

# Holocaust Namenmonument Nederland



*Holocaust Namenmonument Nederland*

Ruim 102.000 slachtoffers van de Holocaust hebben na meer dan 75 jaar na de Tweede Wereldoorlog een eigen monument gekregen. In Amsterdam is een monument verrezen met alle namen van de Nederlandse Holocaustslachtoffers die geen graf hebben. Alle namen van Joden, Sinti en Roma die vanuit Nederland zijn vervolgd en gedeporteerd, alsmede gedeporteerde Nederlandse Joden woonachtig in andere landen, die in naziconcentratie- en vernietigingskampen zijn vermoord, alsook zij die zijn omgekomen door honger of uitputting tijdens transporten en dodenmarsen en waar geen graf van bekend is (lees ook: [Welke namen komen er op het monument?](#)). Daarmee heeft Nederland eindelijk een tastbaar gedenkteken waar 102.000 Joden en 220 Sinti en Roma zowel individueel als collectief kunnen worden herdacht.

Tot aan september 2021 kende Nederland geen monument waar elk individueel slachtoffer van de Holocaust met naam en toenaam wordt genoemd.

## *Massavernietiging*

Tussen 1933 en 1945 zijn naar schatting 6 miljoen Joden en honderdduizenden Sinti en Roma omgebracht door de nazi's. Van de 140.000 Joden die in 1940 in Nederland woonden, hebben er 102.000 de oorlog niet overleefd.

Niet alle Joden zijn vermoord in de gaskamers van vernietigingskampen zoals Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, Belzec, Majdanek, Chelmno en Sobibor. Velen zijn omgekomen door massa-executies, ziekte, honger, uitputting of het verrichten van slavenarbeid. Het Holocaust Namenmonument Nederland herdenkt al deze

slachtoffers.



*Ontwerp Holocaust Namenmonument*

Het Nederlandse Auschwitz Comité heeft samen met de Pools-Joodse architect Daniel Libeskind op 16 december 2016 het nieuwe ontwerp voor het Holocaust Namenmonument Nederland gepresenteerd. Dit nationale monument is - meer dan 70 jaar na afloop van de Tweede Wereldoorlog - gerealiseerd in het hart van het Joods Kwartier in Amsterdam, daar waar het zich heeft afgespeeld.

Het monument omvat vier Hebreeuwse letters die samen het woord weergeven, dat 'In herinnering aan' betekent. Als bezoekers de gedenkplaats binnenkomen treden zij een labyrint van gangen tegemoet met aan beide zijden twee meter hoge bakstenen muren die de boodschap 'In herinnering aan' dragen. Op elk van de 102.000 stenen wordt een naam, geboortedatum en de leeftijd bij overlijden gegraveerd, zodanig dat de namen van de slachtoffers aanraakbaar zijn. De muren met namen dragen vier objecten van spiegelen roestvrijstaal.

#### *Daniel Libeskind ontwerper Holocaust Namenmonument Nederland*

Het Holocaust Namenmonument Nederland wordt ontworpen door de Pools-Amerikaanse architect Daniel Libeskind (Lodz, 1946). In New York zei Libeskind 'vereerd' te zijn met de uitnodiging voor Nederland een Holocaustmonument te ontwerpen.



Libeskind is de zoon van Holocaust-overlevenden. In 1964 emigreerde hij met zijn familie naar Amerika. Als architect verwierf Libeskind vooral bekendheid met zijn ontwerpen voor het Joods Museum in Berlijn en het masterplan voor de herbouw van het World Trade Center in New York. In mei 2013 werd Libeskind ook al aangewezen als architect van een Holocaust memorial in Columbus, de hoofdstad van de Amerikaanse staat Ohio.

Libeskinds studio ontwierp vele musea en andere culturele en openbare gebouwen verspreid over de wereld. Libeskind zelf bekleedde een groot aantal leerstoelen, onder meer aan de Universiteit van Toronto, waar hij als eerste de Frank O. Gehry leerstoel bezette. De lange lijst van prijzen die hij ontving, vermeldt ook de Hiroshima Kunst Prijs (2001) voor kunstenaars die in hun werk internationaal begrip en vrede propageren. De prijs was niet eerder aan een architect toegekend.

