announced that he'll be donating the proceeds to charity. Good for him. Still, the NFL earns more than \$9 billion dollars in revenue, according to a 2014 Forbes report, a large portion of that total coming from merchandising. And it will still cost you \$99.95 to wear Kaepernick's #7 and represent the revolution. **CP**



GRASPING AT STRAWS

The Fed Goes “All In”

BY MIKE WHITNEY

Readers who follow the financial markets know that the central bank Mafia and their economist friends get together every August in Jackson Hole, Wyoming to discuss the condition of the global economy. The annual gabfest is closely watched by investors and analysts who dissect every word hoping to uncover some clue about the direction of policy. It's not uncommon for the Fed to make a major announcement during the three-day confab that sends stocks skyrocketing. On two separate occasions, former Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke announced the launching of new bond buying programs at the gathering. Not surprisingly, equities rose sharply on both occasions.

This year, the keynote speech was delivered by current Fed chief Janet Yellen who, after bluntly stating that the Fed was very close to achieving its “statutory goals of maximum employment and price stability”, admitted that it didn't make a heckuva a lot of difference since the Fed was going to stick with the same policy-mix it's been using for the last seven years anyway.

Yellen intends to continue paying subsidies on excess reserves to the banks, continue intervening in the markets to prop up asset prices, and continue to recycle the proceeds from maturing bonds back into new debt thus keeping the Fed's gargantuan balance sheet above the \$4 trillion watermark. In other words, the Fed is going to continue with its easy money policies even though, by its own admission, the crisis has passed and the recovery is strengthening. Go figure?

Yellen also said that the Fed was mulling over what to do in the event of a recession. The problem is compounded by the fact that the Fed failed to

raise rates during the recovery leaving little room to maneuver if the economy tanks. As Yellen notes in her presentation, the FOMC usually cuts short-term rates during a recession by roughly 5-1/2 percentage points. Rates are currently at 1/2 percent which makes that strategy impossible. So what's Yellen going to do?

She's going to do the same thing the Fed does every time it gets into a jam, print more money. In the event of a “highly adverse shock”, the Fed is going to use “forward guidance” (keep rates locked at zero for as long as possible) and further inflate its balance sheet with another “\$2 trillion in asset purchases”. In other words, Yellen is going to resume the policies that tripled stock prices in seven years while widening the chasm between rich and poor to levels not seen since the Gilded Age.

“I expect that forward guidance and asset purchases will remain important components of the Fed's policy toolkit,” said Yellen to the assembly. Indeed they will, but where is the proof that these policies actually work?

There isn't any. Consider this from a post at CNBC: “Data from JPMorgan shows that the top 50 central banks around the world have cut rates 672 times between them since the collapse of Lehman Brothers, a figure that translates to an average of one interest rate cut every three trading days. This has also been combined with \$24 trillion worth of asset purchases.”

So if 672 rate cuts have not produced the recovery that central bankers anticipated, then what makes Yellen think that 673 will do the trick? It makes no sense, right?

And if \$24 trillion worth of QE hasn't revved up GDP or boosted demand,

then why would another trillion or two make a difference? It won't. That lab experiment has been tried many times before and the outcome has always been the same; stock prices soar while the economy remains mired in stagnation. Oh, and did I mention that the US economy is presently growing at a pathetic 1.2 percent?

Yellen also said the Fed is exploring new ways of strengthening the recovery. In predictably opaque language, she said that the Fed was considering “alternative monetary policy frameworks, such as price-level or nominal GDP targeting.” What that means in plain English is that the Fed will persist with QE until the economy grows at the pace the Fed wants it to grow. Unfortunately, asset purchases have no impact on growth, they're just a handout to the investor class. Yellen knows that. She's just sending a message to Wall Street that the Fed's going to do everything it can to ensure that there are profitable outlets for investment in the future, even if the Fed has to invent them itself. That's what this charade is all about, calming investors fears about dwindling earnings.

You see, for the last year or so, Corporate America has been having a very tough go-of-it. Quarterly earnings have been negative for four consecutive quarters which means we're in the middle of an earnings recession. This situation could continue indefinitely unless Congress takes steps to increase government spending. And that's why, after seven years of sputtering growth, the Fed is finally talking about the need for fiscal stimulus.

Like all conservatives, Yellen would prefer to “starve the beast” in order to force the federal government to reduce its spending. But she now finds herself in the awkward position of actively promoting fiscal spending so US corporations can beef up their profits.

And that's the underlying theme of Yellen's Jackson Hole speech: The Fed always takes care of its friends. **CP**

EUROZONE NOTES

Europe's Rebel Cities

BY DANIEL RAVENTÓS AND JULIE WARK

After Brexit a chorus of hedge-fund managers, George Soros and Donald Trump predicted the imminent breakup of the European Union. Plenty of culprits were named: the migrant crisis; Italy's banks; ultra-nationalist, Eurosceptic parties; shaky governments in Ireland, Portugal, Spain and Greece; another recession; unemployment; Schengen uncertainties; massive sovereign debts; unbalanced budgets; and inwards-looking governments. Neoliberal foul-up didn't get a mention, even as the IMF intoned its mea culpa for the disaster it had inflicted on Greece. It is difficult for state governments to combat neoliberal policies, not least because international trade treaties allow multinationals to get around national social and environmental regulations. Citizens feel impotent when supra-state predators are invisible.

The city is another matter. Things are much more visible at municipal government level. Life in a city is reasonably sociable because many of its spaces are shared and, as David Harvey observes, the city is the setting in which class struggle is perceptible. The European city has always expressed this in its complex structure of marketplaces, economic, artistic, artisanal and cultural production, and spaces of liberation from old bonds of feudal servitude. Public spaces, understood as democratic spaces, are a locus of mixed, open-access social life. These are strong foundations for today's radical municipal politics. European cities are beset by the same ills as cities everywhere—pollution, excessive growth, social and spatial segregation, degraded outlying areas, new forms of work, financialized economies, corruption and land and real-estate speculation—but these woes are also becoming rallying points.

In 2015, Europe's urban population was around 73.6% or about 547 million people. After the Arab Spring, it became much more politicized when different versions of the anti-

austerity movement took to streets and squares in "Spain" (an increasingly challenged political entity as many citizens of Catalonia, Galicia and the Basque Country do not accept that they are subjects of the Kingdom of Spain, which adds a further deeply-felt political dimension), Greece, United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, France, Portugal, Czech Republic, Netherlands, Italy, Romania, and Gezi Park in Turkey, the eternal EU aspirant. The "cry for alternative political methods", as Barcelona's mayor Ada Colau describes it, was too big to go unheard. People began to organize in movements like the one where she gained political prominence, the Mortgage Victims' Platform, a very urban phenomenon which took a "private" issue squarely into the public domain, thus exposing its outrageous magnitude. Citizens, massing to prevent evictions with their physical presence, sometimes joined by dissenting firemen and locksmiths, began to feel empowered.

This was the embryo of the assembly-based Guanyem Barcelona (Let's Win Back Barcelona) which, subsequently called Barcelona en Comú, won the 2015 municipal elections. There are many examples of citizen-platform politics around Europe and if we focus on Barcelona here it is because it has become a reference, and is active in conceptualizing, experimenting with and propagating a new model of participatory, multilevel, anti-neoliberal politics, starting from the neighborhood level but aspiring to go global. Barcelona en Comú's guide, *How to Win Back the City*, therefore expressed a clear aim: "We want Barcelona to be

the trigger for a citizen revolution in Catalonia, Spain, Southern Europe and beyond." Winning back the city wasn't just about elections but, "Cities are where democracy was born, and they'll be where we can start to recover it."

Badalona, Ferrol, Santiago de Compostela, Madrid, Cadiz, Zaragoza, and other towns and cities of "Spain" are also governed by citizen platforms. While they have had some victories in preventing privatization of public services or achieving more public investment in social programs, they also face barriers at state, European and global levels. Sixty percent of the laws debated in the Spanish and Catalan parliaments depend on European decisions. Hence, the refuge cities initiative is rebellious, taking on both the Spanish government and the European Union. In September 2015 the Barcelona City Council created the refuge city network together with Leipzig, Munich, Athens, and the islands of Lampedusa and Lesbos. This was joined by more than fifty Spanish, Catalan, Galician and Basque town and city councils. Ada Colau then confronted the Spanish government over lack of transparency in administering its EU-granted migrant and asylum fund of more than 210 million euros. This money had certainly not gone to any project of welcoming refugees. It had promised to resettle more than 17,000 refugees but only eighteen had arrived.

Colau's stand opened up a new broad front. Cities were acting where states were washing their hands of a grave humanitarian problem, speaking out together to denounce EU policy in an area that is exclusively state jurisdiction, pushing to open up a new politi-

cal space with a two-pronged strategy, both insisting on the right to asylum and challenging the prerogative of states. The rebellion went beyond denouncing the right-wing People's Party government. Colau called for a political role for cities in which local government would have a say in working on and deciding public policy. In her blog she described a very different Europe: "If Europe is to have a future, it must be as a community that we all cooperate in: states, regional and local authorities, cities and associations".

Once in office, Barcelona en Comú moved swiftly. The salaries of elected Barcelona en Comú officials were capped at €2,200 per month. Symbolically, a bust of the Spanish king was removed from the City Hall and the founding of the Second Spanish Republic was commemorated in April. Moves were made to close the city's immigrant detention center. Property speculation was an early target: owners of empty homes (especially banks) were fined up to €100,000 and eviction orders overturned. A new energy policy was drafted. This is not just about environmentally-friendly energy. The aim is also to recover energy management as a public service and to guarantee an energy supply to the poor. When privatization is a cornerstone of EU/Troika policy in debtor states like Greece, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Ireland, and when corporate giants are gobbling up their public companies, this is combative politics.

But citizen platforms are constrained by the limits of municipal power as governments slash council budgets, reducing their already restricted ability to pursue alternatives to austerity. Universal basic income, to give a significant example, has many supporters in Europe, 68% across all 28 member states. The Dutch cities of Utrecht, Wageningen, Tilburg, Groningen and Nijmegen have programmed pilot projects for 2017. In "Spain" the proposal has many supporters in town and city councils (especially

in Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia) but they do not have the financial or jurisdictional means to introduce it. Old ways of bending rules, conserving privilege and revanchist rancor are still forces to be reckoned with.

A case in point is that of the African street vendors. The municipal government is bound to enforce extant regulations, even when they contradict its declared antiracism and desire to welcome all refugees. The police are having a field day making the most of this contradictory situation to set the vendors against the City Hall, especially by using undue violence in its name. They are egged on by the media for which every African selling fake Hermes scarves has mafia connections. Thus criminalized, they are the social malaise and therefore outcasts. All the efforts of the City Hall to recognize their right to the city, to provide legal aid, access to services, legal status, healthcare, and to change extant immigration laws are ignored in the media.

One telling example of the complexities involved in creating a human environment in a neoliberal world is the placatory skateboard park in Barcelona's port where the vendors had been expelled from the zone where they set out their wares on blankets to entice cruise ship trippers. The skaters immediately declared their solidarity with the vendors ("Down with Borders! Freedom for Everyone!") and they, too, have been menaced by the police. Citizens, aware of the urgent need to produce a truthful counter-narrative, have begun filming police violence against the vendors and skaters, rebutting false claims and often clashing with the City Hall in its attempts to enforce unwanted inherited laws. This is an example of what Saskia Sassen calls the Global Street: a "hard space" where "the powerless" do "the politics." Intervening in causes that exceed their powers, cities are opening up political practices and instruments which include encouraging citizens to rebel against their own "rebel" administra-

tors who are not willing or able to ring the changes fast enough.

Hundreds of cities, municipalities and regions across Europe have joined forces, creating alliances in promoting the social economy, sharing knowledge and resources, building alternative social and economic models from the bottom up, and declaring TTIP/ CETA/ TiSA or GMO-free zones. The municipal vision is spreading fast. If cities are the foundational elements of Europe, their destiny is increasingly seen as tied to that of the whole continent. The rebel cities are claiming what David Harvey defined as "... the right to change ourselves by changing the city... a common rather than an individual right, since this transformation inevitably depends on the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanisation". The new commons are inter-municipal and transnational.

Naples, Bologna, Berlin, Amsterdam, London, Birmingham, Bristol, Grenoble, Wadowice, Slupsk, Krakow, Lodz, Poznań, Warsaw, Porto and other big and small cities and towns have joined forces with the new initiatives for democracy in Europe. One of these is Yanis Varoufakis' project Democracy in Europe DiEM25, which aims at full democratization of the continent by 2025. A crucial plank of his vision is an unconditional universal basic income above the poverty line. At present, most cities can't fund a basic income but pushing for it in "rebel city" programs would constitute a significant moral and political statement and a further challenge to state governments (which can finance the measure through progressive income tax). Varoufakis is right: "[...] either we are going to have a basic income that regulates this new society of ours, or we are going to have very substantial social conflicts that get far worse with xenophobia and refugees and migration and so forth". Commons-based political participation and decision-making can only occur when citizens have their material existence guaranteed. **CP**

Provocation, Credibility and Nuclear Chicken How Clinton Could Make a War

BY ALAN NASSER

Hillary Clinton is an especially ardent enthusiast of Full Spectrum Dominance (FSD). Diplomacy is for sissies. If they hesitate to capitulate to Washington's demands, up in flames they go. In an August 2014 interview in *The Atlantic* Clinton dismissed negotiations with Syria and instead advocated supporting the "hard men with the guns."

Clinton's overwhelmingly hawkish instincts were detailed in a lengthy article by Mark Landler in this year's April 21 *New York Times Magazine* titled "How Hillary Clinton Became a Hawk." Landler reports that Donald Trump and Ted Cruz "are more skeptical than Clinton about intervention and more circumspect than she about maintaining the nation's post-World War II military commitments... neither Donald J. Trump nor Senator Ted Cruz of Texas has demonstrated anywhere near the appetite for military engagement that Clinton has." Topping the article off, Landler supports Clinton's bid for the White House. The Newspaper of Record if fine with war hawk Clinton's finger on the button.

This leaves us with an especially pressing worry: is Clinton likely to create the equivalent of a latter-day Cuban Missile Crisis? Her mania for U.S. global hegemony, the tilt to Asia with its arrogant and escalating provocations of China and her coming extension of the Obama policy of upping the ante with Russia, set the stage for war. The threat now is that Clinton goes big time, confronting, challenging, goading and working to humiliate two of the Great Powers, sovereignties that have made it clear that backing down is not on the table. We shall see below that the geopolitical stage is set for such a showdown. And we'll see how FSD plus the logic of the arms race, now back in swing with a vengeance, equals armed conflict unless one of the contestants does a Khrushchev, i.e. backs down. But the Chinese have announced their unwillingness to retreat in the face of U.S. provocations, and Russia will not cave in a second time to a Clinton JFK impression.

