

# Peace & Planet News

Dedicated to Abolishing War, Establishing Justice, and Fighting Climate Disaster  
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Special Supplement  
October 2020

## A Vote for the Apocalypse

By Tom Engelhardt

It was August 2017 and Donald Trump had not yet warmed up to Kim Jong-un, North Korea's portly dictator. In fact, in typical Trumpian fashion, he was pissed at the Korean leader and, no less typically, he lashed out verbally, threatening that country with a literal hell on Earth. As he put it, "They will be met with fire and fury like the world has never seen." And then, just to make his point more personally, he complained about Kim himself, "He has been very threatening beyond a normal state."

Only a year and a half later, our asteroidal President would, of course, say of that same man, "We fell in love." Still, that threat by an American leader to—it was obvious—launch a nuclear strike for the first time since Hiroshima and Nagasaki were nearly obliterated in August 1945 was memorable. The phrase would, in fact, become the title of a 2018 best-selling book, *Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House*, by journalist Michael Wolff. Two years later, amid so many other threatening phrases from this president, "fire and fury" has, however, been left in history's dustbin, largely forgotten by the world.

Too bad, since it seems so much more



relevant now that California, Oregon, and Washington, not to speak of a Southwest already officially in a "megadrought," have experienced the sort of apocalyptic fire and fury (and heat and smoke) that has turned daytime skies an eerie nighttime orange (or yellow or even purple,

claims a friend of mine living in the San Francisco Bay Area). We're talking about a fire and fury that's forced cars to put on their headlights at noon; destroyed towns (leaving only armed right-wing militants behind amid the flames to await imagined Antifa looters); burned millions of acres

of land, putting hundreds of thousands of Americans under evacuation orders; turned startling numbers of citizens into refugees under pandemic conditions; and crept toward suburbs and cities, imperiling the world as we've known it.

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## A Giant Leaves Us

Tribute to Kevin Zeese,  
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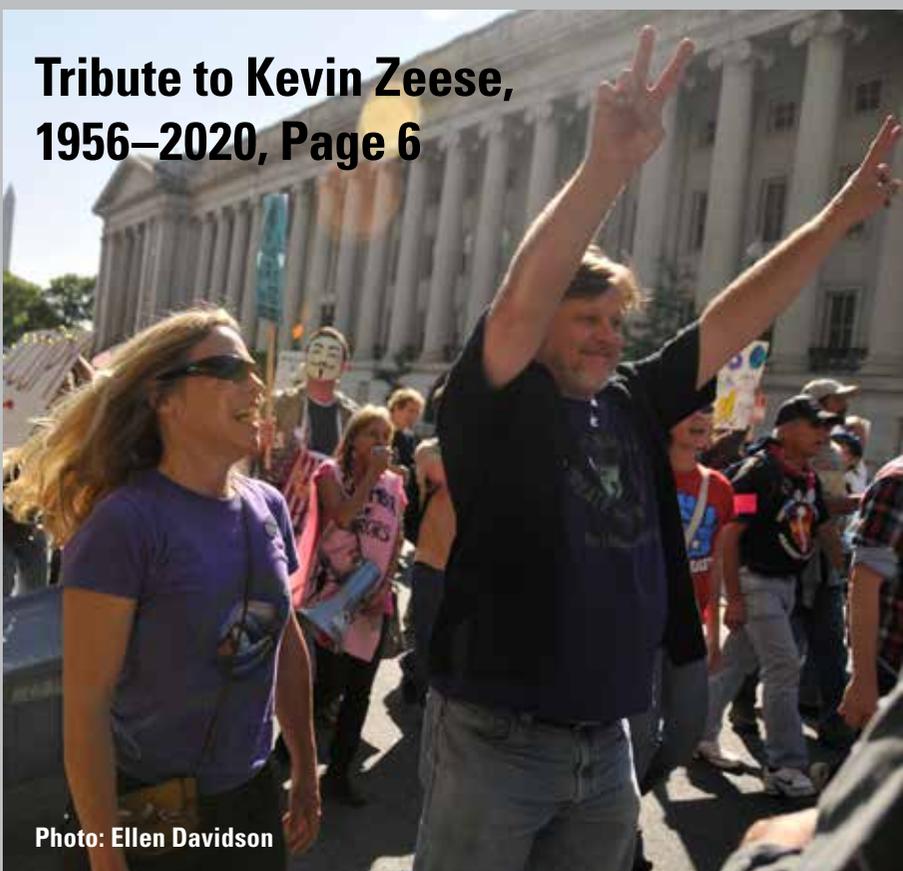


Photo: Ellen Davidson

## Who Is Lisa?

*Ranked-choice  
voting opens up  
Maine Senate race  
to an antiwar voice*

By Dud Hendrick

Ad day doesn't go by that we're not reminded of those who have dictated our country's course—the political decision-makers and the corporate elite who have gone wildly astray. Deliberate lies, propaganda, intentional policies for profit and power, and misguided reckless aspirations have not only put our country on life support but indeed put the entire planet in peril.

The threats facing all of humanity are climate disaster and war, especially the threat of nuclear war. Americans have a host of issues demanding attention—the COVID-19 pandemic, Black Lives Matter, militarized police, economic inequality (i.e. 20 individuals own as much



Senate candidate Lisa Savage.

wealth as the entire bottom half of the population), the highest incarceration rate in the world, endemic police brutality disproportionately experienced by people of color, inadequate health care (the life expectancy is 46th among all nations!). All a long way from the fantasy called "The American Dream."

The deep-seated causal factors for all this are complex, but it's not far-fetched to suggest that two over-arching realities lurk behind the many failures of our government to do better: money in politics and the duopoly—a system of two par-

*continued on page 10 ...*

# From the Editors

## And So We Live

In 2018 over 38 million people lived in what is defined as poverty. Of these over 11 million were children. The ethnic group with the highest percentage of people living in poverty were Native Americans, followed by Black people, then Hispanics. Over 11 million were in what is known as “deep poverty,” meaning that their incomes (if any) were more than 50% below poverty level.

Social justice demands that everybody have access to adequate housing, food, and medical care; freedom of expression, etc. In the United States this is taken to mean sharing the (stolen) bounty that is the wealth of the nation or having equal access to what is known as the American Dream.

Maybe we should ponder what is “the good life, what is the “American Dream,” and where it has led, because it has always been an illusion. Instead of living in natural harmony with the earth and other creatures, humans, out of fear, decided we had to control more, had to have more security, more comfort, more domination of nature. That very illusion, along with the concept of exceptionalism that goes with it, has led the whole world to a precipice, largely of American making.

I find it difficult to say this, but what is undeniable, except to the most self-deluded, is that we are fast heading toward the end of this relatively short human experiment on

this planet. And the speed with which we are approaching the abyss is increasing. On a practical level, we do everything we can to slow it down in the hope that, if slowed enough, maybe, just maybe, the species can change course in time. Every one of us (I mean every person of conscience) needs to do everything we can in that direction. The ice caps are melting, fires are consuming our precious oxygen-giving trees, monster storms have become the norm, the planet is burning up. We’re not even mentioning the constantly looming threat of nuclear war, either by accident or intention. Within a decade, if we last that long, the precipice will be undeniably evident even to the most obtuse.

America the Exceptional has a narcissistic sociopath determined to remain in power despite what may be the will of the people. One of our most respected political philosophers, Noam Chomsky, recently said, “Trump is the worst criminal in human history, undeniably. There has never been a figure in political history who was so passionately dedicated to destroying the projects for organized human life on earth in the near future.” Chomsky, who is not prone to exaggeration, noted in another interview, “We have a sociopathic maniac in the White House.”

So what is to be done? How to face the very potential death of civilization and



Photo: Ellen Davidson

even life on this beautiful planet, along with the many species passing out of existence every day? More significantly, how to face all this and not sink into depression and become morose, defeated and even insane? We hope this issue of *Peace & Planet News* can provide a little hope.

Long-time social justice activist Lisa Savage is running for the U.S. Senate seat in Maine and standing up for the things in life that matter. Remarkably, with huge grassroots support and ranked-choice voting, she actually has a chance. The brilliant political philosopher and activist, Kevin Zeese, a giant for truth and jus-

sink. Denial will not save us. Radical honesty and truth is essentially our life raft, our sense of worth and courage. And when we incorporate into our being the integrity to face reality and live the truth, we become able to face even the potential demise of life on earth with dignity, courage, and poise. Despite the odds being monumentally against us, we can take a stand for truth, for justice, and for this precious planet.

