



Nebraskans for Peace

Nebraska Report

There is no Peace without Justice

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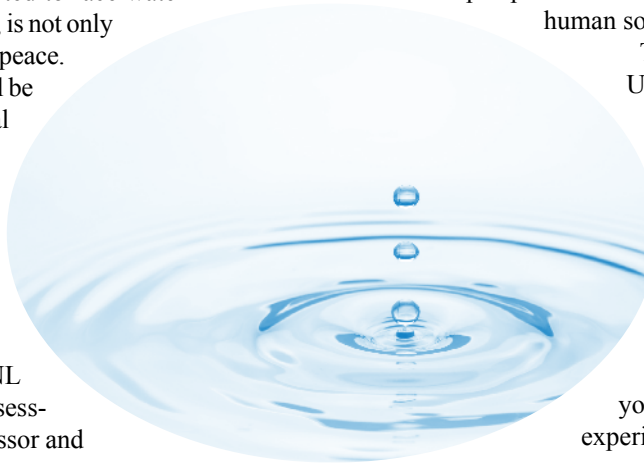
Water and Peace

Is Peace Possible in an Era of Diminishing Water Supplies?

Water is so essential for life that wars have been fought over it. And with the accelerating pace of climate change, conflicts over water resources will become more frequent, widespread and intense. Even an agricultural powerhouse like Nebraska, sitting atop one of the largest fresh-water aquifers in the world, is projected to face water shortages in the decades to come. Potable water, it turns out, is not only essential for life. It's essential to creating the conditions for peace.

Our diminishing water resources, fittingly enough, will be the subject of the keynote presentation at the 2014 Annual Peace Conference in Lincoln, Saturday, October 4. A panel of four presenters will provide an overview of our current water supply and use, projections for future availability, the social and economic impact of water (and food) shortages, and local initiatives to address this looming peril. Dr. Ann Bleed, past director of the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, is a hydrologist and expert on state and regional water policy. Professor Clint Rowe is a UNL climatologist and co-author of the university's climate assessment slated for release September 25. Retired UNL professor and

NFP president emeritus Paul Olson is one of the premier authorities on peacemaking in the state. And State Senator Ken Haar, District #21, is the Nebraska Legislature's leading environmental advocate. Together these four panelists will provide a well-rounded perspective on the challenge climate change and resource scarcity present to human society and the earth's ecosystem.



The 2014 Annual Peace Conference is co-sponsored by the University of Nebraska-Omaha Grace Abbott School of Social Work and will run from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at the Center for People in Need, 3901 N. 27th Street. Early registration cost, which includes breakfast and lunch, is just \$30. Visit www.nebraskansforpeace.org for information on how to early register, or contact the NFP State Office directly at 402-475-4620.

The morning keynote presentation on "Water and Peace" will be followed in the afternoon by a selection of Peace & Justice Workshops on timely political topics. Make your reservations now to attend this one-of-a-kind educational experience for the mind and heart.

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Nebraska Report

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Nebraskans for Peace

NFP is a statewide grassroots advocacy organization working nonviolently for peace with justice through community-building, education and political action.

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What We've Been Up To

by Paul A. Olson and Tessa Foreman

NFP has short-term issues and long-term ones. Obviously, now the short-term priorities have to do with the war in Ukraine, and that in Palestine/Israel, and the long-term ones have to do with climate change, and its certain effect on international aggression and efforts to create a decent way of life here and abroad. We also have justice issues here in Nebraska. To take these up in order:

Short Term: The war in Ukraine rumbles along as usual, but it is getting more international attention because of the downing of the Malaysian Airlines flight. Some writers have picked up on the elements of fascism in the Ukrainian government that we have spoken to, especially Stephen F. Cohen (<http://robinwestenra.blogspot.com/2014/07/stephen-f-cohen-on-ukraine.html>). This information dearly needs to be disseminated to the public. Letters to the editor are a prime venue.

In the Palestine/Israel area, we have called for an embargo on private arms sales to both sides and an embargo on U.S. government arms sales to Israel. We see little cause for optimism that the UN can do much in the crisis there because the United States will veto any solution that grants rights to the Palestinians. Nebraskans for Peace members have participated in a number of demonstrations and letter-writing efforts to local and statewide newspapers concerning the bloodletting there.

Long Term: In the area of climate change, we have continued working to promote the development of renewable energy, and are greatly cheered by the recent actions of the Omaha Public Power District and Lincoln Electric System. OPPD's new long-range plan dramatically reduces its carbon footprint and LES's new solar program is among the most creative and progressive in the country. Berkshire Hathaway's industry-leading investments in renewable energy are cause for celebration as well. But we still have our work cut out for us in terms of getting Warren Buffett to repudiate his financial stake in tar sands and coal transportation. The Lincoln lantern float,

observing the 69th anniversary of the opening of the nuclear age, examined not only the tragedy of the first nuclear detonations in this country, in Japan and the South Pacific, but also the tragedy of Fukushima and the possibility that relatively soon Nebraska may be able to wean itself not only from coal, but also from nuclear energy. The impact of climate change on our water supply will be the focus of the 2014 Annual Peace Conference, which dovetails neatly with the leading role NFP has assumed in state discussions over food security and localization of our food supply.

On other fronts, the Lincoln Chapter held a meeting in conjunction with the Lincoln Foundation and developed a call for prison reform and better mental health services in Nebraska. The Omaha Chapter has begun a long discussion of and mobilization about neighborhood violence in Omaha and of the extent to which peace education at the neighborhood level could lead to lowered murder rates in that community.

The Grand Island Chapter has kept alive its weekly vigils and letter-writing efforts, and the Crete Chapter has held its annual auction festival.

An area in which members can help: we have sent questionnaires concerning positions on issues that we deem important to the major Nebraska legislative candidates, candidates for statewide office, and the candidates for the national House and Senate. We plan to distribute the replies to our membership without comment so you can know where these office-seekers stand; however, almost no candidates have replied so far.