The specific dynamics of how the combination of the push for global hegemony plus the arms race must lead to war unless one of the adversaries backs down was spelled out with characteristic lucidity by Paul Sweezy, the economist and co-founder of the magazine *Monthly Review* (September 1982), in a remarkable essay titled "Nuclear Chicken." Later in this article I shall borrow from the core argument of Sweezy's essay in applying his analysis to the current conjuncture. I begin with a prefatory account of the portentous geopolitical realities, including leading think tanks' and media bigwigs'

attempts to revive what used to be called "thinking the unthinkable".

Russia's Nuclear Superiority and Washington's Response

Let's begin with a summary of today's arms race. Russia's nuclear capabilities are known to be far superior to the U.S.'s, which explains Washington's and NATO's threefold strategy to commit billions of dollars to upgrading the U.S. nuclear arsenal, to draw as many as possible of the former Soviet republics into NATO, so that the alliance has expanded right up to the Russian border and engaged in continuous NATO military exercises there, and to deploy anti-missile systems in Eastern Europe to alert Russia that Washington/NATO is not intimidated or restrained by Russia's nuclear advantage.

The clock has begun ticking. As a recent *Guardian* headline reports, "NATO countries begin largest war game in eastern Europe since cold war." Early this month NATO launched Operation Anaconda, the largest such military exercise in a quarter century, since the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991. According to a NATO announcement, this war game involves 31,000 troops, 105 aircraft, 3,000 vehicles and 12 warships. The largest troop contingent, numbering 14,000 is from the United States.

5,000 NATO forces are currently carrying out similar actions in Lithuania and Latvia. The Obama administration has pledged a military confrontation with Russia should the unstable right-wing governments there or in Estonia "provoke" Russia.

The stated aim of these exercises is to anticipate a scenario in which NATO and Russia come to war. In a gruesome irony, the dress rehearsal has German tanks crossing eastward through Poland. And in an act at least as bold and threatening as any during the Cold War, a new U.S. military headquarters has been created in Poland, equipped with Washington's most advanced military equipment. NATO is building up its forces in eastern Europe much as Germany did in the runup of the 1930s. Russia will not take this sitting down. The inevitable succession of escalations and counter-escalations portends nuclear confrontation. Former Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev described the situation succinctly: NATO leaders "only talk about defense, but actually they are preparing for offensive operations... All of the rhetoric in Warsaw simply clamors for all but declaring war on Russia."

UPI's coverage of an early July British Army annual Conference on Land Warfare confirms Gorbachev's concern. In his presentation, an Army general representing the U.S. identified the Army's top priority as "to deter and if necessary defeat Russia in a war."

Close nuclear shaves have happened in the past, and the *Guardian* notes, in connection with the present provocation, that "defense experts warn that any mishap could prompt an offensive reaction from Moscow." Russia's Foreign Minister warns that "We do not hide [our] negative attitude toward

the NATO line of moving its military infrastructure to our borders, drawing other countries into military unit activities. This will activate Russia's sovereign right to provide its own safety with methods that are adequate to today's risks."

Clinton's mindset perceives a remark like this as a challenge, rather than as a reasonable response to provocation. She will feel obliged to up the ante lest "we" appear to lack "resolve". By this logic, not to escalate in the face of a perceived challenge is tantamount to capitulation. It is an invitation to a Russian counterescalation. The dynamic is self-perpetuating and is a straight path to nuclear face-off.

Russia has more tactical nuclear weapons and low-yield nuclear weapons than the United States. The world's fastest missile, the SS-18, can hit New York City and Los Angeles in less than 25 minutes. The U.S. has as yet no effective deterrent. No less significant is Russia's lead in anti-missile missiles. The S-400 and S-500 can knock out any US ICBM, cruise missile and stealth aircraft. The U.S. F-22, F-35 and B-2 are rendered practically worthless. And China is working toward an effective deterrent to any U.S. military adventure: Russia is scheduled to soon deliver S-400s to China.

But Russia has yet to install its superior missiles and anti-missile missiles in every defense position required to neutralize NATO attacks in any likely theater of war. Hence NATO's flurry to quickly surround Russia and weaponize her neighbors. In an attempt to overcome Russia's nuclear advantage, Washington/NATO will install putatively defensive anti-missile missiles in Poland and Romania that can be easily morphed into attack missiles capable of striking their Russian targets in 5 minutes. Russia is then obliged to develop yet another counter. NATO will attempt to outdo this measure. This cannot go on forever. At some point, face-off rears its head.

It is the nature of this self-perpetuating race to transform the notion of a "winner." The only way this kind of competition can be won is for one of the contestants to give up, an impossible outcome, or strike first. In Pentagonese the latter is called "counterforce," the destruction of the enemy's retaliatory capability by a first strike. Wackos like General Curtis LeMay (General Buck Turgidson in Dr. Strangelove) pushed this option, which had virtually no currency with top policy makers and advisors. Instead, Washington retained the option of first use, a last resort when conventional means of warfare fail. Nuclear weapons were understood as deterrents. In the old days, once the Soviet Union had matched Washington's nuclear capabilities, Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) seemed to permanently consign nuclear weapons to the role of deterrents. In that case, the risk of nuclear war was reduced to close to zero. And counterforce was off the table.

But that was then. Now we tremble under the radical policy changes after the first Iraq war. Immediately after Iraqi troops were forced to retreat from Kuwait in 1991, then-president George H.W. Bush triumphantly exulted "By God,

we've kicked the Vietnam Syndrome once and for all." The door was now open not merely to "low-intensity warfare" and local counterinsurgency aggressions, but to larger-scale interventions on a limitless scale. Pushing the envelope further still, the George W. Bush administration repudiated the ABM treaty and officially opened the door to the use of nuclear weapons in a first strike.

Deterrence was no longer the principal function of nuclear weapons policy. As we shall see, nuclear weapons were soon thereafter to become routinely regarded by policymakers as instruments of "conventional" warfare.

We shall see below that major think tanks and policymakers are now up to their ears in detailed planning for nuclear confrontations with China and Russia. This is the context surrounding the rise to the presidency of the person with perhaps the itchiest trigger finger in Washington. Most of us used to think that MAD ruled out another potential apocalypse like the Cuban Missile Crisis. No one can believe that now. The soul-searing anxiety much of the world experienced during the Cold War years preceding the Soviets' achievement of nuclear parity with Washington has been restored.

The Political Psychology and Arms-Race Logic of U.S. Militarism: the Need to Maintain "Credibility"

It is an axiom of imperial politics that the hegemon can under no circumstances give up. Washington has claimed not merely unsurpassed but unequalled global military predominance. And Sam has been consistent: since the aspiration to FSD is bound to meet resistance, Washington must be committed to permanent war, a doctrine once associated by Dick Cheney and Associates, but now embraced by the entire policy-making establishment. Because Russia's actually existing potential for universal deterrence takes time to fully put in place, the U.S. must in the meantime convince the world that it means business. The master imperative of hegemony is that Washington must maintain its "credibility." Clinton talks of "resolve." Same thing. In the context of nuclear war-mongering, this means that if Washington is to get what it wants from other nations, it must wield the threat of a nuclear strike, but that strategy is useless unless the threat is believable. When push comes to shove, as we shall see below, the only convincing proof of the threat's credibility is the actual use of nuclear weapons.

Part of what this entails is taking action, on the principle that "if you are not with us you are against us," against regimes that do not pledge allegiance to the imperial project. Hence, nations that assert independence, or ally themselves with influential powers opposing U.S. hegemony, shall be pummeled, destroyed as functioning states, threatened, or subverted: cf. Russia, China, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Venezuela, Honduras et al. Military incursions have been limited to conventional means of destruction. None of these aggressions has so far threatened a major nuclear con-

frontation with a Great Power. We have as yet seen nothing comparable to the Cuban Missile Crisis. As yet. But this is set to change. We shall see in the following section that nuclear war has now become the obsession of policymakers and policy-related think tanks.

The Elite Consensus Around Thinking the Unthinkable

Washington's new escalations are reflected in recent elite exhortations to revive the military-confrontations of the Cold War era. In a recent issue of the *Foreign Affairs*, John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt state, "There are regions outside the Western Hemisphere that are worth expending American blood and treasure to defend...In Europe and Northeast Asia, the chief concern is the rise of a regional hegemon that would dominate its region, much as the United States dominates the Western Hemisphere." Here is an explicit statement of the doctrine of FSD: the U.S. must dominate the globe's every region. Regional "spheres of influence" are no longer part of the empire's thinking.

In a *May Washington Post* editorial titled "The Liberal International Order is Under Fire. The United States Must Defend It." we are warned that;

Hardly a day goes by without evidence that the liberal international order of the past seven decades is being eroded. China and Russia are attempting to fashion a world in their own illiberal image... This poses an enormous trial for the next U.S. president... no matter who takes the Oval Office, it will demand courage to demand difficult decisions to save the liberal international order... The United States must keep trying to integrate China into the rules and traditions of the liberal international order—a policy of eight presidential administrations—while also marshaling forces to confront China's assertive and unilateral grab of territory in the South China Sea. Likewise, stabilizing Ukraine and saving it economically will be a vital bulwark against Russia's violent subversion.

The "liberal international order" is the capitalist globe as dominated by the U.S. China and Russia are not attempting to "fashion the world" into anything at all. Russia is involved in no "violent subversion." The reality is that these powers are feared to develop sufficient power and influence to obstruct America's ability to call the international shots, to predominate politically and militarily everywhere, including in China's and Russia's neighborhoods. A comparably enormous U.S. hegemonic counterpower must be put into place. This will involve "difficult decisions." Meaning that the U.S. leadership must be prepared to risk military confrontation in order to scare away these obstacles to U.S. hegemony. The *Post* cites a report by the Center For a New American Security, chaired by the neocon warhawk Robert Kagan, in support of a stepped-up global imperial campaign. Kagan's report, titled "Extending American Power: Strategies to Expand U.S.

Engagement in a Competitive World Order," lays the cards on the table:

"At a time when partisanship in the American political establishment has reached unprecedented heights, the group believes it is more important than ever to rebuild the national consensus on America's role in the world. This project promotes the idea that American leadership is critical to preserving and strengthening the bedrock of today's international order, which is being shaken by a variety of forces."

Two key rationales are evident. The global system directed by America's "leadership" is under threat. Steps must be taken. And Kagan calls upon the erstwhile strategy of externalizing domestic tensions. The Trump-Clinton-Sanders debate has reintroduced a dangerous "partisanship" [read: debate beyond permissible orthodox limits] which threatens "national consensus" [read: debate within mainstream parameters]. A national campaign peddled as a defense against global threats to American freedom can neutralize partisanship by directing domestic discontent to external enemies. And there's nothing like war to unite a nation internally riven.

A recent report by the influential Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments rationalizes the current multi-billion dollar nuclear buildup. The report focuses on U.S. tensions with Russia, and is frighteningly titled *Rethinking Armageddon (RA)*. The conceit behind the title is that we must put behind us the belief that Russia's achievement of nuclear parity with the U.S. guaranteed Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD), and undermined the feasibility of the use of nuclear weapons. On the contrary, argues RA, we are now in a "second nuclear age" which frees the U.S. to deploy nuclear weapons "in a discriminate manner."

The report is introduced with a citation from the Cold Warrior John Foster Dulles: "If you are scared to go to the brink, you are lost."

In a spine-chilling clue to what could be the second major historic instance of nuclear brinksmanship, RA outlines a scenario in which Washington is on the brink of a confrontation with Russia. Putin announces that Russian forces will provide humanitarian assistance to civilians "displaced from their homes by Latvia's aggressive and violent efforts to suppress the rights of ethnic Russians." The U.S. has, according to RA, four options, three of which require the use of nuclear weapons against Russia. Under what RA regards as the old-hat thinking about MAD, such options would have been ruled out. No more. RA's conception of a "limited" nuclear strategy that would not provoke a more intense engagement would have the U.S. deploy "a small number of weapons" early on in the conflict. That way the Russians would be convinced that we mean business and would not risk further conflagration. They would simply concede defeat and back off. We are to believe Russia would embrace the inescapable implication of RA's strategy, that it would accept U.S. FSD and resign itself to taking orders from Washington. Not a chance. So intense is

Uncle Sam's hunger for global predominance that he cannot assess with a modicum of rationality the consequences of his Olympian ambitions. Hillary Clinton specializes in this kind of self-delusion. And Obama has prepared her opportunity: the administration has pledged to take military action against Russia should the unstable right-wing regimes of Latvia, Lithuania or Estonia provoke the Bear, e.g. by persecuting these countries' Russian-speaking, Russia-friendly minorities. Was the administration unaware of Putin's promise of aid should Latvian ethnic Russians be persecuted?

Russia is not the only potential object of Washington's perilous provocation. Uncle Sam has China too in the bullseye.

Washington's "Tilt To Asia" and Provoking China

Shortly after Obama's inauguration, Washington sent the Navy surveillance ships the USNS Impeccable and the USNS Victorious into China's EEZ (exclusive economic zone). This was the beginning of a series of escalating provocations. The Chinese responded rationally, by installing defensive missiles around the zone.

The New York Times reports the most recent application of this strategy, in a story titled "U.S. Carriers Sail in Western Pacific, Hoping China Takes Notice." In mid-June Washington engaged two U.S. carrier groups, led by the U.S.S. *John Stennis* and the U.S.S. *Ronald Reagan*, in joint deployments into the Philippine Sea. 12,000 sailors, 140 aircraft, and six smaller battleships conducted joint surveillance operations. This was only the most recent incitement in a series of instigations.

In the 10 days prior to the above exercise, the *Stennis* and *Reagan* had conducted joint maneuvers in the South China Sea with Japanese and Indian navies, after deploying four Navy Growlers, electronic warfare planes and 120 military personnel to Clark Air Base in the Philippines.

Washington has in the last two years recruited leading powers in the Asia-Pacific region, and in March and April began a sharp escalation of its military threats. Japan and Australia, and other allies including Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia have initiated hostile operations against China. Most of these countries have been encouraged by Washington to develop their naval power, and have subsequently increased their military spending. In 2015 alone the Philippines increased military spending by more than 25 percent, and Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore and Malaysia by 5 to 16 percent. Age-old and geopolitically insignificant contestations over reefs and small islands have been resurrected in defense of these provocations. Vietnam has in recent months secretly fortified several of its islands in the Spratly group in the South China Sea with mobile long-range rocket launchers. It would take only days to make them operational with rockets capable of striking Chinese-held islets. Hanoi's move is certain to further accelerate the arms race that is already underway and to heighten the risk that an incident or provocation could lead to military conflict. That

danger has escalated in the wake of the ruling last month by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague in favor of a U.S.-backed case brought by the Philippines to challenge China's territorial claims in the South China Sea.