In 2011 hield Libeskind de achtste Nooit Meer Auschwitz Lezing in Amsterdam, bij welke gelegenheid hem de Annetje Fels Kupferschmidt Onderscheiding werd uitgereikt. De prijs wordt jaarlijks uitgereikt aan een persoon of organisatie die zich op buitengewone wijze verdienstelijk heeft gemaakt voor het realiseren van de doelstellingen van het Nederlands Auschwitz Comité.

Zie: <https://www.holocaustnamenmonument.nl>

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# Ending The Fossil Fuel Era Is The

# Only Way To Halt Global Warming And Stop Environmental Injustice



CJ

*Polychroniou*

*The decarbonization ideals underlying the Green New Deal provide the only realistic way to halt global warming and build a sustainable, resilient, and equitable future.*

Environmental justice is a crucial component of the broader struggle for a sustainable, resilient, and equitable future. So is the end of the fossil fuel era; in fact, decarbonization and environmental justice go hand in hand.

The environmental justice movement traces its origins to the [Civil Rights Movement](#) of the 1960s. As such, it is deeply rooted in black history.

The Memphis Sanitation Strike in 1968, which drew [Martin Luther King Jr.](#), is regarded as the first nationally mobilized protest against environmental injustice.

In 1982, African Americans organized a mass protest against a polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) landfill in [Warren County](#), North Carolina, an event that served as the catalyst for the birth of a political movement dedicated to fighting environmental injustice and environment racism.

Of course, other communities of color had also mobilized against potential environmental threats, even before Warren County. In the 1960s, [Cesar Chavez](#) led a fight to organize migrant farmworkers. He founded the National Farm Workers Association in 1962 with the aim of overthrowing a farm labor system in the US that treated farm workers as slaves. Chavez had also recognized early on the dangers of exposing farm workers to pesticides in the fields, and in the early 1970s campaigned successfully to have [DDT](#) banned on account of its adverse environmental effects.

There can be no denying that minority and low-income communities have

historically borne a disproportionate burden of environmental risks. Poor and racial-ethnic minority populations are far more likely to live near polluters and breathe polluted air. [Robert Bullard's](#) studies showed that hazardous waste, garbage dumps and polluting industries almost always end up in poor and predominantly black communities rather than white, affluent suburbs.

Indeed, a [2017 report](#) from the NAACP, the Clean Air Task Force, and the National Medical Association affirmed that African Americans are 75 percent more likely than other Americans to live near industrial plants that pollute water and air and erode the quality of life. In turn, a [2018 study](#) by Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) scientists found that African Americans faced a 54 percent higher health burden compared to the general population. Non-white communities had a 28 percent higher health burden and those in poverty had a 35 percent higher burden.

Environmental racism is undoubtedly very real, and the federal government has known about it for many decades. Yet, “there is [no federal law](#) governing environmental injustice,” although environmental justice was institutionalized as a priority of the federal government in 1994 with the signing of [Executive Order 12898](#) by Bill Clinton. Whatever progress has been made in the fight against environmental injustice and environmental racism has been due to community organizing and activism.

One of the earliest organizations dedicated to fighting environmental injustice is Communities for a Better Environment. It was founded in [1978](#) with a mission to empower people in California’s poor communities and communities of color to take action in order “to achieve environmental health and justice by preventing and reducing pollution and building green, healthy and sustainable communities and environments.”

A decade later, the fight against environmental injustice and environmental racism picked up considerable steam with the formation of multiple of organizations in the US. Included in this group are WE ACT for Environmental Justice (1988), the Center for Race, Poverty & the Environment (1989), the Indigenous Environmental Network (1990), the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice (1990), the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice (1992), and the National Black Environmental Justice Network (1999). Earth Rights International, the first organization founded on the

belief that US corporations could be held accountable for environmental crimes and human rights abuses committed abroad, came into being in 1995 and has evolved into a global movement dedicated to the fight for climate justice.

More grassroots environmental justice organizations surfaced in the years ahead not only because of increasing public awareness of climate change but also because environmental injustice remained widespread in the US. There are currently more than 140 major cases monitored by [Environmental Justice Atlas](#). And virtually all of them are in communities where economically disadvantaged and racial-ethnic minority populations reside.

Over the years, Louisiana's "[Cancer Alley](#)" has come to be seen as one of the most blatant examples of "environmental racism." "Cancer Alley" is an 85-mile long stretch of the Mississippi river overrun with petrochemical facilities. It is one of the most polluted places in the US, and the [cancer risk](#) for the predominantly African American residents in the communities closest to the plants is 50 times the national average.

