

The Fortnightly Rant

Welcome to the Class War

Well, isn't this a fine kettle of toxic waste?

One day after our previous issue hit the streets, the Middle East explodes. The Gulf Stream is getting weaker faster than anyone had predicted, even as Antarctic ice is hitting scary new record lows. The world demands action, and it isn't exactly waiting for us to get our act together.

Closer to home, the debt ceiling is steadily creeping up on us—yet again. Freddy Krueger and Lucy van Pelt have nothing on this predictable bogosity.

Will Congress act? No, it can't, because they have no Speaker. The only way this gets more absurd is if they put George Santos in charge. It's beginning to look as if designing Congressional districts so that only crackpots can win primary elections may not be the best way to achieve domestic tranquility.

Where in this godforsaken mess is there any cause for hope? We're so glad you asked. It's in the Class War.

What are you talking about? You can't write that in a newspaper...oh, wait a minute. New evidence suggests that maybe you can.

The first rule of class war is: the winners don't talk about it. They tell fairy tales instead. Like "Trickle-Down Economics." It lulled the victims to sleep while Hoover-Up Economics was emptying their pockets.

The second rule of class war is: there are no non-combatants. You can only surrender, or find a way to fight back. If you try to play pacifist, you'll just end up as collateral damage. To better understand this, let's take a brief refresher course.

Folks never had it so good—white folks, anyway—as they did in the quarter century after WW II. Looking back, it was like a middle-class

version of the old hobo song, "Big Rock Candy Mountain." Houses, cars, college educations, all were within reach. Wages rose steadily, right along with industrial productivity—up until the mid-1970s.

For Blacks it was different, naturally. Well, not naturally, but predictably. This is the U.S. of A., after all: built largely by the enslaved, on land taken from the dispossessed.

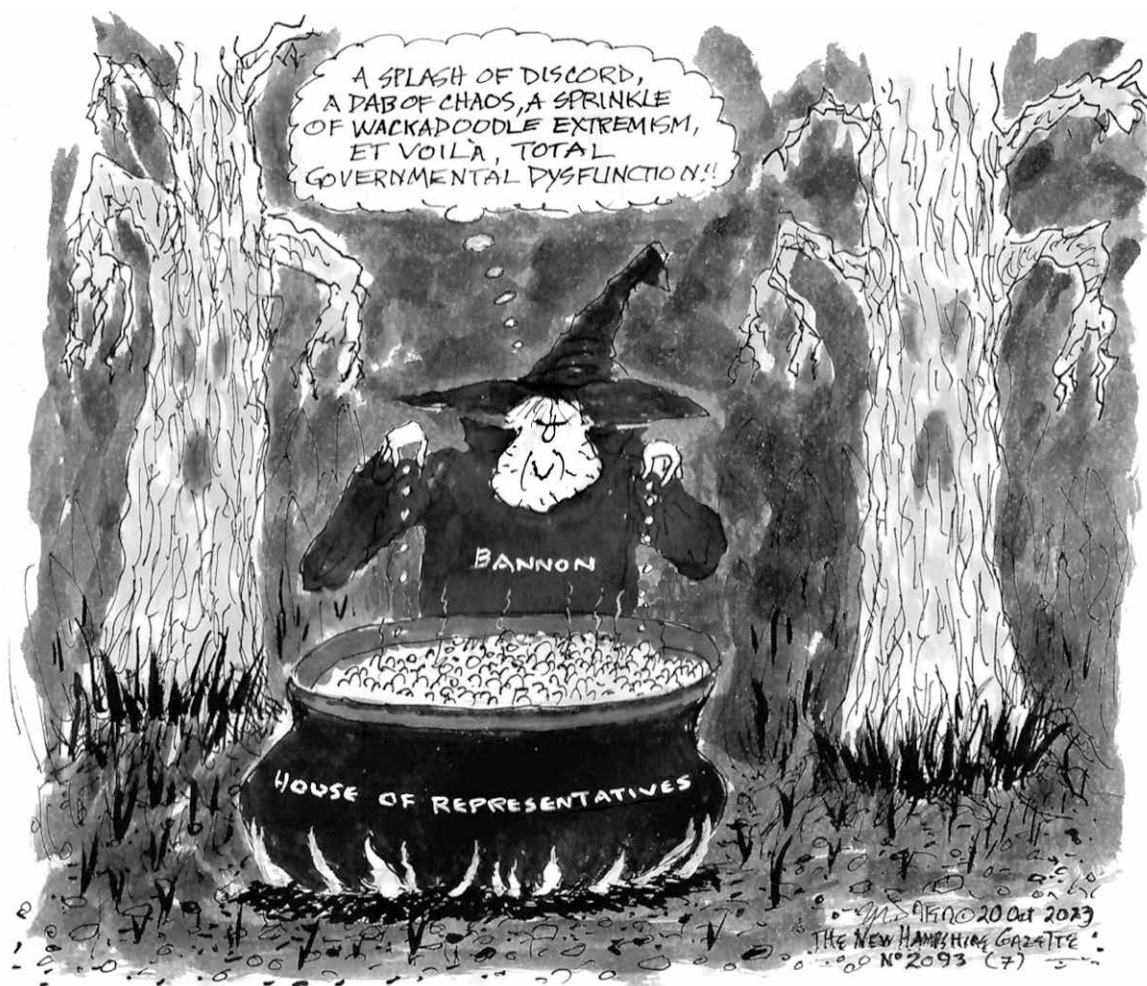
Let us do what the Democrats won't though, and return our focus from identity politics to material conditions. Since the end of the war, corporations have continued investing in improved technology, and productivity has kept on rising. In the mid-1970s, though, the [Milton] Friedman Doctrine, published in 1970, began gaining traction: "the main responsibility of a business is to maximize their revenue and increase returns to shareholders."

Workers? Pensions? Fugged-about it. Not our problem, man. It's all about the next quarter's bottom line. See to that, and all else follows.

Friedman's belief in the magic of the market was so all-encompassing, he thought it could cure racism. The writer Zachary D. Carter described Friedman's thinking: "Racism was irrational, he argued, so racist policies would put the companies that practiced them at a competitive disadvantage. When consumers favored products offered by more open-minded enterprises, bigotry and violence would fade from society." The brewers of Bud Light can tell you how well that worked out.

What followed was not an age of shared prosperity and racial harmony. Last time we checked, it was American Carnage.

Today, no one even remembers, much less credits, Friedman's junk idea about "open-minded enterprises" conquering American racism, but



his junk idea about shareholder value is still widely accepted. Profits get plowed back into stock buybacks, CEO pay skyrockets—and workers' wages barely rise, if at all.