A recent Reuters report revealed that Vietnam has shipped its launchers to five of its Spratly islands and carefully hidden them from aerial surveillance. The launchers are part of Vietnam's EXTRA rocket artillery system purchased recently from Israel. The system uses targeting drones, is highly accurate up to 150 kilometres and can deliver a 150 kilogram warhead that can hit ships and land targets. Chinese installations on Subi, Fiery Cross and Mischief Reef would be well within the range of Vietnamese rockets.

In an alarming development, Admiral Henry Harris, the commander of U.S. Pacific Forces, is pressing for further aggression to take place inside the 12-mile exclusion zone around territory held by China. According to *Navy Times* the commander "wants to drive through an area and do military operations," which would include launching aircraft and firing weapons systems. The Obama administration is reluctant to push this hard, but Clinton, who promises to escalate the violence in Syria beyond what the administration prefers, is characteristically more in tune with the most aggressive recommendations.

The Times warns that, in the light of the current escalations—which do not include the batty incursions urged by Admiral Harris—"some sort of confrontation seems increasingly likely."

Chinese officials agree. A specialist in military strategy associated with the People's Liberation Army warns that "China will very likely strike back if the U.S. comes within 12 miles of the [Nansha] islands." Another military authority at Nanjing University alerted Washington that "The U.S. provocation has boosted the chance of military confrontation between Beijing and Washington." And the state-controlled *Global Times* warns that "China hopes that disputes can be resolved by talks, but it must be prepared for any military confrontation." This has not deterred the U.S. from developing detailed plans for war with China. The Mitchell Institute For Aerospace Studies has reported that Air Force officers are preparing the most detailed plans to date for deploying the F-35, the most advanced fighter plane, in an all-out war with China. Is our next president licking her chops at the opportunity to play her favorite game? Prominent think tanks have recently provided grist for Clinton's mill.

Last year the Council on Foreign Relations, the leading elite foreign-policy think tank, released a study titled "Revising U.S. Grand Strategy Toward China". The upshot is that antagonisms are growing between what the Council considers the world's two most powerful nations, tensions that require an escalation of Washington's policy of confrontation. The hostilities are grounded in China's reluctance to embrace the core of U.S. foreign policy, identified thus by the

Council: “Preserving U.S. primacy in the global system ought to remain the central objective of U.S. grand strategy in the twenty-first century.” The “threat” to U.S. national interests consists in China’s refusal to submit to the U.S. demand that it exercise no predominant influence in its own neighborhood! What unsettles elites most, according to the Council, is the “challenge by China to U.S. primacy in Asia.” This is but one of the horrifying corollaries of FSD. Under a Clinton presidency, this amounts to a virtual invitation to war.

The RAND Corporation has taken up planning for war with China in a study commissioned by the U.S. Army titled “War with China: Thinking Through the Unthinkable.” The phrase “thinking the unthinkable” was coined by RAND’s chief postwar strategist, the Strangelove counterpart Herman Kahn, whose book *On Thermonuclear War* advanced a strategy for winning a nuclear war against the Soviet Union. The study makes it clear that war with China is by no means out of the question, but stresses that as time passes Washington’s nuclear advantage is sure to decline. The clear implication is that sooner is better than later. Rand anticipates that military action against China will foment a resurgent antiwar movement, in which case the “system of civilian control” will be deployed for large-scale suppression.

As if to prepare the way for the coming commander-in-chief, the administration has begun a massive nuclear weapons “modernization” program. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute comments that “The ambitious U.S. modernization plan presented by the Obama Administration is in stark contrast to President Obama’s pledge to reduce the number of nuclear weapons and the role they play in U.S. national security strategy.” The Stockholm Institute, of course, is shocked, *shocked* by yet another Obama lie.

Against this background, only the blind fail to see the coming to power of the warmonger Clinton as placing another world-historic crisis on the agenda. A realistic example of the impending threat is found in one of RA’s scenarios for nuclear confrontation between the U.S. and Russia. A key trigger of war would be that “the limited reaction of the United States and Europe to Russia’s actions in Ukraine and Syria, however, have eroded their credibility...”. RA outlines similar credibility crises in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Let us look further into the pivotal notion of maintaining credibility—Clinton’s “resolve”—in the history of nuclear geopolitics.

Hegemonic Credibility in the Last Potential Armageddon: The Postwar Arms Race and the Cuban Missile Crisis

Dwight Eisenhower, in his memoirs *Mandate For Change*, spelled out the fundamental rationale of U.S. nuclear policy when Washington was a nuclear-weapons monopolist:

“My feeling was [during the Korean war], and still remains,

that it would be impossible for the United States to maintain the military commitments which it now sustains around the world... did we not possess nuclear weapons and the will to use them when necessary.”

Mere possession of the weaponry is not enough. There must be the credible threat to use them. That threat was an established practice in postwar U.S. foreign policy. Here are but a few instances, courtesy of Daniel Ellsberg:

- Truman’s deployment of “atomic capable” B-29s to Britain and Germany during the 1948 Berlin Blockade
- Truman’s threat to consider nuclear retaliation, in November 1950, when Chinese troops surrounded Marines at Chosin in Korea
- Eisenhower’s nuclear threat to China to force a 1953 settlement in Korea
- Secretary of State Dulles’s offer of three tactical nuclear weapons to France in 1954 to relieve French troops at Dienbienphu
- Eisenhower’s 1958 threat to nuke China if it should invade the island of Quemoy
- The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis
- The 1968 announcement that nuclear weapons might be used to defend Marines at Khe Sanh, Vietnam
- Nixon’s 1969 threat to use nuclear weapons in North Vietnam

It was the Cuban Missile Crisis, when John F. Kennedy threatened to nuke Russian-installed Cuban Missile sites unless Khrushchev had them removed, that prompted the Soviets to conclude that lest they be permanently subject to nuclear bullying the Soviet Union must surpass U.S. nuclear capabilities. By the mid to late 1970s, the Soviets had achieved nuclear parity with the U.S. Not only had Washington lost its nuclear monopoly, but not too long afterwards the Soviets were to achieve defensive superiority.

The world-historic upshot of this development is that Washington’s nuclear threats had lost their credibility. Recall that the ultimate test of credibility is actual use. The 1945 atomic bombing of Japan had shown that Washington was indeed willing to use these weapons for geopolitical purposes. But actual use is only a necessary condition of credibility; the intimidator must also be a nuclear monopolist. With the U.S. no longer a nuclear monopolist, actual use was thought to be ruled out by virtue of MAD. Nuclear threats were no longer credible. The looming threat of nuclear annihilation seemed gone forever. The rest of the world was freer to do what it pleased.

Thereafter, the rationale for nuclear weaponry was generally acknowledged to be deterrence. “Counterforce,” i.e. first-strike, was out of the question. Accordingly, the nuclear disarmament movement virtually vanished. But only for a short while. In late 1981 and through 1982 not only did the U.S. anti-nuke movement revive, but a hitherto hardly existent

European nuclear disarmament movement came into being. What precipitated this movement was the NATO decision in December 1979 to augment its European nuclear arsenal with Pershing and Cruise missiles, correctly perceived by the Soviets and by activists as counterforce weapons.

Two consequences of this unexpected move became evident. For the first time, nuclear confrontation in the European theater became a live option, shifting the risk of nuclear war from the U.S. to the NATO partners. When European activists declared this shift to be intolerable, Reagan's Secretary of State Alexander Haig rejoined "There are worse things than nuclear war." The antiwar movement in Europe exploded. Secondly, the Soviets saw this as upsetting what had been a stable balance of forces in Europe by restoring the functional equivalent of U.S./NATO nuclear superiority. Both Great Powers had been building their deterrent capacities all along, but Washington arbitrarily cited the latest Soviet development as the reason for the dramatic buildup in Europe.

A compelling explanation of Washington's escalation was put forward by Paul Sweezy in the essay cited above. Sweezy noted that the U.S. had always been the prime initiator of nuclear weapons buildups, he took seriously the implications of the need that the nuclear threat be credible, and he observed recent major shifts in global power in relation to these implications.

The most conspicuous development preceding the new buildup was the stunning series of defeats for imperialism that had occurred during the 1970s. Eisenhower's pre-MAD assertion that U.S. global hegemony required that Washington must have "the will to use [nuclear weapons] when necessary" made imperial sense prior to MAD. But his words became empty after the U.S. lost its nuclear monopoly. Why? Because the credibility of the nuclear threat was lost once Uncle Sam was no longer the only master gunslinger in town. The 1970s provided powerful evidence that the U.S. had come to suffer a conspicuous relative decline in its military power and therefore, in today's parlance, in its ability to exercise Full Spectrum Dominance. Here's what global resistance accomplished in the 1970s:

- Portugal lost its African colonies in 1974
- a year later the U.S. lost the Vietnam war
- one of the U.S.'s major Central American clients, Anastasio Somoza, was overthrown in Nicaragua by a socialist opposition
- as a result, insurgencies spread in other parts of Central America
- in Zimbabwe a national liberation movement came to power
- the regime of the Shah of Iran, Washington's paramount junior partner in the Middle East, was overthrown by anti-Western revolutionaries

The fall of the Shah was arguably as devastating a defeat for U.S. imperialism as was the defeat in Vietnam. Billions of dollars of advanced weaponry was transferred to a hostile power, as were the prized oil fields.

To the ruling class, the U.S. now looked to the world like a "pitiful, helpless giant" (the term used by Nixon to justify the invasion of Cambodia and the bombing of North Vietnam). It appeared that what we say doesn't go. The defeat was hammered home in November 1979, when the Ayatollah's regime seized 52 American hostages in Teheran and held them for 444 days. Adding further insult to further injury, shortly afterwards the Soviets moved into Afghanistan.

How must all this appear to a class that wants to rule the world by nuclear intimidation? Soon after the foregoing setbacks, Jimmy Carter announced the Carter Doctrine, which included the threat to use nuclear weapons should the Soviets move toward Iran's oil fields, and announced years of coming increases in the defense budget.

The reaction to the defeats of the 1970s was evident in U.S. policy into the Reagan years. On May 30, 1982, *The New York Times* featured an article titled "Pentagon Draws Up First Strategy For Fighting A Long Nuclear War," describing a "limited" nuclear war in Europe and Pentagon plans for fighting a "protracted" nuclear war against the Soviets.

This was merely the latest, albeit markedly stepped-up, version of the going strategy regarding nuclear escalation: to make Washington's enemies believe that the U.S. was really preparing to fight and win a nuclear war. Elites were not so stupid as to be unaware of the suicidal and self-destructive consequences of initiating a nuclear war. Escalating buildups were intended to induce the fear that the threat was credible and so to inhibit behavior unacceptable to Uncle Sam. Deterrence was still the name of the game. After all, it worked in Cuba in October 1962 and it was perceived to have worked in the six instances of atomic diplomacy enumerated above.

What has emerged is a qualitatively new phase in the arms race and in nuclear-weapons policy. As noted above, it is only in recent years that the full import of the rejection of MAD as the basis for the policy of deterrence and the consequent openness to first strike as a viable option in Washington's pursuit of FSD have been openly embraced by elites. The turn to Armageddon has naturally resulted in detailed strategic planning, including large-scale redeployment of troops and nuclear weapons in regions chosen for their suitability for aggression against those powers perceived by Washington to be major impediments to U.S. dominance. Never before have such arrogant provocations been exercised.

Developments since the 1970s have unfolded as they would had the U.S. no nuclear weapons. We might as well not have them. Hence the current multi-billion-dollar new nuclear buildup. The credibility of the nuclear threat appears to have been permanently undermined. Deterrence is therefore no longer the rationale for nuclear weapons policy. The alter-

natives now are no use or first use. And no use is out of the question. Enter Hillary Clinton.

The Present in the Light of the Past

Elites no longer have the assurance that comes of perceived omnipotence. A number of setbacks have undermined Uncle Sam's conceit of omnipotence and motivated the U.S. to escalate enormously its global aggression in a delirious effort to intimidate its principal rivals and restore the credibility of the ultimate threat. Among these comedowns are the serial failure to achieve stated objectives in Vietnam, Iraq, Iran and Libya, the stated determination of some states to replace the dollar as a universal reserve currency, the acceptance by oil producers like Iraq, Iran and Libya of payment for oil in currencies other than the dollar, the emergence of non-state effective challengers to Washington's global predominance, such as the mujahideen, al Qaeda and ISIS and increasing talk of the formation of regional trade blocs discarding the dollar altogether in the blocs' trade and investment relations.

Clinton's notorious bellicosity is in part a cry of desperation at these seemingly intractable obstacles to FSD. Her overblown swagger betrays a sense of vulnerability and uncertainty that provokes lashing out, an especially dangerous impulse in a chief executive who appears constitutionally disposed to imperial brutality and pathologically assured of Washington's entitlement to global obeisance.

Clinton harbors a deep resentment of Washington's declining credibility. Her determination to demonstrate U.S. "resolve" in the context of present historic military provocations nurses a tendency to brinkmanship. If she experiences the variety of defeats and obstacles to U.S. economic and military hegemony the way elites perceived the profound defeats of the 1970s, and if these fetters seem to her unbreakable by conventional military means, the option of nuclear chicken presents itself as -and this is the word appropriate to a woman who has relished Gaddafi's murder by anal rape-delicious. John F. Kennedy will be invoked as a courageous leader whose readiness to risk Armageddon was testimony to the depth of America's commitment to freedom and democracy everywhere.

In the July 24 *New York Times*, the most widely read Clinton propaganda venue, the editorial board provides an indication of the likely chicken-inducing scenarios to come. The paper's comments are entirely in step with the frightening analyses of the think tanks discussed above. The *Times* is troubled that Trump is not as reliable a warhawk as Clinton. Obama had promised the far-right anti-Russian regimes in the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia U.S. military intervention, including troops on the ground, should any of these regimes allege Russian interference, e.g., defense of the rights of ethnic Russians. The *Times* regards Trump's reluctant willingness to go to war against "an increasingly aggressive" Russia on behalf of these states as unduly conditional on

their having "fulfilled their obligations" to the United States. This would, the *Times* fears, "play into the hands of Russia's president, Vladimir Putin," Washington's Hitler du jour. The newspaper is also distressed that Trump is unenthusiastic about the deployment of U.S. troops in Korea and Japan. This would "significantly reduce American influence at a time of increasing Chinese aggression."

Clinton has promised to continue the policies of Obama. Uh-oh. A recent front-page *Times* article reminds us that Obama "has now been at war longer than Mr. Bush, or any other American president...he will leave behind an improbable legacy as the only president in American history to serve two complete terms with the nation at war." This is a record seemingly impossible to surpass. I'm not so sure. Don't put anything martial past Mrs. Clinton. **CP**

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Hillary's Mother Complex LADY HRC

BY RUTH FOWLER

I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me.
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums
And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this.
—*Macbeth, Act 1, Scene 7*

When I think of Hillary Rodham Clinton, I think of a Republican who somehow joined the Democrats, perhaps understanding that her own ambitions would never be harnessed by her first choice of party. I think of a ruthless and effective careerist, one who understands the delicate chess game of politics with absolute fluency. I think of a woman who does not possess the same politics as me sure, but someone who understands, like me, what it is to work doggedly, persistently, much harder than her male counterparts, humiliatingly dependent on her intellectually inferior male partner for support and affirmation that yes, she's a real human being. We don't, it seems, get privileged white educated middle-aged females with ferocious ambition. We never have.