Louisiana's "Cancer Alley" is also a blatant example of [government failure](#). But this shouldn't come as a surprise given the political influence of the oil, gas, and chemical industries. Moreover, [ProPublica's](#) investigation of cancer-causing pollution from industrial facilities also exposed flaws in the pollution prevention and enforcement policies of EPA.

On the positive side, environmental organizations have scored some impressive victories over the years, especially lately. Biden cancelled the [Keystone X Pipeline](#) after a 10-year campaign against it by organizations such as the Sierra Club. The [PennEast Pipeline](#) was also cancelled, and California has taken action to phase out [fracking](#) by 2024.

However, many activists stress the point that environmental justice cannot be disassociated from [racial justice](#). This is an issue that has caused long-standing [friction](#) between traditional environmental groups and environmental justice organizations. Nonetheless, the evolution of the environmental justice movement has led to growing collaborations and networks and continuous advancement of the environmental justice agenda. In talking to various environmental activists, a consensus seems to be emerging on the need to strengthen efforts to limit global warming.



This is absolutely essential for combatting effectively environmental injustice and environmental racism. Decarbonization is the key to tackling global warming and environmental injustice. Fossil fuels lie at the heart of the climate crisis facing the world at large and of the health and environmental injustices facing poor and minority communities.

Fossil fuels are responsible for the climate crisis, generate air and water pollution, cause millions of deaths each year, carry a price tag for the world economy which runs into hundreds of billions of dollars annually, and perpetuate environmental injustice and [environmental racism](#).

In this context, true leadership in the fight against global warming and environmental injustice necessitates being involved in the fight to end global fossil fuel use. The decarbonization ideals underlying the Green New Deal provide the only realistic way to halt global warming and build a sustainable, resilient, and equitable future.

Source: <https://www.commondreams.org/>

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# **Unions Have The Potential And**

# The Responsibility To Advance A “Just Transition”



*Norman Rogers - United Steelworkers (USW) Local 675 Photo: LinkedIn*

The idea of a “just transition” has emerged as an absolute requirement for any progress toward a clean energy future. An energy transformation will impact workers in the fossil fuel industry but will also affect regions and communities differently. A just transition must be designed to ensure that the benefits of greening the economy are shared widely and that no worker is left behind.

Norman Rogers, a 20-plus-years employee of a southern California refinery and second vice president of United Steelworkers (USW) Local 675, also serves on the Joint Health and Safety Committee and Negotiating Committee at the refinery. In this interview, Rogers shares his insights on the principles and aims of a just transition and how we could get there.

*C.J. Polychroniou: “Just transition” is associated with the environmental transition, in sectors such as chemicals and energy, although it is now moving into other areas such as health care and even development. Can you talk, from your experience as a refinery worker and labor organizer, about what the notion of just transition entails and how it is being used in connection with workers in the fossil fuel industry?*

*Norman Rogers: The term “just transition” is very much linked with the labor*



movement. Tony Mazzocchi, a trade unionist with the Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers union (OCAW), coined the term as it related to the dangerous, toxic, life-threatening chemicals to which his members were exposed. The idea then, as it is now, is to find other ways to meet the needs for the products being made and the health and welfare of the workforce he represented.

Today, the move to renewables, the increase in the use of electric vehicles and even steel being made without the petroleum coke (petcoke) from the refining process is set to have a profound impact on the number of fossil fuel industry jobs. Knowing what the future holds and the serious repercussions set to take place, and planning for that outcome, that is what the call for a just transition is all about.

As a labor organizer representing fossil fuel workers in the current atmosphere, the philosophy behind a just transition is ensuring that no worker is left behind when transitioning to a clean energy economy. Everyone must be accounted for, whether they are toward the end of their career, just starting out, or any point in between. This fight must be won if the transition to a sustainable future is to be realized. To the extent that we do not do this, we will not be successful in building the community of allies needed for the task at hand.

*It's been said that a just transition is absolutely essential for effective climate action. Why is this so, and what role can trade unions play in facing the challenges of global warming?*

A just transition is essential because, at the end of the day, the decisions to be made to address climate concerns are ultimately going to take place in the ballot booth, and to the extent people see their jobs going away, without alternatives, their vote [will] be to maintain the status quo. There has to be a pathway for those folks set to lose their jobs to move into other careers. And this reaches beyond people working in oilfields and refineries to people building mufflers, engine blocks and transmission housings.

