



# Works in Progress

Volume 29, No. 7

Serving the Olympia community and the cause of social justice since 1990.

January 2019

## Two pivotal years ahead: Organizing, building alliances, voting

Max Elbaum

The next phase of our long-haul struggle for a radically different world will be extremely ugly and extremely consequential.

### The danger we face

The special danger stemming from the 2016 capture of the Republican Party by white nationalism and Trump's drive toward a racialized authoritarian state has given rise to a surge of popular resistance. That outpouring has combined militant street protests with large-scale electoral engagement. The GOP's loss of control of the House of Representatives this year and Republican losses in various state contests puts some check on the administration's capacity to implement its agenda. Breakthrough victories by numerous progressives – including many women of color and several socialists – along with increased strength in the social justice movements that pushed them forward are signs that the US left is emerging from years of marginalization.

But the racist Right still holds the main levers of national power. The Trumpists remain determined to hrestructure society in ways that have huge negative consequences for the vast majority of people in the US, but especially for those most disadvantaged and vulnerable. Key elements of their agenda include:

- ▶ Gutting economic and social welfare programs that benefit poor and working class people and destroying the labor movement;
- ▶ Doubling down on climate change denialism, dismantling already inadequate environmental protections and turning energy policy (and public land) over to the fossil fuel industry;
- ▶ Reinforcing racism by ending Justice Department Civil Rights enforcement, further militarizing the police, reversing policies designed to break the school-to-prison pipeline for people of color, giving free rein to nakedly white supremacist thugs and expanding racist voter suppression mechanisms;
- ▶ Reversing gains made by women over the last 40 years with special emphasis on attacking abortion rights;
- ▶ Stacking the judiciary with right-wing toadies and undermining what remains of a free press;
- ▶ Demonizing immigrants and put-

ting in place policies that will simultaneously ensure a cheap labor force blocked from fighting for its rights and provide Trump's "base" with a dehumanized scapegoat to blame

but it will lack any of the substance.

### Build on 2018 gains

Resistance to every aspect of this agenda will be needed in the streets, on picket-lines, in the courts and in the battle for public opinion for the next two years. This day-in, day-out confrontation



Photo by Lindsey Dalthorp

for their continuing hardships;

- ▶ Abandon diplomacy in favor of military force and give aid and comfort to racist authoritarian regimes and leaders worldwide.

No one should underestimate the danger of this package. It adds up to imposing an "everything-for-the-Rich" economic arrangement and a semi-apartheid "solution" to the "problem" of a growing people of color population via an authoritarian regime. If the Trumpists retain power the US might retrain the trappings of democracy,

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will build to the 2020 election, where ending GOP control of the White House must be the top priority both for minimizing further damage and preparing a new cycle in which progressives can start driving the country's agenda.

The growing strength and maturity of today's social justice eco-system offers hope of meeting this challenge. The progressive wing of the anti-Trump majority consists of a loose alignment of social justice organizations rooted especially in communities of color, and among youth, women, the labor and environmental movements, and the LGBTQ community. This sector threw itself into the 2018 electoral fray in ways not seen since the Rainbow Coalition/Jesse Jackson surge of the

1980s. It infused the anti-Trump motion with dynamism and inspired record numbers to vote against the GOP. Here's a small sampling of the character and scale of activity that provides a foundation to build on:

- ▶ The Texas Organizing Project (TOP), with its strong base among Latinos and African Americans, went all out in the most populous red state. TOP deployed at one time 575 staff, reached 882,000 voters, knocked on 300,000 doors, and was key in flipping two congressional seats and electing three DAs, putting Texas squarely on the map in the fight against mass incarceration.
- ▶ The progressive state table in Florida, which ranges from the Dream Defenders to Florida New Majority and SEIU, pushed through Prop 4, which restored voting rights to 1.4 million formerly incarcerated people.
- ▶ Collaboration between the Working Families Party and New Georgia Project in Georgia, the leadership in parts of Stacey Abrams' campaign by people from the Movement for Black Lives Electoral Justice section, the fact that the National Domestic Workers Alliance deployed the largest independent field operation in that state -

▶ **Pivotal years**, page 15

## A political animal in extreme times

John Bellamy Foster

The question of my political work following the November 2018 elections is a difficult one for me to answer, as US electoral politics rarely have any direct impact on what I do, and certainly not mid-term US elections. An exception, in my case, was the November 2016 elections, which led me to write my 2017 book, *Trump in the White House: Tragedy and Farce*. That work raised the issue of the dangers associated with Trump's rise to political power and the rapid spread of neo-fascist tendencies in the United States, defined by the alliance between big capital and a largely white (and racist) lower middle class.

### A beachhead in the 2018 election

The biggest danger that Trump represents, though, is to the planet and the future of human civilization, as his policies are designed to speed up global warming resulting from the burning of fossil fuels. The current strategy of the Trump White House, the billionaire class, and the fossil fuel industry, taken together, seems to be to smash attempts to address climate change until it is too late to act, in which case they can go on burning fossil fuels all the way to oblivion.

The November 2018 elections thus took on greater importance than usual in the context of countering a malign Trumpism (even if the instrument was a Democratic Party that has long

since sold out to the powers that be and from which little can be expected), and because a small progressive beachhead was gained by the election of social democrats and women of color, including the first Muslim women to be elected to Congress.

### The essence of politics in community

My own politics, however, are not generally aimed at electoral politics or political reform and regulation—or indeed limited to the United States. Aristotle famously said that human beings are political animals. Political activity in this sense extends far beyond the state, and beyond electoral politics, and is related to community, going all the way from the personal to the global. Politics thus rightly encompasses all of our social actions. Fighting racism, sexism (patriarchy), and LGBTQ oppression are all crucial—along with the class struggle, without which real

▶ **Extreme times**, page 12



Works In Progress

**Works in Progress** (WIP) is a community newspaper based in Olympia, Washington and published monthly. The paper was established by the Thurston County Rainbow Coalition which published the first issue in May 1990.

**Our mission.** The aim of WIP is to confront injustice and encourage a participatory democracy based on justice in the economic, political, environmental and social realms and across classes, races and genders.

**How WIP is produced.** WIP depends on a volunteer managing editor, supported by the Publishing Committee, to see to the accomplishment of nearly all organizational, administrative and editorial tasks.

**How WIP is supported.** First and foremost, WIP depends for survival on the contributions and participation of writers, activists, students, organizers, and other members of the community, broadly defined. We also receive support from the Workers' Defense Fund whose purpose is to strengthen organizations that engage in struggle against the powerful for the empowerment of the powerless.

**Guidelines for writing for WIP.** Our priority is to focus on stories that are ignored or misrepresented in the mainstream media, especially those that relate directly to our mission.

To this end, we seek well-researched news stories, serious analyses of issues confronting our communities and accounts of personal experiences or reflections by local writers. We also consider poetry, graphics, cartoons and articles that challenge the boundaries of conventional journalism.

**Submitting your writing:** Send an email to [olywip@gmail.com](mailto:olywip@gmail.com) with the word SUBMISSION on the subject line. Attach your submission as a word document. Include your name, a brief bio and contact information. WIP volunteer editors will contact you if there is significant editing needed. Send pictures etc as attachments. Pictures should be high resolution with dimensions in relation to the content. Generally 300 pixels is one inch.

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**Workers in Progress**

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**Advertising.** Rates are approximately \$10 per column inch, with set rates for standard sizes. Discounts may be available for long-term ads, for nonprofits and for micro businesses.

**Subscription rates.** Annual subscription is \$35/year. Purchase one for yourself or an incarcerated person mailed first class each month.

**Contact WIP.** Online at [olywip@gmail.com](mailto:olywip@gmail.com). or via snail mail to: *Works in Progress*, P.O. Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507.

**Submission deadline next issue**  
**Sunday, January 20**  
[olywip@gmail.com](mailto:olywip@gmail.com)

**Proofreading Meeting**  
**Sunday, January 27, 1pm**  
Buck's Fifth Avenue, upstairs

On the cover: *Tous ensemble* is the rallying cry of France's *gilets jaunes*—we are with them, “all together” in the fight to create a new future for humanity. Ricky Osborne took this photo of WIP volunteers and friends on the switch-back below the Capitol.

Dear Reader,

January marks the beginning of a new year for Works in Progress, our volunteers and our readers. We continue to look for new members of the team that each month pulls together stories and photos that make up another issue of this local, print news journal. WIP has been around for 25 years. With your help, we'll continue for — (your number here) more years.

**Reporters, writers, stringers.** We'd love to add reporters and stringers—people who call or write in with interesting items we could give some visibility in the community.

**Cartoonists, graphic artists, photo-shoppers.** Our pages always need livening up, and our ideas often outstrip our talents, so anyone with these skills would be enthusiastically welcomed. In 2018 photographers Ricky Osborne and Lindsey Dalthorpe became regular contributors.

**Book reviewer? Columnist?** There is a spate of exciting and demanding new books out there—current and future politics, etc. If you'd like to review one, contact us and we will get the book for you at Last Word Books. Want to take on one of our regular features: “Then this happened” or “Past/Present”? Let us know.

**Distributers.** A team of 4 or 5 volunteers distributes 3000 copies of WIP in four counties, but more are needed, including a back-up for our monthly trip to the printer in Centralia. We recently added locations in Tenino. If you have a location we should add, contact us by email and we'll check it out.

**Online presence.** This year WIP got a new and improved website with a working “donation” option. It's capably managed by Carolyn Roos and Heather Sundean with back-up from Anna Zanella. Also, we invite you to submit events and photos for posting on our Facebook page.

January theme and cover Political Work

Stimulated by the successful French protests, but recognizing that our demands are very different, friends of WIP and volunteer staffers put on these fluorescent vests because—like the people of France—and every other country—we are in a disaster zone!

Our demand is to confront the disaster of rising inequality (exacerbated by our economic system), the elimination of regulatory safety nets (by the Trump Administration and followers), and the reality of climate collapse already destroying our communities.

Yellow vests recognize that we are all “first responders” in the crises we face. In this issue we have several articles that address the political and ecological nature of this disaster—and what kinds of things people are doing to survive it so we can make a healthier world.

February theme Rural Life and the urban/rural divide.

WIP is distributed in 4 counties of which three, Mason, Lewis and Grays Harbor are mostly rural. What is it like to live in “the county?” Community-supported agriculture might be thriving but the tax base is small. Election results from 2018 and earlier differ markedly between rural precincts and the Olympia-Lacey-Tumwater concentration. But do those results mean we really have widely different views when it comes to social and political issues? What about rural life in Central American communities whose people are leaving their homes in search of a livelihood in the US? Deadline for stories for the February issue is January 20.

Upcoming themes

**March:** Justice in all its dimensions (*deadline February 17*)

**April:** Food, production, consumption, transformation. (*deadline: March 17*)

Where you can find WIP

News boxes

- Lacey Transit Center
- Percival Landing
- Olympia Post Office
- Olympia Farmer's Market
- West Central Park
- @ Harrison/Division
- Vic's Pizzeria – Division
- Olympia Greyhound Stn
- Thurston Co. Courthouse
- Olympia Transit Center
- College St. @ Yelm Hiway

WIP is also available at

- Traditions Fair Trade Café
- Batdorf & Bronson
- Blue Heron Bakery
- Orca Books
- Olympia Library
- Lacey Library
- Westside Oly Food Co-op
- Eastside Oly Food Co-op
- The Evergreen State College
- The Capitol Campus
- SPSCC
- The Pit Stop on Boulevard
- Other coffee shops etc.

And beyond...

- Centralia
- Shelton
- Grays Harbor College
- Hoquiam Farmer's Market

And....If you'd like an indoor WIP rack or an outside box, or want to be a pick up location, please contact us at [olywip@gmail.com](mailto:olywip@gmail.com)

Special events

Tenants of the South Sound

Weekly meetings to plan for a February event. If you are a tenant and would like to help organize, please join Tenants of the South Sound Membership group. Contact us through Facebook, email at [tenantsofthesouthsound@gmail.com](mailto:tenantsofthesouthsound@gmail.com), or phone (360) 602-1392.

Semicircle reading group January 9 and 23. At Last Word Books

listen to local writers share creative and/or personal work every 1st and 3rd Wednesday. Want to be a feature? Message our email address: [olysemicircle@gmail.com](mailto:olysemicircle@gmail.com)

Advocacy Training

January 10 and 29, 10-12 noon, at Washington State Labor Council on Columbia St.

WA Fair Trade Coalition. Learn the details to understand US workers' vision of trade policy when Congress considers the new NAFTA this spring.

Bridge Music Project

January 11, 7:30 pm, Traditions Café, 300 5th Ave. SW  
Heartsparkle Players.  
The Bridge Music Project teaches youth how music and music-writing can be used as tools to deal with life's challenges. Heartsparkle Players does impromptu skits from incidents in the project's history and from audience suggestions. Donation \$7.00-12.00 (No one turned away)

Bernie Meyer reports on his trip to India

Sunday, January 13, 7:00 pm at Traditions Café  
Global Youth Peace Festival, the Chandigarh Inauguration of the World Peace Dome in Pune, and the World Parliament for Science, Spirituality and Philosophy Presentations out of the Children's Peace Palace in Rajsamand.

Why Libertarianism is Wrong

Thursday, Jan 17, 7-9:00 pm, Traditions Café.  
Presentation and discussion. Economics for Everyone and Olympia DSA. Free. Women + s March - Olympia

Saturday, January 19, 11:00 am, Capitol Campus, 416 Sid Snyder Ave SW

Contact: [Angie@WomensMarchWaState.org](mailto:Angie@WomensMarchWaState.org)

Walk For Peace in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Sunday, January 20, Noon - 1:30 pm.  
Arrive 15 minutes early to receive instructions. Start from Marathon Park. Olympia's Open Gate Shangha and South Sound Buddhist Peace Fellowship conduct a silent peace walk in the tradition of Tich Nhat Hanh. Info: [www.ssbpf.net](http://www.ssbpf.net) or [opengatezeno@msn.com](mailto:opengatezeno@msn.com)

Celebration of Interfaith Works Homeless Services

Friday, January 25, 5-8 pm, St. Michael's Catholic Parish, 1208 11th Ave SE, Stories and guests; share a meal. Purchase tickets online at [IWshelter.org](http://IWshelter.org), \$75 per seat.

