When a 13% return isn’t enough

Bethany Weidner

The City Council offers exemptions from property taxes for developers who build “market rate” housing downtown. According to their Downtown Strategy (DTS), market conditions present a few years ago would produce a return of only 13%, while “entrepreneurial developers” wanted at least 15%. The 8-year exemption from tax on residential elements brought returns into the 18% range. The four developers whose projects are shown in the photo above were all awarded the 8-year break.

Additional incentives

However, the tax break is not the only help provided to developers who build market rate housing downtown. The City Council has approved additional expenditures to “enhance the desirability of downtown and the feasibility of development.” These include a reduced contribution to impact fees, exemption from environmental review under SEPA, street improvements customized for developers among other things.

Expand lower cost housing downtown

During development of the Downtown Strategy, some participants observed that promoting new market rate housing downtown could result in displacement of lower income residents. The City’s report acknowledged that older downtown apartments “are especially at risk of being lost as affordable units because the rents could increase as the market goes up.”

In fact, the Downtown Strategy said that “income data suggests that subsidized and lower cost housing is important and that as Downtown continues to grow, these residential options should be expanded.”

Options for low income renters diminish

That’s not what’s happening. The Council has presided over the loss of affordable units as older buildings close to be renovated for rent at market rates. Based on a 2015 inventory, about 57% of downtown residences were subsidized or low-cost units while 38% of dwelling units were “market rate, plus 5% ‘live aboard.’” The options for lower income renters have diminished quickly. In 2017, the figures were 43% low cost housing units vs 57% market rate units. In 2018, low cost units continued to fall—42% vs 50% market rate. The homeless population continued to rise.

Activists arrested in Trident submarine blockade at Kitsap-Bangor Naval Base

Felice & Jack Cohen-Joppa

On March 2, thirteen nuclear abolitionists blocked traffic leading into Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor, Washington as part of a public protest of Trident nuclear-missile-launching submarines based there.

The direct action came at the conclusion of the annual gathering of the Pacific Life Community, a network of spiritually motivated activists from the Pacific Coast and other western states committed to nonviolent action for a nuclear-free future.

Washington state police arrested nine people for obstructing traffic by carrying banners that stretched across the roadway just outside the base main gate. Their banners read “Trident Threatens All Life on Earth” and “Abolish Nuclear Weapons.”

While they stood in the road, one of the blockaders read aloud from the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in July 2017, the Treaty will enter into force when ratified by 50 nations. Thirty-five nations have ratified to date. The US is not a signer.

Kelly, a Jesuit priest and member of the Pacific Life Community, has been in a Georgia county jail for almost two years after his April 5, 2018 arrest with six other Catholic nuclear disarmament activists

The four owners of these nine high-end apartment buildings don’t have to pay an estimated total of $10,013,992 in property taxes over the next 8 years. Photos by Dan Leahy.
Not the usual suspects

Hitting the pause button is giving us time to think

Ed note: Politico Magazine went beyond the NPR and MSNBC regulars asking for thoughts on what lessons the Coronavirus might lead us. Read all 30 responses at: politicalos.com/nororess/2020/03/19/coronavirus

The rules we’ve lived by won’t all apply. Astra Taylor is a filmmaker and author of Democracy May Not Coast Us a Damn Thing. If It’s Gone.

America’s response to coronavirus pandemic has revealed a simple truth: so many policies that elected officials have told us were impossible and impractical were embarrassing and unenforceable all along. In 2011, when Occupy Wall Street activists demanded debt cancellation for student loans and medical debt, they were laughed at by many in the mainstream media. In the intervening years, we have continued to push the issue and have consistently failed to make demands that were unrealistic. Now, we know that the “rules” we had lived under were untenable and many of the changes we simply made society more brittle and unequal.

All along, evictions were avoidable; the homeless could’ve been housed in unused buildings in government buildings, water and electricity didn’t need to be turned off for people behind on their bills; paid sick leave could’ve been a right for all workers, paying your mortgage late didn’t need to mean foreclosure; and debtors could’ve been granted relief. President Donald Trump is now putting a freeze on interest for federal student loans, while New York Governor Andrew Cuomo has paused all medical and student debt owed to New York State. Democrats and Republicans are bandying about a borrowing and forbearance compromise—on—or outright canceling—student loans as part of a larger economic stimulus package.

It’s clear that in a crisis, the rules don’t apply—which makes you wonder if they are the rules at all. The pandemic is an unprecedented opportunity to not just hit the pause button and temporarily cease production but to permanently change the rules so that untold millions of people aren’t so vulnerable to begin with.

A new kind of patriotism. Mark Lawrence Schrad teaches political science and is author of the New York Times bestseller The Demilitarization of America: Palaces for the People.

The world saw that their needs are not only unmet; the system that delivered our healthcare was an incubator of the psychological trauma that our health care workers are now delivering. We need to commit to health care as a human right, not a right bestowed on the wealthy. And we need to ensure that all healthcare workers have the proper personal protective equipment.

The coronavirus pandemic marks the end of our romance with market society and hyper-individualism. We could turn toward authoritarianism. Imagine President Donald Trump trying to suspend the November election. Consider the prospect of a military crackdown. The dystopian scenario is real. But I believe we will go in the other direction. We’re now seeing the market-based models for social organization fail, catastrophically as self-sacrifice behavior (from Trump down) makes this crisis so much more dangerous than it needed to be.

When this ends, we will reorient our politics and make substantial new investments in public goods—health, especially—and public services. I don’t think we will become less communal. Instead, we will be better able to see how our fates are linked. The cheap burger I eat from a restaurant that is found only past several cashiers and kitchen staff makes me more vulnerable to illness, as don’t have the social distancing and critical thinking skills. The economy—and the social order it helps support—will collapse if the government doesn’t guarantee income for the millions of workers who will lose their jobs in a massive recession or depression. Young adults will fail to launch if government doesn’t help reduce student debt owed to New York State. Democrats and Republicans are bandying about a borrowing and forbearance compromise—on—or outright canceling—student loans as part of a larger economic stimulus package.

Democracy May Not Coast Us a Damn Thing. If It’s Gone.
In Boston, the shelves are empty of flour. In November, a co-op ran out of yeast. People are home baking bread—a pleasure that relies on time and warmth. Starbucks uses more than 8,000 paper cups a minute (4 billion a year and counting). For fun let’s say other disapplicable beverage containers are 2-3 times that. For a month, a lot of us have been brewing coffee or tea at home. Even the word “brewing” suggests a pleasant space of time. And we have time; we share this pause with our neighbors and the rest of the country. Musing over the pages of a book savor both the tea and reminder of the pleasure of “inconvenience.”

WIP covered freight derailments in February, and this month, Washington legislators sent Gov. Inslee a bill that requires freight and passenger trains to run with a minimum of two crew members.

—climate activists were acquitted of criminal trespass by a Portland jury based on a defense that it is sometimes necessary to break the law to combat planetary catastrophe. WIP’s May 2019 issue covered the action by Rebellion Extinction Rebellion. With County assistance, ten high risk individuals moved from the Downtown Mitigation site into hotel rooms. More options are being considered.

Incarcerated people
People held in the Northwest Detention Center (NDC) continue to detain approximately 800 people in close quarters at NDC, in violation of social distancing orders. This has created potential for a devastating outbreak of COVID-19 at the Center. While Governor Inslee has expressed concern about the issue no action has been taken. According to RCW 43.06.220, when a state of emergency is declared, the governor can “issue an order prohibiting such other activities as he or she may determine should be prohibited to help preserve and maintain life, health, property or the public peace.”

Supporters of the people held at NDC are asking the Governor to use his emergency authority to release people from the Center and to prevent new detentions and deportations. More information and instructions to contact officials is at https://www.facebook.com/LaResistenciaNW.