We need you to go to candidate meetings and ask them why they haven't replied. A democracy can't work if those who are running for office in it are not willing to tell the constituents what they are for and what they are against. If you are going to attend a candidate meeting, please write to Tessa Foreman at tessa6161@gmail.com so that she can send you the questionnaire that your candidate has not answered, and you can ask him or her about it in a public forum.



An Appeal to the Peace and Climate Movements

We are at a crossroads, faced with a climate crisis that threatens to end our world as we know it.

The signs of climate change are all around us. They include—increasingly severe weather everywhere (floods, heat waves, droughts, cyclones and wildfires), as well as melting polar ice and glaciers, rising acidic oceans, and thawing of the Siberian permafrost, which threatens release of huge, devastating, methane gas emissions.

If we pursue business as usual we face a world of food shortages caused by drought, increasing disease and deaths, and displacement from vast areas of flooded and uninhabitable terrain. We must do all in our power to stop greenhouse gas emissions, counteract the effects, and prevent the increase of global warming.

Stop the War... Stop the Warming

But the developing climate emergency does not exist in isolation. And we must understand and confront the social and economic context that produced and accompanies it: war and unlimited military expenditures, corporate globalization, vast social inequality and racism.

- The U.S. military is the single greatest institutional producer of greenhouse gases in the world.
- Wars by their very nature destroy the environment and burn and release massive amounts of greenhouse gases. Recent military mobilizations are pouring huge amounts of new carbon emissions into the atmosphere.
- The vast expenditures now consumed by military machines are the very resources needed for a crash program to rapidly create a renewable energy infrastructure and put millions of people to work in green jobs.
- Wars and military buildup are in large part dedicated to controlling the fossil fuel energy resources on which our present model of global economic development and endless growth depend. Resort to armed conflict is increasing as fossil fuels become more expensive and difficult to extract, transport and produce.
- Nuclear weapons, like climate change, threaten to destroy the world. There are nine nuclear-armed nations and estimated 16,400 nuclear weapons in the world. With ten wars and 34 limited conflicts now occurring, the chance of any one of them escalating to nuclear war and its unthinkable human and environmental impact is an ever-present specter. Nuclear power is not a green alternative energy. It produces large amounts of radioactive nuclear waste, poses the risk of catastrophic accidents, and contributes to the global proliferation of nuclear weapons.
- Corporate dominance and extreme social inequality are intrinsic to our expansionist global economic model.
- The UN Millennium Development Goals in conjunction with other forces have begun to lift the poorest billion of humanity out of extreme poverty. The damage now coming as a result of climate change threatens to erase and even reverse whatever progress has been made.

- The people most affected by climate change are those with the fewest resources to deal with it. With increasing environmental destruction, droughts, floods, and famine, there will be massive displacement of impoverished and desperate people leading to forced migration and regional hostilities. Within the U.S., the people most affected include the poor, those in prison or nursing homes, the disabled and others who don't have the freedom or ability to leave when disaster threatens or strikes.
- Two examples of long-term-drought-induced Climate Wars are the tragedies in Somalia and Syria. In the latter case, a five-year drought was one of the contributors to an ongoing civil war. Somalia has been at war for 20 years, and that conflict has also embroiled neighboring Kenya and Ethiopia.
- Rather than taking emergency measures to address climate change and the needs of those impacted now, our military is preparing to control these displacements to protect "U.S. interests."

We who have opposed the toxic, polluting, life- and earth-destroying wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the existential threat of nuclear weapons are in total support of the People's Climate March and its vision of a world without fossil fuels and the fires of war. We will march, we will demand divestment and fight denial, we will battle the pollution of Big Money, and we will join in demanding that the Obama Administration step forward to achieve a 2015 global treaty to phase out greenhouse gas emissions.

We call on all who want to preserve our planet to join the People's Climate March in New York City on September 21st, which is also the International Day of Peace, and to form a Stop the Wars, Stop the Warming Contingent. We are organizing under the following principles:

- We can't effectively address climate change without ending war and militarism.
- We can't end war without ending the fossil fuel energy system. • We can't address social injustice unless we stop using war to safeguard an economic infrastructure (based on fossil fuels) that produces and requires vast social inequality.
- We can't end war unless we address the systemic inequality and corporate domination that requires and produces it.
- We must insist that the transition to a sustainable economy and green jobs not be accomplished at the expense of those now employed in the fossil fuel and military sectors and the communities in which they work and live. Energy and armament corporations should bear the lion's share of the social cost to make that transition a just one.

We call on our government to —

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Reflections on My Visit to Hiroshima

by Susan Alleman

NFP Organizational Administrator Susan Alleman presented the following report about her recent trip to Hiroshima at the 2014 Annual Lantern Float in Lincoln, August 9.

I am here talking to you tonight because my son, Eli, and I had the great fortune of visiting Japan this summer. This opportunity arose because of the efforts of my friend, and NFP friend, author, and professor Nobuko Tsukui. She returns to Lincoln each year to attend the lantern float, and I have been lucky enough to get to become her friend and admirer. Through her efforts I not only figured out what I had to do to visit Japan, but she also introduced Eli and me to two amazing people, to Akiko and Taido Sasaki. Mr. Sasaki is the Go-ju-shoku of the Jokoji temple in Osaka, Japan and wrote the sermon that began this NFP Lantern Float. The Sasaki's were gracious enough to let Eli and me stay with them at their temple for eight days in which we were treated with so much kindness and graciousness.

We spent much time discussing topics over dinner. We learned about the Buddhist way and the gentleness and forgiveness inherent in their religion—a kindness and gentleness inherent in our hosts as well. The Sasaki's took us sight-seeing to several places in and around Osaka, but one place outside Osaka we went with them, Hiroshima, is the one I want to tell you about tonight.

We had the opportunity to visit the city of Hiroshima. While we were there, we visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum located in Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, a museum dedicated to documenting the atomic bombing that occurred there, with the additional aim of promoting world peace. The park itself is also dedicated to the legacy of Hiroshima as the first city of the world to suffer a nuclear attack and to the memories of the bomb's direct and indirect victims, of which there have been as many as 140,000—70,000 of whom died immediately.