And that matters. Right action, compassionate action is always possible, even to the last—to never give up. Indigenous people, Black people, and working people of all colors have struggled for centuries

*‘There has never been a figure in political history who was so passionately dedicated to destroying the projects for organized human life on earth in the near future.’—Noam Chomsky*

tice, passed away recently, but his legacy as a cheerful warrior of integrity, wisdom, and courage will live on and grow. Mike Hastie in his article about the Proud Boys, gives a glimpse of what awaits us and why this election and the leadup to it are so important. Tom Engelhardt pulls no punches in exposing the truth of an impending Apocalypse, and we’ve included the very vital Ten Things We Need to Know to Stop a Coup by Daniel Hunter.

Perhaps, if we live every moment (or at least most moments) with integrity, radical honesty, empathy, and love, we don’t

for freedom and have not given up—ever. As Frederick Douglas said, “If there is no struggle, there is no progress. ... This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.”

And somehow, we come to understand that love, truth, and the courage to struggle for freedom will always be transcendent—even of death.

And so we live.

—Tarak Kauff

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### Peace & Planet News

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# Passing of RBG Makes Democracy Harder, Again

By William Rivers Pitt

“If an opening comes in the last year of President Trump’s term, and the primary process is started, we’ll wait to the next election.”—Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC), on filling a Supreme Court vacancy right before an election, October 2018.

Right. Ol’ Lindsey nearly broke both legs walking that one back upon the passing of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. If Senate Republicans can seat a new justice before the election, they will do it. If they can seat a new justice before the end of January (in the event of a Trump loss), they will do it.

Of course they will do it. Three right-wing justices in one single presidential term? Plenty of presidents have gotten two or three over two terms. FDR got

eight in six years ... and gosh, d’ya think it had an effect on history?

Three in one term is ridiculous, and a full-scream nightmare turn during this gruesome administration.

Of course McConnell and the GOP will leap on this preposterously historic opportunity—combined with the 200-plus new federal judges they have stuffed into the lower courts—to lock in wealth protection and the white supremacist voting structure for at least another generation.

“Control the coinage and the courts,” counseled old Jacob Broom. “Let the rabble have the rest.”

Mitt Romney, Chuck Grassley, Lisa Murkowski and Susan Collins—four GOP senators who have piped up about the upcoming nomination brawl—will not be able to stand in the way of this tornado. One of them will buckle, and that



will be that. Romney’s office already walked back his earlier commitment not to vote for a nominee until after inauguration.

I strongly suspect the placement of a new justice won’t happen before the election—too tight, too fraught, and that four

might hold—but I am grimly certain we will be swearing in a new justice by bleak February.

I say this with love: If you doubt it, if you have hope for a different outcome, you have not been paying sufficient attention, or you’re letting your heart do the talking in your head.

This is about power: Raw, unmistakable power. This is the Republican Party grasping with both hands the last bulwark it has to defend its eroding standing against the rushing tide of history. This is Mitch McConnell fulfilling his destiny; though he may be despised by tens and tens of millions, all the Right People in all the Right Rooms will sing his name to sainthood, and that is all he cares about.

They will do this, because they can, full stop.

Parting thought: Anyone who needs a refresher course on the profound fragility

## Trump and His Rioters Can Win Using ‘The XII’

*Election won by fire and fury—and a loophole in the Constitution*

By Greg Palast

Don’t say I didn’t warn you. In August, I told Naomi Wolf, on air, that President Donald Trump can win via a constitutional coup d’état—via the first-ever use of the 12th Amendment. On Sept. 16, Trump let the cat out of the bag: he expects to invoke the 12th Amendment loophole.

He said, “You think November 3 [decides the election] ... at a certain point it goes to Congress.” He was giving away what his minions must have told him: you’ll win using Amendment XII.

Here’s what I said on August 5. (And thanks to Thom Hartmann for first warning about a “coup d’état by XII.”):

I want people to think about this carefully. For example, the Gucci Riot with Roger Stone back in 2000 where we saw \$1,200 an hour consultants banging on the windows and stopping the vote count. Now we’ll get Boogaloo Boys in Hawaiian shirts with crowbars and pipes who will be smashing the buildings, Molotov cocktails thrown into post offices because our president has said there are a million ballots in these 12 post offices from Venezuela and we have to stop the election from being stolen.

There will be protests in the streets on both sides. We already had the test run in Portland. It’s a test run of the unmarked SUVs picking up people as if we were in Peronist Argentina.

And what I’m worried about is that, for example, you’ll have two post offices on fire. the Miami-Dade County Clerk’s

Office is shut down because it’s too dangerous to go in because of the Boogaloo Boys and the Proud Boys. Then what happens is, the rabidly Republican legislature of Florida says it’s too much mayhem, we can’t count the votes in time.

I expect Florida will have 6 million mail-in ballots. The GOP-controlled Florida legislature will say, we can’t count them in time, so we’re not going to certify the election.

The Republicans who control the legislature of Michigan will also say, “We can’t certify the election.”

Imagine: Detroit is in flames and Milwaukee’s in flames. They won’t certify the results.

So, you have three Republican legislatures say it’s mayhem in the streets, it’s martial law, we’ve had curfews, we can’t count the ballots. Therefore, there will be no certification. As a result, no candidate gets 270 votes in the Electoral College because they don’t send the electors.

Real simple: you don’t certify the election, you can’t send your electors, no one gets 270 electoral votes. Then, under the 12th Amendment it goes to the House.

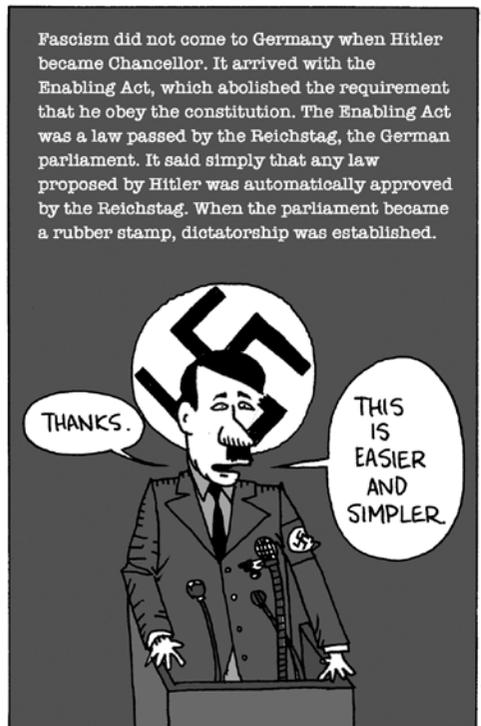
But it’s not Nancy Pelosi who makes the decision. Each state gets a single vote. Wyoming gets the same vote as New York, and Donald Trump is reelected—constitutionally—because our cities are in flames.

What’s the solution?

Massive in-person early voting.

Go mid-week when there are no lines. Bring mask, gloves, sanitizer, ID and resolve.

Greg Palast is a New York-based investigative reporter who has broken stories for BBC Television Newsnight, The Guardian, The Nation, and Rolling Stone. He is the author of the New York Times bestsellers Billionaires and Ballot Bandits, Armed Madhouse, The Best Democracy Money Can Buy, and the highly acclaimed Vultures’ Picnic.



# 10 Things We Need to Know to Stop a Coup

By Daniel Hunter

Coups are not a time to just watch and wait until “someone else” figures it out. You can be a part of choosing democracy. In all the research on preventing coups, there’s one common theme: People stop doing what the coup plotters tell them to do.

We have a president who has openly said he might not respect the outcome of our election. We have to be ready if he claims victory before votes are counted, tries to stop counting, or refuses to accept a loss.

## 1. Don’t expect results election night.

Election season 2020 is shaping up to be very unusual. Many mail-in ballots may not be counted until days or weeks after Election Day. Since Democrats are expected to use them more frequently than Republicans, voter tallies are expected to swing toward Democrats post-election night (they call it a “blue shift”). A wave of confusion may unfold starting election night.