I rarely think of HRC in humanizing terms as "a mother and grandmother who'd do anything to help our children

thrive” HRC doesn’t pet dogs, cuddle babies, cry over the kids she helped destroy or let other little girls touch her hair to see if it’s the same as theirs. Perhaps this is because she really is as vile, heartless and evil as we all think, or perhaps this is because only men get to be beloved figures even while they drop bombs on little wide-eyed children in Pakistan and Syria, reneging on multiple campaign promises and failing to do anything that might curtail our relentless and swift descent into global terror.

Hillary is loathed across the board for her politics, held up as a prime example of neoliberal hypocrisy, claiming, on the one hand, to be fighting for the poor and the oppressed (low income families, children, oppressed racial groups, single mothers, AIDS victims), while protecting the interests of the oligarchy whom support her. I’m all for criticizing the establishment, but there always seems to be a suspension of disbelief in all criticisms of HRC, the idea that there is some kind of liberal nirvana to which our nominee should return. Forgive me if I’m wrong, but I don’t think this exists, and I don’t think HRC has ever been anything other than a Clinton centrist: one more dreadfully ambitious Dembot proving to us that the Democrats are really Republicans, and the Republicans are really minions running around squeaking about fetuses and muslims and other people’s taxes. In her 1996 book on the impacts and influences of children in America, *It Takes a Village*, Hillary admits as much, saying that “Most of us would describe ourselves as ‘middle of the road’—liberal in some areas, conservative in others, moderate in most, neither exclusively pro-nor anti-government.” Hillary’s dislike of the term ‘liberal’ and preference for the word ‘progressive’ is interesting, because she is neither liberal nor progressive - unless we are evaluating her as a Republican, and not as the Democrat she claims to be.

Hillary behaves like a man: an old white, conservative man who supports and protects the hand that feeds him, a “budget hawk” as Bruce Reid, co-founder of the Democratic Leadership Council, terms her stance towards big business. She’s never been radical. Neither has Obama. And neither, really, has Bernie, or even Elizabeth Warren. The American Conservative Union’s annual report “determining a Member of Congress’s dedication to conservative principles” by analyzing their voting record, places Hillary pretty much equal with Bernie, in 2014. Clearly, the ACU report and a congressman’s voting record demonstrates little but how one individual works within the party to sustain or counteract that party’s voting record. HRC may vote with the party, as does Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren. Given the Democrats are a centrist party, conservative party, and the Republicans are essentially a bunch of lunatics still hung up on fetuses and muslims, this doesn’t indicate much except that HRC embodies the current state of the Democratic Party.

I suppose when debating the small margin of difference between these candidates, what we are really looking at is

the bluster of an old white man who tried to pull off something a bit crazy, a bit Occupy, because he knew he was the outside bet. Hillary has spent years and years and years crafting and molding herself into the inside bet, the first female Presidential candidate. Women do not get the luxury of being the outside bet, because we already are the outside fucking bet. Instead, we have to do the female version of respectability politics. We have to grow balls, not because balls are better than ovaries, but because balls are what this country expects and needs from our candidates.

And having established that HRC is just one more old white male, they now need to reverse the sex change, plug the ovaries back in, and soften her a little, because everyone wants a President to be *likable*.

How do you like someone who doesn’t like you? Hillary is not a people person. Like most women who get shit done, she’s a bitch, a troll, a cunt, a ruthless, efficient meanie, sexless, the butt of jokes, ugly, failing to be it all because maybe she never made it to the fucking runway show to walk for Karl Lagerfeld as a size 0. She rarely gives interviews, and has been criticized for fixedly avoiding the press for the last seven or eight months. Given the press is usually hung up on her ovaries, her laugh, her weight, or her outfit, I can’t really blame her for that one. We are not often privy to much information about her fiercely guarded personal life, other than Facebook leaks from Chelsea’s friends who feel moved enough by a four line email any schmuck would write, to call HRC the next President of the United States. Also, she’s Chelsea’s mom and they go way back.

The Mom Card was really the only card left to play.

I wonder if HRC had Chelsea for many of the same reasons most people have kids: because it’s expected of them, because couples without children are considered ‘weird’ in our deeply traditional heteronormative two-parents-together society, because it is required for respectability. I don’t believe Bill when he claims that “For...17 years, through nursing school, Montessori, kindergarten, through T-ball, softball, soccer, volleyball and her passion for ballet, through sleepovers, summer camps, family vacations and Chelsea’s own very ambitious excursions, from Halloween parties in the neighborhood, to a Viennese waltz gala in the White House, Hillary first and foremost was a mother.”

What does this even mean? That Hillary quit her job to bake cookies? That she calmly lived off Bill’s wages until Chelsea hit 18 and went to college? That she put her ambition on hold? That she worked, but always left at 5pm to make sure Chelsea had a home-cooked meal?

Republican Party nominee Bob Dole’s response to Hillary’s book in his ’96 acceptance speech was typically sneering and reductive: “...it does not take a village to raise a child. It takes a family to raise a child.”

America is that family, and given HRC’s dreadful public image as a patriarch, we’re being asked to reimagine her as the

mother and grandmother she is in her private life, the mother to which she has never, ever allowed us access. HRC gives us the polished professional image. All of us who are mothers have been told, at some point in our professional careers, to pull it back. Don't mention the kids. Certainly don't mention if you're a single mom, because that's career suicide.

And yet here America is, now seemingly desperate to know that Hillary was a good mother, an empathic and compassionate mother, a mother who did not fail her daughter and husband and granddaughter in her rabid pursuit of power.

No one asked Barack if managed his time effectively in the White House so he never missed a school play or a soccer match. Everyone seemed to take for granted the role of President might have made him a less present father than before, and accepted this as a necessary evil, understanding that Michelle's role during this time was to pick up the slack, put her career on hold and be the perfect mother. I wonder how all these strong, intelligent women deal with being these smiling, perfect doormats for their husband's eight year terms. I wonder how hard it is to swallow the urge to push their own agenda during this time, use the press to say some-

never intended to be President, but that her natural role as mother, provider, caretaker, led her there.

Basically, after giving Hillary balls, America now wants her to be Mommy again.

While Hillary was promoting her book about children in America and how to raise them, her husband was fucking Monica Lewinsky. Sometimes I wonder if she stayed with Bill because they both realized they needed the conservative, happy solid family unit for both of their careers, and certainly for Hillary's next move. Divorce is still frowned upon. Single parents don't exist in government, unless by virtue of a be-reavement. Anyone who's been through the pain of infidelity knows what it takes to piece a marriage back together. I wonder what was the driving force. Ambition? As FLOTUS noted at the DNC this year, "there were plenty of moments when Hillary could have decided that this work was too hard, that the price of public service was too high, that she was tired of being picked apart for how she looks or how she talks or even how she laughs. But here's the thing – what I admire most about Hillary is that she never buckles under pressure. She never takes the easy way out. And Hillary Clinton has

After giving Hillary balls, America wants her to be a mommy again.

thing radical and liberating. Or maybe they are the Stepford Wives we know and adore.

This fictional 'little house on the prairie' narrative for HRC seems completely contrary to anything that 70s feminism espoused: the idea that women could have it all, and did not necessarily have to choose one role—the traditional role of wife and mother—above all others. But by placing so much emphasis on Hillary the homemaker, Hillary who 'casually' established early-education programs utilizing low income parents as educators for their own at-risk preschoolers in Arkansas and beyond ("She did all this while being a full-time worker, a mother and enjoying our life." Bill boasts) what we're being told by Michelle, by Bill, by Barack - is that actually, they know the dark conservative heart of America, and that heart wants to know Hillary fulfilled her ovarian duties as well as any stay-at-home mom before she dared to take to the public stage. America wants to know that Hillary's achievements, particularly those undertaken while Chelsea was young, were never achieved at the cost of being SuperMom, attending those parent-teacher evenings and ensuring her child got a healthy home cooked meal. America wants those successful early programs to be almost flippant, casual interventions started by a curious, bright young mother concerned about other children and other parents lacking her brilliance (and money). America wants to be reassured that Hillary

never quit on anything in her life."

I can guarantee that if Bill was within eye distance, he would have withered at this last, most pointed remark. Hillary never quit on her marriage. She never quit on her loser, asshole husband. If it hadn't been for HRC, Michelle is saying to all the women in the room, what would have happened to poor Chelsea with a father like that? We all know about *those* kids, with *those* dads. But maybe it was the moms who didn't try hard enough. Maybe every single mother across America just didn't take the slap like Hillary did. Is that a good or a bad thing?

"With every word we utter, with every action we take, we know our kids are watching us. We as parents are their most important role models. "Michelle continues, twisting the knife and layering on the respectability politics. Hillary is the role model we want. A good mother, a good grandmother—this is the source of her power and her potential to be President.

What is a great mother? Is a great mother someone who steadfastly adheres to societal expectations and incrementally pushes away at given boundaries, always making sure that she never gives the patriarchy any reason to undermine her? Is a great mother a woman who keeps the family together, avoiding the pariah status of 'single mother' which always carries the loaded implication that the mother, in some way, invited or deserved her abandonment by embodying those attri-

butes we despise in women: nagging, unforgiving, demanding, unsexy, a woman whose inability to combine beauty with obedience and unswerving devotion is the reason for her fallen status? Is a great mother simply someone who is blessed with a supportive partner who allows her to be better than her peers with their less-virile males? Is a great mother someone who could make a Sophie's Choice between her own child and the state of the nation?

We always talk about parenting as if it's so fraught with difficult decisions, but really, it's not. Children need love, affection, food and comfort. If you're keeping them in a cage in their own fecal matter, you're probably doing it wrong. What makes parenting so difficult is our adult brains, addled by experience and faulty coping mechanisms and confusion, overthinking, overanalyzing, justifying our fuck ups, ashamed of our failures, gloriously relieved when our children make it to adulthood without any felonies or skeletons in the closet.

Is Hillary Rodham Clinton a great mother?

Honestly, I don't fucking care. She's a Democrat. She'll be like the rest of them - except she worked harder to get there, and probably had way more mental scars along the way. **CP**

RUTH FOWLER is a journalist and screenwriter living in Los Angeles. She's the author of *Girl Undressed*.

Where Do Environmental Groups Stand on Bioenergy?

BY JOSH SCHLOSSBERG

One-quarter of renewable energy in the U.S. in 2015 came from wind (21%) and solar (6%), according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Meanwhile, 43% was from generated from bioenergy, combusting trees, crops, manure, and trash for electricity and/or heat, or converting these materials into liquid transportation fuels.

So where do the nation's largest and most influential environmental groups stand on bioenergy, the largest source of renewables?

CounterPunch contacted representatives for the following organizations (listed alphabetically) to determine their stances on biomass power and heating, liquid biofuels for transportation, and trash incineration: 350*, Center for Biological Diversity, Environmental Working Group, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, National Wildlife Federation*, Natural Resources Defense Council, Rainforest Action Network, Sierra Club, and Stand (formerly Forest Ethics).

*350 and National Wildlife Federation representatives didn't respond to repeated inquiries, so organizational platforms are based on information found online.

350

350 is one of the nation's leading environmental groups working on climate change, with its advocacy focused on transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy. Since 80% of the U.S.' energy consumption is generated from fossil fuels, 350's vision involves a significant increase in renewable energy. With nearly half of renewables consisting of bioenergy, 350's position is extremely relevant.

The organization's Break Free From Fossil Fuels campaign declares the need to "keep coal, oil and gas in the ground and accelerate the just transition to 100% renewable energy," yet includes no specific mention of bioenergy.

A search for the term "biomass" on 350's website brings up several blog posts related to bioenergy from around the world, but no platform on the energy source.

K.C. Golden is Board Chair of 350. In 2013, as Senior Policy Advisor to Climate Solutions, Golden testified in front of the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, saying: "Wind, waves, biomass, and hydropower are all solar-derived energy sources. Technology for converting these resources to usable heat and electricity is widely available now, at costs that are already competitive with fossil fuels in many applications."

When speaking of the development of renewable energy sources in the Pacific Northwest, Golden alluded to bioenergy: "These historic and new clean energy commitments are vital to the region's economy. They support our existing manufacturing and industrial base, including global leaders in aviation, wood products, and materials."

Golden also testified that "the availability and feasibility of climate solutions at scale is thoroughly documented," referring to a document entitled "Pathways to a Low-Carbon Economy," which advocates for various forms of bioenergy.

Whether Golden's position on bioenergy on behalf of Climate Solutions is shared by 350 is unclear.

Center for Biological Diversity

Center for Biological Diversity doesn't have a "formal stance on bioenergy," according to Kevin Bundy, Senior Attorney. However, the organization works on getting "government officials and industry proponents to confront [the] climate and ecological realities," of bioenergy, which has led CBD to "oppose a number of regulatory exemptions, subsidies, and specific facilities."

CBD doesn't categorically oppose all forms of bioenergy, however Bundy explains that "pretty much all of the bioenergy proposals we've seen come along with unacceptable adverse impacts, including impacts to the climate, forest ecology, land use, air quality, public health, and even food security."

While the carbon neutrality of bioenergy "can never be assumed," Bundy allows that a biomass facility's carbon emissions might theoretically be "offset by new growth or avoided

decomposition in a relatively short amount of time.” Despite this possibility, he hasn’t seen an on-the-ground example of this.

Not only do biomass power facilities and trash incinerators “emit huge quantities of greenhouse gases,” they also “present serious concerns with respect to local air pollution.”

While acknowledging the relative efficiency improvements of combined heat and power biomass facilities compared to stand alone electric facilities, Bundy says “climate and air quality concerns remain.”

Residential wood heating can also “result in serious air quality problems.”

When it comes to ethanol, Bundy says most forms, from corn ethanol to advanced biofuels, don’t “appear to reliably reduce greenhouse gas emissions, particularly when land use changes are taken into account.”

Environmental Working Group

Environmental Working Group (EWG) “supports the development of sustainable biofuels that reduce carbon pollution without damaging air and water quality,” according to Emily Cassidy, research analyst for the organization.

Wary of corn ethanol, EWG believes the “most promising biofuels are made from cellulosic and waste feedstocks.”

The organization pushes for a reform of the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS), which mandates a percentage of biofuels added to conventional gasoline, to “prevent further environmental destruction from corn ethanol and to ensure fuels made from waste and cellulosic feedstocks are being properly incentivized.”

So far, Cassidy says the RFS has mostly encouraged corn ethanol production that “has incentivized farmers to plow up grasslands and wetlands to grow more corn.”