Connecting Environmental Justice & Prison Abolition

January 26, 12:00 - 3:00 at Media Island 816 Adams ST SE, Facilitated by E.V. Webb

Environmental Priorities Coalition Lobby Day

Tuesday, January 29, 8:30 am - 5:00 pm, United Churches, 110th East 11th Ave  
Issue briefings, training to lobby, talks from environmental champions. Meet your elected officials to advance the Coalition's 2019 priorities. Free. Register at <https://www.tfaforms.com/4707967>.

SPSCC Artist & Lecture Series Presents Winona LaDuke

Thursday, Feb. 7, 2019, 7:30 p.m.  
Writer and political activist Winona LaDuke is an advocate of Native American causes, human rights, Native land reclamation, and environmental justice. See ad on back cover. <https://www.washingtoncenter.org/event/18-19-sp-scc-winona-laduke/>

For a comprehensive listing of events and activities of interest to the South Sound's politically active community and friends, go to the Community Calendar at [LocalMotive.org](http://LocalMotive.org). For WIP listings visit our FB page.



# County commissioners shape our future, literally

Emily Lardner

County commissioner elections don't always generate the interest that a hotly contested race for mayor or state representative might. Yet county government actions are consequential: many decisions about criminal justice, housing, public health, and environmental protection fall to county government to resolve.

**Land-use planning as a key county duty**

Buried within what appear to be the sprawling responsibilities of county government is a critical one: land use planning. Land use planning at the county level governs uses of land outside incorporated cities and towns—determining the future of our built environments as well as the future of open space, forests, and shorelines. As we look ahead to an increasingly unstable climate and sea level rise, decisions we make about how to develop or preserve land matter.

Many of these consequential decisions lie in the hands of county commissioners. Tasked with land use planning, not all commissioners understand or agree with the need to plan for climate change reduction, mitigation, and adaptation. A way to see that locally is by looking at Shoreline Master Plans.

**Plans must use best available science -- except...**

All 39 counties in our state must prepare Shoreline Master Plans to be reviewed and approved by the Department of Ecology based on established guidelines. Washington state requires counties to develop Shoreline Master Plans based on best available science. But the state doesn't specifically require counties to incorporate the science of climate change or sea level rise into their plans.

**The current Shoreline Management Plan Handbook states:**

The Shoreline Management Act (SMA) and the Shoreline Master Program (SMP) Guidelines contain no requirements for SMPs to address climate change or sea level rise. However, they require local jurisdictions to take into account scientific and technical information pertinent to shoreline management issues. The Guidelines require local governments to use “the most current, accurate and complete scientific and technical information available [WAC 173-26-201(2)(a)]. The Guidelines also encourage local governments to consult Ecology’s guidance for applicable new information on emerging topics such as sea level rise [WAC 173-26-090(1)].

**Environmental science or “free market environmentalism”**

Grays Harbor County commissioners elected not to address the topic of sea level rise in their Shoreline Master Plan. Neither does the Plan mention climate change. Instead, in the opening section, under a heading called “Best Management Practices,” this

claim is made: “We need to encourage free market environmentalism as a solution to environmental issues. Markets and the protection of property rights act as a solution for solving many environmental issues.” This principle, attributed not to community members, but to the commission itself, comes with no supporting evidence or examples. What does advocacy of “free market environmentalism” really mean?

**Property + markets + growth = improved environmental quality**

Free market environmentalism is trumpeted by the Heartland Institute. In the 1990s, the Heartland Institute worked with Philip Morris to question the science linking second-hand smoke to health risks. A 2012 leak of Heartland Institute documents revealed their planned campaign, supported by the Charles G. Koch Foundation, to systematically attack the credibility of scientific findings that fossil fuel emissions endanger the long-term welfare of the planet.

The Heartland Institute website describes their stance on free market environmentalism like this: “Free-Market Environmentalism is an approach to environmental problems that focuses on improving environmental quality using property rights and markets.” The website also states: “Markets, property rights, and the rule of law are fundamental to economic growth, and economic growth is fundamental to

improving environmental quality.”

**The free market—opposition to climate initiatives and a carbon tax**

Another proponent of free market environmentalism is ALEC, the American Legislative Exchange Council.

## Will Ecology notice and try to address the clashing contradiction between free market environmentalism and careful planning for the future?

ALEC drafts model policies for conservative lawmakers, including one designed to guide state withdrawal from regional climate initiatives. Another model aims to help lawmakers craft a resolution opposing a carbon tax. Like Heartland, ALEC argues for free market environmentalism, declaring on their website that “technological innovation and free market incentives have allowed us to promote economic prosperity while improving environmental health, protecting wild lands, and conserving resources.” They cite no examples to support this claim.

The public comment period for the Grays Harbor County Shoreline Management Plan ended on December 3, 2018. The Quinault Indian Nation, whose reservation lands fall within the outline of Gray Harbor County,

have joined with other Northwest treaty tribes to develop “a unified tribal habitat strategy” that “aims to preserve and restore the natural functions and connectivity of our river, marine and upland ecosystems, and to seek accountability for decisions on the use of our lands and waters.”

**A NW tribal strategy for ecosystem health in the long term**

Lorraine Loomis, chair of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, wrote in November, 2018, that this habitat strategy is based on “what we know is actually needed to achieve ecosystem health, not what we think is possible to achieve given current habitat conditions. It is not a retreat to the past, but a long-term vision for a future with healthy resources for everyone.”

The Department of Ecology will respond to Grays Harbor County's proposed updates to the Shoreline Master Plan. Will Ecology notice and try to address the clashing contradiction between free market environmentalism and careful planning for the future? And whose vision of the future of our watery region will prevail—that of Heartland Institute or that of the Northwest treaty tribes?

*Emily Lardner is a member of the WIP Publishing Committee and a resident of Grays Harbor County.*

# Swept up in France’s yellow vest protests

Chris Brooks

I've never been tear gassed before. The smell is similar to fireworks and the effect is explosive—and effective. I immediately wanted to get as far away as I could from the noxious source of burning eyes and throat.

I was in Paris when France's “yellow vest” (*gilet jaune*) movement shut down the center of the city.

There were thousands of demonstrators, all wearing the bright yellow safety vests drivers are required by law to have in their cars. They had come from all over the country. The Paris demonstration was the latest escalation in a leaderless movement organized by activists through social media.

The movement originated out of resentment over a hike in the price of diesel gas announced by President Emmanuel Macron as part of his efforts to address climate change. The price of gas in France is already the equivalent of \$6.74 a gallon. Rural families dependent on vehicles would be stretched even further with the gas tax hike.

**No American-style Taxed Enough Already (TEA) party protest**

“These protests are not a backlash against the presence of the French state in the economy,” said Cole Stangler, a labor journalist who reports from Paris. “Many yellow vests are just asking that it act more fairly, infuriated by a government that asks them to give up more income each month at the same time as it grants tax cuts to the super-rich.”

The protesters represent a broad section of working-class France, and their anger is wholly understandable. While the French economy has recovered in the sense that business is booming, the standard of living for the average French family has not improved since the 2008 global economic collapse. Macron's administration has doggedly pursued the interests of corporations and the rich, reducing taxes on the rich to the tune of billions of dollars per year.

**More power to employers**

Macron has also paved the way for companies to sidestep the sectoral agreements that set industry standards and protect workers, instead negotiating individual company contracts with unions. In an executive order, he made it easier to fire workers—and thousands have been terminated as a result. Unions claim that companies are seizing the chance to expel senior, higher-paid workers and fill those positions with younger, lower-paid replacements. Macron claims these changes are necessary to address high unemployment—it has stood at over 9 percent for a decade—by further shifting the balance of power away from workers, towards employers.

**No more business as usual**

The protest began at the Arc de Triomphe and commenced down the Champs-Élysées, Paris's most opulent commercial boulevard right in the

heart of the city. This was a demonstration that intended to be heard. Mass disruption was the goal—no more business as usual.

Protesters shattered windows and set fire to construction vehicles and food stands. Entire sections of the cobblestone street were missing, as if a giant had rolled up the road and walked off with it for a living room rug.

The protesters had wielded stones, but the riot police had armor, shields, batons, and guns; and lots of tear gas.

**Streets made impassable**

The demonstration fanned out through central Paris as the police fired can after can into the crowds and the streets became shrouded in a fog of poison.

Police and demonstrators reached standoffs in some of the small side streets that Paris is known for.

Lines of militarized police stood behind makeshift fencing they erected on one end of a boulevard while protesters gathered around fires they set in the middle of the road at the opposite end.

Tourists caught in the middle and trying to get out were frustrated in their attempt as central Paris became a maze of impassable streets.

**Macron caves to overwhelming demand**

According to polling in France, the yellow vest movement is supported by two-thirds of the public. This stands in sharp contrast to Macron, whose approval rating is barely above 20 percent. Feeling the heat from the barricades, Macron announced this week that the tax hikes will not be enacted in 2019.

**The future of the yellow vest movement is unclear**

As with the leaderless Occupy movement in the U.S. in 2011, major union confederations haven't backed France's movement, but local unions have turned out members and their sympathizers to the yellow vest protests.

► **Yellow vests**, continued on page 9



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# Native Americans scored election wins in Washington and beyond

Stephanie Woodard

TACOMA, WASH.—Chester Earl, and about 300 members of Washington state tribes—from Tulalip, Yakama, Lummi, Quinault, Port Gamble S’Klallam, Earl’s own Puyallup community—and more—gathered at an election night party in a Tacoma catering hall, singing, drumming, dancing, feasting and watching returns from around the state and country. “It’s incredible,” Earl exclaimed as the big news came in: Initiative 940, a Washington state ballot initiative which approves new police reform measures, passed with more than 60 percent of the vote.

Earl and about 15 of the attendees returned from a two-week reservation-to-reservation tour, N8tive Vote 2018. The tour held rallies on the state’s 29 tribal homelands and encouraged members to get to the polls, particularly to say yes to I-940, among other reforms, makes it easier to prosecute law enforcement officers who misuse deadly force.

As *In These Times* has previously reported, Natives are killed by police at the highest rate of any population group—which is rarely chronicled in the media. One victim was Earl’s cousin and tribal member Jacqueline Salyers, a 32-year-old pregnant mother of four, shot and killed in January 2016 as she pulled out of a parking space. Police were seeking her boyfriend, who was in the passenger seat. The officer who shot her in the head claimed that the moving car was life-threatening, which Salyers’ family disputes. The officer was cleared of wrongdoing.

The shooting galvanized the Puyallup tribe to join with other advocates to help craft new police accountability measures. The group then gathered nearly 360,000 signatures (100,000 more than needed) from people all across the state—not just on reservations—to bring a reform bill to the legislature. The bill requires that police officers receive training to de-escalate situations, recognize mental-health crises, and give first aid to those they harm. It also requires independent investigations of deadly and harmful incidents.

The law also eliminates the current language on the books in Washington that excuses officers for a killing

unless they have acted with “malice,” which had put prosecuting attorneys in the difficult position of trying to prove an officer’s mental state. A Seattle Times study showed that un-

## The Puyallup tribe worked with Lummi and Quinault officials to put together a get-out-the-vote tour, confident they would earn public support

der that statute, 213 police-caused deaths from 2005 to 2015 resulted in just one prosecution.

The legislature passed the bill in March, after which the state Supreme Court decided it needed to be approved by voters. The Puyallup tribe worked with Lummi and Quinault officials to put together a get-out-the-vote tour, confident they would earn public support. I-940 was officially endorsed by the state’s tribes, several police associations, the *Seattle Times* and 10 other newspapers, the American Federation of Teachers of Washington and 22 more labor unions, progressive political parties and elected officials, and some 100 church groups, education organizations, veterans associations and more.

“The results give me such relief,” Salyers’s mother, Lisa Earl, said on election night. “The people spoke. Jackie didn’t get killed and die in vain. We have worked so tirelessly for so long and have succeeded in doing something that will help preserve future generations. She has been with me the whole way.”

Lisa Earl believes the new law will make everyone safer, building trust between officers and the public. “We want to reach out and help everyone,” she says. “I don’t know how I would feel if my tribe had not wrapped its arms around me with love after Jackie’s death. We want our police officers to learn compassion. We want them to have the skills they need when they’re running into situations, perhaps without backup. Nurturing is what we are about.”

The election night partygoers also celebrated historic wins by Native American candidates across the country. Deb

Haaland of Laguna Pueblo and Sharice Davids of the Ho-Chunk Nation will be heading to the U.S. House of Representatives to represent New Mexico and Kansas, respectively. Natives also won a slew of state and local races, including Yvette Isburg, who won the post of auditor for the Crow Creek Sioux reservation’s South Dakota county. Auditors, called recorders in some states, control critical on-the-ground implementation of elections.

That’s important for Native voters, who have been disenfranchised in a variety of ways. For example, the nearest registration sites and polling places may be far from reservations. In North Dakota, historically high Native turnout proved the state couldn’t suppress the Native vote, as it tried to do with an 11th-hour demand that voters provide IDs with detailed street address information that tribal members typically don’t have. Young Native voters participated avidly in North Dakota, part of a national swell of youth voter turnout.

Washington state’s tribes and tribal members may have been eager to see I-940 approved, but, more broadly, they want to amplify the Native voice

by increasing the number of tribal people who register and vote. Everywhere the rez-to-rez tour went, it stressed participation and the power of the vote. “We’re stronger together,” says tour participant Tim Reynon, a Puyallup tribal council member. He noted the I-940 effort as proof. “This was such an important election for us.”

Chester Earl adds that the tour began reassembling the statewide tribal coalition that was instrumental in defeating Washington’s then-US Senator in 2000, a Republican known as an “Indian fighter,” replacing him with Maria Cantwell, a Democrat who sits on the Senate’s Committee on Indian Affairs and is perceived as responsive to Native issues.