During this time expect false flags and outlandish claims. Be very cautious with news. Don’t simply pass on whatever seems to be dramatic examples of wrongdoing—but take the time to check if it has been verified, already debunked, or from a source you don’t trust.

Encourage people in your community to prepare for some uncertain weeks. As election results start coming in, the message needs to come through loud and clear: Count all the votes.

## 2. Do call it a coup.

People who do power grabs always claim they’re doing it to save democracy or claim they know the “real” election results. This doesn’t have to look like a military coup with one leader ordering the opposition to be arrested.

We can know it’s a coup if the government:

- Stops counting votes;
- Declares someone a winner who didn’t get the most votes; or
- Allows someone to stay in power who didn’t win the election.

In any scenario, if any of those three principles are violated, we have to declare



Photo: Ellen Davidson

ital. But if the results are being contested, governors and state legislatures may each send in different results—one reflecting the results from voters, the other claiming “it’s a fraud” and “we know best”—undermining the integrity of the voting process.

This set of differences has to get resolved on Jan. 6 by the new Congress. And if the House and Senate don’t agree about the result, then a convoluted process unfolds where the newly seated House selects the President (one-state-one-vote) and the Senate votes for the new Vice

require quick seizure of multiple levels of institutions with a claim that they are the rightful heir.

Coups tend to fail when government institutions (like elections) are trusted, there is an active citizenry, and other nations are ready to become involved.

The role of citizenry is crucial. That’s because during the period right after a coup attempt—when the new government is claiming it is the “real” government—all the institutions have to decide who to listen to.

A failed coup in Germany in 1920 gives an example. The population felt beaten down by defeat in World War I and high unemployment. Right-wing nationalists organized a coup and got the help of a few generals to seize government buildings.

The deposed government fled but ordered all citizens to obey them. “No enterprise must work as long as the military dictatorship reigns,” they declared.

Widespread nonviolent resistance quickly began. Printers refused to print the new government’s newspapers. Civil servants refused to carry out any orders from the coup. And leaflets calling for an end to the coup were spread by airplane and by hand.

There’s a story of the coup leader wandering up and down the corridors looking in vain for a secretary to type up his proclamations. The acts of resistance grew and eventually the democratic gov-

ernment (which still had grave problems) was returned to power.

The moments after a coup are moments for heroism among the general population. It’s how we make democracy real.

## 4. Be ready to act quickly—and not alone.

Typically power grabs are organized in secret and launched suddenly. Most campaigns that defeat coups do so in days: Soviet Union in 1991 took three days, France in 1961 took four days, and Bolivians in 1978 took 16 days.

It’s rare for any country leader to publicly admit they might not respect the results of an election. There’s some good news in that—because people who stop coups rarely have the chance to get training, warning, or preparation. In that way, we’re ahead of the game.

A group of DC insiders called the Transition Integrity Project ran multiple simulations on Trump attempting to hold onto power no matter what. In every simulation they concluded that a “show of numbers in the streets may be decisive.” Regular people make the difference.

To start preparing, talk to at least five people who would go into the streets with you—the safest way to take to the streets is with people you know and trust. Talk to people you know in civil service and various roles about how they could non-comply with coup attempts. Use this time to get yourself ready to act.

## 5. Focus on widely shared democratic values, not on individuals.

In Argentina 1987, a coup got started when an Air Force major, resenting attempts to democratize the military and bring it under civilian control, organized hundreds of soldiers at his base.

While the civilian government tried to quietly negotiate a settlement, people took to the streets. Against the government’s pleading, 500 regular citizens marched to the base with the slogan “Long live democracy! Argentina! Argentina!” They could have spent time attacking the major. Instead, they were appealing to their fellow citizens to choose democracy.

The major tried to keep them away with a tank, but the protesters entered the base anyway, and he knew that open firing on nonviolent civilians would cause him to lose more credibility. Soon 400,000 people took to the streets in Buenos Aires to rally in opposition to the coup.

This gave strength to the civilian government (which had largely been absent). Civic organizations, the Catholic Church, business groups, and labor unions united under a pledge to “support in all ways possible the constitution, the normal development of the institutions of government and democracy as the only viable way of life of the Argentines.” The coup plotters lost their legitimacy and soon surrendered.

This approach is different from protesters going in the street with a list of issues or a grievance against a vilified leader. Instead, it’s exalting widely shared core democratic values. In our project we use

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*Widespread nonviolent resistance quickly began. Printers refused to print the new government’s newspapers. Civil servants refused to carry out any orders from the coup. And leaflets calling for an end to the coup were spread by airplane and by hand.*

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loudly and strongly: This is a coup.

Here’s just one possible scenario: the night of the election (Nov. 3) no victor is determined. Ballots keep getting counted. Meanwhile, there are claims (likely with minimal evidence) that the incoming mail-in ballots now being counted are fraudulent. On Dec. 14 the delegates for the electoral college meet in the state cap-

President (by majority). (#ShutDownDC provides a very helpful breakdown of these steps.)

## 3. Know that coups have been stopped by regular folks.

Coup attempts have happened all over the world, and over half have failed. That’s because coups are hard to orchestrate. Because they are a violation of norms, they



Photo: Ellen Davidson

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the language of “choosing democracy.”

**6. Convince people not to freeze or just go along.**

Imagine that at your job a corrupt boss gets fired and a new one is brought in. Instead of leaving, your old boss says, “I’m still in charge. Do what I say.” A bunch of your coworkers say, “We only take orders from the old boss.” At that point, doubt arises.

That doubt is how coups succeed. Enough people freeze. Even when only a few people go along with the coup and act as though that’s normal, people may reluctantly accept it as inevitable.

In all the research on preventing coups,

there’s one common theme: People stop doing what the coup plotters tell them to do.

In Germany, from military commanders to secretaries, they refused to obey the orders of the coup. In Mali they called a nationwide strike. In Sudan protesters shut down government-supported radio stations and occupied airport runways. In Venezuela all shops were closed.

Coups are not a time to just watch and wait until “someone else” figures it out. No matter who you are you can be part of choosing democracy.

**7. Commit to actions that represent rule of law, stability, and nonviolence.**

Stopping a coup is dependent on the size of mobilizations and winning over the center. It is really a fight for legitimacy. Which voice is legitimate? Some people will have already made up their minds. The aim then is convincing those who are uncertain—which may be a more surprising number than you expect.

But to swing to our side, that uncertain center has to be convinced that “we” represent stability and “the coup plotters” represent hostility to the democratic norms of elections and voting.

We prevent that possibility when we dehumanize potential defectors, make sweeping statements like, “the police won’t help,” never encourage people to join our side, and create chaotic scenes on the street.

Historically, whichever side resorts to violence the most tends to lose. In a moment of uncertainty, people pick the side that promises maximum stability, respects democratic norms, and appears to be the safer bet. It’s a contest of who can be the most legitimate.

Mass resistance to coups wins by using walkouts and strikes, refusing orders, and shutting down civil society until the rightful democratically elected leader is installed. For mass movements to succeed against coups, they should refuse to do violence to the other side.



Photo: Ellen Davidson

**8. Yes, a coup can happen in the United States.**

It may be hard to imagine that a coup could happen in this country. But whenever there is an order to stop counting votes, we call it a coup.

Even by the strictest definition of coups, there has been a militarized coup in the United States. In 1898 after reconstruction in Wilmington, N.C., seeing the rise of a prosperous and successful Black population, white racists organized a coup. They used rallying cries like, “We will never surrender to a ragged raffle of

Sure, read social media ... but spend some time, you know, doing real things that ground you.

Breathe deeply.

Remember how you handle fear.

**10. Prepare to deter a coup before the election.**

The best way to stop a coup is to never have one. People are doing lots of good work on issues of voting rights, urging turnout, stopping repression, uncovering fraud, and getting people to commit to democracy. That may be enough.

One of the easiest things you can do is

*In all the research on preventing coups, there’s one common theme: people stop doing what the coup plotters tell them to do.*

Negroes, even if we have to choke the Cape Fear River with carcasses.”

Despite a terror campaign before the election, Black turnout was high and a slate of Black candidates was voted in. Black power was met with white supremacist violence, with white squads killing 30 to 300 people, including newly elected officials. Over 3,000 Blacks fled this extreme violence, and the era of Jim Crow began.