The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park is located in the center of Hiroshima, in

what used to be a busy downtown-commercial and residential district that then became an open field, created by the explosion. The first thing we saw, glaring down at us was the A-dome. The A-dome, what used to be a very busy governmental building, was the only structure left standing in the area where the atomic bomb exploded. Through the efforts of many people, including those of the city of Hiroshima, it has been preserved in the same state that it was in immediately after the bombing—a skeleton of



Pictured from the left are Mr. Taido Sasaki, Eli Fisher, Susan Alleman and Mr. Kosei Mito at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park.

a building, only the framework surviving, preserved by Japan as a symbol for peace.

One of the main purposes for establishing the Peace Memorial Park and the Peace Monuments is not only to memorialize the victims, but to establish a lasting memory of the nuclear horror and to advocate for world peace.

This is what I feel is the purpose of holding the lantern float in Lincoln every year. We must, of course, honor those people that lost their lives, but we must

remember the horror, year after year, or really day after day. We must establish a memory of nuclear horror in all of us that have never experienced or even fathomed it. And we must continue to advocate for world peace.

So many things struck me when I first arrived in Hiroshima, but the first thing I want to mention is the naming of the memorials “Peace” memorials. Something catastrophic, horrible—heinous really—happened to these people and they choose

Kosei Mito. He was in his mother's womb when the bomb went off. He is now a volunteer guide at the park. He sets up a table every day, filled with materials about what happened on that day. I read his mother's firsthand account of what she witnessed. It is something she had not spoken of for Mr. Kosei's entire life and something she wishes never to speak of again. He spoke to us about his grandfather who was within blocks of where the bomb exploded. The grandfather died after three weeks of intense suffering at their home.

One of the main purposes for establishing the Peace Memorial Park and the Peace Monuments is not only to memorialize the victims, but to establish a lasting memory of the nuclear horror and advocate for peace.

and have chosen to focus on the aspect of peace, to strive for world peace. They did not focus on resentment or retaliation. They focused on Peace. I find that to be such a beautiful sentiment.

The next thing I want to mention is actually the first thing that struck me. And that is the intense feelings that flowed through me just being there. I am sure there are no words that I can use to describe to you, or to help you understand that intensity. I will do my best.

When we first arrived at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, we met a man named

Mr. Sasaki, our wonderful host, told Mr. Kosei that we were visiting from Lincoln, Nebraska and that we held our own lantern float commemoration every year, similar to the ones held every year in Hiroshima. He was very touched by this and decided to take us on a personal tour of the area. He took us to the exact spot where less than one-third of a mile over my head the devastating bomb exploded. I was standing in the exact spot, looking up. I had chills over my whole body as I stood there staring, unbelieving. I began looking around me and seeing this spot as

Statement by Nobuko Tsukui at the 2014 Annual Lantern Float



Nobuko Tsukui of Tokyo, a scholar of Japanese literature of the Atomic Bomb, delivered the following remarks at the NFP Lincoln Chapter's annual Hiroshima/Nagasaki Lantern Float commemoration.

Today, August 9, is Nagasaki Day. A year from now, August 2015, will mark the 70th anniversary of the dropping of atomic bombs on Japan. But, as you and I know, the first man-made nuclear explosion occurred on July 16, 1945 in the United States. And “Trinity”—a designation rather disturbing to say the least with its obvious Christian reference—is the code name given to designate that first test and the test site. Trinity Site is inside White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico.

In other words, the earth was the world’s first victim (hibakusha) of atomic bombing.

Hayashi Kyoko, a Nagasaki hibakusha writer, visited Trinity Site in 1999 and observed: “Until this moment, until I came to stand here at Trinity Site, I had believed that the

first victims of the nuclear devastation on earth were we, the human beings. That is not so. Earlier victims are here. They are here, but they can neither cry nor shout...” (*Trinity To Trinity*)

Further, Jonathan Schell, who was dedicated to abolishing nuclear weapons, wrote this warning as early as in 1982: “The earth is the largest of the support systems for life, and the impairment of the earth is the largest of the perils posed by nuclear weapons.” (*The Fate of the Earth*)

Schell died of cancer in March of this year. Also here I wish to invoke Chief Seattle’s profound wisdom: “The Earth is Sacred.”

Despite such wisdom and warnings, the earth (both the land and the sea) has been hurt ever since—not only by the two bombs dropped in August 1945 but also by nuclear weapons-testing in the decades following. And I regret to remind us that only nine years after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan experienced another major nuclear disaster in 1954, when a Japanese fishing vessel was covered with the “ashes of death” as a result of the U.S. H-bomb testing at Bikini Atoll, and one of the crew members died of radiation disease.

In the 21st century, Japan met an unprecedented nuclear crisis—the meltdown at Fukushima in March 2011. As the entire world recognizes, this is the worst case among many grievous accidents in the so-called ‘peaceful use’ of nuclear energy. What we ought to realize is the fact that Fukushima was NOT the first NOR the only nuclear accident in Japan. While

the world remembers the Three Mile Island accident (March 28, 1979), and another, much worse disaster at Chernobyl in 1986, not many seem to remember the severe accident at the Tokai Mura plant in Japan in 1999, which killed two men. The meltdown at Fukushima occurred 12 years later. I cannot emphasize enough that the

*The earth was the
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(hibakusha) of
atomic bombing.*

advancement of science and technology could enhance the quality of life of human beings, but it could also lead to the situation which no human power could control; the history of the development of nuclear energy is the most devastating illustration of this.

And, as early as in 1981 or 33 years ago, Hayashi Kyoko was making this prophetic statement: “...What kind of ‘peace’ is meant in the phrase ‘peaceful use’ of nuclear energy?... If there is an assurance that the peaceful use of nuclear energy is absolutely safe for the human body, I want to receive an explanation for such an assurance...” (Naki ga Gotoki [As If Nonexistent])

Still, in Japan the myth of the safety of nuclear power had prevailed until March 2011. The world witnessed how utterly defenseless a nuclear power plant could be against the combined forces of earthquake and tsunami.