Regarding air pollution, EWG’s position is that “the production and use of corn ethanol generates more harmful air pollutants such as particulate matter and ozone than straight petroleum.”

While acknowledging that all forms of energy—from coal to wind—require tradeoffs in land use, Cassidy says that, “bioenergy, especially corn ethanol, is one of the most land-intensive forms of energy we use on a daily basis.”

On the trash front, EWG believes that “using trash for fuel has great potential to reduce carbon pollution from transportation.”

EWG and 10 other environmental groups are signatories to a document called “Principles for Sustainable Biomass,” which outlines the specific instances in which the organizations would support tax incentives and other policies to generate more biomass energy.

“Biomass should be grown, sourced, and utilized only in appropriate scales, places, and manners,” according to the document. It would also place enforceable limits on what types of biomass sources and facilities can be incentivized.”

EWG and the other signatories want to ensure that “public biomass incentives protect core environmental values and genuinely reduce greenhouse gas emissions.” The types of biomass energy they would endorse would be “energy efficient” and “require sustainable procurement.”

Friends of the Earth

Friends of the Earth (FOE) “does not believe that we can use bioenergy on the large scale contemplated by the bioenergy industry without creating massive ecological impacts, especially on forests.”

Michelle Chan, Vice President of Programs for Friends of the Earth, explains that corn ethanol, the vast majority of liquid biofuels in the U.S., “relies on the chemical-intensive industrial monocultures that epitomize some of the worst aspects of our agriculture system.” She adds that FOE has “has successfully fought efforts in the U.S. to allow palm oil to qualify as under the Renewable Fuels Standard.”

Chan also cautions “many of the so-called advanced biofuels would be even worse” than corn ethanol, since they often utilize the “same unsustainable agricultural models.” Further, the use of genetically engineered crops and organisms “pose[s] unacceptable levels of environmental risk.”

FOE is a signatory to the “Principles for Sustainable Biomass” document supporting tax incentives for certain forms of bioenergy.

Greenpeace

“Currently, policies that incentivize bioenergy production have negative effects on the climate and natural ecosystems, particularly forests, primarily because most land is managed unsustainably,” according to Daniel Brindis, Greenpeace USA’s Senior Campaigner for Forests.

“Bioenergy can only be ecologically sound if it comes from responsible and sustainable sources, farming practices and land use.”

Greenpeace calls for “extreme caution” when it comes to policies expanding the use of bioenergy. It only supports bioenergy that doesn’t “further destroy or degrade ecosystems...[that] maintains or enhances soil fertility and carbon stocks, and avoids competition with food, feed and materials production.”

When it comes to large-scale bioenergy, there are “few instances” in which it’s sustainable, says Brindis. Corn ethanol and municipal solid waste incineration do “not score well” either, though biogas capture from waste “can be done responsibly.”

The types of bioenergy Greenpeace is most likely to support include: sewage sludge, black liquor from paper mills, methane capture at landfills, and used cooking oil.

“Under very specific narrow conditions and uses,” Greenpeace may support the use of the following sources to generate bioenergy: agricultural residues, tree planta-

tion thinnings, short rotation, fast-growing tree coppicing, sawmill residues, straw, manure, tallow, pits and shells, demolition wood, palm kernel shell, palm oil effluent, and wet municipal organic waste.

Greenpeace believes that policies shouldn't automatically assume carbon neutrality for bioenergy as they often leave out emissions from land use change. The only time biomass can be carbon neutral is if its "net direct and indirect emissions are taken into account."

Greenpeace is a signatory to "Principles for Sustainable Biomass."

National Wildlife Federation

National Wildlife Federation's (NWF) Sustainable Bioenergy webpage establishes the organization's perspective on bioenergy.

NWF believes that biofuels and bioenergy "can be used to produce some of our electricity and liquid fuels, and should be part of the solution to global warming pollution." The group is "involved in a number of initiatives to ensure that the next generation of biofuels and biomass energy can be used to help curb global warming, while produced in a sustainable manner."

Collaborating with the forest products industry allows NWF to "identify the proper balance between forest-derived woody biomass fuel and sustainable forest management."

NWF's most comprehensive document on the subject is called *Growing A Green Energy Future: A Primer and Vision for Sustainable Biomass Energy*.

While wary of first generation biofuels, such as corn ethanol, NWF states that it has "created a technical foundation" for more advanced biofuels. This next generation of biofuel has the "potential to deliver much higher levels of benefits than those derived from grain crops."

NWF is optimistic of the climate benefits of some forms of bioenergy. "When done right, biomass for energy achieves a balance or even a net gain of carbon dioxide taken in by plants, versus the carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases released in production and combustion."

However, the organization also has its critique, saying, "when biomass energy is done wrong, it can release more greenhouse gases than are absorbed by subsequent biomass crops, just as with corn and soy."

NWF supports some uses of biomass to generate electricity, such as beetle-killed forests, saying, "a one-time harvest of dead trees may supply fuel for biomass power plants or other energy uses for 25 years."

Biomass from "thinning operations, logging and wood processing may have huge potential for bioenergy production," but only when "harvested sustainably."

So far as utilizing trash for energy, NWF supports "technology to produce energy from mixed, post recycled, waste streams."

NWF points out that economic security is vital for the future expansion of bioenergy, explaining that "a secure market for biomass for fuels and/or power must be developed for the long term in order to drive the investments needed to develop the industry."

The Renewable Fuels Standard helps achieve this goal, as would a federal Renewable Electricity Standard, which NWF says is "needed to create a secure market for biomass for power and heat."

When it comes to liquid biofuels, NWF estimates that under the "most aggressive scenarios," biomass may make up "up to a third of U.S. transportation fuel use."

NWF signed on to the "Principles for Sustainable Biomass."

Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)

NRDC's work on bioenergy "focuses primarily on the use of biomass originating in forests for electricity generation," according to Sasha Stashwick, Senior Advocate, Energy & Transportation and Food & Agriculture Programs.

NRDC teamed up with North Carolina-based Dogwood Alliance to launch the "Our Forests Aren't Fuel" campaign, focused primarily on opposing logging of southeastern U.S. forests to convert into wood pellets to fuel U.K. biomass power facilities.

Stashwick points to research concluding that "most forest biomass is not carbon neutral and that burning trees in power plants increases carbon emissions relative to fossil fuels for many decades, anywhere from 35 to 100 years or more."

"In some instances," NRDC believes that "industrial waste, such as black liquor, can be low-carbon sources of bioenergy."

Additionally, some fast-growing energy crops "have the potential to reduce net carbon emissions within a relatively short timeframe."

Stashwick says corn ethanol helped with the transition away from fossil fuels, "but it came at an extremely high environmental cost to our soils and watersheds, and too often failed to deliver promised emissions reductions."

NRDC "believes low-carbon liquid fuels are an essential component of the effort to reduce fossil fuel use in the transportation sector," mostly for aviation and "heavy duty transportation sectors" where electricity can't be used.

However, for NRDC to support these biofuels, they must provide carbon emission reductions and other sustainability standards, such as limiting "adverse impacts on food security, land, water, air, wildlife, and local communities."

The organization's 2013 Biomass Platform cautions about logging whole trees for stand-alone biomass energy facilities, while accepting that "small-scale use of wood waste and residues for energy could play a role in addressing future energy needs."

NRDC supports the "Principles for Sustainable Biomass."

Concerning public health, NRDC believes that "burning biomass for electricity generates dangerous air pollution."

NRDC opposes the use of municipal solid waste for energy production.

Rainforest Action Network

Rainforest Action Network has “not developed any formal positions” on biomass energy from forests or other forms of bioenergy, according to Christopher Herrera, Director of Communications.

Herrera says the organization has partnered with organizations working on bioenergy in some instances, however RAN is “focused on continuing to pressure the financial industry to abandon support for extreme fossil fuel extraction projects and the national effort to end the extraction of fossil fuels on public lands.”

Since the opposition to fossil fuels implies support for renewable energy, RAN’s position on the single largest source of renewables is significant.

Jodie Evans, member of RAN’s board of directors and co-founder of Code Pink, wrote a piece in March 2016 entitled “Building a Local Peace Economy: We Have the Power.” In the article, Evans wrote: “In most states, there is the option to switch electric providers to buy from renewable sources such as wind, solar, hydro and biomass, rather than coal, gas, oil and nuclear.”

Board member Michael Northrop is Program Director for the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. The Rockefeller Brothers Fund has provided grants to various organizations and campaigns promoting biomass energy, including 25x25.

In a September 2014 article in the Huffington Post entitled “Forging a Climate Agreement May Have Just Gotten Easier”, Northrop wrote: “Getting to carbon neutral in the urban built environment is a two-step process...The second step is to provide clean electricity and hot water, ideally from onsite renewable energy systems (solar, wind, geothermal, biomass).”

It’s unclear whether Evans’ and Northrop’s statements on bioenergy reflect the position of RAN as an organization or if they are merely personal opinions.

Sierra Club

Sierra Club Climate Policy Director Liz Perera says that many claims of sustainability and carbon neutrality for bioenergy are “untrue.”

“Air pollution, water pollution, land degradation, health impacts, and the increased direct and indirect emissions of greenhouse gases are all serious risks that must be considered with bioenergy.”

“While small-scale biomass operations might show greenhouse gas neutrality over a period of decades,” larger scale bioenergy carries more baggage.

Sierra Club asserts that “any biomass included in Clean Power Plan implementation must have include extremely strict greenhouse gas accounting mechanisms.”

Perera brings up “threats to public health by releasing fine

particulate pollution into the air.”

Sierra Club signed on to NRDC’s 2013 “Biomass Platform” opposing biomass electricity from whole trees and supporting small-scale biomass from wood waste and residues.

Stand (formerly Forest Ethics)

“Bioenergy is bad for forests, fish and wildlife, and biodiversity,” says Jim Ace, Healthy Forest Campaigner for Stand. “Natural forests cannot meet the soaring global demand for fuel for power.”

Stand “opposes burning forests for electricity” due to its forest and climate impacts, saying, “burning wood for energy pumps more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than natural gas and coal.”

The organization won’t support “biomass projects that have a net negative impact on the health of local communities, forests, fish and wildlife, air and water quality, and the climate.”

However, Ace points to research suggesting that “if sawmill residuals are exclusively used, [biomass energy] may be closer to ‘carbon neutral.’”

Stand’s position on liquid biofuels is that “the widespread conversion of native forests and croplands for biofuels production threatens both biodiversity and human food supplies.”

Stand signed on to NRDC’s 2013 “Biomass Platform” opposing biomass electricity from whole trees and supporting small-scale biomass from wood waste and residues.

Conclusions

Each of the ten large environmental organizations most active on bioenergy critique some forms of bioenergy (mostly whole trees for biomass electricity and corn ethanol), while supporting or having no position on the majority of biomass energy (commercial, industrial, and residential heating).

Liquid transportation fuels make up of 27% of bioenergy in the U.S., nearly all of which is sourced from corn.

Biomass power generates 11% of bioenergy in the U.S., sourced from manufacturing residues, post-consumer waste, urban and agricultural wood waste, and thinnings and residues from logging operations, mostly tree tops and limbs.

While biomass power facilities will burn whole trees—typically small, crooked, knotty, or rotten trees unsuitable for lumber production—based on field observations and conversations with foresters and loggers, whole trees likely only make up a fraction of the fuel source.

Still, the vast majority of the public debate and news coverage around bioenergy focuses on the opposition by large environmental organizations to burning whole trees for biomass electricity and concerns with an expansion of this practice.

While several of the profiled organizations bring up concerns with air pollution, only Center for Biological Diversity mentions specific issues with wood heating (62% of bioen-

ergy), which typically employs less pollution controls than biomass power facilities, and in the case of residential, school and hospital heating, exposes more people to air emissions.

CP

JOSH SCHLOSSBERG edits *The Biomass Monitor*.

Under Siege in the Class War Progressive Isn't Enough

BY ANDREW SMOLSKI

We are experiencing déjà vu, although this time as farce. The country is mired in a decades-long crisis made possible by a one-sided capitalist siege upon workers. Farce as opposed to tragedy, because this time as Noam Chomsky monotonously explains, “the other side hadn’t chosen to participate...the union leadership had for years pursued a policy of making a compact with the corporations... [and] it wouldn’t engage the general class structure.” The class struggle wages on, almost as if unbeknownst to the majority, who as Marx said, “know not what they do, but they are doing it”; in this case, reproducing their weakened position in the class struggle.

And so I repeat, y’all, we’ve been here before. The assault we face today is one we’ve faced before. From history certain poignant lessons can be pulled that help us to understand how we arrived on the losing end of a class war. By studying the past, we can draw lessons on how to strategize going forward, pitfalls to avoid, successes to replicate. Recognize, you don’t just poof and appear in what the Economic Policy Institute says is a 35-year trend of increasing wage inequality, stagnation, and decline for the laboring majority. For the top 1 percent to own 90%, well, you’ve got to have a coordinated attack.

How did we move from nearly full employment to the “new normal” of chronically high unemployment, making 9.7% of the workforce a reserve army of the un(der)employed? How did union membership end up at 11.1 percent from its high of almost 35% in the 1950s? How did we move from militancy to acquiescence, from a position of relative power, to being subordinated foot soldiers in abusive alliances?

In broaching this history critically, I want to open up a larger strategy chat about the alliances we, as political beings, make in advancing our cause. Not just any political beings, but as revolutionary anarchists, socialists, and communists who seek multiple better worlds. If our purpose is an end to capitalism, the question is: have our alliances aided in that endeavor? Or, have our alliances led us into to cul-de-sacs, where once trapped, we, the ungovernable, are picked off and dismantled?

I argue that over the long-term, the gains made from

these alliances have been largely illusory, that they have led us to dead ends and a weak tactical position. The revolutionary left’s reformist partners, Progressivism and Business Unionism, have played principle roles in creating these conditions through its paradigm of “saving capitalism”.

As such, I think a certain amount of ire should be directed at the Progressive movement. For in American history, it has been Progressivism and the co-opted unions that have been the fair-weather friends who can get you killed, imprisoned, or purged exactly at the moment solidarity and loyalty are necessary for survival. And while an argument can be put forward that Progressive compromises won us concessions from the capitalist class, these have been shown in the long-term to have certain characteristics that make them as fleeting as a firefly’s flicker. In the end, Progressivism has produced largely conservative compromises, built around sustaining and deepening corporate control over the economy rather than supplanting it. With friends like these...

The Progressive Era, Business, and Empire

Progressivism begins its rise as part of the general late 19th- and early 20th-century rebellion against capitalism’s brutal script for increasing productivity and dispossession of the working class. Historian Gabriel Kolko in his *The Triumph of Conservatism* defines, “Progressivism [as] initially a movement for the political rationalization of business and industrial conditions, a movement that operated on the assumption that the general welfare of the community could be best served by satisfying the concrete needs of business.” Kolko goes on to point out that this was part of the “utilization of political outlets to attain conditions of stability, predictability, and security” for the benefit of the capitalist class and their corporate organizations. Kolko is then turning the dominant belief about Progressivism on its head, from a movement against business to a movement *with* business.

