

SONOMA COUNTY

peace press

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in this issue

- ☛ The Revolution Is Live!
- ☛ The Sweeping of Camp 101
- ☛ Weapons of Mass Repression
- ☛ Peace, Justice and Gasoline Don't Mix

...much more inside



First Amendment standoff in Santa Rosa

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Email articles in MSWord to peacentr@sonic.net

Word limit up to 700 words – space is limited.

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Authors are encouraged to delineate fact from opinion and wherever possible to substantiate their facts with references.

Poems are limited to 30 lines.

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The Editorial Collective selects articles that serve the movement for peace and justice in a positive way. Articles are edited for clarity, syntax, grammar, length and spelling. If needed, authors will be contacted to assist with editing. Submissions must contain author's name, address, phone number, word count and a brief – one or two sentence bio. Decisions about editing fall within these guidelines and are the final judgment of the Peace Press editorial collective.

Articles are the opinion of the author unless otherwise noted.

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Include CALENDAR (in caps) on subject line.

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Rebel Fagin, Terra Freedman, Eszter Freeman, Larry Harper, Earl Herr, Attila Nagy

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*“If you don't like the news...
go out and make some of your own!”*

Wes “Scoop” Nisker

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The Revolution Is Live!

Shekeyna Black

*“The revolution will not be televised.
The revolution will be no re-run, brothers.
The revolution will be live!”*

– Gil Scott-Heron

A trilogy of “I can’t breathe” can be heard from victims of police brutality, from those suffering from the coronavirus pandemic, as well as from Mother Earth herself under duress from climate change. According to [statista.com](https://www.statista.com), “As of June 30, the US police shot 506 people to death in 2020.” The gruesome statistic does not include people who were choked to death by law enforcement, such as George Floyd.

Since his untimely death on May 25, protests demanding Police reform, defunding and outright abolishment, have relentlessly continued across the United States. Largely under the banner of the Black Lives Matter movement. Ordinary citizens; including Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and their White allies, have taken to the streets to let their voices and demands be heard.

Sonoma County residents also participated in peaceful protests following Mr. Floyd’s murder. Unfortunately, on May 31 Marqus Miles “Red Bear” Martinez, a local Pomo Tribal Leader and father of five, was hit by a police sting-ball at close range during a downtown Santa Rosa protest. Santa Rosa Police officers, outfitted in riot gear, formed a line and proceeded to tear gas and launch less lethal munitions into the crowd of protesters, severely injuring Mr. Martinez in his face. The heavy-handed response by SRPD has resulted in several lawsuits and investigations.

The Sonoma County Commission on Human Rights issued a scathing report entitled, “Human Rights Violations in Santa Rosa, California – Policing the Black Lives Matter Protests” in July 2020.

The 40-page document chronicles systemic racism embedded within the local law enforcement and government. The Press Release that includes the link to the report can be read here: <https://patch.com/california/sonomavalley/sonoma-county-government-human-right-violations-santa-rosa-california>

The mainstream media often fails to report or simply skews the facts about the ongoing national protests. Thankfully, many brave citizen journalists have been videoing the daily and nightly protests so that people can see first-hand accounts of what is happening via the livestreams. JacobSnakeUp on YouTube has been restreaming multiple protests every night since Mr. Floyd’s death. A statement on the page explains, “Multiple first person LIVE streams DISCLAIMER: These streams are gathered and compiled purely for

historic documentation and educational purposes only! The world should see what is going on here in America. Here you go!”

Sometimes, it can be difficult to find the livestreams of the protests online due to censorship. Additionally, some of the livestreamers have been complaining that the mainstream media is nowhere to be found at the protests and instead are stealing content from the livestreams and adding their own narratives.

In reaction to the White House sending Federal law enforcement into Portland, a group of Mother’s dubbed the “Wall of Moms” have taken to the frontline to create a human shield to protect the protestors who are exercising their First Amendment Rights of Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Assembly.

Racial Justice Allies of Sonoma County reposted on their Facebook page that the Police Department budgets as a percentage of the General Fund for the various Sonoma County cities is as follows:

Cotati - 54%	Cloverdale - 36%
Sebastopol - 45%	Santa Rosa - 35%
Windsor - 38%	Petaluma - 29%
Healdsburg - 38%	Sonoma - 15%

Rohnert Park has a combined public safety, so is not included. Sonoma and Windsor contract out their police to the Sheriff’s office. (Note: This information was originally posted by Jerry Threet as received from Santa Rosa City Council Member, Chris Rogers. Racial Justice Allies of Sonoma County reposted it on their Facebook page.)

On August 18, we celebrate the 100-year Anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution which gave voting rights to women after a long and brutal suffrage movement. Additionally, according to the National Women’s History Alliance, (which was founded and is based in Sonoma County), “At the behest of Rep. Bella Abzug (D-NY), in 1971 and passed in 1973, the US Congress designated August 26 as Women’s Equality Day. The date was selected to commemorate the 1920 certification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, granting women the right to vote.” On that note, it is more important than ever to exercise your right to vote in the November 3rd election, not just for the national offices but, especially for the local campaigns.

The Peace & Justice Center is still closed for meetings and events and currently, the office hours continue to be suspended as we work to comply with CDC and Sonoma County Health Department mandates regarding COVID-19. If you call or send an email, we thank you for your patience while we do our best to reply to all inquiries. Your donations, large or small, help support our nonprofit organization so that we may continue to do our vital work striving for equity and justice. A convenient Donate tab was added to our website so that donations can be made online via the secure PayPal link at www.pjcsoco.org/donate. Donation Checks can be mailed to: Peace & Justice Center of Sonoma County, 467 Sebastopol Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95401.

Stay Safe! Stay Vigilant! 🌿

Staying Prophetic in Dystopian Times

Harmony Caponio

One cannot fully understand the recent tipping point of George Floyd's murder in May 2020 that initiated a global uprising against racism and systemic violence without understanding the social climate created on the backdrop of Covid-19 and Shelter in Place. Loss of livelihoods and increased oppressive measures had taken place for everyone, deeply affecting the vulnerable as we were required to self-isolate. Whether intended or not, we were stripped of our individual voices and disparity ensued, yet we were powerless to do anything about it.

Many timely conversations for progressive and critical thinkers were missed out on as our connection to each other was reduced to screens. Those very screens were filling us with our daily dose of fear mongering, propaganda, conspiracy/misinformation, problematic social divides... and don't forget advertisements! This led us to an extended period of anxiety and fear, which attack the immune system, impacts mental wellness and reduces people's ability to think logically, critically and for themselves. All this culminated in a process I call "experimental dehumanization." One cannot help but ponder if this was by design and hope that others can recognize the larger theme of dystopia that we now find ourselves in. Additionally, I would hope that we don't fail to recognize one another's humanity during the process.

To understand what a dystopia is, first consider sci-fi novels such as, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, *Bladerunner*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *1984*. Author Margaret Atwood describes dystopian fiction as "...a vision of the future. Dystopias are societies in cataclysmic decline, with characters who battle environmental ruin, technological control and government oppression. Dystopian novels can challenge readers to think differently about current social and political climates, and in some instances can even inspire action." Many distinctive indicators of a dystopian society are already present, such as government control, technological control, environmental destruction, survival and loss of individualism/identity.

In our present situation, government

control doesn't require much explaining, but we need to recognize that the power structure in America includes corporations which have accumulated more wealth and power than the government itself. As we saw with the Essential/Non-essential business model implemented by the Shelter in Place Order, most small businesses were shuttered while big box stores such as Costco, Target and Walmart along with Amazon vastly profited off of the pandemic. Additionally, internet tech giants like Google and Facebook, etc. have become an omnipresent force where misinformation, political polarization, indoctrination and groupthink has been implemented. This is happening on the backdrop of environmental destruction and themes of survival with viral outbreaks of Coronavirus, overpopulation, industrialism and urbanization. It has desecrated nature and led us into natural disasters such as wildfires, earthquakes and hurricanes.

We see the loss of individualism and identity with prolonged isolation, while our social interaction is reduced to screens and the overuse of Facebook. Facebook has become a breeding ground perpetuating disinformation and promoting groupthink. Hard/fast statements about large groups of people with differing views have created polarization and censorship of differing ideas. We see how Facebook has been instrumental in exploiting the stress and trauma of society by politicizing the pandemic and perpetuating a race war which has distracted people from the obvious. We have reached a tipping point of unrest and collective refusal to go back to "business as usual."