Since the operation of nuclear power plants in Japan started in the 1960s, this summer marks the first summer in Japan when no nuclear power reactor at any plant is in operation. But it does not mean that Japan is turning away from nuclear power. The current Japanese government of Prime Minister Abe is positively supporting the policy to continue to rely on nuclear power. He has publicly stated that, as soon as the safety of a given nuclear power plant is officially declared by Japan’s Nuclear Regulatory Commission, its nuclear reactor will be reactivated.

Two years ago, I reported at this lantern float series my interview with the then Mayor of Tokai Mura. He is now retired, but he was among the first Japanese administrative officials to state publicly that all nuclear power plants in Japan should be shut down. One of the reasons for the shutdown he gives is the most obvious fact: that Japan, about the shape and size of the state of California, sits right on active faults. Earthquakes occur daily, and threats of tsunamis are constant. How could any sane mind have planned to install 54 nuclear reactors, all along the coast, to begin with? Another Fukushima nuclear disaster would finish Japan.

Now, what can I do in my very limited capacity? I would keep reminding us that individual human beings will suffer most in the devastation caused either by nuclear weapons or by nuclear power accidents, and that, therefore, we should speak out: Let us show the respect for life—life of all that this planet earth has embraced and sustained from time immemorial.

Thank you.

What's HOT in Global Warming?

by Professor Bruce E. Johansen

The Example of the Moapa Paiutes

For an inspiring story of how some plucky citizens shut down a smoke-belching, sulfur-spewing, carbon-pumping coal-fired power plant and engineered a shift to clean, renewable energy, consider the experience of the Moapa Paiutes. After decades of suffering the sickening ash clouds of an old coal-fired plant, this tiny American Indian tribe living about 50 miles, as the ash flies, north of Las Vegas, Nevada, not only retired the facility, but convinced the Interior Department to site a solar-power array nearby, creating jobs.

The Reid Gardner Generating Station, adjacent to the Moapa River Reservation, is the last coal-burning power plant in Nevada. The Moapa Paiute members say they have witnessed the health of the tribe plummet since the plant was built in 1965. "In my era, we were all healthy people," Aletha Tom, who runs the Moapa schoolhouse, said. "We didn't have the asthma, thyroid problems, cancer, diabetes, but we have that on our reservation. It's so major now."

According to the *Indian Country Today Media Network*, tribal members say that air pollution from the plant in the form of toxic coal dust arrives in giant

clouds that send people scurrying indoors. But that's not the only problem they have observed. "There are also several settling ponds for coal ash residue, there are enormous piles of coal that are uncovered, and a huge coal ash landfill that is also uncovered," said Barb Boyle of the Sierra Club, in an article published on

After decades of suffering the sickening ash clouds of an old coal-fired plant, this tiny American Indian tribe living about 50 miles, as the ash flies, north of Las Vegas, Nevada, not only retired the facility, but convinced the Interior Department to site a solar-power array nearby, creating jobs.

the *Huffington Post*. Boyle said that the tribe "has borne this burden for decades. It's time to stop."

And thanks to the tribe's persistence, the public was starting to notice. Environmental organizations from the Sierra Club to Earthjustice and Greenpeace were actively aiding the campaign. Nevada Senator Harry Reid called the Reid Gardner Power Station a "dirty relic" and supported its closure. And local television stations and newspapers began to bring the plague of ash-borne illness to a broader audience. A video, "An Ill Wind: The Secret Threat of

Coal Ash," reached people from the tribe's website, reporting that the power station "dumps toxin-laden coal ash, a byproduct of combustion, into landfills that lie just a few hundred yards from the reservation. On windy days, coal-ash dust from the plant billows over the reservation, with clouds so thick that you can see and taste

said Vickie Simmons, a leader of the Moapa Paiutes' committee for health and the environment. "And for the sake of our families' health, we must ensure that the toxic waste from the power plant is fully cleaned up. The safety of our community and the future of our children depend on it."

William Anderson, Moapa

ing the retirement of three of the plant's four units by 2014, with the fourth and final unit slated to close in 2017. No sooner was the retirement schedule announced, however, than Reid Gardner's unwilling neighbors found themselves facing a new problem: ramping up pressure on the plant's owner, NV Energy, Inc. (which

had just been acquired by Berkshire Hathaway's Mid-American Energy Holdings the month before), to clean up its residue of pollution. "Now, we have to find out what kind of remediation they're going to do," Tribal President William Anderson told the *Associated Press*. "To us, the



them, tribal members say. At such times, residents don't dare let their children play outside. That apparently offers limited protection, though, as the dust seeps into homes, schools and cars."

An Earth Day 2012 protest seemed to mark a tipping point in the Moapa Paiute's long campaign. The tribe, in conjunction with members of the Sierra Club, conducted a three-day, 50-mile "Cultural Healing Walk" to Las Vegas in 100-degree temperatures. "We are all looking forward to the retirement of the Reid Gardner coal-fired plant that has for decades polluted our reservation,"

Band Chairman, said: "The high percentage of thyroid and respiratory problems is a big concern for the tribal members on the reservation. We need a proper study from air monitoring equipment installed on the reservation to study the emissions we're breathing in. That would help determine what needs to be do for our people's health. We also need more stringent storage conditions for coal ash and a study to be conducted to show the health risks associated with breathing in coal ash."

In June 2013, just over a year later, Nevada Governor Brian Sandoval signed a law mandat-

ultimate goal would be to remove everything and put the land back the way it was. We'll be able to come to closure after almost 50 years."

On August 8, 2013, the Tribe and the Sierra Club filed suit in U.S. District Court, Las Vegas, Nevada, to legally compel the cleanup. The lawsuit claimed "that the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and the Clean Water Act have both been violated over the years by dumping that has compromised the health of nearby residents and threatens the drinking water of

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Psychology & Economics

Economists Are More Human Than They Think, Unfortunately

by Hendrik Van den Berg
UNL Professor of Economics

After attending two psychology conferences this summer, I confirmed my worst fears about economists' poor understanding of human psychology. The many papers presented at the conferences suggested a very different form of human behavior than economists customarily assume in their economic and financial models. And I have to presume that psychologists are

I have to presume that psychologists are closer to the truth about human behavior than my economist colleagues. After all, economists have made little effort to align their behavioral models to reality, while psychologists have as their main focus the understanding of human behavior.

closer to the truth about human behavior than my economist colleagues. After all, economists have made little effort to align their behavioral models to reality, while psychologists have as their main focus the understanding of human behavior.