An illustrative example of the cozy relationship between Progressive politicians and business is the case of President Theodore Roosevelt and U.S. Steel, J.P. Morgan’s corporation. Roosevelt, the Bureau of Corporations, and many Congress members, treated U.S. Steel as a “good trust”, even allowing it to expand its control over the ore-processing market through the purchase of Tennessee Coal and Iron in 1907. Roosevelt’s deferral to the supposed beneficent of Morgan’s “autocratic and paternalistic” organization was part of a personal relationship between the parties. Kolko reproduces the cutout part of a letter U.S. Steel co-founder Elbert H. Gary sent to Secretary of War Elihu Root in which Gary writes that “The President was also kind enough to state generally his favorable opinion of our Corporation and its management as ascertained by reports from the Department of Commerce and otherwise.”

As you can see, the trust-buster Roosevelt, while not totally a myth, has largely been the creation of high school history

textbooks. Worse yet, Roosevelt forged the Progressives' century-long imperial dalliance with the military. After the 1891 Census Bureau announcement ending the genocidal expansion of the U.S. from the Atlantic to the Pacific, historian and professor of Ethnic Studies Ronald Takaki states that the United States transitioned into a truly worldwide Imperial power. Takaki explains that the bellicose military strategy of Navy Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan, who called for American colonies and massive expansion of the navy, was a primary framework through which Roosevelt saw American power expressing itself in the world. Roosevelt then represents the centrist, conciliatory roots of Progressivism towards capitalism and empire, as opposed to the Progressive legend of opposition.

There were wings of Progressivism that during times when no social penalty would be levied against them for doing so would join in with the social opposition. This because Progressivism was not just powerful politicians, but also linked to social movements and unions attempting to direct the anger and struggle in reformist directions. That's to say, it would be false to characterize Progressivism as a purely conservative affair devoid of empathy for the working class.

As historian Jacob Kramer writes, "Progressivism was an effort to expand the capacities of the state to address the problems of class conflict, poverty, corruption, and immorality that accompanied the rise of big business." This was not meant to affect a systemic change, but rather to mitigate the harm caused by the capitalist system, along with nascent America Imperialism. As Kramer goes on to say, "Like liberal reformers of the 1870s and 1880s, such as E. L. Godkin and Grover Cleveland, progressives were opposed to open class conflict and to the revolutionary expropriation of private property." It is because of this reformist, and anti-revolutionary position that Progressivism established "the acceptable limits... regarding radical propaganda, organization, and strike behavior and the institutions they developed for managing these activities became established law and policy for the rest of the twentieth century and beyond."

These limits meant that socialism would largely be excluded by Progressives, or when invoked was really a camouflaged social democracy/liberalism expressed through the rhetoric of radicalism. Woodrow Wilson famously called himself a radical in the years before enacting the Sedition Act in 1918, which subsequently led to the jailing of Socialist and labor organizer Eugene V. Debs and aiding and abetting the brutal repression of the International Workers of the World (IWW; Wobblies). Scores of revolutionaries were locked up in Leavenworth Penitentiary, Big Bill Haywood and others fled to Russia, and the Progressive-Conservative purge churned along.

The larger union movement, represented by organizations like the American Federation of Labor (AFL), was largely anti-socialist, as sociologists Gary Marks, Heather A. D.

Mbaye, and Hyung Min Kim note. They go on to point out that this led to a much more radical Socialist Party, however one that did not become a mass labor movement, nor a national political party, as in England or France. A key founder of the AFL, Samuel Gompers, actively sought to weed out socialists and revolutionary syndicalist from the labor movement, a precursor to the purges to come.

Instead, the larger labor movement largely focused on a strategy of business unionism, party partisanship, support for war, and expanding the power of the state. This made them a vested part of what sociologist Allan Schnaiberg calls the growth coalition, whereby they needed economic growth just as much as the capitalists and the state, making it even harder to break the cycle of capitalist reform and reaction.

A New Deal for a Union Turns into a Military

The New Deal Era repeated much of the Progressive Era's formula for alliances; radical when easy and convenient, conservative when necessary to protect capital and empire and during times of reaction. The alliance between a faction of labor, business, and the Democrats, especially in the north, would continue the centrist reforms that became the hallmark of the post-World War II-era. These reforms were the result of high-levels of class struggle, which pushed, as economist Richard Wolff likes to elaborate, the actually conservative President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to adopt a more Keynesian, socially liberal politics.

This occurred even though leading up to the New Deal Era union membership levels were still very low. But, there was a high level of militant activity in the form of work slow-downs, wildcat strikes, and protest. Economic conditions post-Black Tuesday were altogether deteriorating. The pitched conflict between capitalists, the state, and the Progressive-socialist alliance forced some important concessions; like Social Security, the National Labor Relations Act, and a progressive income tax with a top tax rate of 94%. These policies opened up an autonomous space for the working class giving a more offensive position. Yet, there was still the conservative path dependence of the union movement and its alliance with the Democrats and business.

What I mean to say is that these reforms did not embolden the movement, but instead "modernized" it, as Anatole Dolgoff argues in *Left of the Left*. They brought labor directly into the fold, a co-opted entity, rather than one in militant opposition. The labor bureaucracy was now a participant in the great American power structure, a supporter of empire, and predominantly anti-revolutionary, anti-communist, anti-anarchist, anti-socialism.

People's historian Howard Zinn argued that the labor movement just prior to the Progressive era, especially the more militant sectors, was anti-war. They saw war as aiding capitalist power entrench itself further and further. In those most dazzling moments of clarity it was understood that

to go to war was to attack our fellow working class brothers and sisters in the worldwide struggle against capitalism. Sadly, by the time of the New Deal, the 180 degree turn was complete, and military Keynesianism with its massive investment in the military-industrial complex had become the predominant plan for the “American Century”. As Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy argue convincingly, it was this military investment with public money that finally spurred the U.S. economy out of the depression, not the New Deal. The health of the economy and state was war, and labor got behind that dynamic.

This was part of the U.S. becoming-empire, and throughout the Progressive and New Deal eras, “the relative strength of the United States grew more or less continuously at the expense of both allies and enemies”. Progressives and labor were avid boosters of “American Exceptionalism”, which sociologists Gregory Hooks and Brian McQueen argue turned out to be a highly counter-productive position, as “militarism and expansion of national security agencies undermined congressional support... [contributing to] underdevelopment of the welfare state and abandonment of universal social welfare

became collaborationists with the national socialists, just like “yellow” unions in Mexico aided in instituting a corporatist state repressing actual labor struggle. In the U.S., the Progressive and labor movements also function as open collaborators with state and capital, endorsed only slight improvements to the conditions of working peoples’ lives as a concession for the further entrenchment of concentrated power.

Contemporary Weakness and the Continuing Failures of Progressivism

I’ve been arguing that the groundwork for our current condition was laid by the compromises made in the past and the alliances revolutionaries were (and were not) a part of. The question critically reflexive Progressives should ask themselves is, how did they ever expect to have a stronger position considering how quickly they are to demean themselves and just take what has been forced upon us as a series of worse options?

While these historical alliances and accommodations are crucial to understanding our weakness, our contemporary

The Clintons have turned access to the U.S. government into a business opportunity netting them at least \$110 million over the course of their thirty-plus-year careers.

programs in the United States.”

Thus, it is clear that the meager benefits of American capitalism that accrued to labor from the bargain between labor and capital arbitrated by the state were won by becoming willing accomplices in the fight against world socialism as an alter-hegemonic project. During an interview, sociologist Paul Heideman called out the roots of the AFL-CIO in the right-wing of the Labor movement that was cemented into a state project of military Keynesianism and empire. The AFL-CIO under the right-wing leadership of George Meany became what Heideman labels the AFL-CIA as it supported the espionage activities of the “rogue agency”. Further, the labor movement at times aided and abetted the Red Scare 2.0 of McCarthy in weeding out radical elements from their ranks, which meant purging some of their best organizers, as well as the alter-ideology that makes possible militant, radical change.

All of this also points to a highly important argument made by philosopher Jacques Ranciere about how we stage a people: we imagine them as revolutionary, and lose track of their concrete existence. There is nothing essential about labor or Progressivism that makes it automatically a Left project. In France under Nazi Occupation, sectors of labor

period of reaction does have a more recent starting point, when the capitalist class truly launched its post-World War II counterattack. Marxist geographer David Harvey puts the beginning of this siege in the 1970s. This is when we see the share of income going to the top .1% begin its drastic increase from 2 percent to 8 percent in 2008. Over this period, the triumvirate of Keynesianism-unionism-welfare was slowly and deliberately ripped from the hands of the working class, the hard-won autonomy turned into a folklore and whispers of better days.

What we have now is a world where 62 people have wealth equivalent to 3,500,000,000 people, where 14.8% of the country lives in poverty, where 48.1 million Americans live in food insecure households, where welfare cash assistance is no more, turned into a punitive work program á la arbeit macht frei, and on and on. It is within this milieu that the Congressional Progressive Caucus was founded, during the harsh neoliberal era. They are the closest to a left-wing party that the United States has in both houses of Congress, and actually can only claim one member in the Senate. And they are, as their past brethren, just as conciliatory, just as spineless, just as anti-revolutionary.

So, with the 2016 election upon us, it becomes very impor-

tant to demonstrate that progressive isn't enough, especially when it's political representatives are so willing to support neoliberal and neoconservative candidates due to party partisanship. For me, son of a carpenter and retail worker, the most damning criticism of Sen. Bernard "Bernie" Sanders and the Congressional Progressive Caucus are their capitulation to the Democrats after so many betrayals of the working class. For me, resident serf at one of America's corporatized factory farms of knowledge, it is to recognize that at a time when solar flares of direct action are needed, we've become so complacent as to take anything but the *Oompa Loompa*.

Hillary Clinton is the representative par excellence of the transnational capitalist order. Along with Bill, they've turned access to the U.S. government into a business opportunity netting them at least 110 million USD over the course of their dirty thirty-plus-year careers. We know the Clinton Foundation brings together politicians, capitalists, cadres of the NGO faithful, and that twit Bono to be the embodiment of John Lennon's lyrics, "There's room at the top they're telling you still / But first you must learn how to smile as you kill / If you want to be like the folks on the hill". If you carry with you the fantastical notion that we are going to carry out the counterpunch with these incredulous people, then I have a bag of oregano to get you high.

Criticizing Progressives and their disgusting support for a plethora of immoral acts should temper the "lesser evil" crowd whose chorus crows louder, their 4-year hope meter overheating. Instead, it appears that at this crucial juncture the ghosts of socialism, communism, and anarchism are absent. Their hours were originally cut in 1947 with the Taft-Hartley Act. Almost all specters were laid off by 1989. Although, a few, spry hauntings have occurred since, such as in 1994, 1999, and 2011. Hopes of a séance to bring them back to haunt the bourgeois order once more were quickly abandoned in 2016, as time was spent trying to enroll people in becoming bourgeois boosters under the banner of "revolution".

In the end, what must die is the belief that America will fix itself through reform. To the barricades comrades, the Progressives will not save us. **CP**

ANDREW SMOLSKI is a writer and sociologist.

Life in America's Japanese Internment Camps

The House We Live In

BY LEE BALLINGER

"I remember vividly a patriotic song, sung in 1942 by Frank Sinatra, called "The House I Live In." The song ends, "All races and religions/That's America to me." That popular

song was made into a short film that was played in most every theater in the country. But while it was playing, 120,000 American Japanese were incarcerated in camps on barren desert land and swamps from California to Arkansas." So writes Richard Reeves in his excellent new book, *Infamy: The Shocking Story of the Japanese American Internment in World War II* (Picador).

The camps holding Japanese Americans had been filled by a nationwide military/police dragnet worthy of the Gestapo. Families were separated. Even Japanese infants were evacuated from their homes and placed in camps, as were children adopted by Caucasian parents and orphans. Hospital patients were kept under military guard until they were well enough to survive the trip to the camps.

The only way to prevent being torn from your community and placed in an internment camp was to die. World War I veteran Hideo Murata, upon learning that he and other Japanese Americans would be put in concentration camps, rented a hotel room and shot himself in the head, holding in his hand a certificate of appreciation from the Monterey County board of supervisors for his military service.

Camp conditions were literally bestial--in one case Japanese Americans were forced to live in manure-filled horse stables. Death was always nearby, both from poor conditions and a lack of medical care and from trigger-happy armed guards.

For example, on May 24, 1944, Private Bernard Goe shot Shoichi James Okamoto at the internment camp in Tule Lake, California. Okamoto died within 24 hours. Goe was court martialed and acquitted of manslaughter. "He was fined one dollar," Reeves writes, "for unauthorized use of government property. The bullet."

Shiro Kashino was among the U.S. forces which entered Dachau. He had joined the army from an internment camp and when he saw the barbed wire surrounding rows of huts he said, "This is exactly what they had built for us in Idaho."

It's not really surprising that all this could happen in a democracy, since American democracy has always been mainly limited to those who own property. The property of Japanese Americans was confiscated, along with their bodies and their souls, so they had no rights. This happened at the order of America's most liberal president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and was approved by the Supreme Court. ACLU founding director Roger Baldwin, a friend of Roosevelt, wrote to the organization's local branches on behalf of the ACLU national board: "Local committees are not to sponsor cases in which the position is taken that the government has no constitutional right to remove citizens from military areas." To be clear, practically the entire state of California was considered a "military area."

Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy explained away the incarceration of 120,000 citizens by saying that "the Constitution is just a piece of paper to me." Yes, indeed.

After the war McCloy headed up a host of undemocratic institutions which allowed no input from the millions of people who were affected by their policies. Those entities included the World Bank, Chase Manhattan, and the Council on Foreign Relations. McCloy also served on the Warren Commission.

The excuse given for putting a significant chunk of innocent American people behind barbed wire was that they were a threat to national security. Yet Lieutenant Commander Kenneth Ringle of the Office of Naval Intelligence said that after “careful investigation on both the West Coast and Hawaii, there was never a shred of evidence found of sabotage, subversive acts, spying, or Fifth Column activity on the part of the Nisei or long-time local residents.”

Despite the internment, Japanese Americans were an integral part of the U.S. military effort. On the day Pearl Harbor was attacked there were 3,188 Nisei, Americans born of Japanese immigrants, in the U.S. armed forces. The 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the celebrated Japanese American “Go For Broke” unit, received more than 18,000 individual decorations, the highest number per capita of any unit in the army. At the Battle of Midway, Japanese American codebreakers played an essential role in the overwhelming defeat administered to the Imperial Japanese Navy.