Instead of reclaiming our power as citizens and defending our first amendment rights to free speech and the right to assemble, Facebook is hijacking many and we funnel our precious energy into counterproductive, hate-based arguments. We simultaneously see ourselves misled by the power structure of corporations, which exploit our emotional voids and offer us consumer crumbs that pacify us and reduce our revo-

lutionary sentiments to a slogan on a T-shirt. These same corporations have promised to donate small fractions of their profits to related organizations, but this does nothing for societal change as we help increase the wealth and power inequality of our country. I ask that we see this power grab for what it is and we stop falling for such exploitation and ultimately a dystopian society.

We find ourselves at a critical turning point where people are finally coming together and calling on one other to have empathy. But are we too far gone as a species to have som? Is this our empathy test, to identify who is already an android and who is still human?

Never has the importance of valuing a life meant that other lives are thus forgotten and

Many timely conversations for progressive and critical thinkers were missed out on as our connection to each other was reduced to screens.

somehow don't matter. The fact that people are so easily swayed and indoctrinated online to think that that way is disheartening. I beckon the online social justice warriors and the crisis deniers to get off of the internet and talk to each other face to face instead of becoming ideologues. We must understand that we are all in a collective state of trauma and we are allowing the corporate and tech giants to take advantage of and profit from it while we allow them to collectively and socially divide us.

I urge people to look at our collective crisis through another lens outside of social constructs and understand that this is a people movement. It is a movement that criticizes the abuse of power at structural levels and demands that the people be heard and acknowledged. A movement that catalyzes systemic change. Will we all show up or will we remain silent? 🌿

Harmony Caponio is a former foster youth of Sonoma County, a mother of two and a student of Sociology, Religion and English with an interest in Critical Theory. She is an aspiring astrologer and herbal healer, and most importantly, is a human.

It's in the Streets...



VIERA PHOTOGRAPHICS

Sonoma County Commission on Human Rights report reveals police violated human rights during demonstrations against police brutality. Has law enforcement grasped the irony of their actions?

Homeboy Trouble

I missed the first two nights of the resistance so I can't report on them. On Monday, June 1, I decided to check out what was happening downtown. Police were occupying corners and roofs around Courthouse Square and the mall. There were small pods of young protesters gathering in the area. The air was electric with anticipation. As I headed for home I saw a cop hit his siren and do a donut at 6th and 101 so he could aggressively take position monitoring the on ramp. At 6th and Wilson I picked up a march.

This march was mostly young people of color. I saw no organized monitors and it appeared as though individuals were taking responsibility for stopping traffic from impacting their march. At 3rd and Wilson the march seemed to dissolve. A group of maybe six of us went east on 3rd towards Courthouse Square. Just before we went under the freeway we spotted a group of cops. None wore masks. One had a green rifle. These young people challenged the cops, asking them if they really were going to shoot people. One young man slapped his skateboard on the sidewalk making the cop with the rifle jump. The kid laughed at him. While I question the wisdom of that tactic, look at the fearlessness. I haven't seen these

levels of fearlessness since Andy's Youth. These young people are too tired of racist cops to fear them any more.

At Courthouse Square there was a silent vigil of people taking a knee with an up-raised fist. No one appeared to be in charge. Just before curfew a man spoke briefly and the gathering disbanded.

That night I heard fireworks and helicopters until I fell asleep around 11.

On Tuesday, the 2nd, there was a gathering in the Roseland Shopping Center to commemorate Andy Lopez' 20th birthday. There was an open mike and people were invited to share their sorrow for 3 minutes or so.

One brave young man told everyone how scared he was. Another younger guy opened his remarks with "I'm just a kid" which was met with a round of applause. This open mike gathering was meant to be healing and it helped. One young woman said she'd heard enough talk and invited people to join her and others on a walk to Food Max to let the shoppers know about the police killings of brown and black people in Amerika.

Some went with her while others stayed to continue expressing their sorrow. We are big enough to accommodate both.

Later that night we went up to the Mall. At 3rd and Wilson we spotted a crowd and stopped there. Protesters had diverted traffic on Wilson a block shy of 3rd. Six cars blocked three lanes to secure the footpath for demonstrators. 3rd appeared to be blocked the same way. There was no overt leadership. Young people of color were at the forefront. People had taken a knee before a line of cops who were blocking the 101 on-ramp. Tensions were high. I saw a cop with a tan rifle and wondered what that signified. Again, no cops wore masks. Moments before curfew people chanted, "Please don't shoot" as they stood their ground. The cops huddled and a decision was made to withdraw half the troops. The crowd cheered and moved on. Leadership from the police reduced the tension at that moment. They would increase it later.

Again I heard helicopters and fireworks into the night.

I have been to half a dozen BLM marches/rallies since and I'll probably go to more. It's the youth who are leading this movement. They are finding their ways to organize and deal with adversity. We need to listen to them and follow their lead. I haven't seen such peaceful militancy since Occupy; this level of fearlessness since

It's the youth who are leading this movement. They are finding their ways to organize and deal with adversity. We need to listen to them and follow their lead.

Andy's Youth. Old people want young people to participate in political actions. Well, here's your chance. They ain't coming to your dance; you have to go to theirs, as a guest. I show up, shut up, listen and learn.

It's happening in the streets. ✨

Homeboy Trouble lives in Santa Rosa in a housing collective. Like others, he struggles to find work. Homeboy understands that he is a victim of economic injustice and he is not alone. He resists and he is not alone.

ACLU Activities in Sonoma Co.

Anna Kaufman

For the months of June and July the Chapter Board meeting of the Sonoma County ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) has remained suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Chapter is still hard at work, however, and encourages members to keep an eye out in November for two specific pieces of legislation. Assembly Constitutional Amendment 5 (ACA 5) would, if passed, repeal Proposition 209's ban on Affirmative Action and Assembly Constitutional Amendment 6 (ACA 6) would, if passed, restore the right to vote to parolees in California. As both amendments have passed the state senate, it will be up to voters to push them through this election season with their ballots.

The Sonoma County ACLU is also asking members to collaborate with the RECLAIM OUR VOTE (ROV) organization by writing postcards to encourage voter participation. ROV is a non-partisan, volunteer-based organization that aims to empower voters of color and fight voter suppression, especially in the southern states. The current campaign

is aimed to get out the vote in North Carolina and is being done in collaboration with the state's Chapter of the NAACP.

During this time the Sonoma County ACLU is recruiting Chapter Board members as well as volunteers who would be willing to investigate the use of surveillance by local law enforcement. The surveillance being investigated largely falls under the umbrella of drones and Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs). The Chapter is also proud to announce it has again donated \$1,000 to Undocufund which, under the North Bay Organizing Project, supports immigrant families who have been left out of funding during the pandemic.

The Sonoma County ACLU is always happy to find a greater audience and more participants in the fight for universal basic liberties. To learn more about any of the material covered here, links have been provided below. Most information can also be found on our website at www.sonomaaclu.org.

Links:

ACA 5: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200ACA5

ACA 6: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200ACA6

Contact Karen to get involved with RECLAIM OUR VOTE: kgfraire@gmail.com

Automated License Plate Reader Info: <https://www.eff.org/pages/automated-license-plate-readers-alpr>

ACLU of Northern California's Surveillance Toolkit: <https://www.aclunc.org/publications/fighting-local-surveillance-toolkit>

Anna Kaufman is a senior at New York University studying journalism and Spanish. In her free time she volunteers for the Sonoma County ACLU which is her hometown branch.

Check Out The Sonoma County Non-Violence Training Collective!

Dinah Bachrach

We are alive and well in these intense and amazing times.

Below please find a descriptive list of what we offer. But first, a new offering: A book study group on George Lakey's *How We Win: A Guide to Non-Violent Campaigning*. This 200-page book is just what would-be activists and we activists need at this moment. The study group will have 4 meetings every 2 weeks, for 1 hour on Zoom starting Thursday, August 13 at 5 p.m. Lively, interactive discussions will be led by Dinah Bachrach and Paul Robbins. All are welcome! Contact us at soconvtc@gmail.com. Books will be on sale for \$17.00.

The Sonoma County Non-Violence Training Collective trains activists in non-violence strategy, action, philosophy and history. We can:

- help individuals form action groups
- help groups move from protest to issue campaigns designed to win change
- help existing action groups develop their skills in issue campaign strategy
- train or help provide peacekeeping teams at marches, demos and events
- help groups prepare for direct action, including civil disobedience
- train individuals and groups in consensus process, forming affinity groups, forming spokescouncils and other methods of grassroots organizing
- provide other trainings involving non-violence as a key strategy

For more information, contact us at soconvtc@gmail.com.

WHO DOES IT IMPACT?

- All Workers who do work in the city of Santa Rosa.
- Workers who are having symptoms, or who are under quarantine orders or advice from medical personnel.
- Workers who are caring for anyone who meet the above.
- If your family member's place of care or care provider is unavailable (example: childcare, elderly care, etc.)