The mathematical macroeconomic and financial models economists use generally assume that human beings rationally analyze a wide range of information in

reaching economic decisions. Individuals are assumed to carefully weigh the present relative to the future in making long-term decisions. Economists' most egregious assumption is that people behave as pure individuals and make decisions with only their own well-being in mind.

Economists utilize a very strange definition of rationality—namely that humans carefully weigh all facts and ideas known to humanity in making every decision. The complexity of life and the scarcity of time make this definition not just unrealistic, but absurd. Humans do not, and cannot, meet such a definition of rationality. Getting on with life and the business at hand requires rules of thumb, morals embedded in overarching cultures, and dealing with current problems first, regardless of long-run issues. Human evolution occurred in a real world, not a mythical mathematical one. So people learned to 'do the best they could under the circumstances'—a perfectly rational approach to life. Perfectly informed deliberation with respect to every daily decision would not be rational because you probably would not get out the door at the start of the day.

The sessions I attended at the psychology conferences this summer suggest that human behavior is indeed quite different from that assumed by economists. Study after study attested to the social nature of human beings. People are very conscious of their standing in life; they both care for and despise others, often very strongly; and they are very selective and biased with regard to the information they use in making decisions. Humans are strongly influenced by the cultures they and their ancestors collectively developed, which gives a certain momentum to human behavior. None of these characteristics of human behavior match economists' assumption that humans are 'rational' in objectively calculating how each decision affects their own well-being.

Economists' Own Behavior Does not Match their Model

If anyone were to behave as 'rationally' as economists presume, one would think it would be economists themselves. But, interestingly, that is not the case. An obvious example is how economists are discussing the lingering economic reces-

Neither policy as suggested can 'restore' long-run economic growth to our economy. Economic growth cannot be restored. At least not the type of growth we are familiar with. Given our clear environmental constraints, neither Paul has a viable long-run economic policy.

The type of economic growth we have experienced over the past 200 years cannot

Economists utilize a very strange definition of rationality—namely that humans carefully weigh all facts and ideas known to humanity in making every decision. The complexity of life and the scarcity of time make this definition not just unrealistic, but absurd. Humans do not, and cannot, meet such a definition of rationality.

sion triggered by the 2007 financial crisis.

Granted, the current economic situation is complex, making it difficult to agree on the appropriate policies. And we currently see an active dispute within the economics profession. Should we impose austerity policies that reduce overall government deficits? Or, should we use the government to expand aggregate demand for output in order to increase employment? Both of these policy options are justified as reducing unemployment by, it is claimed, increasing economic growth. If you have followed this general policy debate, you will note, for example, that both Paul Krugman, an advocate of the latter approach, and Representative Paul Ryan, advocate of the former approach, emphasize how their suggested policies will restore economic growth. And herein lies mainstream economics' fundamental error.

continue because it cannot be further supported by our natural environment. The evidence clearly shows that atmospheric temperatures are rising, nature is failing to sustain many of the services that are critical to human life, and the widespread exploitation of nature is sharply reducing the biodiversity that safeguards our existence. There is no longer any doubt that 'growth' (by which we mean the massive use of carbon energy, the increase of material output per person, and the rapid growth of the overall human population) is the cause of this environmental degradation. And yet, economists across the political spectrum call for 'restoring growth' as quickly as possible.

Unfortunately, from an environmental perspective, the strange indecisive mixture of austerity (government budget

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Psychology & Economics, continued

cuts) and stimulative economic policies (mostly central bank money expansion) has ‘restored’ some of the lost economic growth. And, like clockwork, global carbon emissions and environmental degradation have picked up as well. We have now passed the 400 mark in carbon particles per million in the atmosphere—50 more than what climate scientists estimate is possible without accelerating rises in atmospheric temperatures.

One could argue that we are in an environmental-stress bubble—not unlike a financial bubble—that will explode sometime in the future. Unfortunately, just as economists did not foresee the dot.com bubble that was quite obvious to many ordinary observers in 2000 or the 2007-2008 debt bubbles, nearly all economists are ignoring this environmental bubble.

Economists’ Self-Serving Culture of Growth

Economists’ failure to anticipate long-term problems should not be surprising. Economists are just people, after all. Psychologists often point out that people routinely favor the present over the future. This is perfectly reasonable behavior from an evolutionary perspective. Fortunately for us, we exist today because our ancestors were good at quickly focusing on immediate problems, like the bear at the mouth of the cave or the enemy in the bushes. Evolution teaches us that there is no long run if short-term threats are not dealt with.

So, economists, like all people, continue to deal with immediate problems while ignoring long-run issues. For example, it is easier to analyze economic problems using well-known models taught in graduate school rather than developing entirely new models that better capture the complexity of real life. Economists generally find that they are more likely to hold on to their jobs if they conform to the culture of the profession. In general, an economist’s life is less difficult when he or she uses the standard jargon, the models that everyone is familiar with, and when only familiar topics are addressed. Hence, few economists act truly ‘rationally’ by carefully analyzing all available information and deciding to

deal with the very critical issue of long-run human survival in an environmentally stressed world. Thus, economists have largely ignored financial bubbles and long-run environmental problems.

Some of you might be amused to learn that economists do not even fit their own models of human behavior. However, in our complex modern society, in which our carbon footprint has become large enough to put the future of the planet’s ecosystem in jeopardy, we need someone to focus on the long-run consequences of our actions. Economists are an obvious professional group that should take up environmental issues. Yet, we are stuck with economists acting like normal people, seeking solutions

There is no longer any doubt that ‘growth’ (by which we mean the massive use of carbon energy, the increase of material output per person, and the rapid growth of the overall human population) is the cause of environmental degradation. And yet, economists across the political spectrum call for ‘restoring growth’ as quickly as possible.

to the immediate employment problem by means of policies that they should know will bring about more destructive growth and push the world towards environmental disaster.