**9. Center in calm, not fear.**

It’s scary to believe we’re having to talk about a federal coup in the United States.

And we know that fearful people are less likely to make good decisions. Let’s aim for calm and avoid hyperbole. Be a reliable source by double-checking rumors and spreading high-quality facts.

to sign the pledge to Choose Democracy and get a lot of people across the political spectrum signing the as well!

Because the best way to stop a coup is to deter it.

*This article has been edited for length. It was originally published at [wagingnonviolence.org](http://wagingnonviolence.org).*

*Daniel Hunter is the global trainings manager at [350.org](http://350.org) and a curriculum designer with Sunrise Movement. He has trained extensively with ethnic minorities in Burma, pastors in Sierra Leone, and independence activists in northeast India. He has written multiple books, including Climate Resistance Handbook and Building a Movement to End the New Jim Crow.*



Photo: Ellen Davidson

By Margaret Flowers  
Photos by Ellen Davidson

Kevin Zeese died unexpectedly in his sleep, likely from a heart attack, early in the morning on Sept. 6. He had not shown signs of illness and was working until the end.

If you missed the online tribute to Kevin, you can watch it on YouTube at [bit.ly/KZTribute](http://bit.ly/KZTribute).

Many people know Kevin from his writing; from *Clearing the Fog*, the podcast we made together, and from Popular Resistance, the activist website and information clearinghouse that we founded together in 2012. Popular Resistance was created in part to inform about what people are doing to stop the machine (resistance) and create the new world (build alternative systems).

He had a deep knowledge of history and the issues. He often spoke of his time working for Ralph Nader in 2004 when he wrote policy briefs as a “PhD in public policy.” He understood how political power works.

Kevin’s activism spanned

more than 40 years. He worked on political campaigns when he was in high school in Queens, N.Y., and protested the Vietnam War. When radical lawyers Ramsey Clark and William Kunstler spoke at SUNY Buffalo, where he was studying political science, Kevin was inspired to join the civil rights movement. He went to Boston to be a marshal for an anti-racism march and was attacked with others by police on horseback.

During law school at George Washington University, Kevin’s favorite class was on legal activism. He describes the experience in *Americans Who Tell the Truth*:

“We created a group SEXCE (Students for the Examination of Contraceptive Effectiveness) and got legislation introduced in Congress, got the FTC [Federal Trade Commission] to correct their advertising, the FDA [Food and Drug Administration] to start a rulemaking process to correct their labeling. It was pretty amazing to see all of that come out of one law school course on Legal Activism.”

Through this project, Zeese

says, he ‘learned guerilla law and legal judo’—how to leverage the law with minimum cost and maximum impact.”

Kevin’s first internship was with the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), answering letters from prisoners. He said this gave him a deep understanding of the destructive impact the War on Drugs has on people. After law school, Kevin worked as legal counsel for NORML and then as executive director.

He was working to legalize marijuana when Reagan was president and popular opinion strongly supported the War on Drugs. Kevin sued the Drug Enforcement Agency three times over the reclassification of medical marijuana and won, but each time the decision was overturned on appeal, so the movement turned to state efforts to legalize medical marijuana.

During this time, Joe Biden was the chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, working with the racist head of the Dixiecrats, Strom Thurmond, to push for a “drug czar” (Reagan vetoed that) and for more severe punishments. Kevin called Biden the architect of the drug war and mass incarceration.

After NORML, Kevin created the Drug Policy Foundation and the Alliance of Reform Organizations, which brought together

peace, economic justice, election integrity, single-payer health care, and much more. He helped organize the occupation of Freedom Plaza in 2011 and led campaigns to stop the Trans-Pacific Partnership, win Net Neutrality and protect the Venezuelan Embassy from takeover by rightwing coup-makers.

He often recognized issues as important before they were popular and had the courage to take them on even when they were controversial. He had unwavering moral clarity and told the truth even when it was not what people wanted to hear.

Kevin also saw people’s potential and wasn’t afraid to tell them. Many people turned to him for guidance and assistance, what to do in a time of crisis, or advice on strategy. Kevin’s calm steadiness made people feel safe when he was around, and he always seemed to know what to do. He was a gentle giant who looked out for everyone. He also had a great sense of humor and loved to laugh.

The weekend before his death, Kevin participated in an online rally about how to build power for the changes we need before and after the coming election. He spoke about what we must do at the Aug. 30 UNAC-sponsored online rally, “After the DNC and RNC: We Can’t Breathe!”

Here’s what Kevin said: “Power to the people! We have the power to change if we stay

# Kevin Zeese: A Life Well Lived

all the groups working on various aspects of the drug war. He understood that popular power required building a movement of movements and worked to create unity among them.

In his later years, Kevin’s advocacy work expanded to include

united. We have incredible opportunity now. We see the movements growing, especially after the Democratic National Convention and Republican National Convention. The conventions showed us that those parties do not represent the people and that our power is

come from Joe Biden or Donald Trump. It will come from the people.

“We also have to understand that the only path to success is failure. We fail and fail and fail until we win. But every time we try, we build the movement. And

and probably more than 200,000 by the time of the election; his poor response to the economic collapse. He’s leading us into another Great Depression, and he constantly puts in place laws for the wealthy—while poverty, homelessness, debt and joblessness increase.



we get stronger. We can never tell how close we are to success.

It’s like we’re banging on a wall, pounding and pounding, and it’s not until that wall begins to crack and we start to see the light come through that we realize we’re getting close to that breakthrough moment when change can occur.

“We see the 2020s as a decade of transformation. The movements have been growing since Occupy in 2011, then the Black Lives Matter movement, Fight For 15—all during the Obama era—and now the growing of the movements during the Trump era. We see the 2020s as a decade of social transformation. In order to have that transformation, we need to be organized and educated. ... It’s normal for us to not always be on a linear path to success. It’s a jagged path. We move up and down, we get stronger.

“We all know that Donald Trump is terrible. The worst president of my life! His overt racism; his open support for violent white supremacists; his mishandling of the COVID-19 virus, causing more than 180,000 deaths so far

“But Biden is no better. And I mean no better. For 47 years he’s been wrong on every important issue. When I was in college going to a demonstration in Boston for school integration, Biden opposed school integration. When I worked on ending mass incarceration and the drug war, Biden was passing laws to escalate the drug war and passing laws for mandatory sentencing. He’s the architect of mass incarceration!”

“Later in his career Biden became chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and led in not just voting for the Iraq War, but in the effort to make it happen. As chair of Foreign Relations, he put in place massive, corrupt military budgets while leading us into war after war. He led the effort to make it so students can’t get rid of debt even in bankruptcy. Now he’s calling for cutting Social Security when we

should be doubling or even tripling Social Security payments. “So I’m going to vote against Trump by voting for what I believe in. I’ll be voting for the Green [Party] candidates Howie Hawkins and Angela Walker, because I’m going to be voting for Medicare For All, for community control of police, for the eco-socialist Green New Deal, for ending the wealth divide and ending the never-ending wars.

“We must build people power, so that no matter who’s in office, we can stop the government from operating. We can make the country ungovernable. We can put in place general strikes, so that our demands are heard and met. That is how we will win.

“We have a lot to build on. There have been over 900 wildcat strikes since March. The labor movement is growing. The climate justice movement is growing. The anti-racist movement is growing. The anti-inequality movement is growing. We have a lot to build on. The one percent cannot defeat the 99%. So let’s not underestimate ourselves.”

The family of Kevin Zeese, including myself and my two sons created the Kevin Zeese Emerging Activists Fund to continue Kevin’s legacy by sponsoring young activists and front line grassroots organizations that work for economic, racial, and environmental justice and peace. An online launch and musical celebration will be held on October 28, 2020, at 7:30 pm Eastern.

Tickets are available through the store at [PopularResistance.org](http://PopularResistance.org). We can best honor Kevin by continuing to support new movement leaders and visionaries who recognize injustice before the rest of us do and have the courage to address it.