“The ‘other Washington’ being the way it is nowadays,” Earl continues, referring to D.C., “we need to elect people who will protect the rights of Native people, women, LGBTQ people, immigrants, and more.”

There’s a proven way to do that, Earl says: “We will awaken the Native vote, get our people registered, and get them out to vote.”

*This article was published by In These Times as a web-only feature on November 8, 2019.*<http://inthesetimes.com/article/print/21569/native-americans-scored-big-election-wins-in-washington>

*Stephanie Woodard is a contributing writer to Rural America In These Times and an award-winning journalist whose articles on American Indian rights and other topics have been widely published.*

## Solving Local Environmental Problems

The January 2019 interview on “Glen’s Parallax Perspectives” series (see below for info about watching it through your computer or TCTV channel 22) will help us understand and solve some environmental problems in the Olympia area, especially in the Deschutes River, Capitol Lake, Budd Inlet, Puget Sound, and the surrounding land areas.

This program’s scientific insights will also help people elsewhere to understand and solve their local problems.

We clearly explain the science so anyone can understand the problems and the solutions we propose.

Two very knowledgeable guests help us explore these problems and solutions:

Sue Patnude has a master’s degree in public policy. She has worked extensively in public policy related to science and the environment in a variety of roles for 30 years. Now she is the Executive Director of the Deschutes Estuary Restoration Team, [www.deschutesestuary.org](http://www.deschutesestuary.org).

Daniel Einstein has a Ph.D. in Bio-engineering and has worked for decades in a variety of professional scientific roles. In addition to working as an assistant professor at St. Martin’s University, he also volunteers vigorously to protect our local environment, especially through the Olympia Coalition for Ecosystems

Preservation, [www.olyecosystems.org](http://www.olyecosystems.org)

We explained basic concepts such as “ecosystem,” “sustainability,” and “best available science.” We explained some of the local environmental problems (especially the water-related ones), and we proposed smart, practical solutions. We addressed problems and solutions related to water quality, salmon, orcas, blue herons, and so forth.

We also addressed some “big picture” context and related issues, such as climate disruption that causes warmer temperatures and sea-level rise.

Local environmental groups and other non-profit organizations are working hard to solve the problems. They know good solutions and could accomplish more if they had more volunteers and more financial support. We really do need more people’s help, including people who have not already participated in environmental organizations. Governments are limited in several ways, so non-profit organizations and volunteers are necessary if we are to solve the problems.

### Questions?

Contact Glen Anderson, the TV series’ producer/host at (360) 491-9093 [glenanderson@integra.net](mailto:glenanderson@integra.net)

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# A renewed chance to move away from fossil fuels

Rich Harris

Reading the news lately about mankind's continued assault on the earth's climate can easily leave one feeling disheartened. The Trump administration's attack on science, its reflexive support of fossil fuel industries, and its total denial of the climatic consequences of business-as-usual, is nothing less than immoral abdication of our responsibility to our children and the other creatures with whom we share the earth.

### Recent setbacks on progress

In France, strong opposition forced President Macron to retreat from his proposal to reduce fossil fuel reliance by adding new taxes on gasoline. We've recently learned that, contrary to promises made in Paris, CO2 emissions from most countries, which had been falling slowly, are again increasing. And particularly frustrating here in Washington State was the second defeat in as many elections of an initiative (I-1631) that would have taxed carbon emissions and put our state in the vanguard of a clean energy future.

### Thinking and acting strategically

A few ideas have emerged to help us understand why I-1631 failed. Clearly, the vast sums spent on negative advertising by oil and gas interests played a part. And although awareness of the climate crisis is high, taxes are unpopular even here in Washington, particularly when the benefits of those taxes are intangible and not necessarily local. The same electorate passed other progressive measures, but voted down two that contained additional taxes in support of progressive policies.

What to do now? Above all, keep working hard and strategically, and don't lose hope. Part of maintaining hope is taking responsibility for actions we perform daily. Another part is supporting efforts in our local communities. In Olympia, for example, the Thurston Climate Action Team is particularly active and worthy of support.

### Getting behind a fee-and-dividend approach

Still, to avert the worst of the costs flowing from the changing climate, we need policy on a larger scale. Thus, it was heartening to learn in November, 2018, of the introduction in Congress of the "Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act." The bill is sponsored by both Democrats and Republicans, and represents a forward-looking, achievable, and tangible action we can all get behind: gradually but inexorably increasing the costs of carbon pollution while providing citizens, businesses, and governments with funds to transition to clean energy.

In short, the bill would impose a fee of \$15/ton, at the most upstream possible site, on substances emitting carbon into the atmosphere. The fee would increase \$10/year, providing predictability for businesses and governments, and a gradually tightening

noose on carbon polluters thus tilting the playing field toward clean energy. The bill is currently labelled HB 7173 and a similar, bipartisan bill has been introduced in the Senate.

### Well-aligned incentives

Because fossil fuels can't disappear overnight, and because we'd all be paying more for goods produced from them, such a fee in isolation would be both regressive and unpopular (and unsustainable). Thus, the bill returns revenues collected (minus modest administrative costs) to each of us in the form of a dividend.

In short, your cost of consuming fossil fuels and related products would rise, but the government would send you a check related to that cost. Because the dividend would be the same for us all, those using relatively less fossil fuel would end up ahead, while those with larger carbon footprints would expend more than their dividend. Governments and businesses would face the same economic logic, thus motivating support for innovation in renewables, and the most painless possible transition away from carbon pollution.

### Other strategic elements of HB 7173

HB 7173 also includes a border adjustment to discourage outsourcing

of carbon pollution and encourage countries not yet ramping off carbon pollution to join us. The current bill

## The climate crisis is such a multi-faceted problem that we'll need multiple approaches

also exempts fuels used specifically in farming, which should blunt opposition from powerful agricultural interests. This may be seen as regrettable, but is a reasonable accommodation that will only modestly diminish the speed with which carbon pollution is reduced while garnering support in a sector that would typically be opposed. With time, the development of energy-efficient or carbon-free technology hastened by the fee-and-dividend should allow the agricultural sector to reduce their emissions well.

### Not the be-all and end-all but a crucial start

Unlike 1631, HB 7173 doesn't create a fund to support innovative green projects – but no single bill does everything one might like. The climate crisis is such a difficult, multi-faceted problem that we'll need multiple ap

proaches. It would be counterproductive to criticize any one measure because it doesn't provide a fully comprehensive solution. We need a large toolbox to reform our economy from the one creating our current climate crisis: the carbon fee and dividend in HB 7173 will be a vitally important tool.

### A key role for citizens

Let's all urge all members of Washington's Congressional Delegation to join the current co-sponsors of 7173 and its companion in the Senate, and dedicate ourselves to getting it enacted. Citizens' Climate Lobby, a national group with 501 active local chapters everywhere (including Olympia) and influence in Congress, is working hard and leading the charge. The headwinds in D.C. remain strong, but social change often seems impossible until the dam suddenly breaks when the public has spoken with sufficient force.

*Rich Harris lives in Olympia with his wife, and works at the Department of Fish and Wildlife. He has also lived in Montana and the Tibetan Plateau of Western China. He is active with the Olympia Chapter of Citizen's Climate Lobby. In his copious spare time, Rich attempts to tame his French horn.*

Contact Thurston Climate Action at (<https://www.thurstonclimateaction.org/>). Other organizations working on this issue are Citizen's Climate Lobby, Creation Care and Our Climate. Links can be found in this article at [www.olywip.org](http://www.olywip.org).

# In times of disaster, infrastructure is power

Stephanie Guilloud

Infrastructure building is a strategy. There are many strategies to grow and exercise power, and social movements require the use of all our tools all the time. Disaster is one area, a growing one, across territories that are massive in terms of geography and temporal in terms of the window of time that opens. Disasters are most certainly not the only urgent problems we are facing. Social movements are contending with generational poverty, structural white supremacy, and political crises on every frontline. People are shaping policies and practices within state and institutional apparatus. People are innovating new economic projects and building independent political power. People are organizing and fighting and surviving. All of these strategies are necessary.

### Infrastructure takes many forms

Infrastructure refers to the fundamental facilities and systems required for society to function. On one level that means bridges, roads, gas stations, and telephone lines. On another level it means a web of institutions including schools, hospitals, courts, and banks—systems created to produce and distribute knowledge, information, services, and resources. On a third level it means something larger—the ways we relate

to one another, the ways we learn, the ways we communicate, how we take care of our homes, the operating procedures and mechanisms we use to gov-



ern ourselves and our environment.

For organizers in the South, we often say that our movement infrastructure is based in relationships. We do not share the same scale of funding and intermediary institutions as other regions. We do, however, have long-lasting and cross-regional relationships. Organizers travel across thirteen state lines, across expansive cities, into river deltas and mountain hollers to work with each other. We share practices, we deepen each other's capacities, and we share analysis. These relationships, when facilitated to converge, coordinate, and initiate, are vehicles for

building social movements.

### Processes that strengthen movements

The Southern Movement Assembly is a collaborative, multi-organizational process initiated in 2012 to converge Southern forces and coordinate our diverse efforts across multiple frontlines. Project South is one of the anchor organizations. Groups organize community and frontline assemblies to practice independent political governance. We grow our numbers and leadership across the region through building relationships and cross-pollinating. We facilitate political and popular education to develop and strengthen leadership and experiment with innovative communication strategies. The Southern Movement Assembly organizations implement a shared plan of action called the Southern Peoples Initiative based in our analysis and shared vision synthesized over years of collective work.

### The need for new institutions

One of the visions of the Southern Peoples Initiative is the development of Mutual Aid Liberation Centers. These centers are forming in already existing spaces. There is a long history of mutual aid during Reconstruction in the South when free Black folks were displaced from resources but built tens of thousands of schools, churches, and social networks. We are crafting these Mutual Aid Liberation Centers to be widely inclusive and resourced enough to provide many levels of infrastructure during every phase of disaster on every terrain it occurs.

Disaster takes place on multiple terrains. Climate disasters endanger our land, water, and food and alter our ecosystems. Disasters displace us from our physical, cultural, spiritual place. Poverty and violence displace millions of people from their homes and then criminalize migration across militarized borders. The financial systems, largely driven by debt, create both the slow-boil of impoverishment but also the acute disasters of debt bubbles, stock market crashes, and currency crises. Mass shootings, police murders, and public health crises

► Infrastructure, next page

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# Books and reading and time on your hands

In December, Brenda Big Eagle contracted Mitigation Specialist for the Thurston County Public Defense and Athena Brown, Diversion/Reentry specialist for the Thurston County Jail, organized a group of dedicated volunteers to help collect and sort new books for the county jail. The collected books replaced severely damaged books currently being utilized at the jail. Last Word Books graciously accepted donations on behalf of the project. The community heard the need and the response was overwhelming. Over 4,000 donated books were delivered to the jail on December 15th in a happy one-day marathon. Another 1,200 books were donated to

the Nisqually jail. For the majority of inmates, reading is one of few activities allowed. Big Eagle stated that the inmates were beyond ecstatic and extremely grateful with the arrival of the new books.

The importance of books for people who are incarcerated is captured in a new book (of course) by George Pelecanos, *The Man Who Came Uptown*. Among other characters, there is a librarian who recommends books for a twenty-eight-year-old African-American inmate named Michael Hudson. Pelecanos writes, “In the past year, since he had first been incarcerated [Michael] had become a voracious reader. His tastes ran to stories occur-

ring outside of East Coast cities. He liked to read about the kinds of people he'd not met growing up in Washington and that were set in places he'd never visited.” Michael tells the librarian that he never read a book in his

life before he was incarcerated. It's quite possible that there are people just like Michael in our jail—and that with this new collection of books, they will become readers too.

*Below, Brenda Big Eagle unloading some of the many boxes of books transported and stored by Bob Brennand and his wife as people collected them. Below left, some of the many library project volunteers waiting to move thousands of books into the jail. Photos by Ricky Osborne*



## 106.5 KOWA FM Radio enlightens your ears

Lisa Ganser

Founded by Media Island International, KOWA is a licensed non-profit radio station whose mission is to give voice to individuals, organizations and movements working for gender, racial and social justice, economic democracy, ecological sustainability, and environmental justice. Our goal is to help build the foundation which could enable actual peace.

KOWA is a Pacifica Network affiliate and airs many amazing programs from across the country and around the world, including the daily and weekly news programs Democracy Now!, Rising Up With Sonali, Sojourner Truth, the Ralph Nader Radio Hour, Alternative Radio, Native America Calling, Black Agenda Radio, Letters and Politics, Guns and Butter, Economic Update with Richard Wolfe, Quirks and

Quarks and many more.

KOWA's intentional programming includes Progressive Masculinity, and LGBTQ+ segments. Progressive Comedy and Spoken Word shows help move us forward in the work to help get these underrepresented voices out into the community. KOWA-LP streams and can be heard live throughout Olympia—to the border of Lacey!

Tune it to some of these unique programs: Weekdays 5-6 pm for Hard Knock Radio, the daily drivetime Talk Show for the Hip Hop Generation. It features hosts Davey D, Weyland Southon, Anita Johnson and Tsadae Abeba Neway who hit the air everyday Mon-Fri offering news, views, breaks, and beats. Also check out Feminist Hour from 9:00 to 10:00 am Thursdays and Out Agenda from 9:00 to 10:00 am on Mondays.

## Infrastructure

From previous page

represent systemic violence to our individual and collective bodies. Each disaster reinforces multiple forms of systemic oppression. Hurricanes are not just about water and wind, but reinforce social control through militarized response, financial exploitation through land grabs and privatization, and depopulate areas to diffuse political participation.

The vision of the Mutual Aid Liberation Centers reflects a desire to grow our power on multiple terrains at once. The big vision is a regional constellation of local sites that provide resources, sanctuary, and governance. The Mutual Aid Liberation Centers are places to gather, learn, practice governance, provide health care, support in emergency, and shelter during disaster. To farm if there is land, to distribute food if there's plenty. In a time full of crises, trusted institutions are essential.