As we transition toward the new economy and the attention we give to it being "just," we must ensure there is justice as well. The new jobs that come online and the allocation of resources must be made available to all; the sustainable future being touted must include all stakeholders: fossil fuel workers, fence-line communities, Indigenous people, the underemployed — they all must be

accounted for as we move forward. The benefits of a decarbonized future must be shared by all and the framework we build to make that happen is an integral part of any success we hope to achieve. A just path to a decarbonized future is absolutely critical to an ecologically sustainable economy. The costs of achieving a green economy should not be borne by those who have suffered and been excluded by the injustices associated with industrialization. I quote my father when I say, "Failing to plan is planning to fail."

A successful transition can only be achieved through social dialogue, consultation with those most directly affected by a decarbonized future and recognition there may be more than one path forward. Unions have a key role to play given the move to a green economy so fundamentally impacts the lives of workers. Unions have the potential, the responsibility, to advance the cause of a transition that is just. They must help ensure that workers, and the communities in which they live, receive a fair deal. Organized labor has a long, rich history of fighting for an equitable future for workers; the same must hold true now as we move to a decarbonized future.

*Labor unions are divided over the Green New Deal. Some trade unions support a transition away from fossil fuels, while others seem to express apprehension, anxiety and fear over the prospect of a transition to clean, renewable energy sources. However, the prevailing view seems to be that "jobs vs. the environment" is a false dichotomy, a false choice. How do you and the union you represent look at the issue of "jobs vs. the environment"?*

Without a doubt, there is a great deal of division in regards to climate concerns but, to a certain extent, one's view of climate concerns are almost a moot point given the changes taking place. If one keeps track of the number of television ads for electric cars over the course of a weekend, it becomes obvious the landscape is changing, and these are changes that mean a drop in demand for fossil-fuel-powered vehicles. Add to that, in California, new fossil-fuel-powered passenger cars will no longer be sold after 2035. It should be noted there are numerous other states making similar moves. With that, the debate over jobs vs. the environment becomes unproductive given that the focus should be how we make the jobs to come good-paying union jobs.

New work is coming and with it, a new workforce is needed. The number of jobs associated with the clean energy economy already surpass those in the fossil fuel

industry, and with the predictions these jobs are set to further increase in number, we can help bury the “jobs vs. environment” debate by ensuring these new jobs are quality jobs that support families and communities in ways that the current fossil fuel jobs have for close to a century.

*From a practical standpoint, what would a just transition model actually look like?*

Speaking only for myself, a just transition model must include income support for workers during the transition. Also, solid, well-financed training and re-training programs with a clear path to access the new jobs generated is necessary. With the jobs to come, strong collective bargaining must be a part of the picture. Similarly, as we start from scratch, sustainable development tools for economically disadvantaged communities must be incorporated so everyone benefits from what’s to come. The list of course should be expanded to include specific government policies aiming to integrate strong social protection measures for those at risk of losing their jobs and those unemployed workers in communities harmed by the challenges and threats of global warming.

*What are the best strategies for creating enduring labor-environmental alliances?*

The chief strategy I can suggest is that we need allies everywhere we can find them, and there is a language and a type of discussion that exists when we are speaking to allies. There has been a great deal of demonization that has taken place in reference to the fossil fuel industry and those who work there. An understanding is needed that those folks working these jobs are people doing the right thing; they have put roofs over their family’s heads, food on the table and supported the communities in which they live. And everyone, *everyone* has benefited from the fruits of their labors, whether it be hopping a flight for an overseas vacation or a road trip or the syringes that deliver the vaccinations to help fend off the coronavirus.

We are now being told that the right thing to do is for us to lose our jobs, jobs which in many cases have been multigenerational and, after decades of collective bargaining, have become good-paying jobs. If we can move to a place where there is recognition of these concerns, it creates a space where the discussions that need to take place about a path forward can happen. The goals of meeting climate challenges and the realities of people being able to support their families and communities need not be the “us or them,” either/or proposition it is being made

out to be. It is a chance for us to see how well we can listen and then how clever we can be with what we've heard.