The Motives for Growth Are Well-Entrenched in our System

Admittedly, there are, and have always been, economists who foresaw the dangers of financial bubbles. For example, Thorstein Veblen, whom I discussed in the *Nebraska Report* some months ago, warned us about the “financialization” of the capitalist economy more than a century ago. John Maynard Keynes also did. But note that these economists have been very intentionally pushed out of mainstream economic teaching and thinking, so that today most practicing economists have no analytic tools that give prominence to the possibility of financial instability.

This bias in economic methodology is not entirely accidental or innocently

cultural. Rather, there is a clear motive for the financial powers-that-be to induce economists, who are appreciated by the powerful as useful spinners of the stories that people rely on to make sense of their economic situation—to promote the ‘free-market’ creed. These ‘neoclassical’ economic models are effectively designed to paint the capitalist system in a positive light. Corporate and financial interests control the culture of economics by controlling funding at the prominent universities, by directly controlling the media through ownership and advertising revenue, and by directly hiring a large percentage of professional economists in the private financial industry.

Now, the same thing is happening with regard to how economists deal with environmental problems. By indoctrinating young economists into accepting the neoclassical models (including their odd assumptions on human behavior), wealthy interests can be assured that even the most conscientious economists will inadvertently reach ‘harmless’ conclusions. Effectively, the economics profession today has been deprived of the stories, models and methodology that would lead to more realistic and urgent conclusions about our environmental situation.

For example, the economic models we use assume all economic activity passes through the market system. The natural environment generally interacts with human economic activity outside organized markets, and consequently the environmental effects of economic activity are ignored when we use those models to analyze economic policies. Thus, by ignor-

Peace and Climate Movements, conclusion

- Undertake an emergency program to make all our cities energy efficient and to create a new energy grid based on renewable energy sources.
- End federal subsidies for the fossil fuel industries—coal, gas, oil and industrial biomass.
- End the 2005 “Cheney exemption” to the Clean Water Act for gas hydraulic fracking, which threatens clean water supplies to people in some 23 states. Strictly enforce the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts of 1970 in all energy production.
- Stop building new fossil fuel infrastructure, including the Keystone pipeline project, and rapidly end fracking projects and the awarding of any new offshore drilling contracts.
- Build a carbon-free, nuclear-free energy future and end subsidies for nuclear power. Implement a financial transaction tax to fund the new solar, wind, hydro, and efficiency programs we need globally and to help clean up the toxic mess of fossil and nuclear destruction.
- Join with all nuclear powers to abide by their treaty commitments and to move quickly toward mutual abolition of all nuclear weapons as required by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.
- Re-direct military spending to the creation of millions of green jobs and to research and develop a rapid but just transition from fossil fuels to non-polluting energy sources.
- Stop the military protection of fossil fuel interests in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world.
- Bring our all troops home now from Afghanistan and Iraq, reject military attacks in Iraq, Syria and Iran, and use the billions saved to invest in energy efficient mass transit and other public infrastructure, schools, affordable housing and sustainable union-standard jobs.
- Redefine the mission of U.S. military forces as defense of the United States instead of achieving “Full Spectrum Dominance” in the service of global corporations, the fossil fuel industry, and the military industrial complex that President Eisenhower warned against, thereby also allowing closure of most of our 1,000 or more foreign military bases.
- Stop blocking the proposals for effective international action on climate change put forward by the Group of 77 and other developing countries, starting at the UN on September 23, 2014. All countries must do something, but the countries which are most responsible for carbon emissions have the larger responsibility to commit resources to achieve an 85 percent cut in greenhouse gases by 2050. The wealthier developed countries should provide \$100 billion to an international fund for green industrial development in less-developed countries.

We can't afford the greenhouse gas emissions arising from the way we live and from war and preparation for war. And we can't afford the climate of mistrust and non-cooperation that military threats and intervention foster.

To successfully avert worst-case climate disaster we will need international agreements and cooperation on a scale not seen in the past; we need new approaches in order to demilitarize U.S. foreign policy and humanize domestic policy.

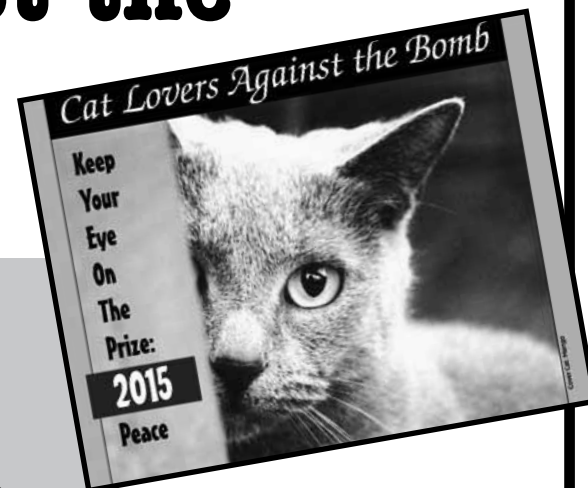
We believe that most Americans will welcome these positive changes. Working together, peace, climate and social justice activists can help make this happen.

We see September 21st as the coming together of the peace, climate and social justice movements and the beginning of a groundswell of public involvement in the creation of a more peaceful, sustainable and just world.

JOIN US! [peoplesclimate.org]

National and international organization signers include: Campaign for Peace and Development, Franciscan Action Network and Franciscan Earth Corps, Franciscans for Justice, Nonviolence International, International Peace Bureau, Pax Christi USA, Peace Action, U.S. Labor Against the War, U.S. Peace Council, and Veterans for Peace.

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Psychology & Economics, conclusion

One interesting group of economists that has been able to extract itself from the neoclassical culture of economics are the Économistes Atterrés (The Appalled Economists)...

ing environmental constraints, economists obviously will conclude that restoring economic growth would be a good way to reduce unemployment.

What If Economists Were Not Biased by their Culture?

One interesting group of economists that has been able to extract itself from the neoclassical culture of economics are the Économistes Atterrés (The Appalled Economists)—a French group that is openly appalled by the biases of mainstream economists. They advocate a set of policies to simultaneously deal with unemployment, social inequities and environmental degradation that has come to be known in France as *décroissance* (degrowth). *Décroissance* essentially seeks to replace growth with quality of life as the focus of economic analysis and economic policy. There is now even a monthly newspaper, available on all newsstands in that country, entitled *Décroissance: Le Journal de la Joie de Vivre* (Degrowth: The Newspaper for the Joy of Living).