Department of Corrections. There is no consideration of compassionate release from prisons at this time, but the DOC in February adopted a set of measures to decrease the spread of COVID-19. As of March 20, there were 5 confirmed cases in the system. You can see a comprehensive and detailed day-by-day description of all actions and occurrences at prisons and OIC release sites by going to https://www.doc.wa.gov/news/covid-19.htm and clicking on the daily situation report.*

Strengthen and build immunity to give your body a fighting chance

Lori Lively

Sheltering in place, washing hands often, not touching the face and using a mask when encountering outsiders are all good ways to “flatten the curve” and stop the spread of N-Covid-19. But don’t stop there—consider the advice of nutritionists, naturopaths and medical doctors who recommend additional ways to boost your immunity. Your local natural health store can help you find products.

Vitamins C. Small amounts (roughly a teaspoon) of liposomal vitamin C, taken orally every few hours to bowel tolerance, is one of the most effective ways to treat viral infection, short of intravenous application. If bowels become loose, lessen the dosage.

Mushrooms. Medicinal mushrooms in supplement form, from turkey tail to chaga, reishi conpdeks and lion’s mane have been found variously to support immune health by reducing stress, lessening inflammation, and even enhancing natural killer (NK) microphages in white blood cells that fight tumor production.

Iodine. Atomic, or nascent, iodine is being rediscovered not just for thyroid disorders but for protecting the body, to some degree, from the immune-suppressing effects of radiation. If that seems unrelated to the current pandemic, think again: everything that weakens immunity should be avoided, including alcohol, sugar, marihuana, tobacco, stress, caffeine and overexposure to electromagnetic frequencies.

Externals. Silver in its hydrosol form (suspended in water) has also been shown to fight viral infections, as does oil of oregano when mixed with a carrier oil and applied nightly to the toes and soles of the feet. Wear thick wool or cotton socks after applying the oil until it has been absorbed.

Stay calm. Deep breathing, sound sleep, rhythmic movement, eating fresh, organically grown food, and regularly going to fight medication and prayer are also outstanding ways to reduce stress and give our bodies a chance to heal. Above all, avoid panic and fear, which also compromise immunity.

Socialist Ivo Morales actually won Bolivia’s 2019 election. Remember how US papers and our government endorsed the claim by the OAS that the election was fraudulent? And denounced Morales as corrupt? And how the Trump Administration quickly welcomed a Congresswoman who declared herself President in place of Morales? Too quickly, it turns out. MIT scientists analyzed the actual vote and determined that Morales was the legitimate victor — there was no evidence of fraud. Washington Post specialists in election integrity came to the same conclusion.

In the meantime, Morales was removed from power. A new military-installed government has tried to disqualify voters in the Movement for Socialism Party, ahead of new elections. But the damage is done. One of the key ways to democracy was destabilized and handed over to conservatives and the military. Stay tuned for Venezuela. (See WIP’s report on Bolivia’s election in March 2020 issue.)

What about those who can’t stay home?

Washington’s Governor Inslee is sued an order on March 23 prohibiting people from leaving home except for essential activities least through April 6. The order essentially “individuals experiencing homelessness.” So if you’re homeless, you’re not illegal, just on your own. The order said nothing about people locked up — either officially imprisoned or “detained,” which is like prison but you’re not convicted of anything and the sentence is indefinite.

 Thurston County homeless
 Local volunteers. This January, Thurston County volunteers counted over 1,000 people living without adequate shelter. Volunteers with Just Housing Olympia (JHO) will be working with Partners in Prevention Education (PiPE) and others involved with the Greater Regional Outreach Workers League (GROWL) to support unsheltered neighbors. JHO will help distribute survival supplies and food to people living outdoors. They are also coordinating with other community advocates to support low-income people and tenants, and to advocate for economic and health protections. For ways you can help, go to https://justhousingolympia.org.

Public institutions.
The County Board of Health received a million dollar state grant to address the impact of COVID19 on people with no homes. Acting Olympia City Manager Jay Burney, as of March 25, the County began working to take and implement the following steps:

• Expand shelter capacity and existing 24-hour shelter offerings. Move beds 6 ft apart at shelters.
• To maintain capacity, the city has offered use of a vacant building at 2828 Martin Way. Provide meal and hygiene product delivery to encampments to allow for “shelter” in place. Provide portable toilets, hand washing stations, and garbage pick-up. Setting up quarantine and isolation spaces.
• With County assistance, ten high risk individuals moved from the Downtown Mitigation site into hotel rooms. More options are being considered.

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Lori Lively is former Education Director at Marlene’s Natural Food stores in Tacoma and Federal Way. For more information about non-pharmaceutical methods to boost immunity and fight viral infections, go to Joseph Mercola, MD (www.mercola.com) and Thomas Coonan, MD (fourfoldhealing.com).
Oly Indivisible talks to Arizona voters

Robin Ivey-Black

It all started on Martin Luther King Jr. Day with over 170 people attending a meeting of Olympia Indivisible (OI). I entered the basement of St. John’s Episcopal Church inspired by posters on the wall with quotes by King such as “Our lives begin to end the day we begin to talk about things that don’t matter.”

Olympia Indivisible was born shortly after the 2016 Presidential election, with an outpouring of incredible work and dedication by Lisa Ornstein and Carla Wulfsberg. As part of the National Indivisible movement, it advocates at state level for progressive Democratic legislation. Nationally we work to oust Trump, take back the US Senate and increase Democratic seats in the House of Representatives.

Many were stirred to gather after the impeachment circus brazenly displayed that our very democracy was at risk. People gathered to make a difference because the idea of four more years of Trump was abhorrent. Could human decency, care of others and the planet survive?

At the meeting, I joined the Home Team, which would work to register to Arizona Democrats less likely to vote. It has been proven that handwritten encouragement that voters will receive can increase voter turnout by 3-4%. Arizona was the focus because Trump won the state by a slim margin in 2016 - 4%. This time around, a Democrat has a good chance of winning Arizona.

Part of the effort included travel to Arizona. Initially I thought that was too much for me, but then I realized we have less than a year to turn things around. I came to believe, as I heard someone say at the meeting, that action is hope.

Here is the day-to-day report of my trip.

2/28/2020 Five of our group arrived in Phoenix. Others are already here or arriving tomorrow.

The locals say many new residents are registering as Democrats. There are 135,000 more Republicans than Democrats registered in Arizona. We returned to party headquarters to register college students and encouraging them to vote. We will also canvas for state candidates. It’s a numbers and encouragement game.

The state legislature is important because although for years the Republicans have controlled both houses, they now have slim control in the House (31-29) and a 17 to 13 lead in the Senate. If the state legislature turned Democratic, it would have the authority to create fair gerrymandering. 2/29/20 Our first day we met with folks at the newly opened headquarters of Legislative District 28, which covers a large Phoenix. They are supporting three candidates, all running for state control over the last 12 years. Education became so underfunded that Arizona schools are among the lowest in the bottom of all states. There are also problems with unregulated charter schools.

After our training we each partnered with a local volunteer. I had Mary, a hardworking, longterm, senior canvasser. We drove 15 minutes north to a neighborhood, carrying our phones with the “Minut” app. This has downloadable addresses of Democrats in the area. We used them to enter updated info about voters. Most people were receptive, some work in the education field. Their concern included low teachers’ salaries and health care.

The morning was cool but by 11 am it was already hot. One of our main duties was to gather 1,000 signatures for each candidate so that their names can appear on the ballot. We met a young Republican who told us he is voting Democratic because he was discouraged over Trump.

We also gave out flyers about a house party where neighbors could meet the candidates. Mary encouraged people to go—they would meet each other and see which of their neighbors are ‘Dems’ so they could vote or cheer together. This was telling—people here keep their politics close to the vest.

3/1/20 On our second day, a Sunday, many people didn’t answer the door. We left literature on locking metal screen doors and stickers with pebbly landscaping and large cacti.