HOW DO I USE MY PAID SICK TIME?

- Give your boss notice as soon as you are able. There is no requirement of how far in advance, but let them know as soon as you know.
- It doesn't have to be a notice in writing but we suggest it, to cover yourself.

NORTH BAY JOBS WITH JUSTICE



Paid Sick Leave Passes!

Thank you to everyone who helped us!
Thank you to Santa Rosa City Council

CAN MY BOSS DENY MY PAID SICK TIME?

- Not at all! Under no circumstances can your employer tell you no. It's your right to use your paid sick days off.
- Your boss CANNOT require you to find your own replacement for your shift.
- Your boss CANNOT require a doctor's note.

WHAT IF MY BOSS DENIES MY RIGHT TO PAID SICK TIME?

- Call Legal Aid of Sonoma County or California Rural Legal Assistance right away! We work with them and they are safe and supportive.

California Rural Legal Assistance:
(800) 357-9513
Legal Aid: (707) 308-2512

The Sweeping of Camp 101

Bryan Jones and Tomas Phillips

Homelessness in Sonoma County is a complex situation. The City of Santa Rosa, Sonoma County and nonprofit providers are providing temporary housing. Homeless “solutions” include camps at Los Guillicos, the Finley Center, Sam Jones Hall, SSU and Catholic Charities Shelter.

This brief article is about the homeless camp under Highway 101 in downtown Santa Rosa, stretching from 3rd Street to College Avenue. The camp was cleared by the City of Santa Rosa on June 24/25. The sweep was delayed after the City said two people living there had tested positive for COVID. They then tested everyone but found no other positives. This was the largest sweep since January 2020, when Sonoma County removed 300 people from the Joe Rodota Trail.

A friend from Homeless Action! and I went to the camp on June 6 to find out how many people were there. The Consent Decree requires authorities to offer accommodations to those camping in public spaces instead of

three months. He’s been homeless for three years. He said he takes medication for PTSD, high blood pressure and Bells Palsy. He’s a client of Sonoma County Mental Health and does not want to live in a shelter. He’d like to live in one of the trailers at the County Fairgrounds. At the 101 camp, the dumpster is emptied every other day, but another dumpster is needed. Hand washing stations are needed, as there are none there.

Kellie, age 42, was reluctant to have much of a conversation. She kept talking to a woman sitting nearby, who was trying to punch a hole in a can of green beans. She said she’d lived at Los Guillicos when it first opened, but had left when a friend moved out. She’s been at the camp for three months. She receives income from Social Security. When I asked her if she had any disabilities, she said she had a bad back.

an apartment. She said there were two people who have COVID-19 at the camp.

Todd, age 29, was seated when I talked to him. His knee kept shaking. He said he has seizures, but does not have any medication for it. He’s been at the camp for one month and

This was the largest sweep since January 2020, when Sonoma County removed 300 people from the Joe Rodota Trail.

homeless for 7 years. After losing a job, he became homeless. He’d like to live in a place where he can have his tent and belongings.

Charles, age 52, had a weather beaten face and was missing many teeth. He formerly lived at the Joe Rodota Trail. He became homeless after losing a job and his housing. He doesn’t want to live at Los Guillicos or the Finley Center, as he wants to be left alone. The

tents are too small and he doesn’t like a curfew. He seemed to be very jittery. He started complaining about the Police coming to the camp and kicking in his tent. He became agitated with me and I quickly left.

Visiting the camp, I was confronted by the harsh reality of people in difficult circumstances. They have lived in the margins for years, resistant to shelters, impacted by ill health and ostracized from society. I reflected on my privilege, the home I live in, the income inequality in our country, and the increasing marginalization of many. The potential of beauty and love in our lives, the wealth of our country and the bucolic landscape of Sonoma County was not apparent in the camp. Yet hope is still alive.

Maybe somehow we can provide for them and welcome them back, with the promise of life anew. 🙏

Bryan Jones is a retired commercial photographer who moved to Sonoma County in 2013. He recently had a photo exhibit at the Santa Rosa Center for Spiritual Living of photographs he took at the recent camp on the Joe Rodota Trail. Tomas Phillips has been a Section 8 landlord in Sonoma County since 1990 and has provided housing to clients of Catholic Charities and COTS for many years. He is on the Board of Burbank Housing Development Corporation.



Another dislocation of homeless people in Santa Rosa

just forcing them to leave. We counted 65 separate living structures for 75-100 people by nighttime. We went back on June 20 after notifications of an impending sweep. Many had left. Some had taken accommodations at Sam Jones Hall or Finley Center. Many had “disappeared,” not wanting to live under the structure of the sanctioned camps.

These are a few of the people we met:

William, age 34, has been in the camp for

Cliff, age 58 and his girlfriend have a big, old trailer camper. They need a safe place to park it that can supply water, restrooms and an electric hookup.

Anysa, age 49, has been at the camp for three months. She doesn’t want to live in a shelter, as they’re too crowded. She picks up her mail at 600 Morgan Street and often has lunch at the Redwood Gospel Mission. She’s on Social Security and used to live in

Raise the Wage!

Living wages help us fight the pandemic

Omar Paz, Jr.

Many workers and families suffer from financial insecurity, pandemic anxieties and attacks on community institutions by the federal administration. Sonoma County workers who are currently able to work, live paycheck to paycheck or wait for trickles of state and federal assistance, if they are fortunate enough to have work authorization. Over the past two years, North Bay Jobs with Justice (NBJWJ) raised the minimum wage in four Sonoma and Marin County cities: Sonoma, Santa Rosa, Petaluma and Novato. This was before the current unprecedented pandemic exacerbated inequities facing Latine,* Black and Indigenous communities, and a subsequent wellspring of grassroots movements arose for change in our community. Local leaders and residents are ready to bring this fight to the county's unincorporated areas.

How are essential workers to choose between an insufficient paycheck and putting their families and communities at risk? Poverty is a struggle among all communities, but even more so in communities of color. In 2016, 44.5% of Latine, 27.9% of Black and 40% of Indigenous workers fell below 200% of the Federal Poverty level. As of July 9, 2020, COVID-19 has hit the Latine community hardest with 66% (788 cases) of total positive cases, while accounting for only 27.2% of the total county's population based on county data. This disproportionate impact is especially disturbing considering its concentration within the low-wage workforce.

According to the 2018 State of Working Sonoma Report, "In 2016, workers of color in Sonoma County accounted for about a third of all workers, yet workers of color constituted a majority of low-wage workers. 40% of Latinos belong to a family that works and lives in poverty... One in five residents live in poverty despite living in a family with at least one working member..."

These inequities demand responsive public services and policy that circumvent historical barriers to financial security for our most vulnerable communities.

Federal stimulus and state benefits are inaccessible to the undocumented community. Local UndocuFund efforts and one-time money from the state have been a welcome but insufficient relief. Based on hundreds of intake interviews, many mixed status families

have spent their entire savings on rent and other necessities as early as March and April. That was four months ago. \$500 only lasts a week, at best. Workers of color are told to spend locally for the economy's sake.

They're forced to risk their family's wellbeing to work at businesses that are constantly closing and reopening. Their labor provides food and groceries, is the backbone of industrial agriculture (wine grapes, apples, livestock, poultry, etc.) and carries out large construction and trades projects. Broken down by industry, county data shows that low-wage

workers and their families are hit the hardest, with COVID-19 impacting 63% (579 cases) of essential service sectors, such as: Services and Sales – 17%, Agriculture and Farm Work – 13%, Construction and Related Trades – 7%, Retirees and those not seeking work – 13%, and the Unemployed who are seeking work – 13%.

Absent policy solutions tied to the ongoing housing crisis – such as rent and mortgage cancellation and a moratorium on all evictions, rent increases and foreclosures – an accelerated minimum wage increase tied to the Bay Area Consumer Price Index (CPI) creates long-term benefits to all low-wage workers and more specifically, women and people of color. Based on an intensive 2018 report by the UC Berkeley Labor Center, benefits include: "reductions in family poverty, reduc[ed] enrollment in public assistance programs" (such as SNAP and Medicaid), better "social [and health] outcomes" with respect to "psychological well-being, crime, hypertension and obesity" and "school achievement." With significant, measurable outcomes backed by research, raising the wage is a no-brainer.