### Claiming spaces to make our own infrastructure

A historic Black church in Chattanooga opened one of their small buildings to community education classes, built a garden, and hosted the sixth Southern Movement Assembly when the city (in lockstep with the developers of a recently privatized hospital) would not allow the Assembly to be in a public park. A strip mall adjacent to the largest housing projects in Dothan, Alabama, houses an office, a church, a community radio station, a barber shop, a natural wellness remedy shop, a restaurant, and an organization led by formerly incarcerated people and their families.

A community center built by the Methodist women in 1944 was rescued from irrelevance by community leaders in the 1990s to become a home to an organization working to end hunger in Georgia and an institution growing movement capacity across the South-

ern region. A small corner of land in rural Hondo Texas was the original site of Mexican mutual aid associations that collected funds for burials, raised food, and supported civic engagement—and is now connected to this assembly of multitudes.

**Linking paths through the wreckage** During disasters, these spaces should light up the map. Each center should be alive with all the efforts that people are willing to give during these moments of urgency. We all have a role to play. Teams of researchers, nurses, healers, and regular folks who are moved to respond and support. Trainings for first-responders, street medics, and self-defense. Harm reduction, mental health, and sexual assault counseling. Spaces for preparation before actions and debrief afterwards. Each center is a monument of community infrastructure of land, buildings, and supplies as well as political space for leadership development, education, and decision-making.

The vision is that these centers will grow, offer support, inspire each other, locally and regionally. That they will become more than the sum of their parts. As each site and center develops, the visions and possibilities deepen and spread.

My political life has been shaped and informed by disasters. But I have also been shaped by witnessing the power and tenacity of people carving new paths through the wreckage. I believe that we can transform the patterns and create new arrangements led by social movements. I am 41 years old now, and I look to my own history, the history of social movements, and global examples of growing collective consciousness, creating bold visions, and organizing strategically to achieve what we believe is possible.

*Stephanie Guilloud is a Texan by birth, a graduate of The Evergreen State College and works as Co-director of Project South.*

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# Rise of vegan businesses in Olympia: a concern for animals and the earth

Heather Sundean

Seattle and Portland have long been known as great places to live if you are a vegan. For those who abstain from consuming or using animal products, these two cities offer a vibrant array of restaurants and stores.

Olympia is nestled between these two “vegan Meccas” and has many restaurants that offer vegan options, but for years, vegans in Olympia have longed for more all-vegan restaurants, stores, and services. Vegans now have reason to celebrate. As more people in our community become aware of and concerned about animal exploitation, more all-vegan businesses have sprung up.

In December, I spoke to three owners of local vegan businesses to learn what inspires their plant-based business model.

Kevin Rainsberry and Jamie Vulva are co-owners of the Wayside Cafe & Deli (609 Capitol Way, S), an all-vegan comfort food restaurant that opened its doors last summer. I met with Kevin and Jamie as the delicious smell of something pan-seared (barbequed tofu?) rolled off the grill.

What inspired you to start an all-vegan

restaurant in Olympia?

**Kevin:** We saw the absence of any sit-down vegan restaurant as a gap that should be filled.

*Why did you create an all-vegan menu, as opposed to just offering vegan options?*

**Kevin:** As longtime vegans, it was important to us that the Wayside be all plant-based. Animal rights is a foundation of our business, so we never considered including animal products on the menu.

**Jamie:** If you're serving any animal products, you are contributing to harming animals.

*Do you consider running an all-vegan business to be a form of activism?*

**Jamie:** Every vegan has their own way of doing activism, and I think it's important to show people, through good food, that they do not have to settle for anything that doesn't fit their personal values. I've actually heard from several community members who are considering veganism for the first time, as a result of their experience eating here. I believe it has the power to change people's minds.

**Kevin:** The Interfaith Works Eye-2-Eye fundraiser dinner, where I've done the

cooking for many years, will be sponsored under the Wayside's name this January.

*After a long day at the Wayside, what do you go home and cook for yourself?*

**Kevin:** Something boring, like pasta or pizza. OK, arugula and kalamata olive pizza.



Next I interviewed Lesli Baker, a plant-based nutritional therapist and yoga instructor. Lesli and I settled in for a chat over the phone after Lesli's long day of yoga instruction.

*How does a plant-based or vegan approach fit with your job as a nutritional therapist?*

**Lesli:** Clients come to me with a variety of health issues, such as stomach issues, fatigue issues, hormonal issues. When a client contacts me seeking help, I let them know that to work with me, they will need to transition to a plant-based diet. I make sure to work with clients where they're at, and start the conversation by sharing the health reasons why a plant-based diet is important and can help them heal.

*Do you feel that your work aligns with your personal convictions?*

**Lesli:** Yes—if you think of veganism as an umbrella, all of the reasons for being vegan (environmentalism, health, and animal rights) fit really comfortably under the umbrella. The umbrella is big enough for everybody to be vegan for their own reasons. That being said, moral veganism is really a very important part of my own personal philosophy with regard to diet.

*Founding a vegan business is a big investment, considering you are serving a niche clientele. Would you consider having a vegan business to be a form of activism?*

**Lesli:** I think any small role we can play to plant the seed in someone's mind about going vegan is a form of activism. Just by being vegan, you are setting an example by saying, “look at me, I am healthy and happy and physically active. And I'm thinking for myself. Wouldn't you like to also do all of those things?” I think representing yourself out loud as a vegan in your community is a form of activism.

*Is there anything exciting on the horizon for you?*

**Lesli:** Stay tuned in 2019 for vegan lifestyle transition workshops, as well as workshops on how to adopt a plant-based diet, and even workshops for those experiencing specific issues (such as women experiencing perimenopause symptoms). More information will be available on my Facebook page.



My last interview was with Liana Francisco, the new owner of the Little Gen-

eral Store (500 Capitol Way, S.). Liana and I sat down bright and early for a cup of coffee at Batdorf and Bronson.

*What sort of hopes and dreams do you have for the Little General Store?*

**Liana:** My main goal is to transition the Little General to an all-vegan establishment. When I first set out to buy the store, that goal wasn't clear in my mind, but as a longtime vegan I came to realize that including animal products in my inventory wasn't something I wanted to do.

*Do you see running a vegan business as having a bigger purpose than just a job?*

**Liana:** Yes. It is something much bigger. I see it as being a part of the solution to many problems in our culture, and addressing important issues such as environmentalism, animal rights, and health. It is a great job to be able to offer that type of employment, too – employees want to be a part of something that matters.

*Is there anything that you've been obsessively cooking lately?*

**Liana:** Vegan, gluten-free waffle toasts. And trying to push the boundaries of what can possibly be cooked in an Instant Pot.

*Heather Sundean is a Tumwater resident, longtime vegan, and animal rights activist.*

**For more information,** Wayside Cafe & Deli: [www.facebook.com/thewaysideolympia](http://www.facebook.com/thewaysideolympia)

Interfaith Works Eye-2-Eye fundraiser dinner: <https://www.iwshelter.org/events.html>

Plant Based Nutrition and Yoga Therapy: [www.facebook.com/lpbplantbasednutrition](http://www.facebook.com/lpbplantbasednutrition)

Little General Store: [www.littlegeneralolympia.com](http://www.littlegeneralolympia.com), <https://www.facebook.com/littlegeneralfoodshop>, [www.lianafrancisco.com](http://www.lianafrancisco.com)

## Moving the needle

Susan Glisson

*[Ed note: The Democratic candidate for US Senate in Mississippi lost a run-off vote, prompting one outsider to conclude voters are “still a bunch of hateful white people no matter how we try. We need to cut our losses and focus on the states that will make real change.” Here is a more resolute view.]*

Thank God Mrs. Hamer and Medgar Evers didn't “cut their losses.” They and others toppled segregation in spite of a “bunch of hateful white people.” And some of those white folks learned and did better...

**There are no shortcuts**  
In our culture of immediate gratification, we expect difficult cultural change to occur in an instant, by fiat or tweet. It never has and never will. There are no shortcuts to the everyday process of building inclusive relationships and trust in order to change mindsets and actions. An election is not a movement.

A movement for liberation requires long-term commitment. It requires truth-telling and courage and patience. And a movement should celebrate

moving the needle, as Mississippians did. While President Trump won the state by eighteen points, organizing in that state cut the GOP advantage in the Senate race by more than half, to 8 points, even though Republicans outspent Democrats 4 to 1. More folks showed up to vote in Hinds County for the runoff than voted in the regular election. That is unheard of, people! And that work didn't just happen in the last six months.

**We're awake and there's work to do**  
Beyond this one election, I hope what's also been lost is the illusion that we can change Mississippi (or this nation) without hard work. I hope some of us lose the myth that organizing doesn't work and doesn't deserve support. I hope we've lost the idea that if we ignore racism it will just go away.

We are awake in Mississippi on a new day. There are children to feed and elders to love and minds to change. We have work to do and no time to coddle mercurial attention spans.

*This quote is excerpted from a statement by Susan Glisson in Facing South, the on-line magazine of the Institute for Southern Studies.*

We are awake in Mississippi on a new day. There are children to feed and elders to love and minds to change.



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# The way forward is solidarity and friendship: Santo Tomás and Olympia

**Jean Eberhardt**

"We have lessons to teach each other and stories to tell each other about how to survive and resist and thrive even when times are scary and dangerous. There is a way forward and the way forward is solidarity and friendship and figuring out the ways in which our interests are actually deeply aligned with one another." — Leo Ferguson, Movement Building Organizer at Jews For Racial & Economic Justice, from in an interview with *On the Media* on November 2 on the subject of the Synagogue Shooting in Pittsburgh, PA.

This is the story of our relationship with Santo Tomás, born in a time of war imposed by our government, that continues now to the very hard times the Nicaraguan people are facing.

While hosting a wonderful 12th delegation from our sister town in April-May, we watched in shock from a distance as many anti-government protests erupted in Nicaragua and ended with hundreds of deaths, with many more wounded, locked up

or disappeared.

Our current newsletter includes differing perspectives from our friends in Santo Tomás and from various websites. As always, the Thurston Santo Tomás Sister City Association (TSTSCA) stands firmly against US Intervention in Nicaragua in any shape or form. Neither do we accept violence perpetrated by the Nicaraguan government or the protestors.

Nicaragua has shifted from an acute, several month crisis to a protracted period of simmering tensions, eco-

nomic uncertainty, and an escalation by the likes of John Bolton. This new US National Security Advisor calls Nicaragua, Cuba and Venezuela the "Axis of Evil" in the Western Hemisphere. With funding already going to anti-government groups in those three countries through USAID and the National Endowment for Democracy, we fear Bolton's declaration may be the prelude to much greater intervention.

The US supported the military coup and subsequent electoral fraud by the

president of Honduras, ignores the corruption scandals of Guatemala's leader and applauds ultra-right presidents in Argentina, Chile and Brazil. It's clear that the appointment of Bolton is not about bringing democracy to these "axis of evil" countries that have public access to medicine and education. Whatever one believes about the leadership of Nicaragua, Cuba and Venezuela, can we agree these are sovereign nations that the US should respect?

The steering committee of the TSTSCA decided we needed to cancel visits by our summer community delegation as well as a proposed winter delegation due to instability in the country. As our relationship in deeply grounded in cultural and educational exchanges, we look forward to resuming the visits to and from our sister town. At this time, we do not know when that will be. In the meantime, we continue to raise critically important funds for our sister community in Nicaragua. (please support our Rummage Sale; see ad below). Read wildly differing firsthand accounts from friends in Santo Tomás in our Dec. newsletter on our website: [oly-wa.us/tstsca/](http://oly-wa.us/tstsca/)



## Olympia Carpenters use new tools to pursue "the art of war" and win

**Mark Bean**

[Note: This is Part 3 of a 4-part series describing steps the Olympia Carpenters took to revitalize their union at a time when good union jobs were under threat. Part 1 appeared in November, and Part 2 in December.]

**Organizing your organizing job**

In May 1989 I graduated from the New School for Union Organizers - a program of the Labor Center at TESC. I had also been injured in a fall working on a freeway job for Gordon Kruse Construction. At first, I was very concerned about how I would earn a living. I needed spinal surgery and I would have to rely at least for some months on State Labor & Industries disability benefits.

But it's funny how disaster can lead to new beginnings. Over that summer someone said to me, "an organizer organizes their own organizing job." And with that, my life changed and led to my becoming an organizer with the

Southern Puget Sound District Council of Carpenters. It was a position in the Carpenters Union that hadn't been seen in maybe fifty years. It meant I could now put to work the skills I had developed in the New School and even realize my passion to help my fellow carpenters.

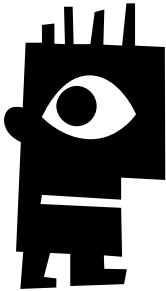
**Knowing your position**

Members of the Olympia Carpenters began researching construction activity in our county in 1990 as part of our education about where we stood within the geographic boundaries of Thurston County. We learned that all residential carpenter construction in the area was being performed by un-represented carpenters. New commercial construction mainly in Lacey, Olympia and Tumwater had more project jobsites with non-union carpenters than union sites.

**Making lists, listening and learning**

Our local Organizing Committee be-

gan sending volunteers to these jobsites. We would introduce ourselves to the carpenters with the aim of making contact and creating a list of who these carpenters were and how to stay in touch with them. On many job sites, former union members were providing their skills to their non-union employer. Many had a story of why they were no longer union members. We listened and learned. These un-represented carpenters were surprised that union carpenters came to talk with them—in their past experience, the union had shunned them. This began what would later become our District Council's Carpenter to Carpenter program.



**Testing skills developed at the New School**

We also encountered a special challenge when a non-union contractor arrived in town to build the new Natural Resources Building (NRB) on the East Capitol Campus. We discussed the situation and decided a little "organizing" was needed. We also wanted to practice and hone some of our organizing tactics. We saw the possibility of making an example that would build our reputation as a group to be reckoned with. We would convince the contractor Hensel Phelps (HP), and the state agency, Department of General Administration (GA), of the error of their ways. This effort became a laboratory and a proving ground for our New School education, testing skills such as research, intelligence gathering, bottom-up organizing, salting, putting pressure on an enemy, and building alliances.