I hooked up a young man with volunteer opportunities at the District 28 headquarters. That gave me a lift after conversing with an older woman who was a Democrat but now believes they are no good. I couldn’t convince her that we need to remove Trump. My bunch was confirmed after asking about her news source. Fox. My parting words were for her to try public television news.

We returned to party headquarters for their official grand opening. Some of our group met with Richard Goodwin, Manager of Field Team 6 at the hotel. Richard focuses on registration on college campuses in Phoenix. There are 140,000 students here. Richard trained us in registering and the nuances of the Arizona voting system.

3/2/20-3/2020 We broke into groups of three to four and drove rental cars to various universities and community colleges. There was a lot of driving because Phoenix is large and very spread out.

We found that many students are already registered and that local groups and groups from California have been helping with registration here, too. But we do register some students, providing education and encouragement, as well.

We reminded students to get their Democratic primary ballots in the mail by a certain date. Some had not received a ballot. They had to check their mail at their parents’ house. We can re-register them if they have moved or don’t want a ballot sent to their parents. If they have registered as independent, which some have, they will not receive a primary ballot. We can re-register them as Democrats so they receive a ballot to vote in August’s primary election.

Our team came with anti-Trump stickers and “Voting is Your Super Power” stickers. Many students love them. It is an opportunity to talk more. Many told me they are overwhelmed with college work and say they don’t know enough about political stuff to make a good decision. They expressed confidence in who was the best Democrat candidate or what was true anymore. Politicians not working together bothered them. Many had difficulty coming up with answers when asked what they thought were the important issues. Some listed student debt and climate change. Other team members said they heard foreign policy, women’s rights and health care. Many liked Bernie Sanders but said if Biden got the nomination they would vote for him.

Take-aways. My most memorable moment came in talking with a Christian student from Montana who thought he would vote for Trump. I tried to infuse some complexity into his most important issue, abortion. I communicated that even though Trump says he is against abortion there are many others who are hurting people and the environment. I suggested he work on his issue by supporting health care, housing and adequate nutrition for all people as a way to prevent pregnancy and abortion.

Another team member found hope in learning from a student that she and her mother will both be voting for President for the first time to make sure a US citizen from Bosnia. Some team members encountered a teacher who was offended by our anti-Trump stickers, but found common ground discussing environmental issues. The teacher said he had always been a ‘McCain’ Republican and would not vote for Trump.

We all tried to express to students the importance of their vote, especially in November. I told them I was concerned that folks their age have not seen what the world was like before climate change, how normal seasons flowed predictably from one to another and that natural disasters were few and far between. I said I was older and would not live to experience the worsening effects that they would. The fact action we need to lessen the impacts of climate change would not happen under Trump. I told them that their age group doesn’t have the best voting record. I beseconed them to vote and to make sure their colleagues do. They said they would.

Did we make a difference? There is no way to quantify how much or in what ways. But maybe we made a heart-to-heart conversation worth? How far does it echo?

I hope our efforts are the beginning of these conversations and other small efforts by many to alter our national landscape this fall.

Robin Ivey-Black is a local writer, artist and community builder. People concerned about 2020 elections should check out Olympia Indivisible at www.olympiaindivisible.org or visit www.voteforchange.com to send handwritten notes to Democrats.

Oly Indivisible joins volunteers from Arizona’s District 28 to canvas for Democratic candidates. Photo by Robin Ivey-Black
Stay ambitious, be progressive, fight for justice:

Goals of a young climate change organizer

(Note: Elyanna Calle is a senior at Tumwater High School and is a member of the organizing team for the Olympia sub-chapter of Washington Youth Climate Strike. Matt Crichton interviewed Elyanna by phone in late February.)

WIP: Elyanna, what got you started doing climate activism?
EC: I was 13 when I decided to go vegan. I care for animals, care about my health, and saw the truth of what was happening in our culture. I couldn’t see that. I made the decision to stop contributing to that.

With this new awareness, I started my journey into social justice and doing something about the world and not staying complacent. Once I made that choice, I got involved with animal rights activism. I moved to Olympia last January and saw an opportunity to start organizing for Washington Youth Climate Strike.

WIP: When did climate strikes start and who participates in them?
EC: The first US Climate Strike was in March 2019 and the first in Olympia on September 20, 2019. Students from area high schools rallied for the climate and demanded action.

WIP: What is your strategy?
EC: To keep our efforts youth-led and youth-focused and do our best to mobilize youth in the area. We also want adult allies, but we keep the focus on youth because we are the future. We will target people – politicians – who have the power to make big changes. We want to stay ambitious, be progressive, and fight for intersectional climate justice.

WIP: Are Climate Strike rallies linked and building toward something?
EC: The strategy of Washington Youth Climate Strike is to take escalated action. Right now, we are in the phase of striking, and then it will move toward direct action, civil disobedience. For now, we are in the mobilizing and inspiring people up mode. I can’t say very much about events in the future. These strikes are leading towards something. The scheduled event for Earth Day (April 22) has been cancelled because of the health emergency, but people should follow @climateskrkw on Instagram to see events online and stay updated.

WIP: Describe a recent organizing success.
EC: The September 20 Climate Strike rally was a big learning curve for me. I was running around and super stressed out, trying to get everything done. At one point during the day, I stopped dead in my tracks and saw about 200 students from Nova Middle School marching into the Capitol, chanting with signs.

I started to tear up, and it hit me that all the work I have been doing had made an impact. If nothing else happened, those students are taking action and being inspired. That was a big success to me personally, seeing young people getting involved. Once you start with activism, you can’t stop because that becomes your mindset.

WIP: In your view, how are adults doing in protecting our planet?
EC: A lot of times youth encounter adults who want to, consciously or unconsciously, take over the work we are trying to do. More often though, I’ve encountered adults who are supportive allies, knowing their generation continued the problem. Now they are willing to support the generation that is fixing the problem. I’ve encountered many adults who underestimate the ability of youth. It’s our time now to organize and to take action. It’s up to us, so we’re going to make those decisions.

WIP: What effective ways have you found to engage the younger generation – for example those who play video games and ignore what’s happening to their world?
EC: I’m still figuring that out. Even though our generation is supposed to be pumped up and ready to take action, a majority want to play video games rather than changing the world. Oftentimes I shoot for the low hanging fruit – people who care and are just waiting for an opportunity to show it. You can’t force someone to care. I’d rather spend my time helping those who already care. In time there will be more of the low hanging fruit that ripens.

WIP: What advice would you give young climate activists who might feel overwhelmed?
EC: Find one organization or event that you can be involved in and grow yourself into so that you can localize the change you’re trying to make. Find that one project or action you can take and once you accomplish that, all the fear and anxiety melt away because you realize your power to make change. Take action! Assess your priorities, and you won’t say yes to everything.

WIP: What sustains you as you struggle against forces that don’t want to listen or cooperate?
EC: In terms of sustainable activism, I keep myself motivated from the Sept 20 and Dec 6 strike. I wanted to stop and not do another one. I thought back to what initially motivated me. I have two little brothers who are three and four. When I want to stop, I think about how they are who I’m fighting for. They need to have the same opportunities in ten years as I do. They can’t fight for that right now. Once I have that in my mind, I don’t think I can’t care less what uncooperative people say.

WIP: Where do you hope to take your experience in the future?
EC: I’ve learned so many invaluable lessons from organizing these events. I’ve gained leadership skills which will help me be successful in whatever I choose to do. I hope to go into journalism, and that aligns with what I’m doing now. Once I get to Texas (for college), I’m sure I will find opportunities to use and progress my skills, specifically regarding the upcoming presidential election.

WIP: What is the best way adults can support Youth Climate Strike?
EC: Adults can show up at events and bring everyone they know. Also, if adults have money they would like to donate: linktr.ee/climatestrikew.