We're fighting for a just wage before 2020 ends so workers and their families can see results by no later than March 2021. We'll hold online panels, email and phone banking drives, circulate petitions and make our voices heard. Consider supporting us by emailing the Board of Supervisors at: BOS@SonomaCounty.org and contacting North Bay Jobs with Justice to volunteer for our campaign. Households that provide the community with thank-less labor that drives our local economy while risking their own wellbeing, deserve financial security. The time for sustained,



Marching for a \$15 minimum wage in Sonoma County

impactful leadership from our elected officials is now. Lives are on the line and the public is waiting for our leader's first response.

*Author's Note: "Latine" is a gender neutral stand in for "Latino" or "Latina," which are gendered and exclusive of non-binary, gender-fluid and agender individuals. It is preferred over "Latinx" due to ease of enunciation.

Sources: Socoemergency.org, "State of Working Sonoma (Fall 2018): A Profile of Income & Racial Inequality, Poverty, and Low-Wage Employment," Jesús Guzmán, MPP, "Estimated Impact of a Proposed Minimum Wage Law for the North Bay," October 2018, UC Berkeley Labor Center, Ian Perry, Garrett Strain and Ken Jacobs, <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Agriculture-Weights-and-Measures/Crop-Reports> 🌱

Omar Paz, Jr. is a Lead Organizer at North Bay Jobs with Justice. He can be reached at Omar@NorthBay-JobWithJustice.com.

Weapons of Mass Repression

Rebel Fagin

Weapons of mass repression refers to weapons governments use to stop people from challenging their policies. Many are called less lethal weapons. Less lethal does not mean less than lethal, it simply means you're less likely to die from them than say, a bullet. I discovered a pattern in my research that I didn't expect and it didn't surprise me. The British for use against the Irish initially developed most of these less lethal weapons. The Israelis then took these weapons and made them more deadly for use against the Palestinians. The Americans use the Israeli weapons against Black and Brown people in America. Here's an overview of some of these weapons of mass repression.

RUBBER BULLETS This is really a misnomer. These are metal bullets with a thin rubber coating. The British first used steel bullets with a rubber coating against the Irish in 1970. The Israelis introduced rubber coated metal cylinder bullets for use against the Palestinians. These are infinitely more deadly. Most deaths occur from head shots. These "less lethal" weapons are supposed to be shot at lower extremities. Many companies make them. Ryland Stamey was shot in the head by one of these bullets in Santa Rosa during a peaceful protest on May 31, 2020.

STUN GRENADES OR FLASHBANGS These weapons produce a deafening sound of 175-182 decibels coupled with a hot blinding flash that leaves people disoriented and easy to round up. It was first used against the Irish in the 1960s. The Israelis' employed it during the 1972 Munich hostage crisis. In the US it was first used in 1989 in Minneapolis. Critical Systems, Inc. (CSI) manufactures them under the brand name Combined Tactical Systems (CTS). More on them later.

STING BALLS are explosive, hard plastic grenades about the size of a softball. They are shot from 40 mm launchers and release hard rubber balls when they explode. They are designed to be used 100 feet from people and then as indirect fire devices, ones that bounce off of something before encountering human beings. Marqus 'Red Bear' Martinez was shot in the face with one by an overhead police sniper in Santa Rosa on May 31, 2020. The grenade exploded in his mouth, breaking both jaws and driving several of his teeth into

his tongue and the roof of his mouth. CSI makes these.

CHALK ROUNDS are categorically grenades. These explosive devices are shot from 40 mm launchers and are frequently used in Gaza to break up crowds of peaceful protesters. On May 31, 2020 Michaela Staggs was hit in the head by one of these grenades while peacefully protesting in Santa Rosa.

CSI TEAR GAS was banned in warfare at the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention yet approved of for domestic use! Shot from 40 mm launchers, these projectiles are "designed to penetrate intermediate barriers of moderate density such as windows, drywall and interior doors. The projectile breaks upon impact and delivers an average payload of powder or liquid throughout the target area. The purpose is to penetrate barriers with a secondary function of releasing gas." Said the manufacturers, "Tear gas grenades fired from a launcher (can) be carried out by indirect fire with the barrel of the rifle aimed upwards at a sixty degree angle...grenades are not to be fired at individuals as doing so is liable to cause injuries or death." CSI tear gas grenades have been shot into the heads of countless peaceful protesters in Palestine. In Israel the M. R. Hunter company represents CSI.

TASERS These "less lethal" electric shock weapons have killed thousands both in the US and Palestine. When shot, their barbs attach to the victim and release multiple electric shocks. As the person writhes on the ground, the cops usually tell them to be calm. When the victim can't comply they are often tased again. Axon Enterprise makes these weapons in the US. This Arizona company's major investor is Blackrock. Code Pink is heading a campaign to get Blackrock to divest from Axon https://www.codepink.org/stop_tasers. In Israel, this less lethal weapon is made by Contact International of Jerusalem. From 2014-2016, 180 complaints were filed in Israel about their usage by security forces. 12 were investigated. No officers were charged.

LONG-RANGE ACOUSTIC DEVICES (LRADS) are known as The Scream in occupied Palestine. It was first used in the West Bank in 2005. It is "a compact, jeep mounted, acoustic system that radiates a narrow, high power, steerable, acoustic beam designed to be used as a non-lethal

weapon for riot suppression. The system creates sound levels that are unbearable to humans at a distance up to 100 meters." You either leave the target area or your ears bleed from ruptured ear drums. The Scream is made by Elbit Systems of Israel, the folks who profit from check-point security.

SKUNK GAS has been described as smelling like skunk, rotting meat, old socks and an open sewer. It is dispersed into crowds in Palestine from a jeep-mounted, liquid-spraying launcher. It sticks to skin, clothes, walls, streets and cars. It can blind. It was first used in 2008 in the West Bank. It is made by Odortec of Israel.

Between 2011-2014, 8,000 Palestinians were wounded by rubber bullets and tear gas canisters. Who is paying for these weapons? We are. In fiscal year 2007/2008 the US

Who is paying for these weapons? We are...Much of this money goes to CSI.

State Department provided \$1.85 million in "tear gas and riot control agents" as part of the \$3.8 billion the US gives Israel every year! Much of this money goes to CSI.

Critical Systems, Inc. makes CSI tear gas grenades, 40 mm launchers, sting balls and flashbangs. CSI goes by the brand name of Combined Tactical Systems (CTS) in the USA and the M. R. Hunter Company in Israel. CSI is owned by Michael Broon and Jacob Karvel. The Carlyle Group and Point Lookout Capital Partners are the primary investors. The headquarters for Combined Tactical Systems is 388 Kinsman Road, Jamestown, PA 16134, USA. The CEO is Donald Smith; the President Jacob Kravel. I'm sure these folks would love to hear from you. You can call them at (724) 932-2177 or contact them at www.combinedsystems.com. While you're at it, contact the Santa Rosa City Council citycouncil@srcity.org. Let 'em know what you think of these weapons and their use to repress peaceful protesters. It'd be good for them.

Sources: www.timesofisrael.com, 12/19/17; www.militarytimes.com, 5/7/19; Who Profits, 4/8/20, 4/14/20, Bloomberg Business News; www.combinedsystems.com; mondoweiss.net, 6/17/20; Flashpoints, 6/16/20. 🐦

75th Anniversary of the Atomic Bombings

Larry Harper and Robert Doane

On August 6th and August 9th, 1945, at the very end of the Second World War, the United States dropped the first and only atomic bombs on human beings in Japan, targeting the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Peace Crane Project has been commemo-

rating these anniversaries for over 35 years to raise awareness, focus on the continuing danger of stockpiling thousands of bombs and the inevitability of proliferation, as well as the ever-present risk of massive nuclear accidents. Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, there will be no memorialization this year, but we hope that you will take a moment to contemplate those catastrophes and to honor the victims who died as a result. We ask you to also think of the others who have died and suffered as a result of the nuclear cycle, from mining to nuclear power accidents to bomb testing. The cities were mostly filled with women, children and the elderly, since the young men were away at war. 200,000 or more victims died. The total will never be known. The victims were vaporized, obliterated and reduced instantly to ash. Many, many more victims succumbed later from radiation poisoning that remains potent for years. Not only do contemporary historians question whether bombing Japan actually accomplished anything for the war effort, but so did top US military leaders of the time, such as then General Dwight Eisenhower. He said, "the Japanese were ready to surrender and it wasn't necessary to hit them with

that awful thing. It is my opinion that the use of this barbarous weapon at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was of no material assistance in our war against Japan." Japan was already in negotiations with the US and allies and was on the verge of defeat anyway, which means that destroying these two cities was not only

bomb testing and the mining of uranium. The Peace Crane Project is committed to keeping the memory of the tragedy of the atomic bombings alive. To that end, we are working with Green Legacy Hiroshima (glh.unitar.org) to bring seeds from a legacy Kinko Biloba tree that survived the atom bomb to Sonoma County to create a living memorial.