Décroissance should not be confused with sustainable growth—a term so often used in the media and by many nonprofit environmental groups. The advocates of *décroissance* view sustainable growth as a contradiction in terms. The scientific evidence shows that the current model is not sustainable. *Décroissance* thus calls for a completely new economic paradigm, in which resource-intensive human production will be forced to diminish while resource-minimizing production that employs people and improves the quality of

life will be promoted. This new paradigm requires a new form of social technology that will enable humans to reorganize the way they go about living and interacting with their natural environment while improving social interaction.

Décroissance consists of a broad program to change human society. It refuses to be satisfied with making adjustments to our current system. The details of this new program are so pervasive that they will have to be collectively worked out. In fact, French groups like the Économistes Atterrés are actively discussing how such an alternative economic system can be obtained within a more democratic and participatory political system that also improves social outcomes and human satisfaction with life.

In a book entitled *Changer d'Économie* (Changing Economies), one group of appalled economists proposes the following program:

1. End the use of fossil fuels and nuclear energy by massively cutting energy usage and developing non-fossil and non-fissile fuels.

They advocate a set of policies to simultaneously deal with unemployment, social inequities and environmental degradation that has come to be known in France as ‘degrowth’—essentially replacing growth with quality of life as the focus of economic analysis and economic policy.

2. Expand public transportation to where it has the capacity to carry the entire population to work and leisure activities.
3. Shift freight to railroads and away from road traffic.
4. Implement food independence and agricultural sovereignty.
5. Promote public investment in economic restructuring, including public ownership of energy, transport, education and low-income housing infrastructure.
6. Use productivity increases to reduce work hours without reducing labor income.

7. Increase labor's share of total income and reduce capital's share, thereby improving the distribution of income.
8. Adjust work hours rather than the number of jobs.
9. Reduce the scope of the market economy and expand the public commons.
10. Establish a transparent process for evaluating the full environmental consequences of all human activities.

The gap between these proposals—all quite reasonable given the scope of our environmental challenges—and what mainstream economists are discussing today exemplifies the current failure of the economics profession.

Is This Really Possible?

Before we reject this attempt out of hand as being too idealistic or too radical, note that *décroissance* is no more radical than the monopolistic and financialized capitalism we now have. Granted, the capi-

talist system has created a powerful group of wealthy economic interests that have the economic and political clout to resist change, but the mere challenge of change should not discourage us. Our current monopolistic and financialized capitalism also completely reordered the way we live and interact with the environment. In fact, the system continues to bring very costly changes to our lives, so it is not really a matter of choosing between a presumed current stability and some unknown ideal.

We must make difficult long-run decisions—unfortunately without the help of complete information or perfect models of reality. We will have to develop dynamic planning mechanisms that can be adjusted



Hank Van den Berg, proud to stand with 'The Appalled Economists.'

as the uncertain future evolves. That is, we will have to make many more decisions in the future; there is no 'big bang' process here for which we only have to specify the starting point from which everything will follow automatically. We do not know enough to even contemplate such an approach, even though economists do exactly that when they embrace *laissez-faire* economics and put their faith in the invisible hand. The fact is that today's decisions are based on only partial understanding about how things will work out, and whatever we choose, we may not get things exactly right. We may even find that our initial decisions were very wrong. Therefore, we need to heed the Économistes Atterrés' call for a more democratic and participatory political system than we have in our current capitalist-controlled society.

Sadly, psychology suggests that most people are no more interested in making difficult long-run decisions, followed by continual assessment and review, than are economists. But eventually the short-run becomes the long-run, and according to our best understanding of the environmental processes currently underway, by then it will be too late. Given the desperation of our situation, I will take my chances with the results of a thorough debate under the guise of *décroissance*. I'm choosing to stand with "The Appalled."

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Speaking Our Peace

Hamas could have been "contained" without a single shot being fired. Now, or in 2012, 2008/9 and 2006. Yes, I find Hamas' extremist ideology, its past of suicide bombings abhorrent, and, like Israel's militarism, its swift resorting to violence despite its proven futility has been extremely costly. However... Hamas not only dropped its calls for the destruction of Israel from its election manifesto [but] indicated its willingness to accept a two-state solution along the pre-1967 borders. Before the latest conflict, Hamas even went so far as to cede political control to the Palestinian Authority and a government of technocrats in the desperate hope that this would lead to the lifting of the siege.

Despite all these clear overtures, Israel's extremist, jingoistic government...

has refused to play ball and finally find a way to coexist... If Israel and Egypt fail to find a way to live nonviolently with Hamas, history will continue to repeat itself, each time more tragically than the preceding time. And Gaza will become not only the graveyard of innocent civilians, but also the burial ground for the prospects for peace for generations to come.

From the mistaken narrative that we will work only with designated 'white hats' against 'black hats,' that rhetoric of democracy applies only to those governments we can control, we foment or enable war after war—in Iran, South America, Africa, and now in Israel-Egypt-Gaza. Such a policy buries any prospect for peace, and the hypocrisy of it all loses us many a war.

Visit to Hiroshima, conclusion

if it I was there that fateful day. The feeling is one I cannot describe, nor one I ever want to feel again. The very hypocenter of all the incredible destruction and where all those deaths occurred, was right where I was standing.

Lastly, I want to mention one other aspect of this experience. And this I express to you as a mother, a mother traveling alone with her child. My son's name is Eli. Eli and I decided to go on this adventure before he starts junior high school this year, so we could experience a different culture and see the world outside of the United States, something I had never really done before now and something I wanted to share with him.

While touring the museum, I learned that at the time of the bombing the city held 8,200 students ages 12 and up. These children had been mobilized to work for the war effort. They were there to demolish buildings, clear lanes, open fire-fighting spaces and create firebreaks across the city

because of all of the firebombing that was occurring across their country.