As if all this were not enough, there's also the matter of wage theft. The corporate media bombard viewers with horrifying tales of rampant crime: robberies, burglaries, car jackings, and the like. The natural effect is to milk everyone's glands until their cortisol levels have them twitching. Yet all the loot from all those well-publicized crimes is less than the annual \$50 billion that bosses steal from employees through the silent plague of wage theft. Meanwhile Congressional tax cuts have left workers with a safety net that's all holes and no rope.

It's not a pretty picture. Where's

that hope we promised? In Guatemala, of all places. And Poland. And right here at home.

Guatemala is one hard-luck story. Your basic *Homo sapiens*, just trying to stay alive amongst jaguars, crocodiles, poisonous snakes, poisonous insects.... Then along came Conquistadors, smallpox, gunpowder, &c. It was hard times even before United Fruit bought nearly all the land and threw the farmers off. The people's choice then? Work for the man, or starve. In the early 1950s, Jacobo Arbenz got elected with promises of land-reform. At the request of United Fruit, though, Ike had Allen Dulles' CIA install a right-wing dictator. Soon it was back to normal, *i.e.*, misery. Thirty years later Ronald Reagan administered a booster dose of repression.

Despite all this, in August the Guatemalan people stood up and elected Bernardo Arévalo in a landslide. He's "Tio [Uncle] Bernie" to his followers, because his policies align with the Vermont Senator's.

Guatemala's Attorney General is trying to derail Tio Bernie's inauguration, but she is under U.S. State Department sanction for corruption. More importantly, the people are in the streets demanding that she resign. How will it end? No telling. But at least the people are in the streets, proving that they know what's up.

Meanwhile, in Poland, voters threw out the right-wing party that's ruled for eight years.

And UAW President Shawn Fain proudly wears an "Eat The Rich" T-shirt.

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Hell of a Way to Run a Primary

Our readers have been patient so far, but sooner or later they're bound to start asking—"Where the hell is our coverage of the 2024 First in the Nation™ Presidential Primary Election®?"

To which hypothetical question, we can only reply, "Show us a primary worthy of covering!" Because so far this thing is an unholy mess.

Stand back, because we're about to both-sides this issue. We'll begin with the Party Formerly Known as Republicans, which we will so designate because Abraham Lincoln doesn't deserve to be held guilty of association with this ludicrous gang of goons, thugs, and perverts.

We're not even going to list the alleged candidates here. The names are out there, as are the dimwitted meatsacks to which those names are assigned. In other words, they are common knowledge—which

is fitting, as they constitute a batch of the lowest possible common demonizers.

If we have not made it abundantly clear yet, we're going to violate a fundamental rule of journalism here and allow ourselves to be a part of this story. After all, that rule is only about a century old. We're grandfathered. Hell, we're great-grandfathered.

Now, where were we? Ah, yes. Those few, those sappy few—not few enough—that band of botherations. They're vying to lead a party without a platform that does not believe in governing. Oh, Samuel Beckett, you died too soon. This would put a smile on your wrinkled mug.

Someone is presumably polling this situation. We have not bothered to look. Nothing a poll said at this stage of the process would tell

us anything anyway. In this world of so-called "alternative facts"—a combination of words that should be treated as if they were radioactive waste—we offer the following alternative method of determining the odds: put each of the candidates' names on a label, put each label on a crab, and put all the crabs in a bucket. The ensuing struggle will be as edifying as anything the actual candidates may do.

Casting his dark shadow over this random assortment of doofuses is, of course, the most dysfunctional excuse for a human being ever to have occupied the Oval Office. We would remind readers, at this point, of something that seems to have slipped from common memory: his Republican predecessor was George W. Bush.

How much warning can one country need before it learns not

to stick forks into electrical outlets? Installed by the Supreme Court, then re-elected, more or less, by the people—in the midst of a war begun under premises considerably more false than the recent norm. Someday, we suspect—if we don't all die off first from heat waves or climate-induced starvation—we'll learn that all this idiocy has been the result of a collective cognitive deficit caused by leaded gas and lead paint.

So much for the Gong Show reboot in the R Ring of this circus. What's up at the other end of the tent? Nothing terribly inspiring, we fear.

For a hundred years, New Hampshire has hosted the First in the Nation™ Presidential Primary Election®. Of course, for most of that time, no one gave a damn. Ephraim and Ebenezer are competing for a seat at the national con-

vention that will pick a candidate. Knowing which man won won't get the chores done. Seventy years ago, though, when genial ol' Ike surprised everyone by kicking Bob Taft's butt, and Estes Kefauver did the same to Harry S Truman, it started to get interesting.

Hardly an American who is now alive remembers a presidential election in which the New Hampshire Primary wasn't important. Now, though, Joe Biden has hit the "Reset" button. Some day some geezer will tell his grand-kid, "Sit down and let me tell you about Dixville Notch, buggy whips, and cloth diapers."

Yes, our incumbent President, and therefore, by custom, the leader of his Party, as he heads toward his last hurrah, has chucked us overboard in

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favor of South Carolina—the state which saved his campaign in 2020, after his dismal fifth-place showing here. It's understandable enough, but it's hard to see how the local electoral franchise recovers from the blow. We'll go through the motions, but it just won't be the same.

During William "Bill" Gardner's last years in office we began to have doubts about the former Secretary of State for Life. Reluctantly so, because, after all, it was he who, on May 1, 1989, upon the payment of a modest fee, affixed the fake-gold Seal of the State of New Hampshire on the document assigning the rights to the tradename of this paper to the incumbent alleged editor. Naturally this caused us to attribute to him a high degree of integrity and wisdom.

Gardner's participation in Donald Trump's Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity in 2017 had us wondering if he hadn't lost some of his critical faculties.

Now, surveying the 2024 Primary, we begin to think his resignation in January of last year may have been prescient and astute. He was getting out before the whole edifice came down on his head.

Ahead of N.H. Primary, Nearly 4,000 Dems Switch Affiliation
By Ethan Dewitt, Oct. 11th

Nearly 4,000 New Hampshire Democratic voters changed their party affiliation ahead of the state's presidential primary next year, the New Hampshire Secretary of State's Office announced Wednesday—a possible indication that they plan to participate in the Republican primary.

In a news release, the office said that 3,542 people who were registered as Democrats switched their registration to "undeclared." An additional 408 Democrats switched to be registered as Republicans.

Voters in New Hampshire had a window between Sept. 14th and Oct. 7th to switch parties in time for the presidential primary. In New Hampshire, voters registered with a specific party may only vote in state and federal primaries for that party, but voters registered as "undeclared" may choose which primary to vote in on Election Day. Moving forward, no registration changes will be allowed until after the presidential primary.