Now, more than ever, all of us are Popular Resistance. Kevin is gone but the work continues. To support the Kevin Zeese Emerging Activist Fund, go to [popularresistance.org/kevin-zeese](http://popularresistance.org/kevin-zeese). Tickets for the Oct. 28 launch are available at

[popularresistance.org](http://popularresistance.org). Dr. Margaret Flowers is a pediatrician, public health advocate, and activist. She is an advisor to the board of Physicians for a National Health Program, serving as a Congressional Fellow during the health reform process in 2009–10 and is co-chair of the Maryland chapter. She is currently co-chair of the Green Party of the United States. She is the director of PopularResistance.org. Kevin Zeese was her longtime best friend and her life partner for the last 10 years.

Top: With Flowers vacationing at Lake George. Middle left: At the Women’s March on the Pentagon, October 2018. Middle right: With Flowers at Freedom Plaza, October 2011. Bottom left: With Bill Moyers inflating a helium balloon for an anti-TPP action in Leesburg, Va., September 2012. Bottom right: Arrested at the White House protesting the treatment of Chelsea Manning, March 2011.





Wildfires turn San Francisco sky 'Blade Runner 2049' orange.

## Apocalypse

... continued from page 1

In the wake of the hottest summer on record in the Northern Hemisphere, we are, in other words, talking about the sort of apocalyptic conditions that the President undoubtedly had in mind for North Korea back in 2017, but not even faintly for the U.S. of A.; we're talking, that is, about a burning season the likes of which no one in the West has ever seen before, a torching linked to the overheating of this planet thanks to the release of fossil-fuel-produced greenhouse gases in ever greater quantities. In fact, as Washington Gov. Jay Inslee pointed out recently, we shouldn't even be talking about "wildfires" anymore, but about "climate fires" whose intensity has already outpaced by years the predictions of most climate scientists. (Or, as Inslee put it, "This is not an act of God. This has happened because we have changed the climate of the state of Washington in dramatic ways.")

Significant hunks of the American West have now been transformed into the natural equivalent of furnaces, with fires even reaching the suburban edges of Portland, Ore. (which, for days, had the worst air quality of any major urban area on the planet), and promising a future in which cities will undoubtedly be swept up in such conflagrations as well. Admittedly, Donald Trump didn't threaten to launch "fire and fury like the world has never seen" against Portland (though he did send federal agents there to snatch peaceful protesters off its streets and continues to insult and threaten that city's mayor). If anything, as the fires scorched those states to a crisp, he did his best to avoid the subject of the burning West, as in these years more generally he's largely treated climate change (that "hoax") like ... well, a pandemic that should be ignored while America stayed "open."

And it's not a subject he's been grilled on much either, not until recently, when Western governors began laying into him over his stance on climate change. To of-

fer just one example, as far as I can tell, Bob Woodward, the *Washington Post* editor and court chronicler of presidents who, for months, had unparalleled access to Trump and grilled him on so many subjects, never bothered to ask him about the most important, most dystopian, most apocalyptic future Americans face. And mainstream Democrats didn't do much better on the subject while those fires were building to a crescendo until Joe Biden finally called the President a "climate arsonist." He added, aptly enough, "If you give a climate arsonist four more years in the White House, why would anyone be surprised if we have more of America ablaze?"

*[W]e're talking, that is, about a burning season the likes of which no one in the West has ever seen before, a torching linked to the overheating of this planet thanks to the release of fossil-fuel-produced greenhouse gases in ever greater quantities.*

There's no question that, at the beck and call of the fossil-fuel industry, Donald Trump and his demonic crew have worked without qualms or remorse to ensure that this would be a fiery and furious America. Freeing that industry of restrictions of every sort, withdrawing from the Paris climate accord, opening up yet more areas for oil drilling, wiping out environmental safeguards, and even (at the very moment when the West was burning) appointing a climate-science denier to a top position at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the President and his crew proved themselves to be pyromaniacs of the first order.

Of course, the heating of this planet has been intensifying for decades now. (Don't forget, for instance, that Barack Obama presided over a U.S. fracking boom that left people referring to us as "Saudi America.") Still, this President

and his top officials have put remarkable energy (so to speak) into releasing yet more carbon dioxide and methane into the atmosphere. And here's the strange thing: They made it deep into the present apocalyptic moment in the West without—Greta Thunberg and climate change protesters aside—being held faintly accountable for their urge to fuel the greatest danger humanity faces other than nuclear weapons. In fact, as is increasingly obvious from the torching of the West, what we're beginning to experience is a slow-motion version of the nuclear apocalypse that Trump once threatened to loose on North Korea.

In an all-too-literal fashion, The Don-

ald is indeed proving to be history's "fire and fury" president.

And don't for a moment think that there was no warning about the over-the-top burning now under way in this country. After all, in 2019, parts of Australia were singed to a crisp in a way never before seen, killing at least 25 humans and possibly more than a billion animals. And that country, too, was headed by a climate-change denier, a man who once brought a piece of coal to parliament and handed it around while soothingly telling other legislators, "Don't be afraid, don't be scared." In addition, in recent years, the Arctic (of all places) has been smoking and burning in an unprecedented fashion, heating its permafrost and releasing staggering amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Oh, and this June, the temperature in a small town in Siberia crossed the 100-degree mark for the

first time.

By the way, Russia, too, is run by a leader who until recently was a climate denier. I mean, what is it about the urge of so many of us in such a crisis to support those dedicated to quite literally destroying this planet as a livable place for ... well, us? (Hey there, Jair Bolsonaro!)

### Our Very Own Firenado

An almost unimaginable near-half-century ago on a different planet, I lived in San Francisco. I can still remember the fog rolling in daily, even during summer in one of the coolest, breeziest cities around. Not this year, though. On Sept. 6, for instance, the temperature there broke 100 degrees, "crushing" the previous record for that day. In Berkeley, across the Bay, where I also once lived long, long ago, it hit 110. As a heat wave swept the state (and the West), temperatures near Los Angeles soared to a record-breaking 121 degrees (almost challenging overheated Baghdad, Iraq, this year), while reaching 130 degrees in the aptly named Death Valley—and that's just to start down a list of soaring temperatures across the West from the Canadian to the Mexican border.

As those fires filled the skies with smoke and ash, turning day into the eeriest of nights, a smoke cloud the likes of which had never before been seen appeared over the coastal West. Meanwhile, firenadoes were spotted and the ash-filled air threatened terrible things for health. As has been true for the last 46 years, I'm thousands of miles away from my old Bay Area haunts. Still, I regularly check in with friends and TomDispatch authors on that coast, some aged like me and locked in their homes lest the smoke and ash, the air from hell, do them in. Meanwhile, their cars are packed to go, their evacuation checklists ready.

My heart goes out to them and, really, to all of us (and, above all, to those to whom we oldsters will be leaving such a

*continued on next page ...*

# If the Powerful Lie to Us

## Julian Assange and what he's being charged with

John Pilger gave this address outside the Central Criminal Court in London on Sept. 7 as the WikiLeaks editors extradition hearing entered its final stage.

By John Pilger

When I first met Julian Assange more than 10 years ago, I asked him why he had started WikiLeaks. He replied: “Transparency and accountability are moral issues that must be the essence of public life and journalism.”

I had never heard a publisher or an editor invoke morality in this way. Assange believes that journalists are the agents of people, not power: that we, the people, have a right to know about the darkest secrets of those who claim to act in our name.

If the powerful lie to us, we have the right to know. If they say one thing in private and the opposite in public, we have the right to know. If they conspire against us, as Bush and Blair did over Iraq, then pretend to be democrats, we have the right to know.

It is this morality of purpose that so threatens the collusion of powers that want to plunge much of the world into war and wants to bury Julian alive in Trump's fascist America.

In 2008, a top-secret U.S. State Department report described in detail how the United States would combat this new moral threat. A secretly directed personal smear campaign against Julian Assange would lead to “exposure [and] criminal prosecution.”

The aim was to silence and criminalize WikiLeaks and its founder. Page after page revealed a coming war on a single human being and on the very principles of freedom of speech, freedom of thought, and democracy.

The imperial shock troops would be those who called themselves journalists: the big hitters of the so-called mainstream, especially the “liberals” who mark and patrol the perimeters of dissent.

And that is what happened. I have been a reporter for more than 50 years and I have never known a smear campaign like it: the fabricated character assassination of a man who refused to join the club, who believed journalism was a service to the public, never to those above.