*Source:*

<https://truthout.org/unions-have-the-potential-and-the-responsibility-to-advance-a-just-transition/>

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**Lumen Travo Gallery - Amsterdam:  
Joseph Sassoon Semah - Solo**

# exhibition 'On Friendship / (Collateral Damage) IV

*Joseph Sassoon Semah - Solo exhibition 'On Friendship / (Collateral Damage) IV*

Lumen Travo Gallery - Jan. 22 - March 12, 2022. Lijnbaansgracht 314, 1017 WZ Amsterdam

On the occasion of his solo show at Lumen Travo Gallery, Joseph Sassoon Semah takes us on a journey of a critical analysis of Joseph Beuys and the Germany's post-war history.

(see

<http://www.lumentravo.nl/exhibitions#on-friendship-collateral-damage-iv-how-to-explain-hare-hunting-to-a-dead-german-artist-the-usefulness-of-continuous-measurement-of-the-distance-between-nostalgia-and-melancholia>



On Friendship / (Collateral Damage) IV

How to Explain Hare Hunting to a Dead German Artist  
[The usefulness of continuous measurement of the distance between Nostalgia and Melancholia]

Exhibition curated by Linda Bouws



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# Noam Chomsky: GOP's Soft Coup Is Still Underway One Year After Capitol Assault



*Noam Chomsky*

In the third and final presidential debate of 2016, Donald Trump had signaled that he might not concede the election should he lose to Hillary Clinton. However, he did say to his supporters a day later that he would definitely accept the results of the election if he won.

Trump's threat to reject democratically run election results should have disqualified him from running for the highest office in the land.

But instead he went on to win the 2016 election and then divide the country like



no other incoming president. And when he lost the 2020 election to Joe Biden, he not only refused to concede defeat, but he also sought to block the certification of the electoral vote by urging his fanatical supporters gathered at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, to “stop the steal” of the election. Months earlier, he had already put his base on high alert by saying, “The only way we’re going to lose this election is if the election is rigged.”

Under a less incompetent wannabe strongman, the assault on the Capitol could have led to the actual overthrow of the U.S. system of representative democracy. But the January 6 attack instead featured Trump’s hallmark disorganization and lack of a coherent plan.

A day after the attempted coup, Trump announced that there would be an “orderly transition” of power on January 20, but that did not mean that he had plans to “go gentle into that good night.” On the contrary, he continued to spread lies about the 2020 election, which he himself called the “Big Lie,” even after he had failed to convince officials in Georgia and Arizona to overturn those states’ results. Trump’s personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, also tried to convince a federal judge in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, to overturn hundreds of thousands of votes in the state.

Trump’s position was quite simple: *If democracy fails to give me the desired election results, damn democracy!*

Trump’s “Big Lie” continues to hold sway over the overwhelming majority of Republican voters, and the Republican Party itself is increasingly unwilling to accept defeat. Subsequently, states with Republican legislatures have passed waves of new laws restricting voting and are taking over local and state election boards. These developments speak volumes of the anti-democratic mindset that has become the trademark of the GOP in the Trump era.

In the interview that follows, Noam Chomsky reflects on the anniversary of the January 6 insurrection and offers us his own insights on what may lie ahead in a country where a very sizable segment of the population still believes in Trump’s lies.

Noam Chomsky is internationally recognized as one of the most important intellectuals alive. His intellectual stature has been compared to that of Galileo, Newton and Descartes, and his work has had tremendous influence on a variety of

areas of scholarly and scientific inquiry, including linguistics, logic and mathematics, computer science, psychology, media studies, philosophy, politics and international affairs. He is the author of some 150 books and recipient of scores of highly prestigious awards, including the Sydney Peace Prize and the Kyoto Prize (Japan's equivalent of the Nobel Prize), and of dozens of honorary doctorate degrees from the world's most renowned universities. Chomsky is Institute Professor Emeritus at MIT and currently Laureate Professor at the University of Arizona.

*C.J. Polychroniou: A year ago, on January 6, 2021, a mob of Donald Trump's supporters broke into the U.S. Capitol in an attempt to block certification of the electoral votes — a routine procedure following a presidential election — that would have formalized Joe Biden's victory. The Capitol building had been breached on a few occasions in the past, but this was the first time in the history of the country that an assault on democracy was actually incited by an outgoing president. In fact, months later, former President Trump would go so far as to condemn the criminal prosecution of those who took part in the Capitol attack that day even though he had denounced the insurrection after he had been impeached over it. From your perspective, Noam, how should we understand what happened on January 6, 2021?*