WIP: How is your organization structured?
EC: I’m on the organizing team with a lot of autonomy to structure the effort. Right now, I’m the city lead, and we have a core organizing team of three to four people. We also have school-based ambassadors who advertise and mobilize students at their school. The number of school ambassadors varies depending on who is reliable and who has the time to commit. Right now, there are ambassadors at five different schools in the Olympia area.

WIP: What gives you hope for the future?
EC: Seeing all the work that has been done gives me hope. When I think that nobody cares, I have to remind myself of all the amazing activists I have met and the ones I see on social media that will be fighting for this planet for many years to come. We are in good hands because there are always going to be big groups of people fighting for what’s right, and that gives me hope.

For more information: www.facebook.com/ClimateStrikeWa and www.wasga or on Instagram at https://instagram.com/climatestrikew/.

Matt Crichton is a contributing writer for Works In Progress.
Renters’ Forum

When one person’s home is another person’s investment property

WIP correspondents

Imagine getting a notice to vacate your home — in a short 20 days. You must pack up, look for new lodging whose rent you can manage. Then meet the financial demands of a new landlord if you do find a place: first and last month’s rent, security deposit, possibly other fees. And if you can’t find a new place, move in with a relative or friend. Or join the ranks of the homeless.

Such short-notice evictions were the experience of many people who spoke at a recent forum on “renter protections and the future of renting in Olympia.” The forum was organized by members of the City’s Land Use and Environment Committee to discuss the crisis faced by renters in Olympia as landlords raise rents while employers pay the same wages year after year.

About 100 people were in attendance at Washington Middle School, half tenants and half landlords with a few Council members and individuals from Washington Community Action Network (WACAN). Xochitl Maykovich of WACAN opened the forum with a plea for greater protections for renters from short-term evictions. In addition, she said, renters need protection from rapidly rising rents. The majority of households in Olympia are renters, and half pay more than 50% of their income in rent. At the same time, there are fewer listings for rental units.

WACAN previously supported renters when they asked Olympia City Council members last November to address affordability by adopting an ordinance that would allow move-in fees to be paid in installments. Similar ordinances are in effect in other Washington cities. The Council has not yet determined what it will do in response to this request.

Landlords at the forum, for their part, described the lengths they go to seek out and maintain good tenants — and avoid evictions that can involve long processes or turn into extended vacancies. As for rising rents, one explanation was that at times they were forced to increase rents or consider selling their properties. They named taxes and fees, regulatory requirements to upgrade, and market dynamics as the things driving them to increase rents.

Both tenants and landlords agreed that the city needs more rental units available at affordable rates. One suggestion was that new homes and former duplexes could help mitigate rent levels. In discussing where such units could come from, landlords pointed to accessory dwelling units (ADUs) but said building them is not attractive because city fees range from $30–$40,000 for these units while less could be charged for rent because of their small size. The county’s Section 8 housing voucher program has not succeeded in changing the picture for low-income individuals or families.

In the end, landlords acknowledged that a shortage of rental housing creates an incentive to charge rents that match the market. Even with the addition of several new apartment buildings in downtown Olympia, however, rents have gone up and formerly affordable apartments have been renovated for higher rents. Erin Fenner of WACAN suggested that, in light of this, what’s needed is public funding for new rental infrastructure. And soon.

Reporting for this article was provided by Baxter Lee, who covered the event.

Renters’ Forum

Register Olympia’s rentals; create a path to resolve conflict

Clark Gilman

The March 5th forum on rental regulation was a spirited evening. Four members of City Council and Olympia’s senior staff people listened to community advice and concerns about rental housing. Two organizations worked to turn out members.

The Washington Community Action Network (WACAN) works to provide low-income and formerly homeless renters, while a landlord association recruited small landlords who own rental houses. Though the two groups don’t intersect in landlord and tenant relations, they share fears and concerns related to uncertainty and instability in our economy.

The power imbalance between renters and landlords was palpable. Before the meeting began landlords found seats at the table and visited with city staff. Renters hustled in the school hallway until the meeting began, then demanded an opportunity to share statements of grievances that they had prepared. Landlords’ anxiety showed in kind with their fears of regulation and increased costs.

The tension in the room underscored the serious challenges we face as a community. Rents are increasing much faster than wages are increasing. Our population has grown more quickly than new housing has been built, leading to competition for available rental units. The hot West Coast real estate market has brought investors

from outside of our community bidding up the price and buying houses and apartments.

So where do we start? Here are my takeaways from my listening. I believe we start with rental registration. Today, neither the City nor the County knows which houses in Olympia are rentals and which are owner occupied. We need fire-safety inspections on rental housing. We also need to create a clear and simple path for renters and landlords to address conflicts. Perhaps this is publicizing the work of the Dispute Resolution Center. Maybe it’s a public ombudsperson. People need to know where they can turn when there is conflict and housing is at risk.

Clark Gilman is a long-time resident of the Westside and an Olympia City Councilperson.

13% From page 1
Possible unintended consequences

Maybe City Council members should challenge their staff’s seemingly intractable allegiance to publicly subsidized private investment. Spending tax money and municipal budgets to enhance profitability contradicts official public policy. Still, they choose to ignore “market forces” when it’s convenient—usually on behalf of the powerful and wealthy.

Yet filling the downtown with seven-story, mixed-use apartment buildings by filling the pockets of developers might turn out to have been a very good idea in an era of cascading crises, entrenched inequality and climate disruption. Bethany Weinher has been a retailer, mortgagee and landlord.
American to form an association – Americans or for women. White House were led by, among others, a Native American girl and a Chinese Immigrant. The movement for women’s rights, including the right to vote, thus owes its accomplishments to more than the white women leaders we are familiar with from the history books.

In the late 1800s, black women formed clubs and organizations where they could focus on a particular set of objectives. As daughters of slaves, they saw enfranchisement as a way to be recognized as citizens and as a means to elevate their communities. Because of their unique position, black women tended to focus on human rights and universal suffrage, rather than suffrage only for African Americans or for women. Some of the women of color who made a difference include:

Mary Shadd Cary (1823 – 1893) was a journalist, teacher, lawyer, politician and the first African American to attend Howard University Law School in 1850 but did not graduate because DC code wouldn’t admit women to the Bar. A decade later, she received a degree. She proposed an amendment to strike the word “male” from the Constitution.

Hallie Quinn Brown (1849 – 1949) was an activist, delivering the suffrage message to black churches, anti-slavery societies, and women’s groups. She toured with antislavery lecturers, including Lucretia Mott and Lucy Stone. She continued to fight for the right to vote even after passage of the 19th Amendment as Jim Crow laws disenfranchised black men and women throughout the South.

Ida B. Wells Barnett (1862 – 1931) was a teacher, journalist, and activist who refused to give up her purchased seat and sued the railroad. Articles on anti-lynching exposed injustices of the Jim Crow law in the South, including disenfranchisement, segregation, lack of education and economic opportunities. Barnett refused to move to the back of the 1913 suffrage parade, marching along with 5000 other women up Pennsylvania Avenue.

Mary Church Terrell (1863 – 1954) was an educator, author, lecturer, and activist who learned about women’s rights and Susan B. Anthony’s suffrage campaign while attending Oberlin College. She established the National Association of Colored Women, acting as its first President.

Zitkala-Sa (Red Bird) (1876 – 1938) was a writer, teacher, and political activist. She wrote about Native American life, culture, and loss of identity, fought racial stereotypes, and led the Council of American Indians to unite tribes and gain suffrage for all.

Adelina Otero-Warren (1881 – 1965) was an educator and politician in New Mexico. Otero-Warren helped Alice Paul organize the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage, and after the 19th Amendment allowed women to vote, she ran for congress as a Republican.

She belonged to the Votes for Women Club in the city of Los Angeles which was active in 1910 and in 1911. She served as the president of the College Equal Suffrage League and was a respected orator who worked as a translator to help the California suffrage campaign.