Assange shamed his persecutors. He produced scoop after scoop. He exposed the fraudulence of wars promoted by the media and the homicidal nature of America's wars, the corruption of dictators, the evils of Guantánamo.

He forced us in the West to look in the mirror. He exposed the official truth-tellers in the media as collaborators, those I would call Vichy journalists. None of these imposters believed Assange when he warned that his life was in danger, that

the “sex scandal” in Sweden was a setup and an American hellhole was the ultimate destination. And he was right, and repeatedly right.

The extradition hearing in London beginning this week is the final act of an Anglo-American campaign to bury Julian Assange. It is not due process. It is due revenge. The American indictment is clearly rigged, a demonstrable sham. So far, the hearings have been reminiscent of their Stalinist equivalents during the Cold War.

Today, the land that gave us Magna Carta, Great Britain, is distinguished by the abandonment of its own sovereignty in allowing a malign foreign power to manipulate justice and by the vicious psychological torture of Julian—a form of torture, as Nils Melzer, the U.N. expert,



As for Assange's homeland, Australia has displayed only a cringing cowardice as its government has secretly conspired against its own citizen who ought to be celebrated as a national hero. Not for noth-

tions can breathe freely. The Judases on *The Guardian* who flirted with Julian, exploited his landmark work, made their pile, then betrayed him, have nothing to fear. They are safe because they are needed.

Freedom of the press now rests with the honorable few: the exceptions, the dissidents on the internet who belong to no club, who are neither rich nor laden with Pulitzers, but produce fine, disobedient, moral journalism—those like Julian Assange.

Meanwhile, it is our responsibility to stand by a true journalist whose sheer courage ought to be inspiration to all of us who still believe that freedom is possible. I salute him.

*John Pilger (johnpilger.com) is an Australian-British journalist and filmmaker based in London. In 2017, the British Library announced a John Pilger Archive of all his written and filmed work. The British Film Institute includes his 1979 film, Year Zero: the Silent Death of Cambodia, among the 10 most important documentaries of the 20th century.*

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*The aim was to silence and criminalize WikiLeaks and its founder. Page after page revealed a coming war on a single human being and on the very principles of freedom of speech, freedom of thought, and democracy.*

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has pointed out, that was refined by the Nazis because it was most effective in breaking its victims.

Every time I have visited Assange in Belmarsh prison, I have seen the effects of this torture. When I last saw him, he had lost more than 10 kilos in weight; his arms had no muscle. Incredibly, his wicked sense of humor was intact.

ing did George W. Bush anoint the Australian prime minister his “deputy sheriff.”

It is said that whatever happens to Julian Assange in the next three weeks will diminish if not destroy freedom of the press in the West. But which press? *The Guardian*? The BBC, *The New York Times*, the Jeff Bezos *Washington Post*?

No, the journalists in these organiza-



## Apocalypse

... continued from previous page  
blazing, tumultuous world).

Sadly, among the endless scandals and horrors of the Trump era, the greatest one by far scandalized all too few for all too long among those who officially matter on this beleaguered planet of ours. Even in 2016, it should have been obvious enough that a vote for Donald Trump was a vote for the apocalypse. Give him credit, though. He made no secret of that fact or that his presidency would be a fossil-fueled nightmare. It was obvious even then that he, not

climate change, was the “hoax” and that this planet would suffer in unique ways from his (ad)ministrations.

And in every way imaginable, Donald Trump delivered as promised. He's been uniquely fiery and furious. In his own fashion, he's also been a man of his word. He's already brought “fire and fury” to this country in so many ways and, if he has anything to say about it, he's just gotten started.

Don't doubt for a second that, should he be losing on Nov. 3 (or beyond, given the mail-in vote to come), he'll declare electoral fraud and balk at leaving the White House. Don't doubt for a second that he'd be happy

to torch that very building and whatever, at this point, is left of the American system with it before he saw himself “lose.”

Since he is, in his own fashion, a parody of everything: a politician, a Republican, an autocrat, even a human being, he sums up in some extreme (if eerily satiric) fashion human efforts to destroy our way of life in these years. In truth, fiery and furiously fueled, he's a historic cloud of smoke and ash over us all.

By his very nature, to use those 2017 nuclear words of his, he is “threatening beyond a normal state.” Think of him as the President from hell, and here I mean a literal hell. He, his crew, and the fossil-fueled criminals running the major oil, gas, and coal companies who are riding his coattails into profit heaven and planetary misery are the cast of a play, both comedy and tragedy, that none of us should have to sit through. He's our very own firenado and—it's not complicated—four more years of him will consign us to a hell on Earth of a sort still only faintly imaginable today.

*Tom Engelhardt is a co-founder of the American Empire Project and the author of a history of the Cold War, The End of Victory Culture. He runs TomDispatch.com and is a fellow of the Type Media Center. His sixth and latest book is A Nation Unmade by War.*

# Who Is Lisa?

... continued from page 1

ties that, despite real and pronounced differences between them, agree on far too much, as vividly exposed in nearly all congressional deliberations. Most tellingly, the Republicans and the Democrats are in accord that:

- The military and the “defense” budget enjoy sacred cow status;
- Major corporate interests, essentially, rise above all other interests, such as the welfare of citizens and the planet.

Faced with this bleak picture, people in Maine found some hope in ranked-choice voting, which enables those who have concluded that neither major party serves the people to cast a vote for an independent or third party candidate who truly does. We can now do so without being accused of enabling a spoiler.

However, in an electoral landscape dictated by the major party, deep-pocketed, duopoly that controls all aspects of the

followed suit, announcing Lisa’s inclusion in a debate to follow in October. It’s a shocking development that major parties may well regret. Progressives have a lot to say that resonates with the overworked, stressed out, common citizen. Lisa Savage’s slogan, “People, Planet, and Peace,” resonates. People get it that we have problems that will not be solved by militarism, wars, or corporate greed.

Everyday people are looking hard for someone to represent them—not Wall Street, war contractors, corporate fossil fuel giants, or Big Pharma.

Lisa Savage’s father and grandfather had been celebrated athletes for the Skowhegan H.S. Indians. Lisa graduated Skowhegan and went on to teach in the school system. Yet she took a public stand that was not an easy one. Lisa stood for the removal of the disrespectful use of the mascot term “Indians” by her high school alma mater.

Barry Dana, past chief of the Penobscot Nation, had this to say, “Lisa became in my opinion one of the hardest working al-



Barry Dana, past Penobscot Nation chief, with Lisa Savage. Photo: Jeff Kirlin

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*Progressives have a lot to say that resonates with the overworked, stressed out, common citizen. Lisa Savage’s slogan, ‘People, Planet, and Peace,’ resonates. People get it that we have problems that will not be solved by militarism, wars, or corporate greed.*

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process—most significantly media exposure, alternative campaigns have to fight hard to gain traction. It’s an uphill climb.

As an example, the progressive-minded social justice activist running for Senate, Lisa Savage, has been practically iced out of the conversation while the Republican incumbent, Susan Collins, and her Democrat challenger Sarah Gideon, with over 20 million of party dollars, dominate print and broadcast media.

Finally and surprisingly, after months of grassroots work and the rising clamor of a growing population of informed citizens the *Bangor Daily News*, *Portland Press Herald*, and *News Center Maine* committed to sponsor a debate on Sept. 9 to include Lisa. As it turned out, Lisa was both calm and brilliant in the debate and walked off with accolades from many sectors. The Maine Chamber of Commerce

lies to the tribes. She continually gave testimony before the board requesting they comply with tribe’s request to drop their offensive mascot, nickname, and imagery. She also presented testimony before the Maine state legislature in our successful effort to create a statewide law prohibiting offensive mascots. Lisa played a huge role in this victory for which I am forever thankful.”

There’s another battle being waged in Maine over a Central Maine Power proposal that will bring power from Hydro Quebec to southern New England, through 53 miles of currently undisturbed Maine forests. It’s a “profit-over-planet” proposition that would forever alter the culture of rural western Maine and also involves flooding thousands of acres of Canadian lands (populated mostly by Indigenous people) and releasing copious

amounts of greenhouse gases. It is anything but “green energy” and has been characterized as Tar Sands East. It’s a classic case of a mega-corporation again putting profit before people and this increasingly fragile planet. As of July, Central Maine Power had spent \$10.53 million and Hydro-Quebec \$6.24 million to sell the project to Maine, according to Natural Resources Council of Maine.