The Republican presidential primary field is busier than the Democratic field this year; 12 Republicans are vying for their party's nomination. On the Democratic side, President Joe Biden is running for



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The New Hampshire Gazette - No. 2094

re-election and is being challenged by Marianne Williamson, a self-help author who ran unsuccessfully in 2020.

Two candidates are running as independent candidates: Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Cornell West.

Secretary of State Dave Scanlan has not yet set New Hampshire's 2024 primary election date, which is typically held in February. The filing period for candidates to appear on New Hampshire's presidential primary ballot began Tuesday, Oct. 10th, and will continue until Oct. 27th.

The secretary of state's registration numbers reveal that registered Republicans now outnumber Democrats 269,766 to 265,159 in New Hampshire, but undeclared voters tally 344,212. That balance may shift next year if Democratic-leaning voters switch their affiliations back to the Democratic Party ahead of the state primary and general election in fall 2024.

In total 4,920 people switched affiliations in this latest round: 78 people switched from Republican to Democratic; 719 switched from Republican to undeclared; 41 switched from undeclared to Democratic; and 132 switched from undeclared

to Republican. *This report was first published in New Hampshire Bulletin, which is part of the nonprofit States Newsroom, a national network of news bureaus supported by grants and donors. It is published here under Creative Commons license CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.*

Rep. Dean Phillips [D-Minn.] to Challenge Biden?

It now appears that Marianne Williamson may not be Joe Biden's only challenger in New Hampshire's rogue primary. According to news reports, Rep. Dean Phillips [D-Minn.] called New Hampshire Democratic Chair Ray Buckley last week "to introduce myself as I contemplate entering the Democratic primary," Phillips said in statement. "It was a very friendly conversation."

Dean who? Dean Phillips was elected in 2019 to serve Minnesota's 3rd District: the western 'burbs of Minneapolis-St. Paul. He's said to be moderate, a centrist. Sounds boring, but his back story is pretty wild. When Dean was born his father, U.S. Army Captain Arthur T. Pfefer, was serving in Vietnam. Six months later Arthur was killed in the crash of a Huey on Dragon

Mountain. Arthur's MOS was 4312, Real Estate Officer. How many of those could have died in Vietnam?

His mother later remarried. Her husband Eddie Phillips was the heir to the Phillips Distilling Co., which was, at one time, the largest liquor distributor in the U.S. Dean got his MBA in 2000, at about the age of thirty. His daddy then made him President and CEO of the family business. His net worth is now variously estimated at between \$77 and \$123 million, making him the ninth wealthiest member of Congress.

As if all this weren't entertaining enough, Dean's adopted father's mother was a certain Pauline Phillips, better known as "Dear Abby."

The ever-colorful political consultant Rick Wilson is not amused by Phillips' pretensions. He recently wrote, "Dean Phillips Is A Suicide Bomber - Tremendous wealth + ego + unscrupulous political operatives = a blow to American democracy." Wilson's own political baggage gives off a pungent odor. He helped a chickenhawk defeat Sen. Max Cleland—a triple-amputee with a Silver Star—in 2002. But he's right about Phillips Minnesota Democrats are lining up to challenge him in the primaries.



Fog. There seems to be a lot of it around these days.

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A Muzzle For The Officers Who Removed A Teenage Journalist From A GOP Event
By Dan Kennedy

It's hardly a surprise that Republican officials in New Hampshire would throw a 15-year-old out of a political event for doing nothing other than shooting video. But there is no excuse for police officers going along with their outrageous demand.

According to Samantha J. Gross of *The Boston Globe*, Quinn Mitchell, an aspiring journalist who's become something of a celebrity for asking tough questions of presidential candidates, was escorted out of a political event at the behest of party officials in Nashua, New Hampshire, on Friday—apparently because someone didn't like his recording videos of a longshot presidential candidate.

"They told me I was being a disruption," Mitchell was quoted as saying. "I was taking a video like anybody else." He added that five officers were involved in removing him from the Sheraton Nashua hotel.

Quinn said that a party official told him he was being kicked out because he had a reputation for

disrupting events. No doubt that official was referring to Mitchell's journalism, which can indeed be disruptive because he does it the right way. Earlier this summer Quinn asked Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, "Do you believe that Trump violated the peaceful transfer of power, a key principle of American democracy that we must uphold?" He also asked former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, a born-again Never Trumper, whether Hillary Clinton would have been a better choice than Donald Trump in 2016.

Although Mitchell was reportedly back in the hall Friday an hour after his removal, the incident led to a story in *The New York Times*. It also leads to an important question: Should police officers who work for the public go along with a demand to remove a teenager—or anyone—from an event simply because he was exercising his First Amendment rights? The answer, quite obviously, is no, and it really doesn't matter whether the officers were on the taxpayers' dime or if they were being paid as part of a private detail. (*The Times* reported that it tried and failed to get a comment from the Nashua police department.)



For that, police officers who removed Mitchell from the hotel have earned a New England Muzzle Award.

Since 1998, Dan Kennedy has awarded Muzzles to call attention to outrages against free speech. This item was published October 16th at Media Nation. It is published here under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 4.0 United States License.

Can Capitalism Solve The Environmental Crisis?
by Zoe Alexandra

Every year government officials, think tanks, NGOs, and representatives of the "private sector" convene in the Conference of the Parties (COP) to discuss what actions world leaders should take regarding the climate crisis. This illustrious meeting is sponsored by the world's largest transnational companies such as Unilever, Danone, Bayer, Nestlé, and others, companies that are responsible for a large part of the environ-

mental devastation that has brought our world to the brink.

As such, the discussions which take place in such a space, are rarely ever able to point to the real culprit and much less so, demand the changes which are necessary to save life on the planet. The more radical resolutions, fought for, tooth and nail, by those countries most impacted by climate devastation, are rarely respected.

Spaces such as the III International Dilemmas of Humanity Conference, become all the more important in today's context, wherein experts, members of people's movements, and activists from all over the Global South have come together to discuss the primary questions facing humanity, such as the climate crisis. As in the other discussions, the debate on the climate crisis on Day 3 of the conference was focused less on the impacts of the climate change which are today well known, and more on the necessary solutions to save life on the planet. Speakers also debunked the same solutions

that are formulated by ruling elites and big business to allegedly address the climate crisis, highlighting that capitalism is incompatible with life.

The speakers on the environmental crisis panel included Theodora Pius of the National Network of Small-Scale Farmers Groups in Tanzania (MVIWATA), Tikender Singh Panwar researcher and political activist from India, Houcine Rhili of the Nomade Association in Tunisia, and Carlos Barrientos of the Committee of Peasant Unity of Guatemala.