Maria Guadalupe Evangelina Lopez (1881 – 1977) Lopez was active in the Votes for Women club in Los Angeles and served as president of the College Equal Suffrage League. She was a translator for the California suffrage campaign and was responsible for 100,000 dual language voter pamphlets. She was one of the first women to give a speech in Spanish in support of women’s rights.

Clara Elizabeth Chan Lee (1886 – 1993) After California passed Proposition 4, Lee was the First Chinese American to register to vote in the US in 1911, nine years before the passage of the 19th Amendment. As a founder of the Chinese Women’s Jeleah (self reliance) Association in 1913, she promoted women’s rights in both the US and China.

**“Lifting as we climb”**

The motto of the National Association of Women’s Clubs was “Lifting as we climb.” Hallie Quinn Brown commented: “I believe there are as great possibilities for women as there are in men … We want a grand and noble womanhood, scattered all over the land. There is a great vanguard of scholars and teachers of our sex who are at the head of institutions of learning all over the country. We need teachers, lecturers of force and character to help teach this great nation of women.”

Those words were true then and are true now. Only if we “lift others as we climb” will we help to ensure rights and respect for everyone.

Carolyn Woodling is active in the League of Women Voters, NOW and the Zonta Club of South Puget Sound.

Check out this book:

Miss Forten Of Philadelphia: Awesome Black Female Educator and Founding Marion Jackson Copping: First Black Female Principal, both by local author LaWanda Johnson.

Rethinking everything

And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently.

And the people healed. And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.

And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.

from And The People Stayed Home by Kitty O’Meara
The coronavirus outbreak has now hit Thurston County. Thousands of county residents are at risk of contracting COVID–19, facing the economic fallout of its rapid spread.

Many local residents do not have the option of working from home. Service, retail and restaurant employees, gig economy workers, those employed in the entertainment industry, small businesses and others stand to lose their jobs and income in the midst of this crisis. With job loss and work-hour cuts, we can expect significant economic fallout from rental defaults, foreclosures to a severe lack of childcare and affordable, healthy food for families. Moreover, the economic fallout of its latest Point-In-Time census indicates many of our neighbors are living outside without any access to bathrooms or running water to wash their hands.

We urge Thurston County, the municipal governments of Olympia, Lacey, Yelm, Tumwater, Tenino, Rainier and Bucoda, the Port of Olympia, the State of Washington and any other government agency or school district serving Thurston County including private safety and wellbeing of residents by meeting the following demands.

Right to Stay (Shelter in Place)

- Enact emergency moratorium on rentals, evictions and foreclosures, acknowledgment of the safety and wellbeing of residents by meeting the following demands.

Apoyo de ingresos de emergencia

Proporcionar estipendios semanales a los padres sin cuidado infantil. Incluso aquellos con beneficios de licencia por enfermedad pagados, puesto que muchos de estos padres no tendrán suficientes ingresos para mantener a sus hijos.

Salud y bienestar

Aprovechar los recursos existentes para proporcionar clínicas gratuitas de salud mental y de durío, así como los servicios de línea directa. Transferir recursos.

Proteger a los reclusos de la cárcel

Reducir inmediatamente las poblaciones de cárceles municipales y del condado. A excepción de los delitos graves (asesinato, secuestro, violación doméstica y violación). Las personas arrestadas, o siendo juzgadas, y los prófugos de justicia en espera de juicio deben ser liberados o no. Para cada recluso en prisión debe ser restringido por nivel de ingresos, residencia o ciudadanía.

Establecer contratos con motels, albergues, y hospitales para proporcionar asistencia a aquellos que no han experimentado beneficios de desempleo. Además, los residentes del condado que reciben beneficios de desempleo deben reibir ingresos suplementarios para garantizar que los trabajadores afectados reciban un salario digno.

Health and Wellbeing

- Leverage resources to support free clinics and outreach-based medical volunteers (volunteers, doctors, dentists, first-aid/wound-care specialists). Strengthen spraying exchange and hand sanitation stations.

- Leverage resources to increase access to free mental health and substance use treatment services.
Arrests at Trident base
From page 1

Activists also held a sign that read “We love you, Fr. Steve Kelly.” Kelly, a Jesuit priest and member of the Pacific Life Community, has been in a Georgia county jail for almost two years after his April 5, 2018 arrest with six other Catholic nuclear disarmament activists at the Kings Bay Trident base in Georgia. The seven members of the Kings Bay Plowshares await a sentencing date.

The weekend gathering and protest, attended by about 50 people, were hosted by the local Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action. The annual Pacific Life Community gatherings and actions are scheduled to mark the anniversary of the largest nuclear weapons test ever, Castle Bravo, that devastated Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands on March 1, 1954.

There are eight Trident submarines deployed at Bangor, which is believed to hold the nation's largest stockpile of nuclear weapons. Six Trident submarines are deployed on the East Coast at Kings Bay, Georgia.

Each Trident submarine was originally equipped for 24 Trident missiles. In 2015-2017, four missile tubes were deactivated on each submarine as a result of the New START Treaty. Currently, each Trident submarine deploys with 20 D-5 missiles and about 90 nuclear warheads (an average of 4-5 warheads per missile). The warheads are either the W76-1 100-kiloton or W88 455-kiloton warheads.

The Navy has recently deployed a smaller W76-2 “low-yield” or tactical nuclear weapon (approximately 6.5 kilotons) on Trident submarines at Kings Bay, Georgia and is expected to deploy from submarines at Bangor, dangerously creating a lower threshold for the use of nuclear weapons.

One Trident submarine carries the destructive force of over 1,300 Hiroshima bombs (the Hiroshima bomb was 15 kilotons).

For more information, visit https://pacificlifecommunity.wordpress.com/ and gzcenter.org and kingsbayplowshares.org.

"Peace officers" waiting to arrest the demonstrators as each one crosses the line into the Naval Base

Can we learn anything from a socialist country?

Only 90 miles away

Our internet researcher

When Bernie Sanders mentioned that Cuba’s population has a high rate of literacy, US politicians and their media echoes acted like he had endorsed the Devil Incarnate.

Maybe they were worried that if news about Cuba didn’t come wrapped in a package labeled “DYNAMITE! Do not open!” we might start wondering why capitalism can’t deliver some of the goods that socialism has.

Health care was an initial focus of Cuba’s revolutionary government. Over the decades a strong system of medical schools, research institutes and community clinics have made the promise of guaranteed health care a reality. In two measures of health status, Cuba ranks higher than the US - life expectancy at 79 years is above that of the US and infant mortality at 4.4 births per 1000, below.

Cuba is known in many parts of the world for its preparedness in cases of natural disaster, with 60% of their pay continuing under vulnerable to natural disasters like hurricanes.

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More than 77% of the population owns a television set, and Cuba is the only country in the Western Hemisphere that does not have a video game industry.

Cuba is in many parts of the world for its preparedness in cases of natural disaster, with 60% of their pay continuing under vulnerable to natural disasters like hurricanes. In 2014, the government adopted a law granting a month's pay to anyone unable to perform their job due to natural, health or technological disasters, with 60% of their pay continuing until things returned to normal. After the devastation of Hurricane Irma, Cuba’s recovery was quick, with Puerto Rico struggling for months.

Take the country's response to the Coronavirus. Cuba's biomedical research had come up with an antiviral drug – which has become one of the medications used by the Chinese in treating coronavirus patients. In March, when overwhelmed Italian officials contacted the Cuban ambassador to Italy, and Cuba dispatched 53 doctors to Lombardy where they are serving along with doctors from China.

Cuban doctors are also en route to Brazil to help combat coronavirus. Several thousand had been practicing in rural areas of that country under the Workers' Party government. The right-wing politician Jair Bolsonaro during his campaign attacked the Cuban doctors as “spies and terrorists,” and when he took over the government, he expelled most of them. A year later, in March, his government’s minister of health has begged the Cubans to come back. Cuban doctors have also been dispatched to Venezuela, Nicaragua, Jamaica and other countries to work during the pandemic.