Green Legacy Hiroshima exists to safeguard and spread descendants of trees that miraculously survived the nuclear bombings as symbols of hope and to transmit its message of peace. The seeds were germinated by Quarry Hill Botanical Garden in Glen Ellen (quarryhillbg.org), which features one of the largest collections of wild-sourced Asian plants in the world. They are being nurtured there until they are 3-4 years old and ready for transplanting. At that time, they will be planted at Sonoma State University near the Holocaust & Genocide Memorial Grove (sonoma.edu/holocaustgrove) and the Ann Frank Tree www.sonoma.edu/holocaustgrove/anne-frank-tree.html.

The Peace Crane Project is dedicated to creating a world free of nuclear weapons, where people can learn to live together in harmony.

Commemorating the Bombings: Let's Ring Bells of Peace – a US-Japan Sister Cities Bell Ringing Project.

Sebastopol World Friends in solidarity with Sonoma County Japanese American Citizens League invite you to remember the 75th anniversaries of the atomic bombs being dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States on Wednesday, August 5, 4:15PM and Saturday, August 8, 7:02PM. These events coincide with the actual local date and time the bombs fell. We ask you or members of your organization to ring a bell at one or both of the times. Our suggestion is to ring a bell 75 times or for 75 seconds. You can find more information about the project's history, ideas, and the SCI's mission at <https://sistercities.org/2020/07/15/u-s-japan-sister-cities-bell-ringing-75-years-of-peace-since-hiroshima-nagasaki/> 🦋

Larry Harper is a member of the Peace Crane Project and has been an anti-nuclear activist for over 40 years. He has been arrested for protesting nuclear weapons and nuclear power at the Nevada Test Site, Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab and the Rancho Seco Nuclear Power Plant. Robert Doane is a retired architect, a writer and editor. He is a supporter of the Peace Crane Project. His lifelong appreciation of Japan and the Japanese aesthetic began during his apprenticeship to his father, also an architect, who was active in support of the Japanese-American community when it was not popular.



Photograph via Smith Collection / Gado / Getty

“unnecessary,” but deeply immoral.

There are those who argue that Truman's motivation for utilizing nuclear weapons was to warn the Soviet Union of the terrible new weapon that we possessed, as a first salvo in the Cold War.

There are over 3,700 active nuclear warheads and nearly 14,000 total nuclear warheads in the world. The number of nuclear-armed countries continues to grow. At present there are nine, plus five or six with access via sharing arrangements and several more with active/covert programs. There are at least 130 nuclear-armed submarines. In addition to inevitable major accidents (as have already occurred), there is a very high risk that any confrontation or conflict involving at least one nuclear power could escalate, deliberately or accidentally, to an atom bomb ‘exchange’.

The danger of nuclear technology is not limited to weapons. There have been more than 100 serious nuclear accidents and incidents from the use of nuclear power. Fifty-seven accidents or severe incidents have occurred since the Chernobyl disaster, and about 60% of all nuclear-related accidents and severe incidents have occurred in the USA. There is also the damage caused by the radiation from

History Rhymes

e.g. singer

History never repeats itself, but it rhymes.

– Mark Twain

It is probably human nature that both older and younger people look upon each other with a certain suspicion and mistrust – perhaps fostered after an interaction or conversation – with the silent thought registered by each side, “God, is that person dumb or what?”

What both generations do not know – cannot possibly understand – is the history and experiences that different age groups have lived through. History and culture inform us of who we are. It is nobody’s fault. Not one to lecture, I can draw on personal experience, especially in the area of American politics, which I have been an observer to and participant in for over five decades.

In late 1968, we “radicals” made a fateful mistake – deciding either to vote for 3rd party candidates or sit on our hands and not vote at all – then watched our “strategy” blow up. Richard Nixon became president and continued a war for seven more years, bringing misery and death to thousands of American servicemen and women, their families and millions of Vietnamese people.

I have remained a life-long Democrat for almost 50 years. I have had my heart, if not broken, squeezed painfully by many events during that time by this party. But I have retained my cockeyed optimism in the face of “political reality.” In that way I am not unlike the cartoon character, Charlie Brown, who believes faithfully that the football will not be pulled away again at the last second, saving him the embarrassment of falling on his ass.

The Democratic Party, for all its flaws and stumbles, still represents core values for myself and many groups of people – especially the poor, many of the working and middle class, cultural/racial minorities and LGBTQ populations. It embraces our hopes and dreams for good jobs, good schools, safe neighborhoods and healthcare for all. It is a party that still continues to reflect the historically progressive ideas put forth from the last 80 years to the present day. To see men and women of color and different sexual orientations all sharing a stage together represents not only what the Democratic Party has become, but what the true face of America has become in the last six decades.

Politics is a dirty business – it has always been. Deals are struck: Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson

twisted arms and pushed through legislation that became the Law of the Land, bringing social, economic and healthcare programs that benefitted millions of Americans. Disappointments abound when supporters find their candidates have “compromised” or made opportunistic choices to get elected. This is how our political system functions. We don’t have to like it and we can critique it endlessly!

I still believe real change comes from the bottom up. I implore all Americans who are eligible to vote to consider how important it is to exercise that right. Many of the messengers we believed in and what they stood for

are gone (many of mine are), but their ideas still resonate and we carry them in our hearts.

When I was in my late teens and early twenties, I saw the older generation smile and just shake their heads at my arguments for change. I was frustrated and angered by their responses. I have a sense that this has not changed over time for young people today. They and I still feel there is so much more to be done.

So, to the younger generations who are 18 and older: Please, do not sit on your hands this election. Don’t give up! There is too much at stake! Don’t make history rhyme again! 🙌

About The Electoral College

Peace Press Editorial Collective

This election matters. There are several potential laws to vote on, local candidates and the national race. Let’s start by taking a look at how the electoral system works. Each state is awarded as many electoral votes as they have representatives in both Houses of Congress. Each state has 2 Senators while the House of Representatives is based on state population. Thus, Vermont gets 2 electoral votes for its Senators and 1 for its sole representative, while California gets 55: 2 for our Senators and 53 for our Representatives.

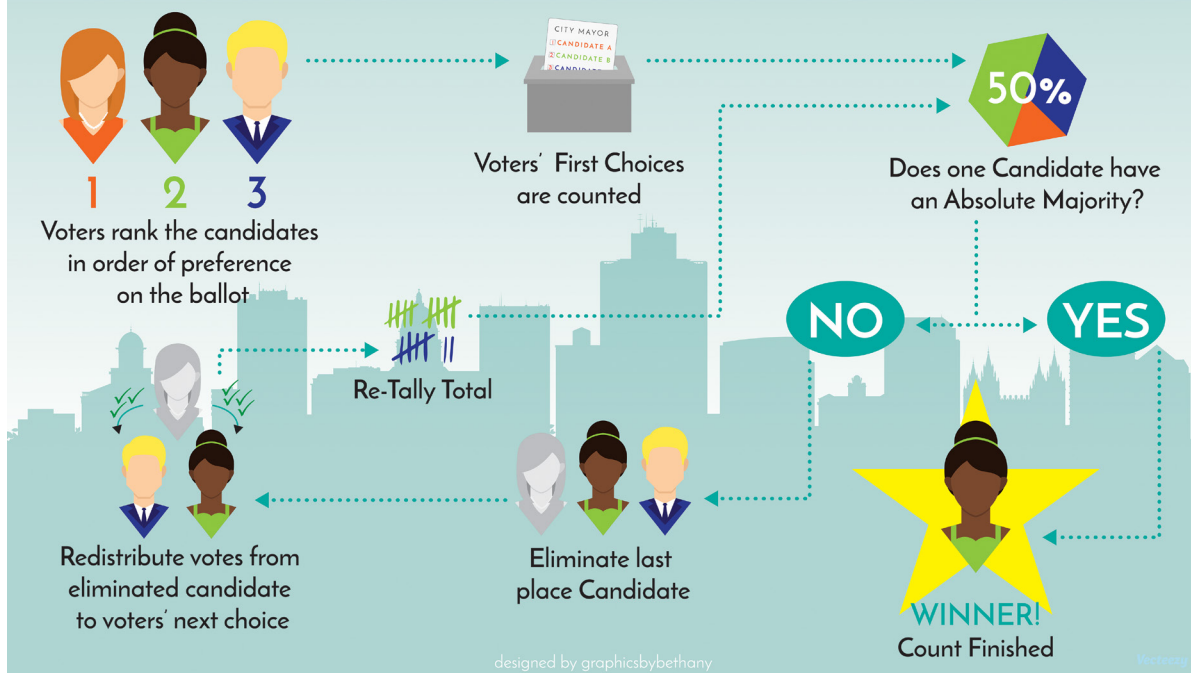
Whichever candidate has the most votes in each state gets all the electoral votes. While 48 out of 50 states, including California, are winner-take-all states, there are 6, maybe

8 states that matter: Wisconsin, Michigan, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, North Carolina, Arizona and to a degree, Nevada. The rest are locked into their position. For at least 30 years now California has been overwhelmingly Democratic. It’s an easy bet that all 55 electoral votes will go to the Democratic candidate.