The Tanzanian leader spoke about the struggle of the peasantry in Tanzania and across the world, who continue to constitute a significant portion of working people. In Kenya, peasants are 70 percent of working people and are on the frontlines of the struggle against climate change. "People are trying to defend their rights to use and access land. People are defending the

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Haven Court, as seen from Fleet Street, on Sunday afternoon, October 8th. It's a part of town not generally mentioned in the glowing profiles of Portsmouth which periodically appear in the big-city dailies. It, too, will be made more presentable one of these days. Once it has, we'll forget what it looks like now—hence this photo, for the record.

Murph's Fortnightly Quote
"There is one trait that all leaders and rulers have in common — they are outnumbered."
— Unknown

"No drug, not even alcohol, causes the fundamental ills of society. If we're looking for the source of our troubles, we shouldn't test people for drugs, we should test them for stupidity, ignorance, greed and love of power."
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A Way Out

To the Editor:

I do not applaud Hamas' attack on innocent Israeli civilians, but the media seldom provide any context for such horrific incidents. An unprovoked attack? One has to remember that Gaza has been under a cruel blockade for 16 years and that it had been attacked by Israel five times since 2008. Moreover, 4 out of 5 Palestinian children now suffer from extreme trauma.

Some Israelis want to "flatten Gaza" to eliminate those "human animals" and to prevent the 2 million human beings there from having food, clean water, electricity and fuel to maintain the few hospitals that aren't damaged. Sadly, 447 Palestinian children in Gaza have already been killed.

Who supports this racist, apartheid regime? The current president and nearly the entire U.S. Congress. Multiple human rights organizations all attest that Israel practices apartheid against Palestinians. According to the UN, apartheid is a crime against humanity.

I mourn for and stand with innocent Israeli victims as I stand with the innocent Palestinian victims of violence. However, there is a way out. Israel must end its brutal military occupation of 56 years of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. And it must stop further "settlements." Many agree that the current Israeli government is the most racist government in Israel's history and is intent on ethnically cleansing the land between the river and the sea of Palestinians, including Christians.

Lest we forget, oppression, despair and hopelessness breed violence. We must support justice, equality and human rights for all.

Will Thomas
Auburn, N.H.
New Hampshire Veterans for Peace
Will:

Once again, following a spectacular outburst of violence, citizens are widely presumed to have lost the ability to sustain more than a single thought in their heads.

Somehow, Hamas' attack on Israeli civilians is supposed to have put them

beyond the pale. Whatever happens—or has happened—to any Palestinian is then justified. Yet American citizens who support our war machine, and our foreign policy, are innocent of any culpability for uncountable numbers of Yemenis, Palestinians, Vietnamese, Guatemalans, Koreans...

Hmm... perhaps we are unable to sustain more than a single thought in our heads.

The Editor

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The Feudalist Society, LTEC

To the Editor:

Lots of new "exposure" in the press these days concerning the life and times of Leonard Leo and his network of merry followers. Seems like it's taken an awfully long time for Hillary's "Vast Right Wing Conspiracy" to grow legs. However, now that we have names, dates, and dollar signs attached, it's time to latch on hard and bite down to the bone.

Fact is, there's no more "Republican Party." Instead, our nation is rapidly falling into the grip of the LTEC party (Let Them Eat Cake). America's LTECs (aka Oligarchs) may be few in number (.001 percent), but they come armed heavily with cash and guided by tight organization. Mavens of "the natural order of things," they of the dominant estate prefer to keep we of the servile estate in line. No place better to start than in the courts. Because we are inferior beings, enforced servitude is for our own good. We need protection from ourselves.

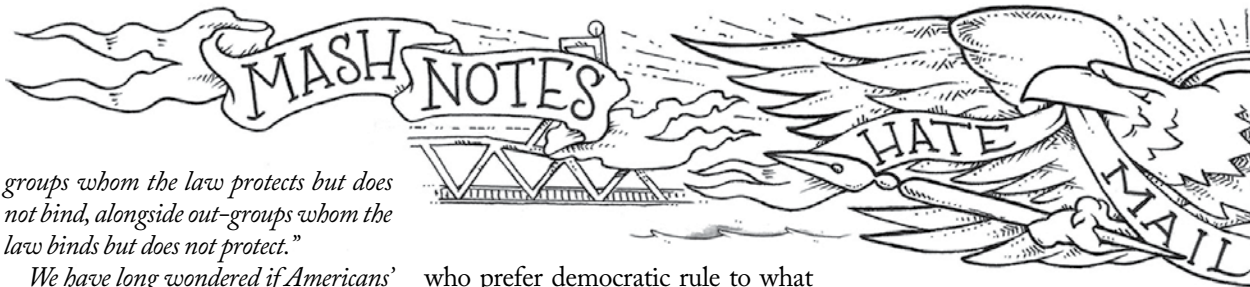
The one thing LTEC's can't seem to stand above all else is public scrutiny and exposure. So, as election time nears, we progressive riffraff have a solemn duty to name names, find out where they hide, and pull down their pants in public at every opportunity.

Rick Littlefield
Barrington, N.H.

Rick:

We have two estates, you say, one dominant and one servile. We certainly can't argue with that.

What we can do is use this felicitous occasion* to bring up, once again, Wilboit's Law: "Conservatism consists of exactly one proposition, to wit: There must be in-



groups whom the law protects but does not bind, alongside out-groups whom the law binds but does not protect."

We have long wondered if Americans' enthusiasm for British monarchy was evidence of a tendency towards subservience. But, of course, most Americans mistakenly believe themselves to be temporarily-broke millionaires in the making. That's what sells lottery tickets.

The occasional winner notwithstanding, lotteries are for chumps. When you are fighting against oligarchy, on the other hand, you can't lose. If you win, you win. If you lose, well, at least you spent your limited time on this rock doing something worthwhile.

* We have missed you, old friend. Welcome back.

The Editor

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A Presidential Candidate Writes...

To the Editor:

John Vail of Easton, New Hampshire hereby announces that he will be a candidate for president in 2024. As follows, in no particular order:

1 - The question for 2024 is What? not Who?. The What is money out of politics (elections, influence of corporations, lobbying, rule by monied elites, Citizens United, etc., etc., etc.). As Potter Stewart said about pornography, we (or most of us) know it when we see it.

2 - An important task for the "campaign" will be to make it abundantly clear that John is not an ideal candidate for the job (perhaps the easiest piece of the work here), such that it is also abundantly clear that anyone voting on that ballot line is voting for the What? not some Who?, clear that such a vote expresses preference for naming the job to be done rather than choosing the craftsman, and clear that the voter seeks to avoid what at best might be called another Who Ho Hum and what at worst might amount to another Who Dun It telling the dismal tale of our next step toward the edge. These would be people

who prefer democratic rule to what now afflicts us.

3 - There is no "We, the People" in this country. Do we dare not dedicate ourselves to reclaiming at least some of that?