Earlier, a British cruise ship with infected passengers was stuck at sea when no Caribbean port would allow it to dock. At the request of London, Cuba permitted the ship to dock and organized disembarkation with hospital care for confirmed coronavirus cases, quarantine for others, and a return home by British Airways for nearly 700 others.

As far as the handling of the coronavirus at home, Cuba has hesitated like other Western Hemisphere countries. Leaders did not close its borders to tourists and others, or implement social distancing measures until some time after the first cases of coronavirus were confirmed. By the third week of March, regulations restricting movement and closing schools were put in place, and the Ministry of Public announced that family doctors are monitoring the symptoms of 37,778 Cubans. At the same time, the government began sending doctors, nurses, and medical students door-to-door across the island, looking for people with fever, cough and shortness of breath, symptoms of COVID-19.

It's not known whether the country has testing kits. It's not known whether the country has testing kits.

Sources: The Miami Herald, BBC, TeleSur and World Health Organization statistics.

Now more than ever... We need home gardens
Help GRuB's Victory Garden Project

Source: Good Grub Foundation
The 2021 budget proposed by President Trump reveals the intent of this administration to reshape America as an authoritarian country run by big business backed by a swelling military sector. Some deep cuts proposed by the President would affect mandated programs like Social Security, Medicare, food stamps and unemployment. However, these are not subject to the horse-trading that goes on around “discretionary” parts of the budget that have to be authorized and appropriated each year. This summary focuses on the $1.489 trillion in “discretionary” spending in Trump’s proposal. Sixty-three percent of it goes to fund military activities, only 37% is designated for all our domestic needs.

Defense spending would go up

Donald Trump wants to spend $934 billion on military for FY 2021. This includes the defense department, the FBI and Cybersecurity (Justice Department), the National Nuclear Security Administration (Energy Dept.), Homeland Security, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the State Department. The US military budget is greater than those of the next seven largest spenders combined.

Yet Trump asks for—and Congress agrees to—continuing increases.

Domestic spending would go down

Essential domestic government functions are targeted to be funded at billions of dollars below existing levels. Some specifics: $1 trillion in cuts to Medicaid and Affordable Care Act premium tax credits over ten years. Cuts of more than $190 billion over ten years in basic food assistance. It shrinks assistance for people with disabilities, eliminates a raft of low-income housing programs and steeply cuts a range of programs that support long-term economic growth, like investments in college affordability. It even calls for large cuts in the National Institutes of Health. Education, environmental protection, housing assistance, national parks and scenic research budgets would be cut. A modest increase for infrastructure investment would be cancelled out by cuts in other programs.

Some ways to cut the military budget

End endless wars.

The endless wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have claimed an unimaginable 400,000 human lives, and displaced an estimated 21 million people. These wars have failed to achieve any of their stated purposes, instead creating an “Islamic Caliphate” that revolves around killing. The endless wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have claimed an unimaginable 800,000 human lives, and displaced an estimated 21 million people. Nevertheless, the US continues to spend about $70 billion per year on these wars. A tenth of that amount would have been more than enough to fully transition the US electric grid to renewable sources.

Retire unnecessary overseas bases.

The US operates 800 military bases in 90 countries. The strategic justification for these bases—“to protect our interests”—is no longer relevant given the contemporary security environment. Instead, they incur enormous costs and disadvantages, exposing the United States to vulnerabilities and unintended consequences.

Rein in military contractors and elaborate weapons systems.

Overpriced weapons systems ever-renewing weapons systems suck billions from taxpayers each year. Some, the military can’t even afford to operate: the $13-billion aircraft carriers, 200 nuclear bombers at $564 million a pop. The F-35 combat aircraft is the most expensive weapons system in history, at a price tag of at least $1.4 trillion over its lifetime and still not fully functional. The Defense Department annually doles out about $400 billion in defense contracts—with the CEOs of the top five DoD contractor being paid a combined $100 million per year.

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Sources: Center for National Priorities and Boondoggle, Inc by Mandy Smithberger and William Hartung

The mandatory category represents the amount that the government must pay for programs that are fixed in law and not subject to the annual budgeting process. The lion’s share of mandatory spending is for social security and Medicare. These are mostly funded by payroll taxes, but medicare and some medicare costs get covered by general tax revenue. Income tax revenue is fixed in law, but since the US is obliged to pay it, it’s also outside the annual budgeting process. (The chart shows 2015 amounts, but the proportions are the same for current years.)

The discretionary category is everything that Congress can appropriate money for during its annual budget process. The President starts the process with his spending proposal—for FY 2021 his request is for $1.486 trillion. Of that amount, $754 billion is for defense. Another $732 billion for non-defense activities. The money comes from income tax the feds collect from individuals and corporations—and money they borrow when there’s a shortfall.

NOTE: 2015 pie chart data shows approximately the same proportions as the 2021 budget, with the glaring exception that individual taxpayers’ expense share rises to 50% from 47%, and corporations’ drops to 7% from 11%.
Allegations by scientists that we are all familiar with the domino version of SARS have been roundly refuted by the Federation of American Scientists.

When an errant bat infected poultry, passed the virus to humans and quickly mutated into at least two deadly strains. Because the market is mere miles from Wuhan's first BSL-4 laboratory, with 60,000 strains of over 1,400 viruses, many have asked whether Covid-19 is a naturally occurring phenomenon or a powerful virus manipulated by humans and accidentally or purposefully released.

Posing the question

Despite the concern of numerous individuals and organizations who warned that accidents or bio-terrorism could cause widespread loss of life, the National Institutes of Health in late 2017 lifted a three-year ban on the funding for "gain of function" research developing genetically-engineered viruses to make them stronger and more contagious by manipulating proteins. Allegations by scientists that Covid-19 might be a weaponized version of SARS have been roundly criticized by, among others, The Federation of American Scientists.

The observation that it has four protein markers from the HIV virus (which would indicate human manipulation), they say, has been proven false, pointing to research published in Nature magazine which states Covid-19 is 96% identical, genetically, to another coronavirus found in bats, disproving the human intervention theory.

Before it disappeared from the public scene or a powerful virus manipulated by humans and accidentally or purposefully released.

People worldwide have wisely and voluntarily complied with measures to control the spread of Covid-19, including public and private quarantines, work stoppage and travel bans. In mid-March, California governor Gavin Newsom assured residents that discussions of medical martial law were premature. 22 states had already called on National Guard troops to assist with the contagion. And every town, city and county wanted to be kept out of travel checkpoints and workplaces in many countries.

There is no definitive description for martial law, but The American Law Library (https://law.jrank.org) says under such conditions certain civil liberties may be suspended, such as the right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures, freedom of association and freedom of movement. And the Patriot Act, which made it possible the current epidemic of fear surrounding the spread of Covid-19 could be used to implement more restrictions on our freedoms in the name of safety?

Six weeks after the World Trade Center disaster in 2001, a series of letters and packages laced with the toxin known as anthrax were sent anonymously to individuals in government and media. Five people died and 17 others were hospitalized as a result.

Ultimately, no one was prosecuted for the crime of spreading the anthrax spores and the investigation in the bioweapons appears to have been abandoned. The fear generated by the events was used, however, to compel legislators to pass the Patriot Act at breakneck speed. Congressional leaders who protested they didn't have time to read the bill into the record, let alone debate it, were threatened by Bush administration officials with being labeled traitors if they did not immediately pass the bill.

Citing what the media relentlessly characterized as a serious ongoing threat to Americans, the Patriot Act became law, ushering in the legal surveillance of US citizens using public and private records, internet history, medical history, purchases, travel and any other means if deemed necessary by the government. The Act authorizes the CIA to conduct spying and details indefinitely citizens accused of crimes even before due legal process.