**Research.** We used *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu to instruct us in our effort. We understood that "war" was of vital importance to our union. Thus, we needed to make many calculations and estimates in order to prevail in our battle. "Know your enemy, and yourself, and you will be victorious" (Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*). We determined to gather information about

the who, what, where, and how of the NRB project.

**Intelligence gathering.** First, we made an alliance with AFSCME members working as city garbage truck drivers that enabled us to get inside information on the day-to-day administration of the project. Some drivers were familiar to our members as we had all grown up in Olympia. Familiarizing yourself with those you know in the community can provide organizing dividends. The g-men's assistance allowed us to survey the trash from the HP offices after they made their weekly pick up. From plastic trash bags we selected and studied project flowcharts and budgets the NRB job.

We also became privy to internal notes and communication among project staff. When we found notes mocking State Labor & Industries Safety Inspectors, we shared this info with them. This brought State Safety Inspectors to make a nest in the neighboring Licensing Building with a nice view of the NRB job site. After that, the job site was shut down a few times due to safety violations, which put pressure on HP and resulted in some fines. One violation arose from the unsafe method used to lift large, heavy concrete form panels over the heads of workers.

The fines and stoppages delayed the job schedule for HP and GA staff. It cost HP money, which ate into their project profit. How did we know about the dollar consequences to HP's job? It was in the regular project flowcharts that we reviewed every week, thanks to AFSCME garbage truck drivers.

Some out-of-work members and community folk volunteered as watchmen. This enabled us to take photos documenting a very large void in a concrete pour on the central building core. We spread a flyer showing this glaring mistake throughout the capitol campus. We rallied with the help of state employees who were part of Local 443 to attend an important public meeting by GA staff and management. Large numbers of people focused on an agenda other than the one planned is an incredible experience. The meeting became a tutorial on how to turn what had been intended to be a PR show, into a public chastisement of

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Lincoln kindergarten teacher Emily Calhoun Petrie dancing with a lampshade at the sale!



# Growing demand and finite water resources –a challenge for Thurston County

Esther Kronenberg

One of the most contentious and fundamental issues facing Thurston County involves water. The laws and regulations around water are complicated and involve many stakeholders. There are tribal treaty rights, federal laws, Department of Ecology regulations, rural communities, municipalities, agriculture, aquaculture and PUDs, all vying for water subject to the State's Growth Management Act. Add 120,000 people who are expected to move into Thurston County by 2035 along with exacerbating effects of climate change, and the difficulty of ensuring a clean and adequate water supply becomes ever more critical.

The legislature modifies a court ruling

In 2016, a new flash-point lit up the water wars. A state Supreme Court ruling, known as the Hirst decision, clarified that Washington's Growth Management Act requires counties to ensure that there is enough water available to accommodate new growth before more development can be permitted. The court's decision followed basic Washington water law that holds new water rights cannot impair senior water rights, including those of the tribes, the environment, municipalities and farmers.

Tribes have the most senior rights for both water supply and instream flows adequate for fish. With the Hirst decision, rural development was shut down when new wells could not be drilled until counties could verify that an adequate supply of water was present. State legislators from rural areas held the Capital budget hostage last year to compel passage of ESSB 6091, which significantly loosens the Hirst ruling. For instance, it allows new development relying on exempt wells to proceed without a review of water availability. It lacks meaningful limits on water use and does not provide for

metering, so the amount of use cannot be monitored. Instead, it provides for committees to develop projects to "offset water use by permit-exempt wells in 15 watersheds" or "water resource inventory areas" (WRIAs).

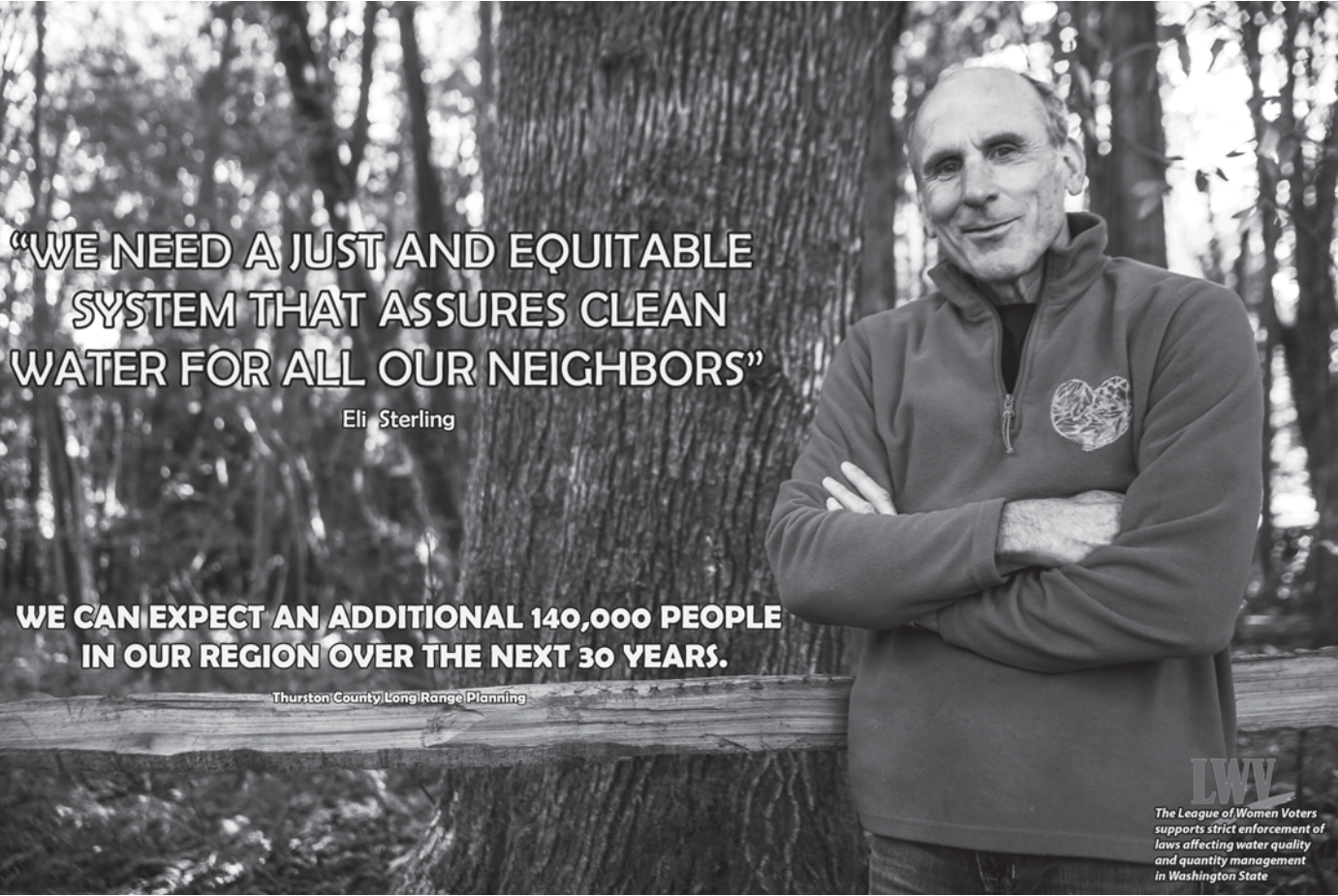
Deschutes River Watershed (WRIA 13). Of these, only the Nisqually has a plan that will be finalized by February, 2019. New committees for the other WRIAs have until 2021 to come up with a plan that meets the approv-

Master Builders, the Deschutes Estuary Restoration Team and the Thurston Conservation District.

This group must balance the needs of growing cities against water rights belonging to streams, farms, aquaculture, builders and industry, and rural residents. Municipalities now use the largest percentage of the available water. That consumption amounts to only 40% of their approved water right, and it is unclear whether there is an adequate supply of water to accommodate full build-out. The databases on water availability are fragmented and inaccurate. The next largest group of consumers of water are aquaculture, then agriculture, followed by industry and residential systems. Individual residential wells account for only a small percentage of overall water use.

Where can water for new development come from?

The stress on the water supply is readily apparent. The city of Yelm already faces water short-



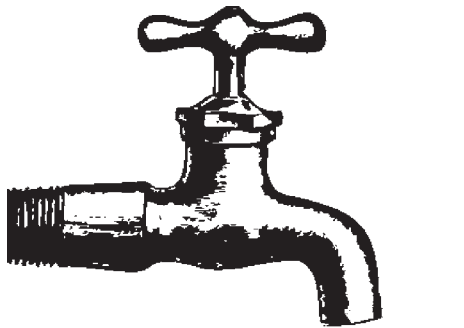
The committees must develop plans with actions to offset potential effects on instream flows of new domestic wells; and include estimates of cumulative water use impacts for the next 20 years, and result in a net ecological benefit to the watershed.

Thurston County is home to four WRIAs: the Nisqually River Watershed (WRIA 11), the Chehalis River Watershed (WRIAs 22 and 23), Kennedy-Goldsborough (WRIA 14) and the

al of the Department of Ecology.

How will stakeholder interests play out?

WRIA 13—the Deschutes Watershed—covers most of Thurston County, including Capitol Lake and Budd Inlet. Its Watershed Restoration Committee consists of representatives from Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, Yelm, Tenino, Ecology, the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, the Nisqually and Squaxin tribes, the PUD, Olympia



ages. Most streams in the County run low or even dry up, like Scatter Creek, during the summer. Rising stream temperatures threaten salmon runs and stream life, caused perhaps by denuded shorelines, more surface runoff, septic inflow or volcanic activity. We know that over-pumping of groundwater depletes stream flows. Where will the water for cities and new development come from? The farmers? The fish processors? The mines? Or the streams?

Get your feet wet on Thurston County's water situation

The League of Women Voters is acting as an observer of the WRIA 13 discussions to protect the public and environment. As part of the update of their 2008 Water Resource Study, which will be used to inform and lobby legislators working on water and planning issues, the League is organizing at least three public forums in the coming months to inform and encourage public engagement.

The first, to be held on February 5 at the Olympia Center, will ask "Where's the Water? A Reality Check." Kevin Hansen, hydrogeologist for Thurston County, will explain the relationship between groundwater and instream flows. David Troutt, Director, Natural Resources Department of the Nisqually Indian Tribe will show that "Interstate 5 functions as a dam disrupting the natural flow of the Nisqually River."

Esther Kronenberg is a member of the League of Women Voters.

## Yellow vests

From page 3

"Meanwhile, militant railroad workers in Paris—many of the same ones who went on rolling strikes last spring over reforms that undermined their job security—have organized a yellow vest solidarity march this weekend," said Stangler.

"There is anger and a willingness to keep protesting without a clear set of demands. Labor, left, and student activists all hope to turn the movement in a more progressive direction."

Chris Brooks is a staff writer and organizer at Labor Notes. [chris@labornotes.org](mailto:chris@labornotes.org). This article is reprinted with permission from Labor Notes.

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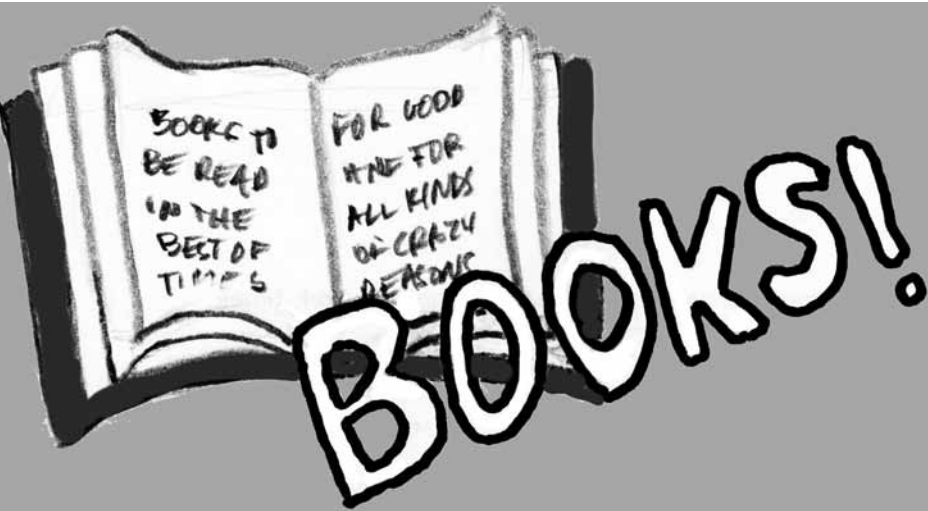
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# 128 years of voter suppression

## One Person, No Vote

by Carol Anderson  
Bloomsbury Books (2018)

Jeff Angus

“The people who cast the votes decide nothing. The people who count the votes decide everything.” – Joltin’ Joe Stalin

Voter suppression, that is, preventing citizens from registering, preventing registered voters from voting, and preventing the accurate counting of cast ballots, is not a recent scam in the US. It has a history, and by knowing its detailed history, we can win some fights against it.

While Washington state has an inclusive and clean elections apparatus, dozens of other states choose to continue cleverly-designed election-fixing that started as far back as 1890.

The 2018 book, *One Person, No Vote*, by Carol Anderson, meticulously documents this history. And while the author shows that technological sophistication only makes voter suppression more effective and less traceable, she also shares tactics for rolling back much (not all) of it.

Instead of a typical chronological narrative, Anderson organizes her history

around three suppression techniques still in use today: voter ID/qualification requirements, voter-roll purges and administrative rule-rigging.

### A long and fraught history

Before the Civil War, no special effort was needed to limit voting to a select few. Each state could determine who was eligible to vote—and generally that excluded women, non-whites, minors and people who didn’t own real estate.