4 - Other things play. Faith is fundamental for me. But, as to our political situation, we can expect to remain basically stuck or worse as long as government is controlled by wealthy elites and the corporations they control. And, we can also expect to lurch forward (gracefully, naturally, thankfully, decisively, at last) at that very moment when our government is no longer bought and paid for.

5 - The country has long had an implicit, if not explicit, request from the general citizenry to the Congress to eliminate the undue influence of money on the policy and law-making process, whether this be bribery outright, influence peddling, or lobbying for hire, if there is much difference among these at all. The Congress has not, cannot, and will not accomplish anything of consequence in this regard; it has become foolish to expect otherwise.

6 - The problems we face as a nation, as a culture, as a civilization, and as a planet all have large amounts of money devoted to preventing their solutions.

7 - We speak of dark money. And indeed it is. Our work and cherishing, our debate and struggle, our view of one to the other, are all done in fog and darkness. This campaign amounts to little more than an idiot in the corner suggesting that we turn on the lights. Aside from the dramatic shift out of what is essentially corrupt, our situation, our understanding of our neighbor's situation, and our ability to find common ground can only trend positively following relief from the distortions and negative inputs of po-

litical money.

8 - Some speak of "draining the swamp." The reference points to a worthy task; the image, of course, is all wrong. A swamp provides wildlife habitat, water filtration, coastal flood and erosion control, beauty, recreation, and spiritual renewal. Not the sort of thing to be drained, unless one is set on "paving paradise to put up a parking lot."

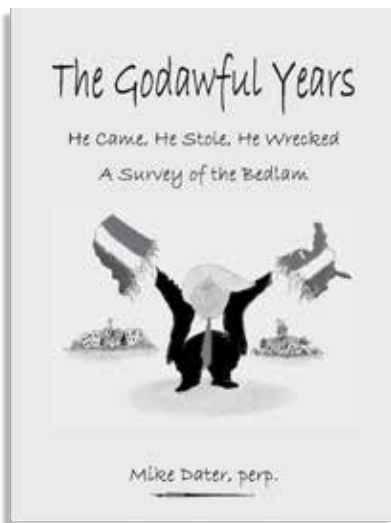
9 - Looking for more suitable figuration, I allude to my carpentry vocation. One orders up a building project to be done and employs someone to do the work. Again the What and the Who. We do elect some Who's who do generate useful public benefits; but what is more reliably delivered is too many boondoggles that are sops to the rich or worse. What's needed, badly, is a new bathroom, particularly its toilet. Any journeyman carpenter could deliver us, in fairly due course and at the very least, the means to flush away a good bit of corruption's substance and stench.

10 - If I must, I will speak of who I am; though, I assure, all fits the useful summary of "nobody of consequence." This, hopefully, is further assurance to voters that, come election day, their vote will be seen as demand for an end to political money and most certainly not a nod of confidence in my ability to lead our troubled nation. Can it really be so simple? Alas and fore-warning, asking me the Who question is likely to provoke a rant, further evidence of non-suitability for the office.

11 - Oh. And the question for 2024 is also What? not How?. The task of doing the American people's work shall be left to those chosen, hired, and paid to do so. Make no mistake, there are folks in the Congress with the integrity and devotion to our country to create something preferable to the cur-

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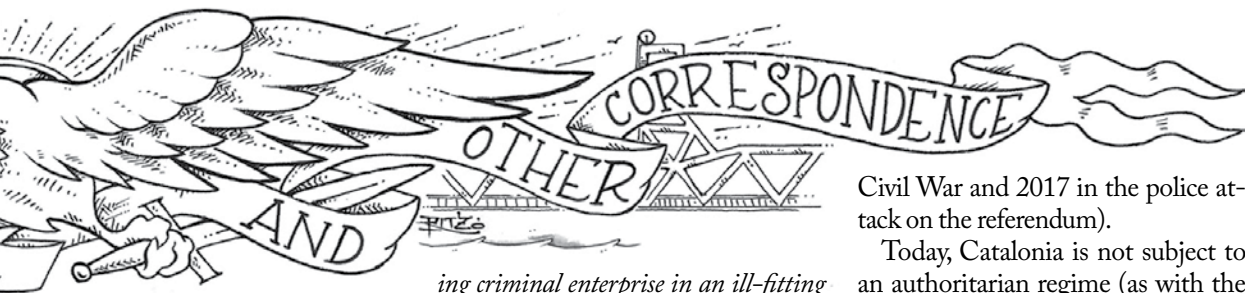
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rent system. Sadly, there are also Congressional scoundrels who will have to be brow-beaten or pushed around a bit to get things moving forward.

12 - Of course, agreeing that there is but one set of facts would be useful. Our dis-agreeableness leaves us much inclined to insist on grasping after facts and disinclined to actually look for them.

13 - *sendnomoney.org* is a website dedicated to making this vision reality.

John Vail
Easton, N.H.

John:
It's beginning to look like New Hampshire's First in the Nation™ Presidential Primary Election,® which began in 1920, probably ended exactly at the century mark.

Between the disrespect being shown to it by President Joe Biden and the DNC, and the catastrophe that is the Republican Field of Nightmares, it's hard to see how FITN, for short, can make it through this cycle.

It's easy enough to see why Biden would have no qualms about ending the tradition. Four years ago he finished a dismal fifth. South Carolina saved his bacon. Now he's rewarding the state by moving up its primary, thus elevating its status.

For its part, the DNC tired long ago of defending a state with so few voters of minority persuasions. We're pale, that's stale.

Secretary of State Scanlan will, we presume, follow state law and schedule the election before any similar primaries. N.H. Democratic Party Chair Ray Buckley seems willing to buck his party's leadership. What will happen at the convention is anybody's guess.

In short, the Democratic side of the Primary is a mess.

Next to the Republican side, though—a passel of back-stabbing weirdos desperately trying to dance around a lumber-

ing criminal enterprise in an ill-fitting suit—it's an elegant and inspiring manifestation of humanity's ability to meet the challenge of governing itself.

And you, John, emerge out of all this chazzerie like Botticelli's *Venus on the Half-Shell*, playing to perfection your role as a longest-of-the-long-shots independent candidate for the Presidency of the United States of America.

As the most promising sign that there may be life yet in FITN, we salute you.

[Note: The above was written before we learned that Rep. Dean Phillips [D-Minn.] is challenging Joe Biden. Since it was intended as an epistolary reply, we'll let it stand. — The Ed]

The Editor

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Vindication Of The 2017 Referendum On Self-Determination In Catalonia

To the Editor:

The Catalan independence movement has celebrated the 6th anniversary of the self-determination referendum of October 1, 2017 with multiple activities. Catalonia had offered to agree on a referendum with the Spanish state many times, but in the face of its repeated refusal, it decided to organise the referendum itself and, as the UN Human Rights Committee has written, 90 percent voted in favour of independence.