Given that only a few hundred Germans were arrested in the United States despite the fact that the pro-Nazi German American Bund had 40,000 members, it’s tempting to ascribe the fate of 120,000 Japanese Americans simply to racism. There certainly was a lot of it. Richard Reeves offers a litany of examples:

- In 1924 Congress passed the Immigration Act, which excluded all Asian immigration by reinstating a 1790 naturalization law that reserved citizenship for “free white persons of good character.”
- Elsie Robinson, a San Francisco Examiner columnist, wrote that she would “slit the throat” of any internee who attempted to return to California.
 - The Home Front Commandoes distributed brochures entitled “SLAP THE JAP: No Jap is Fit to Associate With Human Beings.”
- Wyoming governor Nels Smith said: “If you bring the Japanese into my state, I promise you they will be hanging from every tree.”
- California attorney general Earl Warren was a member of the whites-only Native Sons of the Golden West. He rode the anti-Japanese tide to the governorship of California,
- California officeholders were joined by politicians from all over the country, especially Southerners. “This is a race war,” said Representative John Rankin of Mississippi. “It is of vital importance that we get rid of every Japanese...Damn them!”
- Congressman Jed Johnson of Oklahoma demanded the sterilization of all American Japanese. President

Roosevelt, in conversation with friends, speculated that the reason Japanese were “devious and treacherous” was the shape of their skulls. According to anthropologist Ales Hrdlicka, then-director of the Smithsonian and a friend of the president, Japanese American skulls were “two thousand years behind Caucasians.”

- The editorial cartoonist of New York City newspaper PM drew a cartoon showing multitudes of bucktoothed, squint-eyed Japanese lined up across the West Coast to be given packs of dynamite at a stand called ‘Honorable Fifth Column.’ The caption was ‘Waiting For the Signal From Home.’ The artist’s name was Theodore Seuss Geisel, later to become famous writing children’s books under the name Dr. Seuss.”

But there was more than racism at work. There were merchants and farmers who wanted to get their hands on California’s six thousand Japanese-operated farms, worth more than \$75 million (\$1.1 billion today). Japanese American farms provided forty per cent of California’s produce. West Coast Japanese Americans lost 75% of their assets, valued at \$250 million (\$3.8 billion in 2016 dollars).

“We’re charged with wanting to get rid of the Japanese for selfish reasons,” Austin Anson of the Grower Shipper Association of the Salinas Valley told the Saturday Evening Post. “We might as well be honest. We do.”

But there was also more than agribusiness opportunism involved. The U.S. didn’t enter the war in a vacuum. It did so in the wake of the Great Depression which, among other things, saw long and bitter campaigns by workers to establish unions, campaigns that were often led by communists. The ongoing struggle for equal rights for blacks was approaching a tipping point. The Russian Revolution had gained widespread influence and another revolution was gaining steam in China.

America’s ruling elite was already preparing its plans for post-war global dominance and needed the American people to line up behind them. In order to do that, they had to divide Americans from each other. The time-honored card, fear of “The Other,” was played in the form of the internment and all that went with it.

Japanese American internment is usually presented as an exception, a hiccup in a healthy U.S. democracy. Over forty years after the fact, the U.S. government formally apologized for it and paid over 100,000 Japanese Americans \$20,000 each in reparations. Case closed. Let’s move on. The reality is that the World War II internment is entirely consistent with American history, past and present. It is one of many damaged ornaments on a poisonous tree.

“The story goes back at least to the treatment of Native Americans,” Richard Reeves writes, “...to the enslavement of Africans in the New World, to the treatment of American Germans during World War I, to Jewish quotas and “Irish Need Not Apply.”

The story goes forward in time too, beginning with demobilization at the end of World War II. There were hundreds of violent incidents as the Japanese came home from the camps and the war. This was a reflection of the even more hostile reaction that returning black veterans received—a tidal wave of violence crowned by dozens of lynchings,

The justification for interning Japanese Americans is similar to the justification for the current militarization of the U.S. border—to prevent terrorists from slipping across it. The border apparatus continues to drain billions of taxpayer dollars each year even though not a single alleged “terrorist” has ever been apprehended heading north.

Like the Japanese Americans, tens of thousands of immigrants are now held in U.S. detention centers even though they haven’t been convicted of or even accused of a crime. They have simply been decreed “illegal” by the political descendants of John McCloy.

Just as Germans and Italians were spared mass incarceration during World War II, today Polish and Irish immigrants, “illegally” present in the U.S. in large numbers, do not

opened in the near future, as is made obvious in the spirit if not the letter of the Patriot Act and other draconian laws. Implementation awaits only a heightening of the ongoing political/financial crisis. These camps may house not only the growing number of Americans actively opposed to the current social order, but also those whose skills or just willingness to work are no longer relevant in an economy in which human labor is rapidly being eliminated.

Skeptical of the possibility of new internment camps in our future? You are referred to the revelations in the *Miami Herald* of Colonel Oliver North’s 1980s participation in Rex 84, a contingency plan to lock up a massive number of Americans in the event of a “national emergency.”

The end of World War II saw the closing of Japanese American internment camps and also the realization of peacefully implemented contingency plans--the reconstruction of the former Axis powers by the United States. But the latter did not go meekly unopposed.

“In the months following the Japanese surrender, “ Steven Budiansky writes in *Code Warriors*, “thousands of GIs dis-

Like the Japanese Americans, tens of thousands of immigrants are now held in US detention centers even though they haven’t been convicted or accused of a crime.

away in jail awaiting deportation.

Satsuki Ina spent years as a young child in internment camps in California and Texas. In 2015, under the headline, “I Know an American ‘Internment’ Camp When I See One,” she wrote on the ACLU web site about Obama’s internment camps for Central American refugees: “I was born behind barbed wire 70 years ago in the Tule Lake Segregation Center, a maximum-security prison camp for Japanese-Americans in Northern California. My parents’ only crime was having the face of the enemy...My visit with mothers and children at the euphemistically named Karnes County ‘Residential Center’ [where many current Central American immigrants are held]...triggered distressing associations of my own experience as a child. We too lived in a constant state of fear and anxiety, never knowing what our fate would be. We too were forced to share our living space with strangers, line up for meals, share public latrines, respond to roll call, and adjust to ever-changing rules and regulations with the eyes of the guards constantly trained on us.”

The camps where “illegal” immigrants are held are only part of the picture. The prisons where nearly three million Americans are confined should be considered internment camps. As should the camps where the homeless gather. There are also internment camps almost certain to be

satisfied with the pace of demobilization staged rowdy mass protests--some were described by local commanders as ‘near mutiny’—in Paris, Manila, Guam, Yokohama, Honolulu, Vienna, and Frankfurt, chanting ‘We want to go home!... The slogan caught on like wildfire and newspaper columnists noted that it reflected the widespread feeling of American troops, who were singularly unimpressed by ‘pleas about our duties in the world at large’ or America’s newly acquired ‘international commitments.’”

The U.S. government didn’t share the sentiments of its soldiers, some of whom were Japanese American. War-weary troops might be rotated home but others would take their place. The U.S. was determined to dominate “the world at large” by meeting “international commitments” largely of its own design.

Japan had been devastated and its entire navy was at the bottom of the sea. Tokyo and the other major cities were in ruins. Japan’s industry was gone. The United States agreed to occupy and defend Japan, eliminating the need for a defense industry to gobble up her national income. The U.S. saw Japan not only as a good place for financial investment, but as a country which could be developed into a counter against China.

Occupied militarily and financially by the U.S., Japan began its recovery. At first the output from the newly-born

Japanese industries was junk. In the 1950s, “Made in Japan” was emblazoned on all manner of imports which were synonymous with crap. That changed as time went on, especially in the digital age that accompanied the invention of the microchip in the 1970s.

The Japanese, unburdened by a defense budget, set out to rebuild their country on the latest technological basis. The United States, the only major country in the world to emerge from the war with its industrial base unscathed, was saddled for decades by that very fact. Its steel mills and factories were intact yet obsolete, in some cases using technology developed in the nineteenth century. So the Japanese were able to leap ahead, their population going from near-peasantry to sophisticated high tech workers within a generation. The development of advanced electronics in Japan forced sectors of United States industry to respond with computers and robots of their own. As a result, human labor has been squeezed out of production and American cities like Detroit now resemble the devastated Japanese cities at the end of World War II.

My father was a small cog in the anti-Japanese military machine. Drafted into the Navy early in World War II, he was rushed through officer candidate school and sent off to study Japanese. He ended up being perched on the front of landing craft that went from one Pacific island to another, with my dad on a bullhorn urging Japanese soldiers to lay down their arms and surrender. He told me that in every single instance all the Japanese had already committed suicide. This practice of *hara-kiri*, coupled with kamikaze pilots taking on aircraft carriers, projected the Japanese to the world as a violent, warlike people. These images were cemented during World War II as the Japanese military slaughtered its fellow Asians, most infamously during the “Rape of Nanking,” a weeks-long massacre in which the Japanese army killed 300,000 Chinese.

The peaceful side of Japan came to the fore after the U.S. used atomic bombs to incinerate hundreds of thousands of people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I saw the peaceful side for myself when I followed my father into the Navy. During the Vietnam War, I was in Sasebo, Japan with my ship and we were not allowed to go into the city due to huge anti-nuclear demonstrations. Hundreds of thousands of people. You could literally *feel* the desire for peace in the air. This had been formalized in Japan’s post-war constitution, which forbade the establishment of a standing military.

But today Japan, the former bitter enemy of the U.S., is step-by-step being re-militarized under the watchful eye of the U.S. government and the American defense industry.

Tomomi Inada, a woman with far-right political views, has replaced Gen Nakatani as Japan’s defense minister. Inada, who downplays the atrocities committed by Japanese forces during World War II (including the Rape of Nanking), was chosen by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe as part of his ongoing efforts to revise Japan’s postwar pacifist constitution.

During World War II, the United States armed Chang

Kai-shek to fight the Japanese in China, at the same time as it interned the Japanese Americans whose friends and relatives were off fighting the Axis powers. Now that script is being flipped as Japan is being prepared to go to war with China again, this time as an ally of the U.S.

Yet even in this apocalyptic moment, we may find a measure of hope in our history.

“On the night of November 29, 1944, in Hood River, Oregon,” Reeves writes, “the honor roll of local men in service, which covered one outside wall of the local courthouse, was defaced by black paint to cover up sixteen names—all Japanese Americans....The defacement job was done by members of Post 22 of the American Legion...White soldiers in Europe, some of them writing to local newspapers, said that they would be dead if not for the bravery of Nisei comrades. Three local soldiers, men from Hood River, wrote from Europe saying they wanted their names removed from the courthouse wall unless the Japanese American names were put back up.”

The unity expressed by these soldiers’ actions came from men who were in similar positions, living common lives not marked by the inequality of their homeland. Today we see much the same thing in the way that millions of Americans now find themselves, regardless of race or creed or age, crossing the finish line of the race to the bottom together. Their common poverty comes from being expelled from the economy by the high tech juggernaut of robots and software, technology which had its genesis in the American occupation of Japan.

The losers in this race include a growing number of Japanese Americans, often depicted as a “model minority” immune to the implosion of the economy. Nine per cent of Japanese Americans now live in poverty and two thirds of all Japanese Americans, according to the Pew Research Center, now echo the stock refrain of millennials that their standard of living isn’t better than that of their parents.

Common conditions can lead to common uplift when shared goals are defined, accepted, and fought for. When we arrive at the destination such a scenario can provide, we will have paid reparations in full to our parents, to our children, and to ourselves. **CP**

*To those of Hood River—if you please
They are our friends—not Japanese
Not “Japs” or even Japanese
They are Americans, our schoolmates these*

Poem published by students at Oak Grove High School in Hood River in 1944

LEE BALLINGER’S new book is *Love and War: My First Thirty Years of Writing*, is available as a free download at: loveandwarbook.com.

CULTURE & REVIEWS

The Films of John Carpenter

BY EDWARD LEER

John Carpenter always said he wanted to get into the movie business to direct Westerns, particularly like those of John Ford and Howard Hawks. Unfortunately, by the time he came along the genre was out of fashion and unprofitable. As a result, he turned to the more commercially viable horror and science fiction genres. Within these economic parameters, Carpenter fashions a unique blend of sci-fi/horror/neo-western which violently thrusts systems, codes, and logic of the old-world into the incomprehensible scenarios, which put traditional “American” values to the test.

Carpenter’s world is a cold world. Society, often a signifier of safety and security, is routinely shown to be, at best, uncaring and at worst: brutal. The government facility and run-down city streets of *Escape From New York* (1980) are shot with pale, sickly green fluorescents. The scientific base of *The Thing* (1982), the only sign of humanity for miles, has an icy blue tint, occasionally upset by a character lighting a red magnesium flare. Both these artifices are eventually obliterated. In *Escape*, it’s when antihero Snake Plissken (Kurt Russell) enters the primitive, fire-lit world of *The Duke* (Isaac Hayes), the crime boss of New York. A massive explosion is what desimates what’s left of society in *The Thing*, leaving two survivors who may or may not be human. What should be a quant, Midwestern town in *Halloween* (1978), Carpenter presents as isolated, devoid of children, and drenched in a quiet dread. Any semblance of peace is only a temporary truce with the inevitable chaos.

Much like his idol, Hawkes, Carpenter’s biggest preoccupation lies with the worth and merit of his characters. Geoff Carter (Cary Grant) the terse hero of Hawkes’ *Only Angels Have Wings*, remarks “He just wasn’t good enough” in reference to why one of his pilots died in a crash. In *Assault on Precinct 13* (1976), Carpenter’s first feature, inmate Napoleon Wilson (Darwin Johnson) thanks secretary Leigh (Laurie Zimmer) for saving him from the gang members attacking the precinct, “That was close timing in there. You were good.” To which Leigh replies, “If I’d been any good in here, she might still be alive” referring to Julie (Nancy Loomis), the secretary who doesn’t survive the assault. No one is truly safe, but the men and women who can keep their wits and courage about them have a much better shot of making it out alive than those who can’t.

Hawkes tended to endorse this form of social Darwinism in his films, while Carpenter tends to dwell longer on the fallen, regardless of how they handled themselves. While Julie’s death occurs offscreen, the impact rattles all those involved, especially Lieutenant Bishop (Austin Stoker), the moral center of the film, who wants to take it upon himself to keep everyone trapped in the station alive.

Julie most certainly does not meet the high standard of a Hawkesian hero. When the gang “Street Thunder” first attacks the police station for harboring a man who killed their leader, it is Julie who suggests they give up the man. Bishop and Leigh look at her with disgust and amazement, to which she cries, “Well don’t give me that civilized look!” Thereafter, both Leigh and Bishop look away, slightly ashamed, before Bishop reasserts that they’ll continue to protect the man.

While Carpenter values heroism and bravery, he has no patience for self-righteousness. The characters in a Carpenter film, so often portrayed as two-dimensional cowards and swindlers (Harry Dean Stanton’s Brain in *Escape*) are treated with a measure of respect and dignity.