The end of the Civil War brought the 15th Amendment, providing that the right to vote could not be “denied or abridged on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude.” This called for new ways to limit the franchise—and led to an era of terrorist mass action designed to intimidate people out of voting.

Some people rallied around the idea that if you tortured or killed enough people who didn’t look like you, it would dissuade others from trying. It was a standby of electoral politics, especially in the states of the former Confederacy. Sporadic forays by the Federal government into enforcing voting rights law during Reconstruction eventually inspired the suppressors to develop new tactics. They would use the law and regulations instead of the noose to limit the franchise to white men.

In 1890 the “Mississippi Plan” was conceived as a more systematic way to deny rights promised under the 15th Amendment. Mississippi’s model legislation, using all three techniques Anderson points out, became the blueprint for action by other states.

In the area of Voter ID and qualification, Mississippi allowed every county to choose its own standard of “literacy” which could distinguish between voters. Some African-Americans had to read and explain part of the state’s financial regulatory code or they could not register. Whites might have to read the name on their driver’s license.

Decades later, after court cases by the NAACP and voter registration drives by young civil rights workers, those attempting to suppress the vote reverted things such as purging voter rolls, inventing new standards for re-registration in predominantly African-American counties, a new era of gerrymandering, draconian residency requirements, putting polling places in locations inconvenient for specific groups of would-be voters, and other measures.

Anderson reports how Republicans diffused and applied these techniques to more and more states, and how the Supreme Court’s 2013 decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* opened up the Republican playbook to an efflorescence of creative suppression. If you’ve followed the evolution of voting requirements in Wisconsin, Georgia or North Carolina, you’ll get the fine points. The Democrats’ efforts have been limp in the face of this offensive against democracy and the rule of law.

Blessedly, Anderson also shows how, in spite of the Democrats’ fecklessness, non-party organizers have rolled out a model that can beat the scams. In a 2017 Alabama special Senate election, community organizers, mostly-African American, took a page from the Civil Rights era. Adding to the Democrats’ fragile, money-centric wholesale campaigning (advertising, robo-calling, generic get out the vote arm-waving) they pursued one-on-one outreach, worked through existing community organizations and built new ones, relentlessly went to court and peacefully fought back.

Anderson seems to see the Alabama approach as the key to overcoming America’s passion for voter suppression. Build alternative strategies that complement Democratic party funds with organizing that makes voting easy in a country where, when people actually vote, the bad guys generally lose.

I knew a lot about voter suppression techniques, but *One Person, No Vote* added a ton of knowledge and context, and connected the war on voting today to the thread spun by the voter suppression movement since the Civil War.

*Jeff Angus is an avid reader and follower of party politics. He was at one time a US Senate staffer.*

# It’s about the money, honey

Paul Buchheit

Many of us are ill-informed about certain critical economic and social issues. The following facts should have been reported by the mainstream media, but unfortunately most of that media is controlled by the very people who have reason to hide the facts.

### Tax haven cheating is much costlier than the annual safety net

Offshore hoarding of private American wealth is estimated to be \$3.3 trillion.

The safety net costs about \$400 billion per year, or, including Medicaid, about \$900 billion per year. Taking on the tax cheaters seems like an obvious response, instead of cutting the safety net. But the IRS budget itself has been steadily cut. Amazingly, and perversely, the Internal Revenue Service, which could be recovering much of this hoarded money, has seen its staff and budget slashed 14 to 18 percent since the recession.

### Our own country is the world’s second biggest tax haven

While the privileged American tax cheaters are taking money from their own country, they’re not shy about taking from the rest of the world. According to the Financial Secrecy Index of the Tax Justice Network, the U.S. is second only to Switzerland as a tax haven. Their report states: “Financial secrecy provided by the U.S. has caused untold harm to the ordinary citizens of foreign countries, whose elites have used the United States as a bolt-hole for looted wealth.”

### Record low unemployment? Yes, because one hour of work counts as employed

Part of the ‘booming’ economy is a low unemployment rate. As noted recently, the Bureau of Labor Statistics bases the official unemployment rate

on employees “who did any work for pay or profit” during the week being surveyed. That includes part-time workers who are employed for just one hour a week.

The unemployment rate also fails to include those who have given up looking for work—4% more Americans than in the year 2000.

## We’re gradually giving away our country’s wealth to the children of the rich

We’re gradually giving away our country’s wealth to the children of the rich

### It’s not a Death Tax, it’s a Deadbeat Tax.

Anywhere from 35 to 55 percent of U.S. household wealth is inherited. It’s going to get worse. A Boston College study estimated that \$59 trillion will be transferred from American estates by 2061. The study calls it “the greatest wealth transfer in U.S. history.” That’s almost as much as the total financial wealth in the U.S. today. But, as Robert Reich notes, in 2014 only 1.4 out of every 1,000 estates owed any estate tax. So most of the money to be passed down from Baby Boomers will be going to kids who never earned any of it and won’t have to pay any taxes on it.

One might argue that the loss of all this tax revenue is a good thing, because then philanthropists will step up and fund the needs of society. Not much chance of that. The super-rich have little incentive to provide housing or education or infrastructure or clean water to poor neighborhoods. Here’s their incentive: Donor-Advised Funds (DAFs). These ‘philanthropic’ funds allow big tax writeoffs, and the ‘donated’ money can be invested and reinvested with little of it going to real causes. The report “Gilded Giving” by Inequality.org states that “this chari-

table revenue can be warehoused, sitting for years or decades after a charitable deduction has been taken, before any significant payout is made to public nonprofits.”

As we keep shooting each other, our leaders keep cutting mental health care

Why should privileged Americans want to avoid this issue? Because they’re not about to make a financial commitment to the root cause of most of the violence in our country, which is the overwhelming stress and suffering brought on by deprivation in the richest nation in the world. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, anxiety affects nearly one-third of both adolescents and adults.

But instead of therapy, we use drugs to treat patients with mental problems, and as a result pharmaceutical companies make billions of dollars at the expense of incapacitated Americans. Incredibly, over 96 percent of “last-resort” mental health hospital beds have been eliminated in the past sixty years. More incredibly, the 2019 budget for the Department of Health and Human Services includes a 21 percent decrease from the 2017 level.

Most incredible of all is the hypocrisy accompanying this disdain for the needs of American adults and children. As when Donald Trump says, “To every parent, teacher and child who is hurting so badly, we are here for you whatever you need, whatever we can do to ease your pain.”

*Paul Buchheit is the author of Disposable Americans: Extreme Capitalism and the Case for a Guaranteed Income (2017). Contact him at: youdeservefacts.org. This article appeared in Common Dreams, Nov. 26, 2018. Reprinted under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 License*

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# Inadequate defense for juveniles—the state Office of Public Defense and Grays Harbor County

Gary Murrell

Throughout Washington state, county officials strongly influence the criminal justice system by passing ordinances, establishing policies, selecting program administrators and staff, setting public safety priorities and making funding decisions that directly affect many who come in contact with the law.

Everyone in the United States has a constitutional right to due process and, whether one can afford it or not, to adequate legal defense in court. Children are no exception.

Except, that is, if the child happens to be poor and live in Grays Harbor County. In Grays Harbor, the County Commissioners, prosecutors, judges, and public defenders who are responsible for establishing a system that protects that constitutional right, have actually produced a system that masquerades as justice, with children the unwitting victims.

On Friday, 14 December 2018, a Superior Court judge denied the state's motion to end a challenge to the way the juvenile “justice” system operates in Grays Harbor County. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) had

...the public defender never challenges the standardized bail determination, juveniles spend prolonged and unnecessary amounts of time incarcerated.

brought the class action suit against the state and its Office of Public Defense (OPD) in early 2017.

At issue is the failure of the Office of Public Defense (OPD) a state agency, to monitor and supervise the operation of county public defense systems. OPD knew for years about violations in Grays Harbor but claimed it lacked the authority to provide meaningful oversight.

The Superior Court judge has now kicked the case up to the Appeals

Court to decide sometime next year.

The lack of independence of public defenders is especially egregious. According to the ACLU suit, in Grays Harbor “the Juvenile Court judge . . . is intimately involved with the selection process of juvenile public defenders and that judge and [the] prosecutor regularly meet to decide outcomes of juvenile court cases and then inform the public defender of what will happen to her clients.”

According to the suit, “there was great pressure on the Public Defender to not raise certain issues, not to advocate for the clients, and to limit the hearing on each case to a few minutes.” Public defenders readily complied. They “rarely if ever objected to onerous and overbroad conditions . . . imposed by the Court. . . . Because the public defender never challenges the standardized bail determination, juveniles spend prolonged and unnecessary amounts of time incarcerated.”

Not that public defenders are carrying out their responsibilities in a professional manner in other areas. Hired as the “lowest bid” contractor, the “public defender either does not meet with indigent juvenile clients and other witnesses in advance of court hearings, ...when the public defender does discuss cases with clients, it is often on the day of the hearing, the afternoon before, or when court is in session for other clients, and may take place in the detention center, in the courtroom, or in the hallway just outside the courtroom where confidentiality is compromised.”

Juvenile defendants are in essence left to understand on their own such complicated issues as pleas, detention alternatives, plea alternatives, and plea consequences. Many juveniles are “spending excessive amounts of time incarcerated pretrial, for contempt, and for probation violations.”

If the ACLU suit is successful, it could lead to reforms across all county Public Defense practices and performance. And it might restore the meaning of the term “juvenile justice” in Grays Harbor County.

Gary Murrell lives and writes from Grays Harbor County. He is a plaintiff in the ACLU suit.

## Carpenters

From page 8

the GA. There is power in a large number of people moving toward a goal, when you have the moral high ground and the public interest and values are at stake.

**Bottom-Up/salting:** We also talked with HP workers who we met after their day's work, and invited to meetings at our union hall. Some of these men became members of our union and became “salts” for the union. Salting is a tactic where someone gets a job at a specific workplace with the intent of organizing a union. We learned much more from our salts about what went on at the jobsite daily, and who was who in the HP construction management team All this was grist for our

efforts to turn the jobs at this site into good, safe union jobs.

### Putting pressure on an enemy

One day an advertisement appeared in the Olympian, asking for carpenters to apply for work on the NRB project. We used the opportunity to host a job application party on the day HP began interviewing applicants. We were flagrant in our effort. Our carpenters were some of the best qualified tradesmen in the area, and they blatantly showed their union membership. We were baiting the contractor to commit Federal Labor Law violations by refusing to speak to or hire these carpenters due to their being union members. We even brought video cameras to record the event. It threw HP management into a frenzy of insecurity and fear.

All was good fun with a tactical pur-

pose. National Labor Relations Board claims were filed from that carpenter application party. We may not have prevailed in the claims, but we exerted more pressure on HP (along with expenses for attorneys).

### Building alliances

We also looked for resources in community organizations and people we worked with for our mutual benefit. Primarily we made alliances with government worker unions in Olympia that gave us additional leverage on GA and the NRB jobsite. We went outside the usual Building Trades “club” since they were at a loss with what to do and not willing to help.

However, one can find many like-minded folk who see that bringing union construction jobs to town strengthens the community. We learned not to hinder our effort by being closed-minded about potential allies. We kept faith communities informed of our effort and received support from that quarter too. The State Department of Labor & Industries safety inspectors, and prevailing wage monitors were especially helpful. We gave them solid evidence with which to do their jobs. The contractor continued to suffer extra costs from fines and work stoppages.

### Success changed more than the NRB project

HP eventually saw that it was in their interest to sign a bargaining agreement with the Carpenters Union District Council if they were to continue to work in Washington state. Large contractors coming into Puget Sound from other states and Canada also heard of our efforts and signed agreements. New state buildings have been built with union labor ever since. Look at the new GA building on Capitol Way. It was built by Sellen Construction, a signatory contractor.

### The community of carpenters

The finest part of the campaign by Olympia Union Carpenters in the

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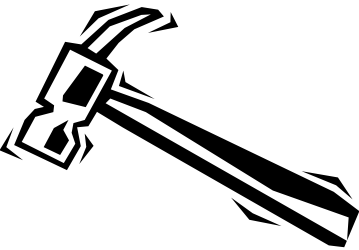
1990s was the knowledge and experience we had acquired in learning who the other carpenters were in our area, We bridged the gap separating us and understood that we were actually the same community of carpenters.

This led to the organization of a new local union for residential carpenters. We also became familiar with the government agencies who had oversight of construction matters, and who we could work with in those agencies. The other important institution created by our union was an annual Rank & File Carpenter School. It brought together union and non-union carpenters to discuss, learn and create plans for organizing for better communities and labor standards. The school was based on a popular education model as employed by the Labor Center at The Evergreen State College. They became partners in our effort.

Remember; we educate people in order to organize them. After that, organizing actions begin to pulse.

**Next month:** What does it mean to be an organizer? Why is it needed now?

Mark Bean retired from the Carpenter's Union and continues to learn from his community.



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# The first phase of the struggle is the battle of ideas

Barbara Ransby

Andrew Gillum and Stacey Abrams may not have won their elections, but in trying to get them elected hundreds of thousands of people were energized and set in motion. Movement organizers now need to give them something to do. At the same time, progressives and radicals need to agree on an agenda for the new Democratic majority in the House. That task cannot be left to the politicians. An anti-racist, pro-working class, intersectional feminist analysis has to inform that agenda.

Moreover, key ballot initiatives were won yesterday, most significantly,

Proposition 4 in Florida which enfranchised 1.5 million formerly incarcerated citizens with felony convictions, disproportionately poor people and people of color. This is a potential game changer for future elections.

Even though some of the more high profile progressives running for office did not win, there is much work to do to build on the momentum of their campaigns, which is what we should do after any election if we have a “vote PLUS” strategy: Activate databases to invite volunteers into a larger political conversations; plan marches, vigils, direct action tactics that keep up the pressure on both Democrats and

Republicans around key issues; re-activate a hearts and minds media campaign to win, defeat or neutralize the underlying racist, elitist, misogynist and xenophobic ideas that feed Trumpism’s reactionary, white nationalist agenda.

The first phase of struggle is the battle of ideas—legislation and elections are metrics that tell us whether we are winning or losing.