If you want to safeguard your vote, then focus on internal voter theft: gerrymandering, manipulated computer voting machines, precinct closures, I.D. requirements, etc. And now there is debate over the approved use of mail-in ballots, so folks have to choose between COVID and democracy! Voter theft in this election will be very decisive. Please vote. California is the perfect state to vote your conscience and not your fears. 🙌



RANKED CHOICE VOTING HOW DOES IT WORK?



the fundamental idea is this: The first-place choices of voters are tallied. If none has a majority, the candidate with the fewest such votes is eliminated. Votes that went to that candidate are transferred to those voters' next choice. Then after a new tabulation if there is still no majority winner, the now-lowest candidate is eliminated and votes for that candidate are reassigned to those voters' next choice. This process continues until one candidate has a majority. A variant of this system is currently used in four Bay Area cities as well as in New Mexico, Maine, London, Ireland

and New Zealand.

Among Ranked-Choice systems, there are many disadvantages to IRV besides its complexity for both understanding and implementation, and many advantages to APS. IRV has an obsession with first-place and ignores much of the information available in the ranked lists. IRV fails to be "monotone": it can result in a winning candidate becoming losing even while gaining support. It would not have eliminated the Louisiana 1991 Gubernatorial "Election from Hell," where voters had to choose between "the Crook" (Edmund Edwards) and "the Klan" (David Duke).

If any Ranked-Choice system had been in use in Minnesota in 1998, Jesse Ventura would never have become Governor. If it had been in place in 1992 when Ross Perot ran against Bush and Clinton, both competitors would have lost to Bush. And had it been in place in Florida in 2000, Al Gore would have become President and history in the 21st century would have unrolled differently.

I will be giving a presentation on Ranked-Choice Voting. It will be a "virtual" lecture, via Zoom, 4-5 pm on Wednesday, September 9. Interested persons should contact me, rick.luttmann@sonoma.edu or the SSU Math Dept ((707) 664-2368) shortly before the event for details on how to access the meeting. 📧

Rick Luttmann is Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at Sonoma State University, where he formerly taught the course "Math and Politics," in which issues such as this were studied.

The Case for Ranked-Choice Voting

Rick Luttmann

The voting system commonly used in the US is the Plurality System: No matter how many candidates run, each voter selects one, these choices are tallied and the candidate with the most votes wins. A majority is not required, just a plurality: more than any other candidate.

There are multiple disadvantages to this system. For example, in the California Gubernatorial Recall election of 2003, well over 100 candidates ran to replace Gray Davis. In principle a candidate could have won the Governorship with fewer than 3/4 of 1% of the votes. And that person might have been the last choice of the rest of the voters!

Another problem: the Plurality system frustrates voters who prefer a "minor" party. Everyone knows the winner will be from one of the two mainstream parties. To vote for the minor party candidate is to forfeit the right to choose between the two who may actually win. But to vote mainstream is to betray one's principles and participate in selecting the Lesser of Two Evils. The true strength of a minor party cannot be determined officially because some support may not have been expressed in the voting.

Often a minor party candidate draws support from a major party candidate with similar views, and may "split the vote" and cause that major-party candidate to lose. This is known

as the "Spoiler Effect."

In elections with more than two candidates, most voters have an opinion not only about which candidate would be best, but also about which would be second-best, third-best, and so on. However, only the first choice can be officially expressed. Voters could wish to have the right to say, I prefer Candidate X, but if the electorate turns down Candidate X, my next choice is Candidate Y; and my next after that is Candidate Z; etc.

Voting systems exist that permit voters to make such a statement formally. Collectively these are called Ranked-Choice Voting Systems. Details of the selection process vary, but each voter is offered an opportunity to rank the candidates.

One selection process is APS, "Average Placement Score," based on the Borda Count, named for the French mathematician Jean Charles de Borda. The rankings of a given candidate on each voter's list are averaged, to get the average placement score. The winner is the one who ranks highest on average. This method of integrating individual rankings into a collective ranking is widely used in the sports world, the academic world and the entertainment industry. It is also used for parliamentary elections in Nauru, Slovenia, Iceland and Kiribati.

Another selection process is Instant Run-off Voting (IRV). There are variations, but

A Proposed Protest Against PG&E – Just In Case

Barry Barnett

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), the largest utility in America and a private corporation, has finally accomplished its bankruptcy. They were motivated by a \$30 billion liability for several California wildfires, which it was determined they caused in 2017 and 2018 due to negligence. This includes neglecting to trim shrubbery and branches that caused shorting of power lines and not upgrading superannuated equipment, all while the president and board of directors gave themselves salary increases and bonuses.

From the TURN (The Utility Reform Network) website:

In March, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced he and the company had agreed on a proposed plan that would mean “the end of business as usual for PG&E.” The plan outlines complicated financial strategies for “reorganizing” the debt, issuing new debt and stock, and paying specific amounts from shareholders’ dividends and assets. It also would make major changes in PG&E management and give state regulators more “accountability tools,” Newsom said. And the deal provides for a state takeover of the utility if PG&E doesn’t meet its financial, safety and reliability obligations.

Newsom has made numerous public speeches threatening to take over the private, price gouging utility. The mayors of 22 cities pressured him to turn PG&E into a customer-owned cooperative. Cities such as San Jose and San Francisco have offered plans to direct and regulate the company. My favorite one (which induced socialistic fantasies) was to make it a public utility governed by the people of California. (This would exclude those already served by Southern California Edison and others utilities, including some smaller municipal companies, such as the one in Los Angeles, which is more efficient and charges lower prices to its customers).

Reorganization of a major utility by the state, a municipality, or the public would take significant capital, personnel and know-how, but apparently this is available over time and the political and public will is there. In California, we have suffered death, ecological destruction, loss of residences and businesses. Northern Californians experienced a compromised alert system and a series of power blackouts coupled with sudden evacuation orders, causing impossible traffic jams to

overflowed shelters. One major fire resulted in the obliteration of the entire town of Paradise, home to a gorgeous mini-Grand Canyon, causing 85 deaths.

The court settlement installed new utility managers, who will hopefully do more careful planning to make California safer. They will replace the bang-up job the profiteers have been doing for years, including jacking up our gas and electric prices and passing all their externalities on to us, their hostaged customers, then filing for bankruptcy when the liabilities they caused racked up to unaffordable billions of dollars.

I have visited the California “Public” Utilities Commission (PUC) several times, consulted with TURN about PG&E’s ripoffs and handed out hundreds of mailer cards admonishing the PUC to prevent rate increases. But they often act as a rubber stamp operation for the stockholding company.

California’s governor has special authority over the state’s utilities, giving the force of conviction to Newsom’s speeches challenging PG&E. He has been rightfully skeptical of the bankruptcy ploy, but has also given the company heads an out. Because of the personnel shake-up, they may continue basically as the same company, though they will be held to safety and environmental stewardship improvements. If PG&E fails to protect against wildfires this fire season, the state of California will take over the company.