Once again, it’s the progressive and not the Democratic or Republican candidate who is standing for the people and against the corporate giants. Savage stated, “We cannot allow phony solutions to climate crisis made by profit-driven companies to distract us ... from real solutions.” She also characterizes the project as “environmental racism,” acknowledging that

further climate disruption. Along with other nonviolent peace activists, she was arrested. In the trial to follow, the same judge who had tried Father Berrigan was on the bench. At that time he had declared, “Anyone of my generation knows Philip Berrigan. He is a moral giant, the conscience of a generation.” On this occasion, again bearing witness to his sympathies, the judge read the famous lines of President Eisenhower’s “Humanity on a Cross of Iron” speech, including the lines, “This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.”

Lisa Savage has taken a stance in support of union workers at Bath who were on strike protesting low wages and the

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*‘[My path is] to reach out to my fellow human beings and say: Violence solves nothing, and continuing our violence against the Earth and its inhabitants will surely lead to the demise of human beings,’ says Savage.*

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the Indigenous people of Canada and of Maine will be those most profoundly and adversely impacted.

Savage earned her reputation as an activist leading the charge in Maine as state coordinator with the Bring Our War \$\$ Home campaign and founding the Maine Natural Guard, a group dedicated to working to protect Maine’s environment by connecting the dots between the climate emergency and the Pentagon’s massive greenhouse gas emissions.

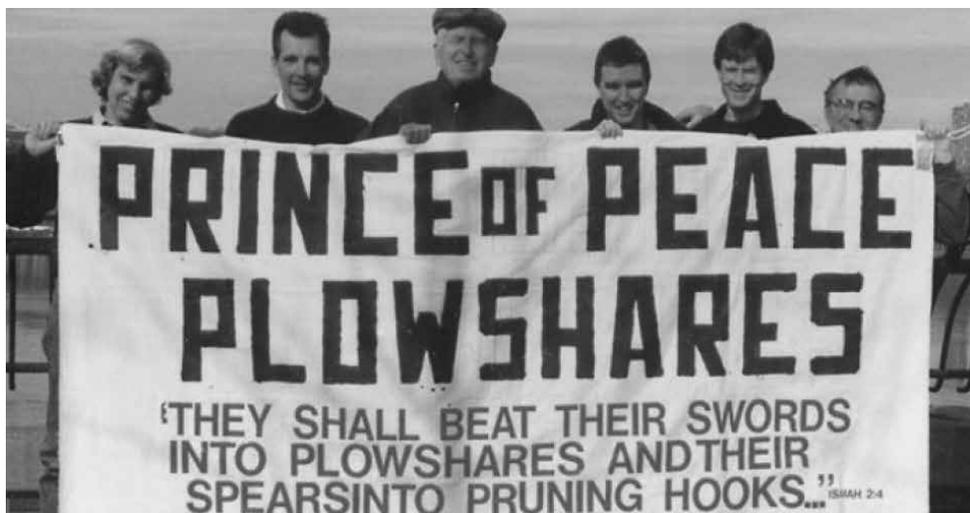
In 1997, the late Father Phillip Berrigan, famed antiwar activist, was sentenced to two years in prison for participating in a “Swords to Plowshares” action at the Bath, Maine, shipyard. Twenty-two years later, in June 2019, Lisa Savage followed Berrigan’s footsteps at one of the many protests at the facility demanding that Bath Iron Works cease building warships and convert to the production of sustainable energy systems to stem

hiring of out-of-state contractors, proving herself to be an ally of workers while nonetheless remaining very clearly a champion of the planet—victimized as it is by the defense industry’s unparalleled contribution to its desecration. She donated to their strike fund and twice joined their picket line.

“I can’t tell other people what their path is, but mine is to use my affinity for communication to reach out to my fellow human beings and say: Violence solves nothing, and continuing our violence against the Earth and its inhabitants will surely lead to the demise of human beings,” says Savage.

This is the sort of sentiment we might wish to be a foundation of our country’s moral compass.

*Dud Hendrick is a Vietnam War veteran, a graduate of Annapolis, a former All-American LaCrosse player, and a member of Maine Veterans For Peace.*



The Plowshares Movement during the 1997 action at Bath Iron Works in Bath, Maine. From left to right: Susan Crane, Steve Kelley, Philip Berrigan, Mark Colville, Steve Baggarty, and Tom Lewis-Borbely. (Photo via nuclear-news)

# Ranked-Choice Voting: A Better Way to Vote

By Elizabeth Warren  
and Jamie Raskin

In a large, diverse field of candidates, ranked-choice ballots would guarantee democratic majority rule. Across the country, nearly 1,000 people are dying each day from COVID-19, an infectious disease that should have been under control by now. The economy is being squeezed to its breaking point. The fight for racial justice has reached an inflection point and demands bold action. And from postal sabotage to old-fashioned voter purges, voting—the very foundation of our democracy and an essential instrument for change—is under siege.

To defend our democracy, we need to fortify it. One way is by strengthening the principle of majority rule while defending and protecting the rights of all individuals, including those in the minority. Massachusetts voters have a chance to do just that in November by approving ranked-choice voting on Question 2.

Although many people believe that majority rule is a core part of what it means

to be a democracy, numerous examples show why this isn't the case in the American system of government. In two of the last five presidential elections, the antiquated Electoral College system has propelled two popular-vote losers (George W. Bush in 2000 and Donald Trump in 2016) to the Oval Office. The Senate is still tied up in knots with the anti-majoritarian filibuster rule. And in far too many other races, elected officials win not because they actually earn anything near a majority of the votes but because they collect a few more votes than the runners-up. That is how the current plurality system works.

To fix this, communities across the country—from Maine to California, and even here in Amherst and Cambridge—have taken steps to safeguard our democracy by adopting ranked-choice voting.

So how does ranked-choice voting work? Under the current plurality system, each voter is allowed to vote for only one candidate, and the candidate who receives the most votes is elected—period. That works fine when only two candidates are on the ballot. But in a big field of

candidates, particularly in a primary, this means that someone with 30, 20 or even 10 percent of the vote could be declared the winner simply because the remaining 70, 80 or 90 percent of the votes are scattered among many different candidates.

breaks the 50 percent threshold, the winner is declared. If not, then the votes of the remaining candidate at the bottom are reallocated to those voters' next choice—and so on until someone gets a majority.

By requiring the winner to reach more

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*Ranked-choice voting has another remarkable virtue: Everywhere it has been adopted, it has replaced the politics of personal destruction with positive coalition politics.*

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Ranked-choice voting allows voters to rank their choices among as many of the candidates as they want, and no candidate is declared the winner until someone receives more than 50 percent of the votes. The ballots are counted for everyone's first choice. If no one has a majority, the votes for the candidate who finished last are then distributed to voters' second-ranked candidate. If a candidate

than 50 percent of the vote, ranked choice voting ensures the winning candidate is the one with the broadest appeal to the majority of voters. The ability to mobilize the broadest and deepest appeal across the electorate would replace the ability to target a passionate minority constituency, which may be extreme or nonrepresentative from the standpoint of most voters, as the key to winning.

Today's elections host some of the largest and most diverse candidate fields—and that's great. But in the current plurality system, large fields split up common voting blocs. So most voters might overwhelmingly prefer to elect identified environmentalists to their town council, and a dozen environmentalists might show up to vie for that spot—but as the green dozen divides up the majority of votes, a single, pro-fossil-fuel candidate who stirs up anti environmental sentiment could win with only a small fraction of total votes cast.

Ranked-choice voting has another remarkable virtue: Everywhere it has been adopted, it has replaced the politics of personal destruction with positive coalition politics. If two like-minded candidates are running against each other in a large field, they are more likely to work for the second and third choices of their opponent's supporters by appealing to what they have in common rather than focusing on divisive issues.

For everyone who worries that they won't know enough about every candidate to rank multiple candidates, they can leave the other options blank. If that voter's choices don't make it into the final round, then that voter is no worse off under ranked choice than under the current system.