*Barbara Ransby is Distinguished Professor of African American Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago*

## Extreme times

From page 1

substantive changes are impossible. What in Europe is called extra parliamentary politics is the very essence of radical-revolutionary struggle.

### Revolutionary struggle and the crisis of capitalist production

I am particularly concerned in my own political activities with the global realm—beyond the dominant Triad of the United States, Europe, Japan—where more revolutionary struggles are being played out. At present I am concerned with fate of the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela, the Movement Toward Socialism in Bolivia, The MST in Brazil, the peasant revolts in India, the revolutionary movement in Nepal, and the global climate movement—as well as numerous other on the ground struggles.

I am likewise concerned, but in a quite different way, with various neo-fascist trends from Bolsonaro in Brazil to Duterte in the Philippines to Poroshenko in the Ukraine to Trump in the United States. The downward spiral of contemporary capitalism is manifested in a twofold disjuncture of economic stagnation and ecological collapse that together threaten all of civilization. This general crisis of capitalist production has now spread to the liberal-democratic state, resulting in the rise of extreme nationalist, racist, and neofacist currents, which draw their support not only from the lower middle class, and privileged (of-

ten white supremacist) populations, but also from key sectors of the financial class.

### The imperial machine at work abroad and at home

The United States as the hegemonic imperial power is at the center of all of these developments. Recently, I watched a college football game and noticed that in one of the now ritual celebrations of the US military it was stated, as an item of pride, that US troops were in 137 countries around the world. Why does the United States have troops in 137 countries? (There are only 195 countries in the world all told.)

The United States has over eight hundred military bases located in seventy countries. Why? In the last year in which Obama was in office, the United States dropped 26,171 bombs. Drone assassinations were ordered by the president every morning, with his selection of the specific individuals or groups to be assassinated. Why? The truth

is that the United States is the hegemonic military-imperial power in the world and aims to stay that way. All attempts by countries around the globe to free themselves from the clutches of multinational corporations and the world market are subject to political

Political activity...extends far beyond the state, and beyond electoral politics, and is related to community ... this same imperial machine serves to a large extent to keep our own population in line.



ostracization, economic sanctions, coups, assassinations, and military interventions—all engineered in part in Washington. It is this same imperial machine that serves to a large extent to keep our own population in line. Today’s militarized police forces are a crucial element in the New Jim Crow that has put grossly disproportionate numbers of Black men behind bars, and which makes Black men a principle target for police shootings.

### Resistance here matters

The struggle against Empire thus begins in the United States, as does the struggle for System Change Not Climate Change, and the struggle

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against capitalism. In a world which is chained by an imperialism forged largely in the United States, resistance and revolts in this country matter, and are invariably heard around the world.

Hence, for Americans, more than any other population in the world, anti-imperialism necessarily begins at home, where imperialism finds its world bastion: Fortress America. Those who reside in the United States have an

indispensable role in making room for a world of substantive equality and ecological sustainability.

### Going beyond the failed system

It is our job to support revolutionaries in the poorest and most oppressed nations on earth by backing their aspirations, and by opposing US militarism and imperialism abroad. We should acknowledge the cry, Let My People Go! Capitalism is now a failed system. But in order to go beyond it we have to fight to create a new future for humanity, and we have to begin where we are, while aligning ourselves with an emerging International of global struggle. Being a political animal in this sense, means a commitment to the global community, and to the most oppressed of the world’s people. We will not be free until they are free.

John Bellamy Foster is the editor of Monthly Review. His contact there is [jfoster@monthlyreview.org](mailto:jfoster@monthlyreview.org)

A Playback Theatre performance

Stories of the Power of Music

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# A new day in Mexico? President Lopez Obrador, popular festivities and financial instability

Alejandro Alvarez Bejar

On December 1st, thousands of people took to the streets of Mexico City to celebrate the inauguration of Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador as the new president of the Mexican Republic. This took place after one of the longest transitions in recent history. For 6 months after the June 1 election, two governments existed— that of Enrique Pena Nieto and that of Lopez Obrador.

### A complex environment for the transition

Because financialized capitalism is structurally unstable, daily governance hangs by a thread on the risk rating agencies. If the government doesn't control inflation, ensure financial stability and maintain fiscal balance and budgetary discipline, it will not pass the confidence test of bankers and international investors. As a result bankers and investors can slowly or rapidly undermine the credibility of any alternative government and sink any plans for change.

The transition from Pena Nieto to Lopez Obrador saw the hasty signing of the Mexican-US-Canada Treaty (a new name for NAFTA). This new agreement repeats all the socially discredited aspects of NAFTA and imposes new and substantial restrictions on the new government and on Mexican, American and Canadian workers.

Also, during this transition from one government to the next, Mexicans lived through the conflict-ridden exodus of Central American migrants (Hondurans, Salvadorans and Guatemalans) to the United States. This exodus created a crisis at Mexico's southern border and temporarily militarized the US/Mexican border. In cities like Tijuana, the conflict produced the same expressions of racism, xenophobia and intolerance that are the basic ingredients of Donald Trump's policies.

Furthermore, during the transition, there were sudden drops in the stock market and a devaluation of the peso against the dollar. This was due to the announcement of the cancellation of a project to construct a new luxury airport above an aquifer northeast of Mexico City, along with revisions to the commissions that banks charge in

Mexico - charges that are double the ones imposed by the same banks in their home countries. All of this was taking place coincidentally with the US-China trade war and a slowdown in the global economy.

Business interests used the media to attack the new government's alleged intention to change management rules for pension funds, along with attacks by parties displaced from power, all trying to recover ground they lost in the June election.

In the state of Guanajuato, one of the most conservative regions of the coun-



try controlled by the right wing PAN party, a limit was placed on the supply of gasoline. Guanajuato was the first state to open their gas stations to transnational corporations in 2018. This new limit on gasoline supply created bewilderment and anger among automobile drivers.

**Corruption and the neoliberal model**  
During the official inauguration in front of members of the House and Senate, governors and special guests, while ex-president Pena Nieto sat by his side, Lopez Obrador castigated neoliberalism with its economics of inequality, its poverty and marginalization, its impunity and cynical respect for the corruption that flourished in Mexico under previous governments, as a true disaster for Mexico.

Lopez Obrador made clear that he is not only initiating a new government, but also a change in the politics of the regime itself. His changes will be peaceful and orderly, yet at the same time, radical and profound, because they will end corruption and impunity.

He reiterated that the neo-liberal economic model is both a foreign idea and one that leads to de-nationalization because it concedes territory, businesses and public benefits to private and foreign businessmen. He denounced corruption as the principal tool of political power and noted the importance of separating economic and political power. But he stressed all this right after announcing his Advisory Board— made up almost entirely of the great men of Mexican business. He did this to calm the jitters of businessmen worried about the cancellation of the new airport.

It was not surprising to see that upon taking office, Lopez Obrador reiterated that he will not raise the price of gasoline, nor increase the public debt. He will respect the signed contracts made by the previous government and the autonomy of the central bank of Mexico.

### A choice to rely on the military

What was a surprise it was to see him announce the formation of a National Guard, constitutionally armed or not, made up of the army, marines and Federal police which will continue the militarized strategy to combat drugs. This also implies that Lopez Obrador is placing the guarantee of democratic rights and freedoms in military structures. In the past, this policy has created a colossal humanitarian crisis throughout the entire country. What happened to the demand for an immediate peace that was the key factor that motivated millions of people to vote for Lopez Obrador?

Lopez Obrador said he would live in his own home and that "Los Pinos," the official residence of Mexican presidents, will be opened to the public. This will allow people to see how ex-presidents led a luxurious life equivalent to the sheiks of the Middle East while most of the country lacked basic needs.

### A question of representation

After the inauguration, Lopez Obrador attended a massive gathering in the capital's Zocalo where representatives of sixty-eight indigenous communities awarded him the "Baston de Mando." As he took this "baton of command," Lopez Obrador exhorted the people who filled the Zocalo "not to leave me alone, without you, I am worthless— or almost worthless."

After the festivities, this celebratory act became controversial. First, it was criticized as too folkloric, with the burning of incense, prayers and invocations to the four cardinal points. Second, and above all, it was controversial because the gathering that gave the "Baston de mando" did not represent the indigenous people. Leaders should not have spoken in the name of the indigenous movement as this act appeared to suggest that they were the main interlocutors with the government of Lopez Obrador.

The question of representation of this group is not a minor matter. Lopez Obrador has ratified three large projects as part of his development plan: the Multi-Modal Trans-Isthmus Corridor from the Pacific to the Gulf of Mexico, the "Maya Train," and a refinery in Tabasco. He said he would expand the existing airport by adding two runways.

In sum, Lopez Obrador is proposing some old mega projects in indigenous territories without the detailed consultation that is clearly required by Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization. It's also important to point out that it was the neoliberal government of Vicente Fox (2000-2006) that proposed the Trans-Isthmus Corridor as part of the "Plan Puebla Panama."

### Will there be an end to the neoliberal project?

With regard to these projects, numerous experts have pointed out that predatory modernity has already left its effect on Merida, Cancun, Campeche and Chetumal. In these cities, tourism, commerce and real estate development have destroyed biocultural patrimony and generated "progress" that is unjust, unstable and destructive. This has occurred because there has been no joint action between governments at the federal, state and municipal level with local communities, peoples and indigenous groups. For this reason, these experts argue publicly for the construction of an ecological, social and solidarity economy guided by a deep biocultural respect and the defense of life in all its forms.

Lopez Obrador has also stated his intention to cancel neoliberal education reform, to offer free medical care in marginalized zones, to construct a "Truth Commission" to punish the abuse of authority and to deal with the case of the forty-three disappeared youth from the town of Ayotzinapa. He announced that he will pay attention to Mexico's fifty-four million poor people, give ten million scholarships to young people and double economic support to older adults and those with disabilities. Without a doubt, he is listening to some of the popular demands for fundamental change.

### The hard task of converting hope into reality

And finally, in a controversial move, Lopez Obrador announced that he was not thinking of prosecuting functionaries from previous governments because he is not motivated by vengeance. Rather, he is "in favor of forgiveness and forbearance." Given the flagrant cases of corruption by public officials at all levels of government under Enrique Pena, this announcement could violate the rule of law and perpetuate impunity. It cannot be an option for an individual president to say, "I pardon you," and forget it. He must act within existing law against corrupt functionaries, otherwise their crimes will go unpunished and thus perpetuate impunity.

In all of Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's actions, from his Inauguration to the Zocalo mobilization to the popular festivals with the hope for a changed Mexico, everyone is aware that change will not occur from one day to the next but at least there is light at the end of the tunnel. If achieving this change was hard, it will be even harder to convert this hope into reality. The discourse versus the reality demonstrates the path that we are walking.

*Alejandro Alvarez Bejar is a Professor of Economics at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), a member of the Trinational Coalition for the Defense of Public Education and a Honorary Commander of the Heroico Batallon de San Patricio. Translation by Dan Leahy*

## What to Wear

- I'm confused
- Liberal snowflake or raging mob?
- Which do I dress for?
- Ballgowns and riding boots?
- Inspired by pussy riot
- Angel wings and leather?
- Too burningman
- Anything 100%organic yet still made in a sweat shop will do
- What size and color is post modern liberal hypocrisy?
- Nothing yellow.
- When are those benefiting from privilege in America going to dismantle systems of oppression?
- When it's fashionable.

Lennée Reid is the booking agent for Cascadia Poetry Group join them on Facebook



# López Obrador, nuevo Presidente: entre fiestas populares e inestabilidades financieras

Alejandro Alvarez Bejar

Con ambiente de fiesta, miles de personas tomaron las calles de la Ciudad de México para celebrar, el 1 de diciembre pasado, que Andrés Manuel López Obrador se convirtió oficialmente en Presidente de la República Mexicana, después de una de las transiciones más largas de la historia reciente (durante 6 meses convivieron literalmente dos gobiernos, el de Enrique Peña Nieto y el de López Obrador).

En el capitalismo financiarizado la inestabilidad es recurrente, pero su gobernanza cotidiana pende del hilo de las “agencias calificadoras de riesgo” macroeconómico. Si el Gobierno en turno no tiene control de la inflación, asegura la estabilidad financiera, procura el balance fiscal y la disciplina presupuestaria, no pasa la prueba de confianza de los banqueros y grandes inversionistas internacionales. Así, pueden hundir lenta o rápidamente, la credibilidad y los planes de cambio de un gobierno alternativo.

En esa larga transición, vimos la firma apresurada del TMEC (Tratado México-Estados Unidos-Canadá, nuevo nombre para repetir lo fundamental del socialmente despreciado TLCAN y añadir nuevas y graves restricciones para el gobierno y para los trabajadores mexicanos).

También vivimos un conflictivo y beligerante éxodo de migrantes centroamericanos a Estados Unidos (hondureños, salvadoreños, guatemaltecos) que puso en crisis a la frontera sur de México y militarizó temporalmente la frontera México-EU, dando lugar en ciudades como Tijuana, a expresiones de racismo, xenofobia e intolerancia, que son todos ingredientes básicos de la política de Donald Trump.

Por anunciar la cancelación del lujoso proyecto de construcción de un nuevo aeropuerto sobre el lecho de un terreno de recarga de acuíferos en el Nor-este de la ciudad de México, o por el anuncio de revisar las comisiones que cobran los bancos (que en México son del doble de la que cobran los bancos en sus casas matrices), tuvimos bajadas súbitas en la Bolsa de Valores y devaluaciones del peso respecto al dólar (coincidiendo con episodios de la pugna comercial EU-China y/o anuncios de desaceleración de la economía mundial).

Hubo reclamos empresariales airados contra supuestas intenciones de cambiar la gestión de los fondos de pensiones (reclamos a cargo de los medios de comunicación, prensa, radio y televisión) y ataques de los partidos desplazados del poder, todos tratando de recuperar terreno tras la debacle electoral que sufrieron el 1 de junio de 2018.