*Noam Chomsky: Participants in the assault on the Capitol doubtless had varying perceptions and motives, but were united in the effort to overthrow an elected government; in short, an attempted coup, by definition. It was furthermore an attempt that could have succeeded if a few prominent Republican figures had changed their stance and gone along with the coup attempt, and if the military command had made different decisions. Trump was making every effort to facilitate the coup, which would surely have been applauded by a large majority of Republican voters and by the Republican political leadership, which, with a few exceptions, grovels at his feet in a shameful display of cowardice.*

Implications for the future are all too clear. The Republican organization — it's hard to regard them any longer as an authentic political party — is now carefully laying the groundwork for success next time, whatever the electoral outcome may be. It's all completely in the open, not only *not* concealed but in fact heralded with pride by its leaders. And regularly reported, so that no one who is interested enough to pay attention to the American political scene can miss it. To mention just the most recent discussion I've seen, the *Associated Press* describes how the

GOP is carrying out a “[slow-motion insurrection](#)” and has become “an anti-democratic force,” something that has not happened before in American politics. A few weeks earlier, Barton Gellman [outlined](#) the plans in detail in *The Atlantic*.

There is no need to review the many well-known flaws of the formal democratic system: the radically undemocratic Senate, the enormous role of concentrated wealth and private power in determining electoral outcomes and legislation, the structural advantages provided to a traditionalist rural minority, and much else. But there are also broader issues.

What was progressive in the 18th century is by now so antiquated that if the U.S. were to apply for membership in the European Union, it would probably be rejected as not satisfying democratic norms. That raises questions that merit more attention than they receive.

With all due respect for the Founders, one question — raised by Thomas Jefferson in his own terms — is why we should revere the sentiments of a group of wealthy white male 18th-century slaveowners, particularly now that the amendment system has succumbed to the deep flaws of the formal political system. No less curious are the legal doctrines of originalism/textualism that call on us to decipher their pronouncements with little regard to social and economic conditions as a decisive guide to judicial action. Looking at our political culture from a distance, there is a lot that would seem passing strange.

But even the tattered system that still survives is intolerable to GOP wreckers. Nothing is overlooked in their systematic assault on the fragile structure. Methods extend from “[taking hold of the once-overlooked machinery of elections](#)” at the ground level, to passing laws to bar the “wrong people” from voting, to devising a legal framework to establish the principle that Republican legislatures can “legally” determine choice of electors, whatever the irrelevant public many choose.

In the not-too-distant background are calls to “save our country” by force if necessary, where “our country” is a white supremacist Christian nationalist patriarchal society in which non-white folk can take part as long as they “know their place”; not at the table.

[White people’s] fear of “losing our country” is [in part a response to] demographic tendencies that are eroding white majorities, resisting even the

radical gerrymandering that is imposed to amplify the structural advantages of the scattered conservative rural vote. Another threat to “our country” is that white supremacy is increasingly rejected, particularly by younger people, [as is devotion to religious authority](#), even church membership.

So while the charges of right-wing propagandists are largely fantasy and delusion, they have enough of a basis in reality to enflame those who see their familiar world of dominance disappearing before their eyes. And with the social order crumbling under the neoliberal assault, these fears can easily be manipulated by demagogues and opportunists — while their masters in the executive suites and mansions relish the opportunity to carry forward the highway robbery that they have engaged in for 40 years if future challenges can be beaten down, by state and private violence if necessary.

That’s a world that may not be remote, though it won’t last long with the supreme climate denialists in charge. When Hungary, the current darling of the right, descends towards fascism, it’s bad enough. If the U.S. does, long-term survival of human society is a dim prospect.

*What does the January 6 Capitol attack tell us about the state of U.S. democracy in the 21st century? And do you agree with the view that Trump was the product of bad political institutions?*

It tells us that the limited political democracy that still exists is hanging by a delicate thread.

If political institutions — more generally, intertwined socioeconomic-political institutions — can yield a President Trump, they are infected with profound malignancies. A moment’s reflection shows that the malignancies are so profound that they are driving organized human society to suicide, and not in the distant future, with Trump and his acolytes and apologists enthusiastically in the lead. By now it takes real literary talent to exaggerate.

What are these institutions? That’s much too far-reaching an inquiry to undertake here, but there are some instructive highlights.