Carpenter grew up in Bowling Green, Kentucky in the height of Jim Crow. In an email interview, Carpenter recounts how formative this experience was:

“This is definitely where I got my worldview. My father earned a PhD in music from the Eastman School of music. He was an accomplished violinist. And an intellectual. Bowling Green at the time had segregated restaurants, hotels, theaters, bath-rooms, schools. Jesus and basketball. Hillbillies everywhere.”

While the brutalities of segregation shaped Carpenter’s inalienable respect for humanity, it was his being an outsider, a Yankee raised by a creative intellectual, which seems to account for his firm sense of Individualism. Both of these notions take shape in one of Carpenter’s most recurring visuals: that of the faceless mob. From the street gang in *Precinct*, to the shadowed ghosts of *The Fog*, and both the *Crazies* and *Riot Gear-clad* police in *Escape*, this image of a soulless hive, devoid of identity, or any humanity for that matter, holds a special place of menace in Carpenter’s films. This notion is reconfigured in *Halloween*, where Michael Myers is less of a man, and more of an evil void (he’s credited as *The Shape*), and *The Thing*, where an alien organism can absorb and imitate any living creature it encounters. While humans can be weak, ignorant, and cowardly, the larger evil is the inhuman.

Conversely, the heroes of Carpenter’s films, while adept and capable, are

often of the average, blue-collar variety. On the outset, Laurie Strode of *Halloween* and Snake Plissken don't appear to have too much in common. Laurie's a meek, bookish teenage babysitter, while the Plissken is a futuristic criminal folk hero, yet they both have a fundamental American essence about them. Like all of Carpenter's protagonists, they're principled, hard-workers with simple aims and desires. Many of these characters (Plissken, John Nada in *They Live*) are simply looking to survive a hostile world, and that's before the antagonist shows up.

"I've always identified with blue collar endeavors," says Carpenter, "Movie directors are a combination of blue and white collar in one individual. Visionary coal miners." Carpenter associates himself with the common man to a degree, but also recognizes his role as the individual with the singular vision that defines a "John Carpenter Film", hence his name above almost every one of his titles.

Critics often have a problem nailing down Carpenter's politics. He claims to be a liberal, and *They Live* is certainly a testament to his rage against Reagan's America of the 1980s. While Jonathan Rosenbaum called Carpenter politically naïve, critic Robin Wood labeled him a conservative reactionary for turning Marxist revolutionaries into murdering thugs in *Assault* and killing all sexually active teens in *Halloween*, while virginal Laurie survives.

Perhaps the clearest iteration of Carpenter's politics can be found in his masterpiece, *The Thing*. While the imitating alien hides among the men of the scientific research station, paranoia and fear starts turning them against each other. The infamous "blood-test" scene, wherein blood from one of *The Things* reacts to a hot wire, occurs in the last half hour of the film, when the men are at each other's throats. The scene is a fascinating metaphor about what happens when the individuals in a group, or body, start working for their own self-interest. Both a state-

ment on individuality and indictment of an egocentric culture, Carpenter is able to reconcile these two apparently contrasting beliefs.

The western myth was about characters at the edge of society, pushing the frontier, and facing the reproductions of going beyond the limits of society. While the archaic trappings of the genre faded from the public's imagination, Carpenter was able to recontextualize these ideas for a more, complex and frightening world. The barriers have passed beyond the physical, and even the rational. The true question is whether we are able to hang on to our humanity in the face of the inconceivable. **CP**

EDWARD LEER is a writer and filmmaker based in Los Angeles.

The Return of Margaret Sanger

BY PAUL BUHLE

This is a little personal for the reviewer.

First, because when I was interviewing old Bolshevik ladies in Miami Beach of 1981, an erstwhile shop-floor militant with a heavy Yiddish accent shyly told me that she had been eager to visit the birth control office in Brownsville, Brooklyn, that had opened in 1916. It made her life better and she even remembered (or thought she remembered) meeting the great Margaret Sanger there. Sanger was part of her radical history.

Second, because and more surprising: when I told my lifelong-Republican mother about the FBI clearing out the uncollated copies of my 1960s magazine, *Radical America*, from my former apartment, she responded that she had regularly left (illegal) birth control leaflets under park benches in Washington Square Park, New York, during the middle 1930s. And that, as a settlement house worker, she had snuck into

tenements while the husbands were at work, explaining birth control techniques to the foreign born. She didn't meet Sanger but was definitely part of Sanger's world.

Our Lady of Birth Control by Sabrina Jones offers a sweeping picture of that world, or at least the woman at the center. This is the second graphic biography of Sanger in only a few years, and Peter Bagge did a very creditable job on the earlier one, *Woman Rebel: The Margaret Sanger Story*. Sabrina Jones has gone steps further, in part because this version weaves the artist's own contraception activism into the story, from her teenage years (and a visit to Planned Parenthood) to the present, at her drawing board. In between, we get lots of agitation and personal insights, from the turn of the twentieth century onward.

Not everyone remembers that Sanger, who married wealthy, arose from an impoverished home with starveling siblings, and shared their tuberculosis for much of her life. She made it into the middle class (and Greenwich Village), had babies, became a sort of anarchist-socialist, and rose or fell into a most unique agitation. This seemingly respectable matron found her calling and the most remarkable allies, Emma Goldman to Big Bill Haywood of the IWW, not to mention assorted bohemian lovers. In Paris, she learned about the latest birth-control techniques, and advocated for them openly in her own tabloid, *The Woman Rebel*.

The newspaper was banned, as her birth control column had been repressed from the socialist daily *New York Call*. Rather suddenly, she was on the run from the law, or rather the law in the personage of U.S. Postal Inspector Anthony Comstock, remembered now for "Comstockery," the repression of birth control information and other things sexual.

How she fought back (dropping her anarchism and political radicalism of any kind) along the way, how she made birth control respectable enough

to surface legally, is a complicated story and has not always been told in a favorable manner. Indeed, during the 1920s-30s when Eugenics was considered a science of bettering genetics, Sanger inadvertently linked herself with those who would take eugenics into race theories. A militant supporter of minority rights, a crusader admired by Martin Luther King, Jr., Sanger is innocent of charges...which has not kept charges of “racist” against her from coming up again and again, over the decades.

Toward the end of the book, Sabrina Jones shifts further into her own life, with the struggle for reproductive rights during the 1980s (as the Republican rightwingers declared themselves against Choice), and her struggle for her own life in a sexualized but also increasingly disease-rampant moment of American culture. She navigates this with great sensitivity and ends up with Sandra Fluke, the Georgetown University undergrad assaulted verbally for demanding, in Congressional hearings, government assistance for reproductive needs on campus. Quite a story. Quite a book. **CP**

PAUL BUHLE is the author of *Johnny Appleseed: Green Dreamer*, drawn by Noah van Sciver, available in October.

Studs Terkel and Third-Party Politics

BY ALAN WIEDER

When Noam Chomsky recently told Amy Goodman that he would hold his nose and vote for Hillary Clinton if he lived in a swing state, it reminded me of Studs’ statements during the 2000 Gore-Bush election for the presidency. In 2000, Studs endorsed Ralph Nader, but like Chomsky at the present time, he suggested that it might be prudent in certain cases to vote for Gore. In

1970, when Chomsky appeared on Studs’ show to discuss his book, *The New Mandarins*, much of the conversation focused on conquest and corporate power. And the men agreed that grassroots movements, not heroes, changed history. Chomsky argues, in correspondence to the mass support of Bernie, that “The New Deal legislation of Roosevelt, for example, wouldn’t have been passed—it wouldn’t have even been initiated—without militant labor action and other political action.” Studs referenced 1948 Progressive Party candidate, Henry Wallace, during the 2000 election, arguing that Nader might elevate Gore just as Wallace did Truman. Both men also acknowledge realpolitik in terms of Supreme Court nominations to say nothing of Trump’s fascist tendencies.

So each day when I hear Trump and Clinton speak, I long to hear Studs talking about the coming election. I can imagine, I can even predict, but I can’t know because when Studs spoke we were surprised. He amazed us. What I can do, though, is review some of the political life of Studs Terkel—he clearly would have been vocal in 2016.

Third-party political advocacy and participation began for Studs in his youth. With his father, Sam, he listened on the radio to the American Socialist Party’s four-time Presidential candidate Eugene V. Debs’ political orations. He also listened when his father repeated Debs’ words: “While there is a lower class I am in it; while there is a criminal element, I am of it; while there is a soul in prison, I am not free.” Many years later, in 1983, Studs was the recipient of the Eugene V. Debs Award “honoring a person whose work has been in the spirit of Debs and who has contributed to the advancement of the causes of industrial unionism, social justice, or world peace.”

As Studs participated in the collective Chicago Repertory Theatre group and the WPA Writers Project, he supported Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He viewed him as a President whose poli-

cies helped working people. However, in 1948 Studs endorsed and worked hard on Henry Wallace’s third-party presidential candidacy. Wallace was FDR’s Secretary of Agriculture in 1933. He became Vice President in 1940. Both Republicans and Democrats viewed him as too progressive. Harry Truman replaced him as Vice President in 1944. As Chicago politico Don Rose points out, “Studs was a third-party guy.” Studs worked with Algren, Timuel Black, Quentin Young and many other Chicago comrades on the Wallace campaign. Wallace’s positions included universal health care insurance and the end of segregation.

A Detroit friend, Lew Franks, asked Studs to co-produce an NBC special for the Wallace presidential campaign. His co-producer was the brilliant musicologist Alan Lomax. The show included two voices, Henry Wallace and Paul Robeson. Studs greatly admired and respected Henry Wallace, but it was Paul Robeson whom he most remembered from that evening. Speaking personally about American racism, Robeson reflected on his father and sang the provocative song “Scandalize My Name.” Wallace, Robeson, Studs, and Lomax tried to create a racial dialogue that night on national radio, which unfortunately, did not lead to Wallace’s election.

Studs maintained his third-party politics as he went on to support Fred Harris, Barry Commoner, Nader, and Dennis Kucinich. When John Nichols eulogized Studs in *The Nation*, he wrote, “Politics was never a game for Studs. It was the work of a lifetime. He wrote brilliant books about the lives of working people not merely because their stories were fascinating but because he wanted to get a conversation started about class in America.” As a third-party advocate, Studs supported former Oklahoma senator Fred Harris’s populist presidential campaign in 1976. Harris had helped enact legislation for Indian rights while in the senate and in the late sixties he was briefly the chair of the Democratic National Committee.

Very disillusioned by the Party, however, he referred to his campaign as new populism. One of his campaign brochures outlined his mission that included grassroots democracy, decentralization, and local, collective participation. The platform was attractive for Studs.

In 1980, Studs worked for Barry Commoner as a member of the Citizen's Party's Illinois committee with Quentin Young, Ed Sadlowski and Sydney Lens. The Citizens' Party's Presidential Convention was launched in Cleveland with two hundred and seventy-five delegates from thirty states. Studs gave the keynote address to a group that included a mix of old radicals, environmentalists, feminists, and representatives from labor. Addressing the crowd, Studs avowed that the Party would "reclaim the American Dream from the predators who have stolen

and a WBEZ interview shortly after the above oration, Studs opined that people in certain states might want to vote for Gore rather than Nader.

The 2000 election wasn't decided until late December through a court ruling. After the election, Studs participated in the *Nation Magazine* annual political cruise. During the weeklong event, he joined in a panel discussion with long time *Nation* editor, Victor Navasky, lawyer and columnist Patricia Williams, journalist Eric Alterman, historian Larry Goodwyn, and Molly Ivens. The panel was called "The Ralph Nader Factor," but Studs thought that the more appropriate title was, "Ralph Nader and the Democratic Leadership Council."

Navasky was the panel host and much to Studs' delight he convinced him to begin with a sermon. Playing the ham, he thanked "Brother Victor"

Terkel speak at Nader's Chicago rally in October. Was he who convinced me that I should vote my conscience and vote for Nader. He has done thousands of Nader supporters a disservice by making his vote switch public.' So I owe a *mea culpa* to them and to nobody else. From now on in, I'm gonna be Huck Finn rain or shine, amen."

With the sermon completed, each of the panelists took their turn. Eric Alterman argued that the two-party system was the reality. He then claimed that Nader's candidacy ruined the possibility of electing of a progressive democrat. Compelled to respond, and speaking with a smile, Studs disagreed.

"Now that's what it's all about, these kids are hungry, they're a whole new generation who've broken through the miasma of this matter of the third party meaning nothing. The two major, of course there's got to be a third force of some sort... So Nader's not the issue. You're right on, factually you're right, but you're truthfully wrong, because the issue is the movement itself and not Ralph Nader."

So what would Studs have said about Bernie or Clinton or Trump? What probably would have interested him the most were the young people who came out and supported Bernie. But what would he have said of Bernie's support for Hillary as the lesser evil. I suspect his comments would have been much like Noam Chomsky's? Maybe he would have first gently scolded Bernie for not going the independent route. I could see that.

During the 1990s he didn't hesitate to criticize Bill Clinton and the Democratic Leadership Council, or as Jesse Jackson named it, the Democratic Leisure Class. I suspect he would be just as critical of Hillary, but then would ask us to remember the Supreme Court. I only wish he was here to tell us. **CP**

ALAN WIEDER is the author of *Studs Terkel: Politics, Culture, but Mostly Conversation* (Monthly Review Press).

"From now on in, I'm gonna be Huck Finn rain or shine, amen."

it—that's what this meeting is all about." Commoner was best known for his research on the effects of radiation and his book on the environment, *The Closing Circle*. But part of his appeal to Terkel and other people on the left was presented in a different book, *The Poverty of Power*, in which Commoner went beyond the connection of science and politics and contended that environmental damage was directly connected to capitalism.

It was the Gore-Bush election, however, that brings Studs' politics front-and-center today. Again, Studs was a Ralph Nader supporter. In early October, Studs introduced Nader to ten thousand people at a University of Illinois-Chicago. Eddie Vedder played music and Studs shouted, "Gore or Bush, what's your choice? "Influenza or Pneumonia, what's your choice?" Yet, in both a *Chicago Tribune* article

and told the crowd: "You are looking at a sinner. I have sinned shamelessly and grievously in support of that Satanic cult headed by Ralph Nader. In fact, I spoke before ten thousand young people in my pavilion, exultant young paying ten bucks a copy to get in, wouldn't pay a plug nickel to hit Gore or Bush, and then I was leading them down the garden path. I've sinned! Why do I feel so good when I sin?"

Speaking about the *Tribune* article, Studs joked about repenting. His talk was a testament to his political acumen and cultural knowledge.

"Even though I sinned for Nader, I am taking back my repentance, and I offer some apologies. It's a *mea culpa* to certain young people who were at that rally... It was a letter... *Tribune*, five little lines. 'Shame on Studs Terkel for betraying the Green Party and Ralph Nader's candidacy. I heard Mr.

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