However, many observers believe that

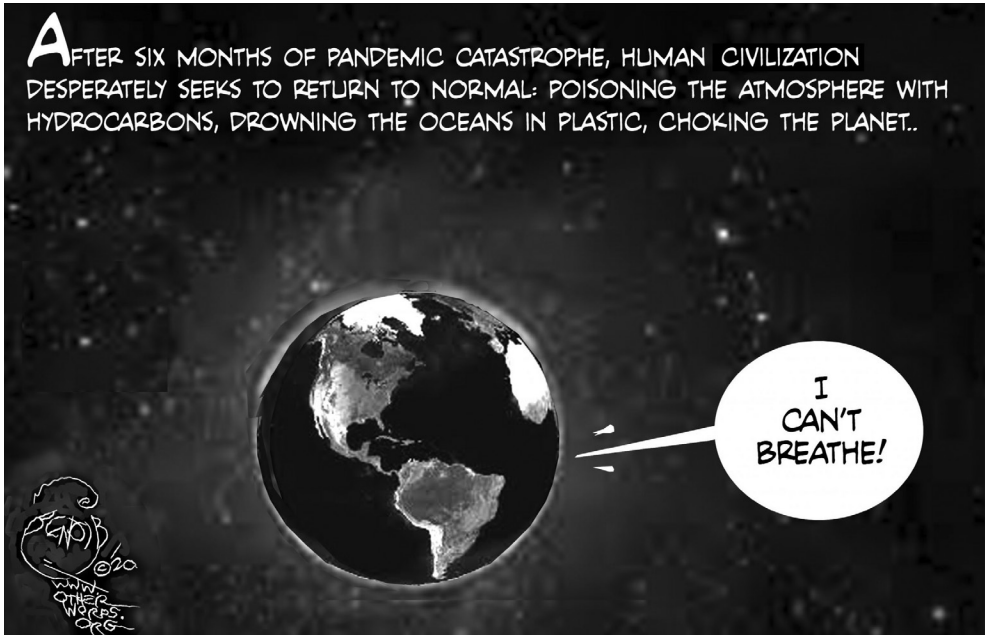
PG&E will pass several billion dollars of externalities on to its customers as rate hikes. They have already ominously announced the necessity of again switching off our electricity this fire season, supposedly to prevent wildfires. If the gouging, irresponsible profiteers succeed in jacking up our bills, I urge all customers to only pay the former gas and electric rates, which will definitely increase in this eventuality. On your bill, calculate the therm and kilowatt hour rates you were paying before the increase, which are the costs incurred by the corporation that they passed on to ratepayers. A note should be included explaining your payment and that you are deducting the unfair amount of the rate hike. I will print cards for mailing to PG&E and the CPUC explaining this action, if necessary.

Remember, we are the 99%.

Sources: PG&E Bankruptcy Deal Nears Crucial Deadline, Jean Tepperman, The Utility Reform Network website, 5/19/20; CPUC Approves PG&E Reorganization Plan, Paving Way for Bankruptcy Exit, Kavya Balaraman, TURN.org, 5/29/20; Pressure Grows for California Governor to Allow PG&E Takeover, David R. Baker and Romy Varghese, Los Angeles Times, 11/14/19. 🌿

Barry Barnett is a political and environmental author and activist, health professional and musician living on the left coast of the US Empire. Follow him on Twitter, the Sonoma County Peace Press, www.pjcsoco.org/peace-press.html and patreon.com/BarryBarnett for free articles, satire, political fantasy stories and poetry. His email is barrymuse123@gmail.com.

AFTER SIX MONTHS OF PANDEMIC CATASTROPHE, HUMAN CIVILIZATION DESPERATELY SEEKS TO RETURN TO NORMAL: POISONING THE ATMOSPHERE WITH HYDROCARBONS, DROWNING THE OCEANS IN PLASTIC, CHOKING THE PLANET..



Israel Calls Off West Bank Annexation – For Now

Lois Pearlman

“There is de facto only one state between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River. All of Palestine is already annexed.”

– Israeli journalist, Gideon Levy

The July 1 deadline Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu set to begin the annexation of some 30% of Palestine’s West Bank came and went – and nothing happened.

There are several theories about why he called off the annexation, but first let’s consider what Netanyahu had originally proposed.

With tacit approval from US President Donald Trump’s so-called peace plan, Netanyahu had been trumpeting for months that he would officially annex a portion of the Jordan Valley on the west bank of the Jordan River beginning July 1. The valley is home to 52,950 Palestinians and 8,100 Jewish Israelis, although the majority of the Palestinians live in Jericho and that city was not part of the annexation plan. That would have left Jericho isolated from the rest of the West Bank, which includes 47 Palestinian villages as well as a few Israeli settlements, 21 Israeli kibbutzim (farming enclaves) and 18 unofficial Israeli outposts. The outposts are unrecognized settlements that often turn into official ones.

According to the Israeli organization Peace Now, one-fifth of the area slated for annexation is land privately owned by Palestinians.

According to the Israeli organization Peace Now, one-fifth of the area slated for annexation is land privately owned by Palestinians.

The proposed plan area also includes the Allenby Bridge, which is the only access to Jordan available to Palestinians. In 1967 Israel captured all of the West Bank and has been occupying it illegally ever since, building more and more settlements on land that is legally Palestinian territory.

This annexation plan has faced opposition from many European countries as well as Canada, Jordan and apparent Democratic Party presidential nominee Joe Biden. In April the European Union filed a formal protest to Israel and had even discussed the possibility

of sanctions against Israel if it were to go forward with the plan.

Palestinians, of course, have opposed the plan, but Israel has not asked them for their opinion. In May Palestinian Authority (PA) leader Mahmoud Abbas severed his organization’s security agreements with

Israel in opposition to annexation. And in a rare show of solidarity, Hamas and the PA held a joint press conference to denounce annexation. There was, and continues to be, talk of a possible Palestinian uprising. And even Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz called for a delay of the July 1 deadline.

So is all this opposition what put the brakes on Netanyahu’s plan? Not according to political experts within Israel. They say it was a shell game Netanyahu

used to divert voters’ attention from the corruption charges against him and his lack of a corona virus recovery plan. But it only had limited success because three recent Israeli elections failed to give Netanyahu a clear lead over his opponent Gantz. Israel was only able to form a government when Gantz’s Blue and White party agreed to join with Netanyahu’s Likud party following the third election. The annexation plan did, however, serve to shift international opposition to the occupation and the continual confiscation of Palestinian land for settlements, into opposition against



annexation. This is a more lukewarm form of opposition, which ignores the realities of the status quo.

But annexation would have real consequences for Palestinians living in the Jordan Valley. Netanyahu said Israel would not grant citizenship to Palestinians in the annexation area, which means they would become stateless and have even less rights than they have now under the occupation. Many of them would lose their land and become refugees. Annexation could also destabilize Jordan, leading to the overthrow of King Abdullah and possibly targeting Jordan as the future Palestinian state – something extreme right-wing Israelis have been suggesting.

But in the final weeks leading to the July 1 deadline that never happened, Trump and Netanyahu had been discussing a more gradual annexation in the West Bank, annexing some of the Israeli settlements now and eventually taking over the rest of the area. Apparently they are counting on the international community to regard this more gradual process as just business as usual, while the original annexation plan would have made it impossible for the world to ignore that Israel is an apartheid state. 🌿

Peace, Justice and Gasoline Don't Mix

Jenny Blaker

The Coalition Against New Gas Stations (CONGAS) is keeping an eye on four proposed gas station projects, one in the unincorporated county, two in Santa Rosa and one in Petaluma, as well as considering ordinances to severely restrict the permitting of new gas stations. Our main motivation is the climate crisis, although each site brings its own unique concerns. We are also aware that the fossil fuel industry leaves destruction in its wake all over the world, and that those at the frontlines are all too often at greatest risk from the impacts of drilling, fracking, polluted water and land, and toxic air due to the transportation and processing of fossil fuels. While we “think global,” we can also “act local.”

A number of CONGAS speakers were all geared up to speak at the Sonoma County Board of Zoning Adjustments (BZA) public hearing on July 2, when the BZA was going to consider whether to grant a conditional use permit for a new 12-pump gas station with car wash, RV storage yard and minimart at the intersection of Highway 12 and Llano Road, between Sebastopol and Santa Rosa. The plans include three above ground 10,000 gallon tanks, two for gasoline and one for diesel, at an already congested intersection, in a flood plain, on the edge of the Laguna de Santa Rosa, on a scenic corridor, during the climate crisis. We had been pouring over documents, trying to understand the nuances of Land Use designations, zoning codes, General Plan policies and the Mitigated Negative Declaration with its forty-plus “mitigation measures” which were supposed to somehow reduce environmental impacts to “less than significant.” Over 140 people had submitted letters objecting to the proposal, along with 600 petition signatures. We were ready to speak on the potential for pollution to ground and surface water quality and neighboring wells, potential hazards from flooding, traffic congestion and safety, and impacts to cyclists and walkers on the Joe Rodota Trail. Then suddenly and unexpectedly, two hours before the meeting was due to take place, it was canceled. We don't know why (although we like to think we may have had something to do with it) and although we are told it could come back on July 23, we don't know yet.

Meanwhile, we just got word that the gas station with convenience store proposed at 874 N. Wright Road (Highway 12 & Wright/Fulton), which was approved by the City of Santa Rosa's Subdivision Committee back in December 2019 and which we appealed, will be before the Santa Rosa City Council on Tuesday, August 18 from 4 p.m. onward. This project, known as Elm Tree Station, is for a gas station on a previously undeveloped site next to the Joe Rodota Trail. The City of Santa Rosa has made policy statements about addressing the climate crisis, so this will be a good opportunity to remind them that permitting new gas stations is prolonging the life of outdated fossil fuel infrastructure into the future at a time when we should instead be investing in safe, accessible, affordable public transportation, safer and more connected facilities for cyclists and pedestrians, and facilities for EV charging rather than gas stations.