Ranked-choice voting can make our elections more positive and require successful candidates to build broad coalitions. It can ensure that everyone's vote counts and open the door to elections that more fairly represent the electorate. Most important, ranked-choice voting can make sure that the winning candidates have successfully appealed to the majority of the voters. That's a stronger democracy.

*Originally published in The Boston Globe.*

*Elizabeth Warren is the senior senator from Massachusetts. Jamie Raskin represents Maryland's 8th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives.*

## Proud Boys

... continued from page 12

did they do that? And then eventually, I realized what was going on.

Whenever the truth threatens one's core belief system, there is an urgent need to deny its reality. That was it. You can't feed a steak dinner to a newborn. In order for them to believe me, they would have to redefine their own core belief system. And that was way too painful. We are our core belief system.

When I came back from Viet Nam, I entered another world. Shortly before I left Viet Nam, I remember helping take an American soldier off of a Medevac helicopter; he was dead from being shot in the head. On another occasion I unzipped a body bag and looked at a teenage American soldier who had committed suicide by shooting himself in the head with a pistol. On another occasion, I went into a tent and tried to save the life of another teenage American soldier who committed suicide by shooting himself in the head with his M-16 rifle.

In my unit, the flight crew from one medical evacuation helicopter had painted in large white letters on the nose of that helicopter one word: "WHY." That was the Viet Nam War in a nutshell. Again, all of these experiences are events that the "love-it-or-leave-it" Proud Boys have absolutely no idea ever happened. They are a blank slate; the history blackboard has been erased for them. Anyone who does not love America unconditionally is a traitor. They cannot absorb the unspeakable truth, because they would not be able to survive the unfathomable betrayal by their own government. Therefore, they will forever remain emotionally immature. As a Viet Nam veteran, I am not allowed this mindset. I had to



politically grow up, or perish. The make-believe world no longer existed for me. I was filled with rage over the people who were running this country. When politicians and the rich start sending their kids to war, I'll start believing in noble causes.

It is extremely difficult to change the nature of empire. It is empire's nature to want anything it wants. According to Howard Zinn, the U.S. empire was responsible for over 20 million bomb craters during the war in Southeast Asia. Can you imagine how many innocent people were murdered on the ground with 20 million bomb craters? Can you imagine what it took to convince the American people that this never happened? Five-hundred-thousand Iraqi children died as a result of the U.S. murder machine, and 99% of the

American people have no clue this ever happened. This is stuff that Hitler did in Germany's Final Solution. During the last six months of the war in Japan, U.S. B-29s went on a barbaric napalm horror show that was the worst human barbecue in world history. General Curtis Lemay's actions do not take a back seat to anything that ever happened at Auschwitz. Since the so-called war on terror, the United States is responsible for 37 million people being displaced in the world. The only way this is going to stop, is for 95% of the world's population to give an ultimatum to 5% of the world's population.

*Mike Hastie is a photojournalist living in Portland, Ore. He served as a U.S. Army medic during the U.S. War in Viet Nam.*

# Proud Boys: Blinded by the Light

*Only those who lack any historical context can worship the U.S. and its militarism*

Photos and text by Mike Hastie

On Saturday, Sept. 26, I attended the Trump rally in Portland, Ore. The rally was held in Delta Park, located off Interstate 5, about two miles from the bridge that crosses over to Vancouver, Wash. A far-right group, the Proud Boys, a national group with about 20,000 members, organized the gathering. *The Oregonian* mentioned in an article that day that 10,000 people might be in attendance. The attendance was later estimated at about 500 people. I think many people did not show up because Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler and Gov. Kate Brown had put the word out that they would not tolerate any violence from that group because there was a counterprotest being held at Peninsula Park, about three miles away. The Proud Boys had a reputation for being heavily armed with rifles and pistols and live ammunition. I had been to a couple of previous demonstrations by this group, and they were certainly armed with these



The Gunslinger.

weapons, as well as paintball guns, baseball bats, and bear mace. All of the members had a vigilante swagger. Three weeks prior to this event, one of their members, Jay Danielson, had been shot and killed by an antifascist activist. The Proud Boys were itching for revenge for this killing.

The rally was to start at noon, so I got there about 11:30 a.m. When I arrived, I noticed a heavy police presence on the fringes of the park. I could hear loud music coming from a large rented stage attached to a pickup truck. On the stage was a movie-screen-sized American flag, and a lot of other American flags and Trump flags were attached to many pickup trucks in the immediate area. Many in attendance were also carrying American and Trump re-election flags. The mood was excited and festive. All kinds of Trump T-shirts with patriotic messages were being sold. The idolization of Donald J. Trump, 45th President of the United States, was palpable. At noon, the rally started with a very loud rendition of “The Star-Spangled Banner” played by a very good guitarist. It sounded very much like the version that Jimi Hendrix played at Woodstock in 1969. Following that, a minister stepped on the stage and led people in a long prayer, asking everyone to pray for the city of Portland and to give them the strength to overcome their radical and liberal thinking. The minister requested that the day’s activities be peaceful. Following the prayer, everyone said the Pledge of Allegiance. After that, there were speakers who stressed the importance of the November election for saving the heart and soul of American democracy. One speaker emphasized that this election meant the difference between life or death in the future of America.

As I walked around and took pictures, the underlying theme was God, Guns, and Patriotism at any cost. I saw a woman wearing a T-shirt with “Jesus Matters” on the front. I saw many men with open-carry rifles and pistols strapped to their legs. There was always a heavy fervor of unquenchable patriotic love for God and Country. They all believed that America is the greatest country that has ever existed on the face of the earth. None of them realized that while America prays for peace, our economy worships war. None of them realize that the U.S. government is a global empire. The word fascism means absolutely nothing to them. On a couple of occasions, the chant “Fuck Antifa” could be heard loud and clear. Other chants included “Build That Wall” and “Four More Years.”

I am 75 years old; I was born in 1945, six weeks before the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. My father was a career Army officer. In 1947 our family arrived in Tokyo. My father had a high security clearance, as his unit was involved in the early stages of preparing for the Korean War. My parents remember Japanese eating out of our trash



cans, because people were so desperate. The last six months of that war, the U.S. military barbarically fire-bombed countless Japanese cities from a low altitude with B-29 bombers—they scorched to death over a million civilians. These were all war crimes.

During the Viet Nam War, the U.S. military committed atrocities every single day. I am aware of many of those atrocities, because I have known many Viet Nam veterans who were involved in them.

On April 4, 1967, Martin Luther King Jr. said this in a speech he gave at Riverside Church in New York City: “The greatest purveyor of violence in the world today is my own government.” In that same speech he also said, “A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.”

And then, there is this emotionally riv-

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eting quote by Rev. James M. Lawson Jr., who spoke at John Lewis’ funeral on July 30, 2020. He said this with three former presidents in the church: “We will not be quiet as long as our nation continues to be the most violent culture in the history of humankind.”

Lying is the most powerful weapon in war. The Iraq War that started in 2003 was launched on a complete fabricated lie! Saddam Hussein never had weapons of mass destruction. All these wars are about making unbelievable profits for American corporations.

Absolutely none of the things I have

mentioned is critical information that Trump supporters are cognitively aware of. In all sense of reality, they are a blank slate. The Proud Boys are absolutely clueless. I saw one of their leaders wearing a baseball cap that had “The War Boys” written on it. They are wannabe tough guys who never grew up.

When I came back from Viet Nam, where I was an Army medic, my core belief system was completely dismantled. I felt like a stranger in a strange land. I was raised in a very patriotic military family and I was emotionally wasted from all the lies I experienced in Viet Nam. I’ve spent the last 50 years recovering from what I call, “Political Incest.” It is a deep wound of betrayal by the Fatherland. More Viet Nam veterans have committed suicide than were killed (58,000 ) in Viet Nam. I did not serve in Viet Nam for the cause of freedom and democracy, I served Big Business in America for the cause of profit.

For many years after I came back from Viet Nam, I tried very hard to convince people that the entire Viet Nam War was staged madness. I told anyone who would listen that the United States, the richest country in the world, with the most powerful military force ever known to mankind, bombed the holy hell out of Viet Nam, Laos, and Cambodia, three of the poorest countries in the world. What is wrong with this picture? After awhile people quit listening, often changing the subject, or removing themselves from the conversation. I kept asking myself, why

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