The Patriot Act also denied Americans their right to oppose the law through legal means. In other words, a citizen can be accused of a crime using his biometric data, not only can't defend themselves against the claim - they can be jailed for it before being proven guilty.

Lori Lively is Associate Editor at Works in Progress. For more background on governmental bioweapons work, see Biological Warfare and Terrorism by Francis Boyle or go to https://greenureg.egr.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-17-017.html. For updates on the Patriot Act, visit https://www.aclu.org/other/surveillance-under-wspatrot-act.

Lori Lively is Associate Editor at Works in Progress. For more background on governmental bioweapons work, see Biological Warfare and Terrorism by Francis Boyle or go to https://greenur...
In this month's column, you will be able to explore with me some aspects of "socialism," often in the news because of the Bernie Sanders— but rarely given an accurate explanation.

As capitalism developed, ethically oriented people proposed various alternatives to its deprivities, typically terming their ideas "socialism." These models, dismissed as "petit-bourgeois socialism" by Marxists, were quickly superseded by the "scientific socialism" of Marx and Engels based on Marx's rigorous analysis of capitalism and the theory of dialectical materialism.

Then "scientific socialism" itself became subject to interpretation by three main camps: 1) Social democracy, 2) Stalinism, based on the experience of the Soviet Union and adhering to "Marxism-Leninism," and 3) Trotskyism, adhering to "Marxism-Leninism" as interpreted by Trotsky.

Here I will explain how I see the differences among these three camps, with their associated problems, and then offer 1) what I consider to be a "socialism" we should strive for.

Looking Forward

Dave Jette

Problems with the Marxist-Leninist approach

First, a one-party state is inimical to democracy. It must be possible to vote the "socialist government" out of office—people must be able to organize opposition. In other words, does very well for its people, and it is far more committed to responding to the desires of its populace compared to the US, but it is nonetheless top-down politically— not socialist.

The role of the state can be high- ly positive, in facilitating—not dominating!—construction of a just, liberated society. Thus, the Marxist concept of the "withering away of the state" in an eventual "commu- nist" society is in view simply wrong.

In my view, traditional Marxism overemphasizes the role of the economic struggle between the capitalists and the working class in transforming society. Left out (until recently) are non-economic struggles for a decent life. The concept of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" is wrong in neglecting the role of the middle class in building a socialist society. Society is a lot more complex than it was in Marx's day, when it was clearly dominated by the struggle between the capitalists and the working class. This would lead straight to the rule of society by the politically advanced "party of the working class" on behalf of the workers themselves.

Overall, Marxism-Leninism has provided serious revolutionary formulas for political work. Unfortunately, it is not sufficiently nuanced, what is presents as "scientific socialism" and to avoid asking the questions that are essential to overcoming the weak- nesses of Marxism-Leninism.

Problems with social democracy

Social democracy has a Marxist orientation, but it leaves capitalism in place while trying to change it. In particular, it leaves the "com- manding heights of the economy" (big banks, huge corporations) in the hands of the capitalists who re- main, in effect, the (political) rul- ing class. While living conditions may be improved for the masses, fundamental social change is im- possible under social democracy. The primary allegiance of social democrats is to capitalism, rather than to humankind. Their priority is to make sure that the economy functions properly. Accordingly, when push comes to shove, they will side with their country (i.e., with their "capitalists) to build and maintain the Empire. This is what happened in World War I.

Bernie Sanders is a social democrat, not a socialist. Whatever he advo- cates constitutes a major progres- sive change in American politics. While not tempering their own politics, socialists should support Sanders' presidential campaign as a step forward in a highly reaction- ary situation.

Defining characteristics of socialism and a socialist program

Socialism means complete democ- racy—not "top-down" government. There is no such thing as "undemo- cratic socialism." People must take their own hands the building of a multi-faceted democratic mass movement to transform society into a socialist one, rather than waiting for a transformation by government or by "advanced" po- litical parties.

An essential role in the creation of the new society must be played by the middle classes. Control by the big financial institu- tions and corporations must be eliminated by nationalizing them (with financial compensation given to their owners).

Full play must be given to all struggles for human rights, ranging from the struggles against racism, the oppression of women, homophobia and more.

Socialists must vociferously oppose imperialist wars to build and main- tain the American Empire, and give support to peoples subject to American economic and military domination.

Finally, as a highest priority, socialists must work to combat cli- mate change, which is on the verge of destroying our ecosystem.
A wake-up call: Threat “Z” at Hanford

Helen Wheatley

Shortly before Doug Shoop retired from managing Hanford cleanup operations for the US Department of Energy in 2019, he met with members of the Hanford Advisory Board. As a single and unassailable simple question of all the issues that need more attention than they are getting now, what keeps him up at night?

And the answer

At the top of his list were the Z-Cribs, old open-bottomed vaults that have held some of the country’s most contaminated radioactive waste from the 1940s through the 1970s. Over a million gallons of liquid waste was dumped into the ground. The Trench—kind of a V-shaped 20-foot deep pit thirty feet long and 60 feet wide at its bottom, and 120 feet wide at the top. Up to 48 kilograms of plutonium lie beneath its concrete and brick-lined core, which is held up by six concrete cribs, old open-bottomed vaults, which are mined from the Trench in the early 2000s.

Both the cribs and the Trench collapse had occurred in a slightly different place, the walking danger could have been some of that mixture and surrounding dirt, causing a release into the atmosphere. It is possible that there was some unrecorded contamination. The collapse was discovered well after it had occurred.

Dangers at every turn

The Hanford project to level the Plutonium Production Complex (PPF), a huge building complex on the Hanford plateau where the fuel “buttons” and plutonium-oxide waste sitting in aging steel tanks were processed. Plutonium-laden waste remains.

The Z-cubs are open-bottomed vaults where over 10 million gallons of liquid waste were dumped into the ground. The Trench received over a million gallons of plutonium-laden waste. Although about 50 kilograms of plutonium were mined from the Trench in the 1960s, up to 48 kilograms remain. In addition, a settling tank used from the 1940s through the 1970s still holds anywhere from 36 to 76 kilograms of plutonium (mainly Pu-239). The heavily contaminated pipe that carried the liquid is also degrading underground.

These old waste areas have languished in the face of even more urgent priorities, such as dealing with over 50 million gallons of waste sitting in aging steel tanks — and dismantling the Plutonium Finishing Plant (PPF) itself.

Trumpism

From previous page

Trump as symptom, syphilis as metaphor

I find a metaphorical analogy to the social and political phenomenum of Trumpism in the disease of syphilis—which in the past was referred to as a social disease.

Syphilis manifests in three stages. The first stage is the initial infection, appearing as a chance, a lesion that is the entry point of the disease. In the second stage, often manifested as a rash, the disease spreads throughout the body. The third, or terminal stage, brings the destruction of major organs, especially the brain.

Trumpism Stage 1: reality TV as chance

The first stage of the social disease that is Trumpism can be located in his reality TV program of the early 2000s. Here the buckster, a demonstrably bad businessman, was given a huge venue to sell his snake oil to an uncritical American public. This played to an element in the American psyche that resonates with the saying “There are simple answers to complex questions . . . and they are always wrong.” Unfortunately, a large segment of the American public bought Trump’s simple snake oil solutions.

Trumpism Stage 2: the rash of racism

Following his exposure on reality TV, Trump rode the coattails of the Tea Party movement into the political arena. Here he embraced the underlying racism of this movement, and made the blackest in the rash of birtherism. He played on the bias that Obama, a black man, was “other,” and refused to be the first African American to qualify to be president. A large, gullible sector of the population bought into Trump’s racist absurdity. This set the stage for Trump to enter the 2016 election via an escalator in his glitzy Trump Tower—a gaudy descent into the abyss, where he and his cohort would go to work destroying our democratic republic.