Catalonia has not fit into the Spanish state for three centuries. Catalonia's integration, in 1714, into today's Spain ruled from Madrid, was by force. After a 14-month siege, Barcelona fell. Catalonia lost its sovereignty, its institutions and the Catalan language was banned. In 1842, General Espartero bombarded Barcelona to put down a rebellion and stated: "For Spain to do well, it is necessary to bombard Barcelona every 50 years." And Barcelona has been bombed or subdued by force more or less every 50 years (1842, 1899, 1923, 1936-39 in the Spanish

Civil War and 2017 in the police attack on the referendum).

Today, Catalonia is not subject to an authoritarian regime (as with the Bourbons from 1714 and General Franco until 1975) because Spain became a "democratic" state, overnight, without fascism being defeated. But the plundering of Catalonia continues. Catalonia is a very dynamic territory economically, but it also attracts a lot of immigration (20 percent) and this generates many social needs that require resources to satisfy them. It is the European area with the highest fiscal deficit (21,982 million euros per year, 9.6 percent of GDP). For comparison, Germany, with 84 million inhabitants, is the country that contributes the most to the EU: 25 billion euros a year. Catalonia, with eight million inhabitants, pays 21.982 billion euros net annually to Spain. It is a veritable regime of economic colonisation. Madrid's political obsession is to keep Catalonia under subjugation because, in reality, Spain has no project of its own, but its only *raison d'être* is to prevent the independence of Catalonia and the Basque Country.

In 2006 Catalonia approved a Statute of Autonomy seeking to fit into Spain with a minimum recognition as a nation. The text was approved in the Catalan Parliament and then quite modified in the Spanish Congress, but it was still approved by the Catalans in a referendum. Then, undemocratically, in 2010 the Constitutional Court further modified the text in fundamental aspects. This meant the total loss of hope for a possible minimally dignified fit. Since then, the independence movement has held massive demonstrations year after year and in 2017 unilaterally organised a referendum on self-determination. The Spanish government sent 10,000 police to Catalonia to try to prevent the referendum. Despite police violence, which was seen on television around the world, 2,286,217 people voted, with 90 per-

cent in favour of independence.

Since then, Spanish repression has imprisoned social and political activists, tried to extradite politicians in exile in Belgium and repressed 4,400 activists. After imprisoning nine people for four years, the Spanish state pardoned them on June 22, 2021. It did so because it knew that on June 23rd the Council of Europe would publish a report criticising Spain for holding political prisoners. But since he had released them the day before, it was as if everything had been arranged....

Now that the EU Court of Justice rulings are about to come out, which are expected to be extremely harsh against Spain, the acting president, Pedro Sánchez of the PSOE, wants to offer a general amnesty (for pro-independence supporters but also for police and judges) in exchange for the pro-independence parties voting for him and allowing him to govern the country. Although Spain does not want to overturn the vindictive convictions against the Catalans, it realises that it is in its interest to eliminate the illegal judicial persecution of the pro-independence movement in order to try to clean up its image. But the Catalans have not gone to all that trouble to be pardoned by Spain and 75 percent of Catalans want to resolve the conflict with a referendum.

Europe should lose its henpecked fears: "other parts of Europe could also ask for independence..." (the same with the proposal for the official status of the Catalan language in the EU: "other languages could also ask for it..."). They should appreciate that other peoples have not demanded to become independent for such a long time and with such a large number of people (nor do other peoples have a language spoken by 10 million people that wants to be official in the EU). Each nation goes its own way and Catalonia definitely does not want to be under Madrid's rule because we have diametrically opposed social and political models.

Jordi Oriola Folch
Barcelona, Catalonia
Jordi:

Thank you for continuing to keep us abreast of Catalonia's struggle.

If any apologists for the Spanish government would like to rebut, we would consider their submissions.

The Editor

====

Don't Eat Octopuses, Octopi, or Octopodes

To the Editor:
World Octopus Day was Sunday, October 8—a day to celebrate these amazing animals, and we should do that by pledging not to eat them and avoiding restaurants serving them. If you become aware of a restaurant with octopus on the menu, consider writing a brief email or letter telling them why you will not patronize their restaurant.

Octopuses are considered the smartest of all the invertebrates. Because they have no bones, they can squeeze through openings as small as a coin. Octopuses have been recorded escaping captivity and are called the Houdini of the sea. They have nine brains, one in their head and one in each of their eight tentacles, and have three hearts and blue blood.

Climate change and overfishing are making life more difficult for all sea animals. Octopus populations in the wild are decreasing because of the food industry's increased demand. So, Spain plans to open the first farm to raise octopuses for the food industry. Being solitary animals, they will suffer greatly in the crowded conditions of a farm. The slaughtering method that would be used is extremely cruel. They will be fed other sea animals, decreasing those already depleted. Aqua farms are notorious polluters. If you search online, you will find more information and a source to sign a petition to stop this octopus farm.

Watch "My Octopus Teacher" on Netflix for some inspiration. After viewing, I think you will want to protect octopuses. Thank You.

Linda Dionne
Raymond, N.H.

Linda:
Wow. Your letter has opened up a whole new can of squirms.

Mash Notes, Hate Mail, &c.
to page seven

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What do we choose to remember with memorial markers, buildings and community projects?

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HUD-VASH does have a dedicated fund for purchasing new items veterans may need. Donations to that fund may be sent to The VA Medical Center, 718 Smyth Rd., Manchester, N.H. 03104-7007. HUD-VASH should be included on the subject line. Every penny will go into home goods for veterans.

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We have not seen “My Octopus Teacher,” and we may never do so, after making the mistake of googling “eating octopus.” *Not Recommended.*

Much more to our liking, we found an Ocean Conservancy.org page on the proper plural form of octopus. Michelle Frey writes:

“While ‘octopi’ has become popular in modern usage, it’s wrong. Octopi is the oldest plural form of octopus, coming from the belief that Latin origins should have Latin endings. However, octopus is not a simple Latin word, but a Latinized form of the Greek word *októpous*. Consequently, its ‘correct’ plural form would logically be octopodes.

“Octopodes’ stems from the belief that because octopus is originally Greek, it should have a Greek ending. This term might be technically correct, but it is the least-used incorrect form of the word for more than one octopus. Using ‘octopo-



des’ might cause more confusion than it’s worth.

“Octopuses” gives the word an English ending to match its adoption as an English word. Generally, when a noun enters into English, it is pluralized as an English word rather than in its original form. Octopuses may sound peculiar to some, but this is the preferred plural.