For more details, see www.Con-gas.org.

Jenny Blaker is Co-coordinator, with Woody Hastings, of the Coalition Opposing New Gas Stations, founded in 2019 to stop the construction of new gas stations in Sonoma County. Our first big win was in July 2019 when a proposal for a gas station, car wash and convenience store in a rural area just west of Cotati was withdrawn by the applicant as a result of public opposition.

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State Capital, Rm. 1114, Sacramento, CA 95814
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Citizen Comment: (202) 456-1111

(A 1-minute call before 8 am costs 29 cents; caller's message is recorded for reference of public opinions)

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1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C. 20500
(202) 456-1111, Fax: (202) 456-2461
president@whitehouse.gov

Sonoma County Social Justice Groups

ALL PHONE AREA CODES ARE (707)
UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE

350 Sonoma County – Engaging our community in the work of 350.org to solve the climate crisis. 350sonomacounty.org

ACLU Sonoma Co., working to preserve individual working rights and liberties. Meets each second Monday. Contact patriciamorandi@sbcglobal.net, or davhen@sonic.net.

Allies Safety Network – compiling a phone chain/helpline to build a safety network for those at risk of harassment to provide a supportive presence in situations of hateful threats. Join the Network Call List: 583-9168

Alternatives to Violence – Presents experiential workshops in personal growth in the community and prisons. 545-1798

Comité VIDA – Defends the human and civil rights of immigrants. 523-1740, cirsc@yahoo.com,

Daily Acts – Offers sustainable solutions rooted in the power of inspired daily actions. 789-9664, dailyacts.org

Fukushima Response – works to inform about the Fukushima melt downs, monitor the consequences, advocate for the shut down of Diablo Canyon. fukushimaresponse.org. 823-9203

Green Party of Sonoma County – sonomgreenparty.org

Green Sangha – Spiritually engaged environmental action. info@greensangha.org

HPEACE – Health Professionals for Equality and Community Empowerment. hpeacesonomacounty.wordpress.com

Healdsburg Peace Project – Peace and social justice action group, Healdsburg. 431-1129, healdsburgpeaceproject.org

Hate Free Petaluma Progressive organization. www.facebook.com/hatefreepetaluma/

Homeless Action – Advocating for people without shelter. 795-2890

Indivisible Goups – All the groups are on Facebook.

Indivisible Sonoma County: indivisiblesoco.com

Indivisible Petaluma: indivisiblepetaluma@gmail.com, or follow on Twitter at @IndivisibleLuma

Indivisible Sebastopol: indivisible.wsc@gmail.com

Indivisible Healdsburg

Indivisible Windsor

LezResist! was formed to be a visible and unified Lesbian presence in support of each other, and to stand in solidarity with the many communities, causes, and policies under attack by the current U.S. administration. Info @ at LezResist@gmail.com.

Listening for a Change – Programs support listening and oral history to create a caring community. 578-5420, listeningforchange.org

MEChA de Sonoma – Student group that focuses on issues affecting the Chicano/Latino community. info@mechadesonoma.org

Metta Center for Nonviolence – Works to promote nonviolence worldwide and to build a nonviolent culture. 774-6299

MOVES-Minimizing Occurrences of Violence in Everyday Society – Stresses nonviolence as the answer to society's violence. 524-1900

NAACP - National Association for the Advancement of Colored People – Seeks to eliminate racial hatred, racial profiling and discrimination. 332-1573

National Women's History Project – coordinates observances of Women's History month around the country. 636-2888, nwhp@aol.com

North Bay Jobs with Justice – organized for better conditions and a living wage for workers. Email: northbayjobswithjustice@gmail.com, Website: northbayjobswithjustice.org, Facebook, North Bay Jobs With Justice Ph: 346-1187

North Bay Organizing Project – a regional faith and values based peoples' organization. 318-2818

North Coast Coalition for Palestine – Brings greater awareness to the plight of the Palestinian people and works to end US military support for Israel. 575-8902. www.nccpal.org or find us on Facebook.

NOW of Sonoma County – local chapter of the National Organization for Women. 545-5036

Occupy Sonoma County – Embraces the egalitarian, deep democracy principles of the Occupy Movement with a regional strategy for effectively organizing county-wide social justice campaigns that are globally relevant. 877-6650, OccupySonomaCounty.org

Organizing for Action: Progressive organizing project. Contact Linda Hemenway: whatisworking@gmail.com or 707-843-6110 and Facebook

Peace Alliance – Mission is to campaign for a cabinet-level US Department of Peace. 838-8647, maggik3@sonic.net, thepeacealliance.org

Peace Roots Alliance – We seek to create a peaceful, just and sustainable world for future generations. 765-0196, Linda@peaceroots.org

Petaluma Blacks for Community Development – facebook.com/pb4cd

Petaluma Progressives – Grassroots, political education and action group. Producers of the Progressive Festival. 763-8134, info@progressivefestival.org

Praxis Peace Institute – Peace Education organization, 939-2973, praxispeace.org

Progressive Sonoma – Peaceful Resistance Network. An umbrella association to network Sonoma's local progressive action groups. peacefulresistance9.wixsite.com/progressivesonoma. Facebook at Peaceful Resistance Sonoma

Project Censored/Media Freedom Foundation – Publishes the top 25 most censored news stories each year. 874-2695, Peter@projectcensored.org, Mickey@projectcensored.org. projectcensored.org.

Racial Justice Allies – Developing anti-racist practices among white social justice activists. 795-2890 racialjusticeallies@gmail.com, www.racialjusticeallies.org

Sonoma County Chapter of Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP). In support of single payer health insurance. 763-1925. sngold@juno.com. www.pnhpca.org.

Sonoma County Climate Activist Network (SoCo CAN!) Groups and individuals working address and reverse climate change. Meet in months with a 5th Monday, 7-9 PM at the PJC. Info: 595-0320 or SonomaCounty-CAN@gmail.com (email preferred).

Sonoma County Coastal Hills: gardens@mcn.org

Sonoma County Nonviolence Training Collective offers free trainings in methods and principles for progressive social change and peace. soconvtc@gmail.com.

Sonoma County Resistance via change.org

Sonoma Solidarity with Standing Rock – Supporting indigenous rights and fossil fuel resistance. SonomaSolidarity.org, Facebook: Sonoma Solidarity with Standing Rock. 792-4422.

Sonoma Valley Peace & Justice – Peace and social justice group for Sonoma Valley. audreyvh@sbcglobal.net

Sonoma County Black Forum: Our mission is to lead, serve, and thrive, by promoting positive community and youth engagement events. Monthly meetings. sonomacounty-blackforum@gmail.com

SURJ (Showing Up For Racial Justice, Sonoma County) – facebook.com/SURJSonomaCounty

United Farm Workers – 1700 Corby Ave., Santa Rosa 528-3039

United Nations Association – Builds public understanding and support for the United Nations. Facebook

Veterans for Peace – Organization of vets working together for peace and justice through nonviolence. 536-6002

Women in Black – Women who stand in silent vigil to protest war and human rights abuses.

Women's Justice Center – Advocacy for victims of rape, domestic violence, and child abuse, particularly in the Latina community. 575-3150, justicewomen.com

*Democracy is NOT
a spectator sport!*

*Please email zenekar@comcast.net
for additions or changes to this list.*

No meetings will be held
at the Peace & Justice Center
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PJC weekly
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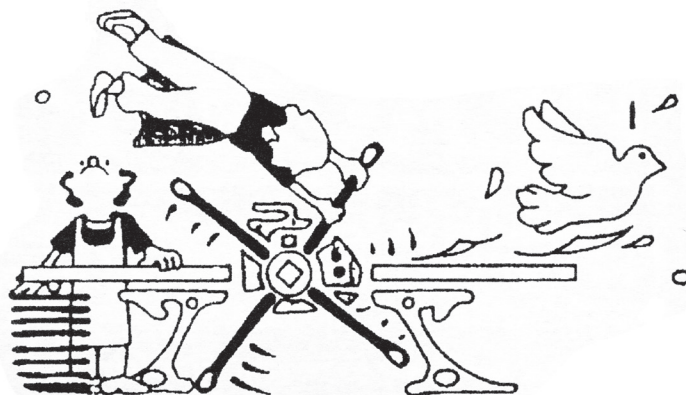
Please call (707) 575-8902 or visit PJCso.co.org

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