Trumpism Stage 3: the terminal collapse of democratic governance

In tertiary syphilis, the major organs of the body are compromised and destroyed. So too the destruction of the organs of our body politic began immediately with Trump’s unqualified election, and has continued with the complete corruption of all norms and standard of good governance. To enumerate a complete list of Trump’s destructive impacts would require a large tome. I will mention two areas of corruption emblematic of the rest.

In the face of the Impeachment trial, we witnessed the collapse of the constitutional system of checks and balances. Clearly, the legislative branch no longer exercises effective oversight of the executive branch. Trump has asserted automatic executive powers and thrown the system into chaos. These incidents point to the great danger posed by the Z-Cribs and Trench. If a major earthquake causes the Trench to collapse, a truly catastrophic cloud of plutonium could be released into the atmosphere.

That should keep everybody, and not just those in Washington up at night. Plutonium is especially mobile, and contamination from the Trench could carry it far and wide.

With continued deterioration, there are other contamination dangers as well, from wildfires to the inadvertent spread of contaminants by animals, or by humans long after the existence of the United States Dept of Energy.

Energy has become a distant memory. Just cover it up and forget it? Considering the high risks, costs, and difficulties of cleanup, is it not surprising that the immediate response of the US Dept of Energy to this threat of failing “Z” structures at the PPF, now that it has awakened to the immediacy of the problem, is to cover the contaminated soil in cement-like grout. With the blessing of the State of Washington, it grouted the PUREX tunnels when it became clear that the second, larger tunnel could fail completely.

Temporary grouting is a logical plan, but Hanford Cleanup watchers understand very well that the greatest risk to our region is allowing the Department of Energy to entomb the waste and eventually forget about it, in an almost permanent shallow disposal site. From the beginning of Hanford Cleanup in the 1980s, the demand has been to remove, treat, and dispose of Transuranic waste in a way that protects future generations.

One remaining critical question

For some time, the comedian, Bill Maher, has been posing the question that most politicians want to avoid answering. That question is: What if Trump loses the election and refuses to leave office? I end this reflection with this disturbing question hanging in the balance.

Denis Langhans is a retired corporate executive who holds a PhD in the humanities.

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April 2020

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Works In Progress
The milk business in Agri-Marketing, cows have become There is no information available This rosy description is at odds The US Department of Agriculture enforcement of animal welfare regulations is difficult even within the countries' infrastructure and handling practices comply with our legislation. Enforcement of animal welfare regulations is difficult even within our country, but once the animals enter developing-world countries, it is virtually impossible to monitor compliance or guarantee the animals' welfare. For over 20 years, journalists and official sources have been reporting on systematic violations and inhumane slaughter practices in developing-world countries.

Maria Protis

The Port of Olympia has participated in live animal transportation since 2015. Thanks to Clayton Agri-Marketing, cows have become the Port's second most common export, behind timber, according to a Port spokesperson. The agribusiness company's February 2020 shipment included more than 1,400 pregnant dairy cows from California and Idaho on their way to Vietnam.

The milk business in Vietnam is booming The US Department of Agriculture inspects all of the cows and the conditions on the ship before they leave Port. According to Tony Clayton, his company takes good care of the animals. "They've got fresh water, they've got good bedding, they're going to be comfortable." Clayton added that while the American dairy market is struggling, thanks to milk alternatives, business is booming in Vietnam. This rosy description is at odds with the reality of shipping live animals. There are several reasons to prohibit live export:

The majority of developing-world countries lack control posts to rest animals for 24 hours. It is impossible to trace the animals' history, except by sea. There is no information available to assess whether the importing countries' infrastructure and handling practices comply with our legislation.

Olympia Farmer's Market

On Saturday, April 4 the Farmer's Market plans to start the 2020 season. The market will be open Saturdays and Sundays from 10 am to 3 pm with farm produce, plant starts, prepared foods and more. For more information about shopping during the Corona virus and social distancing, go to www.olympiafarmersmarket.com.
The Rachel Corrie Foundation

has in other years held a community observance on March 16, the anniversary of Rachel Corrie’s stand in Gaza. This year, the Foundation quickly canceled the event and adjusted its activities to respond to growing concerns triggered by the spread of the coronavirus in Washington and beyond. Recently COVID–19 has appeared in Gaza, despite strong precautions put in place to avoid what could be a devastating outbreak. Gaza’s healthcare system and its war-battered residents are especially vulnerable, as they have lived under an Israeli-Egyptian siege for nearly 13 years. Historically, this has been a critical time financially for RFC when the community has chosen to donate generously. Now, when businesses, nonprofits, RFC partner organizations and many vulnerable families and individuals in the community face financial uncertainty, it is still important to remember the work of RFC in Gaza and at home, and to do what you can to help it continue.

Lockdown

Yes there is fear.
Yes there is isolation.
Yes there is panic buying.
Yes there is sickness.
Yes there is even death.
But, although there is in Wuhan after so many years of noise you can hear the birds again.
Yes there that after just a few weeks of quiet the sky is no longer thick with fumes, but blue and grey and clear.
They say that in the streets of Assisi people are singing to each other across the empty squares, keeping their windows open so that those who are alone may hear the sounds of family around them.
They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.
Today a young woman I know is busy spreading fliers with her number through the neighbourhood.
So that the elders may have someone to call on.
Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples are preparing to welcome and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary.
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality.
To how big we really are.
To how little control we really have.
To how we are always encompassed by Love.
And we are always encompassed by Love.

Yes there is even death.
Yes there is sickness.
Yes there is panic buying.
Yes there is isolation.
Yes there is even death.

The Rachel Corrie Foundation

April 2020

The Olympia Mutual Aid Collective

is one of many such groups set up by people who decided to organize during this period to connect neighbors to neighbors, to offer up a platform for news and the sharing of resources, and provide a place to discuss individual needs and resources. Their goal is to keep in mind the needs of the most vulnerable during this time—a time defined not only by the pandemic but also by local and global solidarity. You can find them and ask to join their public Facebook Page which allows you to participate—at Olympia Mutual Aid Collective.

Encierro

Hay miedo.
Hay aislamiento.
Hay compras de pánico.
Hay enfermedad.
También hay muerte.
Por lo tanto, no hay que ser depresivo.
Por lo tanto, no hay que ser desesperado.
Por lo tanto, no hay que ser desesperado.
Por lo tanto, no hay que ser desesperado.

The Olympia Mutual Aid Collective

—in the streets of Assisi

—today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples

—so that the elders may have someone to call on.

Community spotlight

OlyAssembly: Are we in this together or not?

78% of Americans live paycheck-to-paycheck. 20% (about 31 million workers) have had their hours reduced or their jobs eliminated based on the need to stem the spread of Covid–19. Most of these jobs offer few, if any, benefits. Unemployment does not cover everyone. The moratorium on evictions for May fails to recognize that, come May (or whenever) all the rent and mortgage bills will still be owed—by people whose income has stopped. Many who work for wages have lost or will lose months of pay for the good of society. Isn’t it right that those whose money comes not from work, but from owning things, share the burden for the good of society. This should have been evident to our leaders, but since it isn’t, OlyAssembly is leading a movement to demand the suspension of rent and mortgage payments for everyone. For more information go to https://ollyassembly.org/rentstrike/

Fr. Richard Hendrick, March 15, 2020

Brother Richard is a priest-friar of the Irish branch of the Capuchin Franciscan Order. He lives in Dublin.
Itemizing the average Washingtonian’s income tax bill for 2018

24% Pentagon & Military
15.7% Interest on Debt

This graph shows Federal government spending of the $16,187 that an average Washingtonian paid in income tax in 2018. Of this, 40% went to the military and the interest on $22.7 trillion in borrowed money. Find more details plus a calculator to break down your specific tax payments at www.nationalpriorities.org

Source: www.nationalpriorities.org/interactive-data/taxday/average/2018/wa/receipt/