“It’s also peculiar to debate octopuses when the octopus is a solitary creature. So, they would very much prefer we didn’t have this discussion in the first place!

“The moral of the story is—it’s a good thing to see multiple octopuses! It means we have a healthy ocean.”

Our final word on the matter: it’s shocking to see Spain threatening to treat octopuses like Catalonians.

The Editor

====

An Overlooked Truth

Dear Editor:

From my kitchen wall I take down my “Rachel, We Won’t Forget You” card bearing 23-year-old Rachel Corrie’s face.

“On March 16, 2003, two Israeli soldiers drove a house-crushing bulldozer over her, twice, crushing her into the Gaza dirt. With five other nonviolent human rights defenders, Rachel had spent several hours in front of a family home in Palestine, pleading with Israeli soldiers not to demolish it. They didn’t (until later); they demolished her instead.” Read: www.IfAmericansKnew.org.

The border between Israel and Palestine has altered, altered as Israel took homes and farms, destroying long-time Palestinian life, for Israel’s

expansion. Who, really, is wrong, here? What reason is there for “surprise” or “unexpected?” Only the reason: “overlooked truth.”

Lynn Rudmin Chong
Sanbornton, N.H.

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In Re: Don Ewing’s Letters

To the Editor:

The Sage of Meredith is one of the most entertaining letters that you publish. Otherwise, it’s just preaching to the choir. Use your humor to deconstruct his rants. You’ve called it the Memo from Meredith—use it as a column that reflects the dark side of the American psyche. His ludicrous claims probably are fed through right wing hate groups on the net. It’s easy to refute and, my response to my right wing friends who enjoy re-sending this propaganda is to find the facts in return and urge

them to send it back up the cloaca from whence it came.

Jim Tartari
Wellesley, Mass.

Jim:

Hah! First we got this note from you. Then, from another subscriber, we received a small batch of clippings from the Laconia Daily Sun. Two of those items included letters from Sun readers discussing... letters from Don Ewing!

Neither of the writers supported Ewing. K.D. Doyle, of Center Harbor, offered a tight, fact-based 350-word point by point rebuttal of Ewing’s diatribe against “Black elites.” David Miller, a Meredith resident himself, blasts Ewing for his “racially discriminatory letter,” then characterizes the Sun’s publication of it as “abhorrent.”

One thing we can all agree on: Ewing is a divisive writer. In fact, we’ll even disagree with you, here, Jim—in a friendly way, of course. You say he’s “easy to refute,” yet to us it did seem to take more than a little effort.

The Editor

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from page three

forests, their rights to use water, and seeds. We are defending life on land, for human beings, animals, and everything that exists,” Pius said.

She sharply condemned the solutions proposed by capitalists and corporations to address the environmental crisis as both anti-people and further climate devastation. “The capitalists have created a crisis, and they have come with the solution. GMO is their thing. They are forcing everyone to believe that GMO should be used as a strategy to resolve what the Africans are facing with climate change.”

Her rallying cry is to “reclaim the rights to use the commons.”

The Indian left scholar Singh Panwar in his talk pointed out that even the world’s top scientists are conscious that the current system is leading humanity on a path to destruction, “The IPCC report points out that there has to be a systemic shift.” However, he highlighted,

“They are not communists...they cannot go beyond this vocabulary.”

He emphasized: “we know what this systemic shift means: the end of capitalism and the birth of socialism.”

Houcine Rhili, whose country Tunisia in recent years has been suffering from frequent droughts and heat waves, said that the battle of discourse is central to combating climate devastation. For example, the U.S. military is one of the single largest polluters on the planet, more than 140 countries combined, yet the poor countries of the global South, and poor people themselves are often pointed to as those responsible. “We [must] fight and undermine the narrative of the capitalist system and fight against this idea which accuses the poor of being responsible for global warming.”

Rhili also pointed out some of the false solutions to the crisis proposed by capitalism, such as the green energy alternatives, which extract natural resources from the south to power the north. He declared,

“Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia and all countries of sub Saharan Africa will witness huge extraction of resources from their land and even loss of land. The extraction of green hydrogen requires huge quantities of water.”

He added, “I can assure you that these transnational companies will use our sea and ocean water and gases in order to provide clear alternative energies for themselves and we will be unable to provide the lowest quantity of water to provide our dignity. There is no dignity without water, water is life.”

Ntima Makhetha, of UNITE union in Lesotho, also pointed out the contradictions that occur when the South has to produce green energy for the north, “Our country sold water...but in our country 70 percent of our people don’t have access to water, and right now the country is embarking on a hydrogen deal to export energy to other countries but it can’t even feed itself. It is said that clean energy will help with climate change, but what about us the people who are living there, how do we survive?”

Indigenous and peasant revolutionary Carlos Barrientos stated that the environmental crisis must not be seen as separate from the survival of

humanity, but that the struggle for the survival of both the people of the world and the planet are one in the same, “We have to understand that we are sons and daughters of mother earth and what corresponds to us is to fight for life and for socialism.”

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Poorer Countries Just Can’t Afford Climate Change

A new report from the Center for Economic and Policy Research shows how mounting external debt is hampering low- and middle-income countries’ ability to respond to the climate crisis, even as climate-related disasters increasingly affect these same countries. The report warns that this is leading to a “vicious cycle” of more debt and ongoing vulnerability to climate change that prevents these nations from progressing toward the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The report, “The Growing Debt Burdens of Global South Coun-

tries: Standing in the Way of Climate and Development Goals,” by Ivana Vasic-Lalovic, Lara Merling, and Aileen Wu, examines what many economists and experts see as a looming external “debt crisis,” and how these countries’ inability to reduce their debt burdens is limiting their capacity to respond to other crises, including the climate crisis.

“Most of the world is going through what many have termed a ‘polycrisis,’ facing down high levels of external debt, combined with interlocking crises of food insecurity, fluctuating energy prices, impacts of war, and of course, the climate crisis,” report coauthor Ivana Vasic Lalovic said. “Countries are limited in what they can do to respond to the climate crisis, though, when they are forced to divert so much of their resources toward servicing their debts.”

“The response so far from the international financial community has been inadequate to help countries break this vicious cycle,” the report states. “A more ambitious response — combining an updating of debt resolution frameworks, debt relief, more grant-based finance, and a

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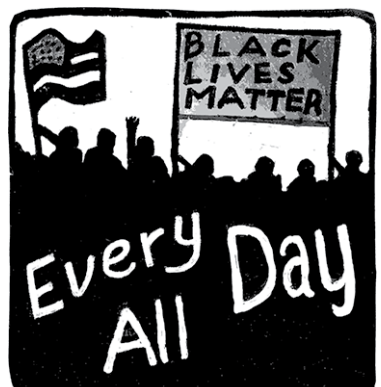
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Is Peace Possible?

by W.D. Ehrhart

The October attack on Israel by Hamas came as a shocking surprise and will have major repercussions no one can yet foresee. It reminds me of the Vietnamese Tet Offensive in January 1968. Just as Israel has been caught off guard, so too had the U.S. The big difference is that the Tet Offensive took place on Vietnamese soil, not American. This attack is against Israel itself.