At 8:15 a.m. 80 percent of those children were killed that day. That is over 6,000 children. My child turns 12 this year. That could have been him there. He would have been mobilized.

As we walked through the museum we saw many pictures of children, some dead, some still alive with their skin literally melting off of their bodies, suffering. There was so much suffering in all of the pictures, in all of the faces, both dead and alive. Seeing all of the mementos in the museum that belonged to those children—the small melted lunch box, the burned-up tricycle, the singed clothes—made it all very real.

Our guide, Kosei Mito, goes out every single day to talk about what happened on that day. He does that because he has a strong belief that everyone should know what happened in Hiroshima, so we never let it happen again. I feel that way too. We must not forget.

What's HOT?, conclusion

millions." The lawsuit alleges that for several years the power plant illegally dumped toxins into the Muddy River flowing into the Lake Mead reservoir behind Hoover Dam, a source of drinking water for more than 2 million people.

First American Indian Solar Project

With the Tribe's exposure to the hazards coal-fired energy hopefully beginning to abate, the Moapa Paiutes are turning their sights to clean energy. President Anderson told the *Indian Country Today Media Network* in June 2013 that "The Interior Department gave the Moapa Paiutes fast-tracked approval to build the first-ever utility-scale solar-energy project on tribal lands—which seems especially suitable in this region of year-round scorching sun. The 350-megawatt plant, to be built on Moapa Paiute trust land, should generate enough power for 100,000 homes, according to the agency, which says the project will mean.

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by Loyal Park, Nebraska Peace Foundation President

Over the past several years we have had many supporters let us know they are including the Nebraska Peace Foundation in their wills or IRAs. This is very helpful especially if we know the approximate amounts. Also we need to be advised if the amount increases or decreases. This information helps us plan in covering a portion of NFP's educational expenses in the years ahead.



All such information is kept confidential by the NFP Board. You may contact Paul Olson, Mark Vasina or myself with your updated information. Or if you haven't already made a commitment, please consider doing so now.

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Speaking Our Peace

We have watched too many westerns. Everywhere we look for white or black hats: Mr. Spocks or Khan Noonien Singhs; Gandalfs or Saurons. History is not so colored. It is a spectrum of grays.

When the “Arab Spring” came to Egypt, many of us—including me, including the President—greeted it. We were happy to see the old crook and tyrant Mubarak get his comeuppance. But then Mohammed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood was elected Egypt's president in a free, democratic election. In the first round Morsi got 25 percent of the vote, Shafik 24 percent, Sabahi 21 percent, Abdel Fotouh 18 percent, and Moussa 11 percent; in the second, Morsi had 51.7 percent versus 48.3 percent for Shafik. Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood party, prior to the Arab Spring, had been forbidden to organize politically since 1954 and had an anti-Jewish history. Obviously, neither the United States nor Israel wanted him. We wanted and supported someone like Omar Suleiman, the CIA's point man for Egyptian torture after 9/11.

It wasn't long accordingly before Mohammed Morsi's and the new Egypt's faults began to appear in West-

ern media. Coptic Christians were under assault; the economy was in shambles; the constitution—boycotted by liberals and Coptic Christians—affirmed Islamic law and seemed to suggest state-controlled arts. It placed heavy family duties on women, gave extraordinary powers to the president, and set a rush date for final approval. There was plenty to be nervous about. Yet, after his fall, on July 9, 2014, Mr. Morsi was called by the *Washington Post* the one man who could have made peace (at least between Israel and the Palestinians) because he loosened restrictions on Gaza and seemed to mediate even-handedly between Israel and Hamas. Now deposed, he is on trial for having conspired with Hamas to have them commit terrorist acts in Egypt—a trial generally regarded as a show.

Since Morsi had only a 25-percent plurality in the first election and a slim majority in the second, since most of the Egyptian army (trained in the U.S. and answering its beck and call) had U.S. loyalties, it was not hard to destabilize Egypt and get rid of a potential peacemaker. Didn't even cost much.

An in-depth reporting group at the University of California at Berkeley has established that the U.S. and U.S. surro-

gates—especially the “U.S. Democratic Assistance Program”—poured money into Egypt through front groups such as the “National Endowment for Democracy.” The money, in turn, was funneled to anti-Morsi agitators like former police colonel Omar Afifi Soliman and his 83,000 followers, who used social media and *YouTube* to encourage violent overthrow of the government. Soliman took personal credit for the December 2012 assault on the presidential palace with guns and Molotov cocktails. The U.S. funded other anti-Morsi groups as well: the Salvation Front, the Egyptian Democratic Academy, and the Hand-in-Hand for Egypt Associates (which funded opposition from Egypt's Christians and received \$13 million). The Berkeley report says that, contrary to American law, these monies funded and supported violent protests against Morsi and the planning of violent activities to depose him.

In a recently founded democracy where the vote was about even and the democratic process fragile, our government paid to kill the little extant spark of democracy and replaced Morsi with the army's Abdel Fatah al-Sissi amid unbelievable human rights abuses. The Muslim Brotherhood is now gone—utterly suppressed.

On Black and White & Many Shades of Gray

by Paul Olson, NFP President Emeritus

Al-Sissi, favorable to Israel (one critic even accused him of being a Jew), immediately began efforts to squeeze Hamas in Gaza just as the Palestinian group was withdrawing its backing from Assad's Syrian government to support the rebels (now ISIS)—thereby destroying its support from both Syria and Iran.

To further tighten the vise on Hamas, the U.S. brought Israel and the new Egypt together. But neither nation needed any additional prodding. Indeed, they went well beyond the White House's expectations. Al-Sissi ramped up the Gaza blockade, and well-placed sources in Egypt told *Reuters* that Egypt would soon topple Hamas. Hamas was desperate on all fronts. *The Wall Street Journal*, in fact, blames the war between Israel and Hamas on this ‘squeeze play’ by the Egyptians and Israelis that left Hamas with nothing to lose.

Once again, our arbitrary picking of ‘white hats,’ our rhetoric of democracy (but not our respect for it) has destroyed an opportunity for peace. As *Haaretz*, Israel's opposition newspaper writes:

The sad ironic tragedy is that

conclusion on page 11