Sin mucho ruido mediático, coincidiendo con la toma de posesión de López Obrador, se vio limitado el abasto de gasolina en el estado de Guanajuato, gobernado por el derechista Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN), lo que provocó desconcierto y enojo entre los automovilistas de ésa que es una

de las regiones más conservadoras del país y fue la primera en abrir las estaciones de gasolina de las grandes trasnacionales en 2018.

El acto oficial de Toma de Posesión se hizo frente a Diputados y Senadores, gobernadores e invitados especiales, con el expresidente Peña Nieto a su lado: ahí, López Obrador desnudó al neoliberalismo como un verdadero desastre, por la desigualdad económica, la pobreza, la marginación, la impunidad y el cinismo respecto a la corrupción que florecieron en México en los gobiernos pasados.

López Obrador remarcó que no sólo iniciaba un nuevo gobierno, sino un cambio de régimen político. Que se iniciaba así una transformación pacífica y ordenada, pero al mismo

## Que se iniciaba así una transformación pacífica y ordenada, pero al mismo tiempo profunda y radical,

tiempo profunda y radical, porque se acabará con la corrupción y con la impunidad.

Reiteró que el modelo económico neoliberal era extranjerizante y desnacionalizador, porque fue concesionando territorios, empresas y bienes públicos a empresarios privados extranjeros. Denunció la corrupción como la función principal del poder político, de ahí la importancia que le daba a la separación del poder económico y el político. Aunque todo eso lo remarcó después de haber nombrado como su Consejo Asesor (en el que están prácticamente todos los grandes hombres de negocios mexicanos), para calmar los ánimos empresariales después de cancelar el proyecto del nuevo aeropuerto.

Por ello tampoco resultó raro que en su llegada al Gobierno, López Obrador reiterara que no aumentará los precios de la gasolina ni la deuda pública, que va a respetar los contratos suscritos por los gobiernos anteriores y que respetará la autonomía del Banco de México (el banco central). Pero sí sorprendió su anuncio de que formará una Guardia Nacional (que en la Constitución es un cuerpo civil, que puede o no estar armado) con elementos del Ejército, la Marina y la Policía Federal Preventiva, pues eso implica no sólo seguir con la estrategia militar de combate a las drogas, que ya ha provocado una crisis humanitaria colosal en todo el país, sino que implica depositar la garantía de los derechos y libertades democráticas en órganos o estructuras militares. ¿Y así, dónde queda el reclamo de una paz inmediata, que fue clave en empujar a millones a votar por López Obrador?

Reiteró que vivirá en su casa familiar y que la residencia oficial de “Los Pinos” se abrirá al público, para eviden-

ciar que los expresidentes llevaban una vida de lujos que no estaba lejos del estilo de los jeques de Medio Oriente, en un país lleno de carencias elementales.

Tras la ceremonia en el Palacio Legislativo, López Obrador asistió a un



acto masivo en el Zócalo capitalino, donde representantes de 68 comunidades indígenas le otorgaron el “Bastón de mando”. Al recibirlo, López Obrador pidió a la multitud que llenaba el Zócalo: “No me dejen solo... Sin ustedes no valgo nada, o casi nada”.

Pasada la fiesta, este acto celebratorio se convirtió en controversial: primero fue criticado como “folklorico” (por la quema de copal, rezos, e invocaciones a los cuatro puntos cardinales), pero sobre todo porque el agrupamiento que le dio el bastón de mando obviamente no tenía la representación del conjunto de los pueblos indígenas. No debía hablar a nombre del movimiento indígena, aunque es un hecho que lo hizo proyectándose como interlocutor del gobierno de López Obrador.

Y la representatividad del grupo no es un asunto menor, porque en su discurso López Obrador ratificó que en su gobierno se concretarán tres obras claves de su Plan de Desarrollo: el Corredor Multi-modal Trans-Istmico (para unir el Pacífico con el Golfo de México), el Tren Maya y la Refinería en Tabasco. También insistió en que en tres años estará lista la ampliación del actual aeropuerto, el acondicionamiento con dos pistas adicionales del hoy aeropuerto militar de Santa Lucía y del aeropuerto de Toluca.

En suma, se trata de algunos viejos y polémicos mega-proyectos, anunciados sin consulta detallada en territorios indígenas, requisito que establece con toda claridad el Convenio 169 de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo. Fue el gobierno neoliberal de Vicente Fox Quesada (2000-2006) el primero en plantear el

Corredor Trans Istmico, en su controvertido “Plan Puebla Panamá.”

Al respecto, varios expertos insistieron en que la modernidad depredadora ya había dejado huellas en Mérida, Cancún, Campeche y Chetumal, ciudades en las que los desarrollos turísticos, inmobiliarios y comerciales, han destruido el patrimonio biocultural y sólo han generado un “progreso” injusto, desequilibrado y destructivo, justo porque hasta hoy no se han articulado las acciones de los gobiernos federal, estatal y municipales, con las comunidades, pueblos y grupos indígenas. Por eso mismo, dichos expertos defendieron públicamente la construcción de una economía ecológica, social y solidaria que implica un respeto biocultural profundo y la defensa de la vida en todas sus formas.

López Obrador también ratificó su intención de cancelar la reforma educativa, de dar atención médica gratuita en las zonas marginadas, constituir una “Comisión de la Verdad” para castigar los abusos de autoridad, para atender el caso de los 43 jóvenes desaparecidos de Ayotzinapa. Anunció que se atenderá a 54 millones de pobres, dará 10 millones de becas para jóvenes y duplicará el apoyo económico para los adultos mayores y discapacitados. Sin duda, cambios fundamentales escuchando reclamos populares.

Finalmente, levantó polémica anunciando que no pensaba perseguir a los funcionarios de gobiernos anteriores, porque no lo animaba la venganza y porque era “partidario del perdón y la indulgencia”. Ante casos flagrantes de corrupción de funcionarios públicos a todos los niveles en el gobierno de Enrique Peña Nieto, este anuncio se antoja clara violación al estado de derecho y perpetuación de la impunidad. Porque no se trata de una opción individual del Presidente (“te perdono y lo olvido”), sino de actuar con la ley en la mano frente a funcionarios corruptos que de otra forma, sus atracos quedarían impunes.

En todos los actos realizados por Andrés Manuel López Obrador el día de su Toma de Protesta, brillaron la movilización y el festejo popular con la esperanza de que México cambie, se percibe que todo el mundo está consciente de que eso no ocurrirá de un día para otro, pero ya al menos parece verse una luz al final del túnel. Si el camino para llegar fue duro, lo que todavía falta para convertir la esperanza de cambio en realidad, será durísimo. El discurso y la realidad, muestran así la senda por la que ya estamos caminando.

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## Little Hollywood

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# First international conference against US/NATO foreign military bases

The first International Conference against US/NATO Military Bases was held on November 16-18, 2018 at Liberty Hall in Dublin, Ireland. The conference was attended by close to 300 participants from over thirty-five countries. Speakers represented countries from all continents, including Cuba, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, United States, Italy, Germany, Portugal, Greece, Cyprus, Turkey, Poland, United Kingdom, Ireland, Czech Republic, Israel, Palestine, Kenya, D. R. Congo, Japan and Australia.

This conference was the first organized effort by the newly formed Global Campaign Against US/NATO Military Bases, created by over 35 peace, justice and environmental organizations and endorsed by over 700 other organizations and activists. What brought us together was our agreement with the principles outlined in the Global Campaign's Unity Statement, endorsed by the Conference participants.

Representatives of organizations and movements struggling to abolish foreign military bases shared their experiences of aggression, intervention, death, destruction, and the health and environmental damage that military bases cause for the whole of humanity, along with the threats to and violation of the sovereignty of the "host" countries.

The participants and organizers of the conference agreed as a matter of principle that while they oppose all foreign military bases, they consider the close to 1,000 US/NATO military bases established throughout the world as the main threat to peace and humanity. These constitute the main pillars of global imperialist domination by US, NATO and EU states and all of them must be closed. The NATO states' military

bases are the expression of imperialist intervention in the lives of sovereign countries on behalf of the world's dominant financial, political, and military interests. These interests exercise control of energy resources, transport roads, markets and spheres of influence, in clear violation of international law and the United Nations Charter.

While we call for the closure of all US/NATO military bases, we consider the closure of bases and military installations in certain countries and areas as needing special attention by the international movement. These include the Guantanamo US base in Cuba, the US bases in Okinawa and South Korea, the US base in Rammstein/Germany, and in Serbia, the old and new US/



## Pivotal years

Continued from page 1

all this energized young voters and re-energized veterans of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement.

- Nationwide the work of Our Revolution, the National Nurses Union, Color of Change, fast-growing Democratic Socialists of America chapters, the Movement Voter Project and other groups reached millions with messages that went beyond the need to defeat Trump to demand such advances as universal health care, a living wage of at least \$15/hour for all, a thoroughly restructured criminal justice system, free college education and a leap forward in ending sexual and gun violence.

Beyond galvanizing an electoral blow to the racist right, these efforts inspired hope and political engagement among millions of low-income people. They increased the independent strength of progressive organizations and expanded the boundaries of what it is possible to fight for and win in 2020 and beyond. On-going political work that stems from these efforts includes:

- The campaign for a Green New Deal promoted by Alexandria Oc-

asio-Cortez, Since her dramatic step of joining a sit-in at Democratic House leader Nancy Pelosi's office this campaign has gathered steam nationwide. The latest push is for labor not just to join but to play a leading role because it aims to avert climate catastrophe at the same time it offers the potential for a massive increase in good-paying jobs and more unity among workers from all back-

- The ongoing work of the Poor Peoples Campaign led by Rev. William Barber fighting the "three great evils" identified by Dr. Martin Luther King - racism, poverty and militarism - as well as battling climate change. And beyond its state-based pushes on voting rights, a living wage and other issues, the Campaign projects a "Third Reconstruction" vision that taps into one of the deepest strains of the struggle for freedom stretching back through the "Second Reconstruction" of the 1960s to the gains of post-Civil War Reconstruction before they were rolled back by Klan terror and the systematic disenfranchisement of African Americans.

- The push for Medicare for All which has been embraced by significant sections of the labor movement, long-time single-payer advocates, Democratic Socialists of America and numerous community groups. This demand has now "gone mainstream," winning backing from scores of Senators and Congress people including every likely contender for the 2020 Democratic Presidential nomination.
- The grassroots campaigns on education, criminal justice reform, immigrant rights, a domestic workers bill of rights and more that have long been central to the work of community and workers' rights organizations (such as the Texas Organizing Project, Virginia New Majority, the National Domestic Workers Alliance and the nationwide community organizing networks - Peoples Action, Center for Popular Democracy, PICO, Center for Community Change). Most of these, and other groups, are building off the lessons learned, larger base and new allies gained from participation in the 2018 midterms to expand week-to-week non-electoral organizing and accumulate

strength for greater efforts in the pivotal 2020 balloting.

### Electoral urgency, grassroots organizations

This exciting social justice motion operates in a complicated environment. The special danger posed by Trumpism mandates making its defeat our prime task, which requires building the broadest possible vote-against-the-GOP alliance. Many in this alliance are "moderate" voters, open to but not yet won to a consistent agenda of worker empowerment, racial and gender justice and peace. Others - mainly a layer of corporate Democrats - are our political enemies. That means even as we are allied against Trumpism, there is contention among us over what agenda and message should predominate in the fight against our common enemy, which constituencies are most crucial to victory, and more.

With the stakes so high, no arena of struggle can be abandoned. Given the structural constraints of the US winner-take-all, two-party system, defeating Trump means contending for the Democratic ballot line in Democratic primaries and voting that ballot line when the general election rolls around. Until such time as progressives win deep reforms in the electoral system and/or can ourselves become a "first or second party," this is the only practical path to defeat the far right and solidify a base among the millions who see Trumpism as a mortal threat.

To successfully navigate that path, we need to build up organizations like those mentioned above, controlled by and accountable to a grassroots progressive base. It is crucial to strengthen cooperation between such groups as Our Revolution, Working Families Party, the National Nurses Union and other progressive unions, state-based organizing formations that have roots among workers and communities of color, the nationwide community organizing networks, 350.org and other key social justice groups. Together these already influence tens of millions of people. They constitute the building blocks of what can be an even larger progressive bloc with the potential to reshape local, state and national politics.

Max Elbaum is one of the editors Organizing Upgrade, where you can find articles elaborating on the points made here. He is author of the recently re-released *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao and Che*.

NATO bases in Greece and Cyprus, the establishment of the new US African Command (AFRICOM) with its affiliated military bases in Africa, the numerous NATO bases in Italy and Scandinavia, Shannon Airport in Ireland (which is being used as a military base by US and NATO), and the bases newly established by the United States, France and their allies on and around Syrian soil.

We agreed to recommend and to support coordinated actions and initiatives in the coming year (2019) which shall strengthen the global movement to expand actions and cooperation while moving forward.

As a first step, the conference supports global mass mobilizations against NATO's 70th anniversary Summit in Washington DC, on April 4, 2019 and protests in NATO member states and worldwide.

We declare our solidarity with the Cuban people's decades-long efforts to take back their Guantanamo territory, illegally occupied by the United States, and declare our support for the Sixth International Seminar for Peace and the Abolition of Foreign Military Bases, organized by MOVPAZ for May 4-6, 2019, in Guantanamo, Cuba.

The participants express their most sincere thanks and gratitude to the Peace and Neutrality Alliance (PANA) Ireland, for their generous hospitality and support in hosting this historic Conference.

*Adopted by the participants at the First International Conference Against US/NATO Military Bases. November 18, 2018, Dublin, Ireland*

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# Works In Progress



This issue: Political Work

# WINONA LADUKE

7:30 p.m.  
Feb. 7, 2019



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**Writer and political activist Winona LaDuke** is a widely-recognized and outspoken advocate of Native American causes, writing extensively about human rights, Native land reclamation, and environmental justice. LaDuke will hold a lecture on her causes and organizations, including the Honor the Earth and the White Earth Land Recovery Project, with time to dive deeper through a Q&A session.