And one can hardly imagine a more ruthless or brutal attack. I gather that Hamas fighters descended from the air on a rock concert largely attended by young people, indiscriminately shooting and killing unarmed civilians, and going house to house murdering whoever they happened to find.

There can be no justification—none—for targeting defenseless human beings. I don't care if they're Israelis, Palestinians, Vietnamese, Ukrainians, Iraqis, Afghans, Nigerians, Yemenis, or name anyone else you care to who has been caught up in the jaws of war.

But is this latest outbreak of violence really a surprise? I turned 75 recently. There are Palestinians my age who have never lived in anything but a cinderblock hut in a crowded refugee camp for people displaced by the creation of the state of Israel and the subsequent fighting.

The history of Jewish-Palestinian relations goes back deep into history. The latest chapter began not

in 1948, but with the founding of the Zionist movement in the 19th century. To venture an attempt to determine who is right and who is wrong, to decide who has the right to the land that both Israelis and Palestinians claim is to wander into an emotional minefield guaranteed to leave one battered and bruised and missing a figurative limb or two.

So I'm not going there. I am not going to try to argue that one side is right and one side is wrong. But I am going to argue that there are ordinary—indeed, innocent—Palestinians as old as me who have never lived anywhere but in poverty, who have never had freedom of movement, who have never had political rights, let alone civil or even human rights as most of us understand them.

There are people who have lived under military occupation for over half a century, who have been subjected to long waits and bodily searches traveling to and from their jobs and schools, who have been subjected to helicopter rocket attacks and jet fighter attacks for nothing they themselves have done. There are farmers who cannot tend their crops because of physical barriers constructed between their homes and fields.

Even a cursory study of history reveals that if you suppress and oppress a people by force of arms, sooner or later they will rise up against you. It may take five years or fifty years or five hundred years. One thinks of

the English in Ireland or the French in Indochina or the Soviets in Eastern Europe. Historical analogies never entirely hold up under scrutiny, but an iron fist always sooner or later rusts.

I gather that Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to kill every last member of Hamas. If he thinks that will solve the problem, good luck to him. And meanwhile, every innocent Palestinian the Israelis kill only provokes another Palestinian to set innocence aside.

You can—and some of you will—accuse me of being anti-semitic. But you will be wrong on two counts. Firstly because Arabs are just as semitic as Jews. And secondly because I am not anti-Jewish. Indeed, Israeli Jews have the right to live without fear of violence. In case you did not fully absorb that, let me say it again: every Israeli Jew has the absolute right to live without fear of violence.

But that is a two-way street, a tit for tat; it works both ways. Every time Hamas fires missiles into Israel, Israel responds with bombs and tanks and bulldozers. This time, Hamas has managed to inflict damage on a much larger scale, and once again Israel is responding with commensurately overwhelming force. And once again, innocent civilians on both sides are dying.

After this latest war broke out, a dear friend of mine who is Jewish, a Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War who lived in Israel in the early 1970s, sent me this note:

“Too many memories of ‘73. Too many memories of the dead on Golan then. Too many memories of the dead kids I saw carried out of a schoolhouse in ‘74. Family and friends I’ve been in touch with have not been directly touched, but have kids in the army, The scenes of the hostages being taken and the 260 kids slaughtered at the music festival are unbearable. Peace is the only answer, one of my Israeli friends texted me. He’s right but at this moment all I feel is grief and rage, at Hamas, at Netanyahu.”

I wrote back reminding him of what our mutual friend the journalist Gloria Emerson said way back after the First Intifada: “The Israelis have only two real choices: they can either make peace with the Palestinians or kill them all.” And I added that Hamas seems to have given Netanyahu the excuse to pursue the latter choice.

Whereupon my friend wrote back to me: “I still, in spite of everything, believe the first of Gloria’s choices is possible, in spite of Netanyahu, and in spite of Hamas.”

I admire his bedrock optimism “in spite of everything.” I cannot bring myself to share it, but I hope with all my heart that he’s right, that peace really is possible.

W. D. Ehrhart is a retired Master Teacher of History & English, and author of a Vietnam War memoir trilogy published by McFarland & Co.

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new allocation of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) — is urgently needed.”

The report notes that low- and middle-income countries’ external debt stock has doubled since 2010, and currently stands at over \$3 trillion, of which almost 60 percent is held by private creditors. Additionally, there are almost 80 countries that international financial institutions consider to be in, or at risk of, debt distress. “But debt from private creditors comes with high interest rates, short maturities, and is difficult to restructure,” the report notes.

Most—three-quarters—of these countries are also “highly climate vulnerable,” the report states. “These countries face the least responsibility

for the climate crisis but are facing the greatest burdens in terms of the impacts of climate disasters.”

Interest payments on external public debt are limiting countries’ ability to spend on pressing needs, including climate response and climate change mitigation. Interest payments have “gone up sharply since 2010” relative to low- and middle-income countries’ export revenue. “This year, total debt service is estimated to exceed non-climate-related SDG investment needs for over 100 countries around the globe,” the report finds. “The inability to finance non-climate SDGs has direct human costs and also has an adverse impact on climate resilience, as stronger health, food, and other social systems are needed to withstand the effects of climate disasters.”

For countries to exit this vicious cycle, the authors recommend that debt resolution frameworks be updated, and that there be “rapid and fair debt treatment across all creditor classes” — which may require legislation to compel private investors to follow the same terms for debt restructuring as public sector creditors.

The authors also call for debt relief “from all creditors” and more grant-based financing for lower-income countries’ climate response from rich countries, which are, after all, mostly responsible for the climate crisis. They also urge a major new Special Drawing Rights allocation from the International Monetary Fund “as a quick way to give climate-vulnerable and debt-constrained countries more fiscal breathing room.”

“The international finance community needs to accept that the cur-

rent dynamic, which prioritizes debt service—no matter how burdensome—over human needs and the urgency of climate crisis preparedness and response is unsustainable,” coauthor Lara Merling said. “They need to step forward with solutions. Millions of lives may depend on it.”

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— A.J. Liebling
The New Yorker
May 14, 1960.

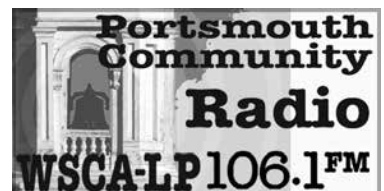
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