The so-called Founders outlined clearly enough the kind of society they envisioned: “those who own the country ought to govern it” and ensure that “the minority of the opulent are protected from the majority” (John Jay, James

Madison, respectively). Their model was England, where the reigning institutions had been described accurately a few years earlier by Adam Smith in words that bear repetition: The “masters of mankind,” the merchants and manufacturers of England, are the “principal architects” of government policy and ensure that their own interests are “most peculiarly attended to” no matter how “grievous” the impact on others, including the people of England but also, much more severely, the victims of “the savage injustice of the Europeans,” notably the people of India, then the richest country in the world, which England was robbing and despoiling for the benefit of the masters. Under the protection of the state they control, the masters can pursue their “vile maxim”: “All for ourselves and nothing for other people,” the maxim of the feudal lords adopted by the masters of mankind who had been replacing them since the “glorious revolution” of the preceding century.

The masters of mankind have always understood that free-market capitalism would destroy them and the societies they owned. Accordingly, they have always called for a powerful state to protect them from the ravages of the market, leaving the less fortunate exposed. That has been dramatically plain in the course of the “bailout economy” of the past 40 years of class war, masked under “free market” rhetoric.

These core features of the reigning state capitalist institutions have been exacerbated by the rot spreading from interwar Vienna, adopting the term “neoliberalism” in the international Walter Lippmann symposium in Paris in 1938, then in the Mont Pelerin Society. The ideas were implemented under almost perfect experimental conditions during Augusto Pinochet’s murderous dictatorship in Chile, crashing the economy in half a dozen years, but no matter. By then, they had bigger game in sight: the global economy in the era of vigorous class war launched by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher and carried forward by Bill Clinton and other successors, establishing more firmly the vile maxim and dismantling such troublesome impediments as a limited welfare system and labor unions.

That’s the kind of terrain in which a Trump can appear, though there are of course multiple factors of varied nature that interact.

*It seems that political violence has become an accepted norm among many Americans today. Firstly, what do you think are Trump’s motives for continuing to spin the “Big Lie”? Secondly, do you share the view that neo-fascism is gaining*

*ground and that election subversion remains a real threat?*

Trump's motives are clear enough. We don't need a degree in advanced psychiatry to know that a sociopathic megalomaniac must always win; nothing else can be contemplated. Furthermore, he's a canny politician who understands that his worshippers will easily accept the "Big Lie."

Many have wondered at the willingness of two-thirds of Republicans to believe the ludicrous pretense that the election was stolen. Should we really be surprised? Have a look at the views of Republicans on other matters. For example, on whether humans were *created* as they are today: [about half of Republicans](#). Or on whether Muslims are seeking to impose Sharia law on the U.S.: [60 percent of Republicans who trust Fox News](#). Or on a host of other pre-modern beliefs in which the U.S. (mostly Republicans) stands virtually alone among comparable societies.

So why not a stolen election?

Election subversion is not merely a threat. It's happening in the "soft coup" that is underway right now. As is the drift toward a form of fascism. There is [evidence](#) that general attitudes of Trump voters on a range of issues are similar to those of European voters for far right parties with fascist origins. And these sectors are now a driving force in the GOP.

There's also substantial evidence that this drift to the far right may be driven in part by blind loyalty to Trump. That seems to be the case on the most critical issue that humans have ever faced: environmental destruction. During Trump's years in office, Republican recognition of climate change as a "serious issue," already shockingly low, [declined by 20 percent](#), even as nature has been issuing dramatic warnings, loud and clear, that we are racing toward disaster.

The phenomenon is deeply disturbing, and not without grim precedent. A century ago, Germany was at the peak of Western civilization, producing great contributions to the sciences and the arts. The Weimar Republic was regarded by political scientists as a model democracy. A few years later, Germans were worshipping Der Führer and accepting the vilest lies, and acting on them. That included some of the most respected figures, like Martin Heidegger; I recall very well my shock when I started to read his 1935 *Introduction to Metaphysics* when it appeared in English 60 years ago. And I'm old enough to remember hearing



similar atrocious thoughts as a child in the '30s, close to home. Sinclair Lewis's 1935 classic on how fascism might be implanted in America by Christian nationalists (*It Can't Happen Here*) was not mere fantasy when it appeared, and it's no surprise that it has been returning to the best-seller lists in the Trump era.

*State-level contests have moved to the very center of U.S. politics, but the Democrats are failing to catch up with this new reality. What's going on? Why do state politics matter more these days, and why do the Democrats seem to have embarked on a suicide mission as far as political strategy is concerned?*

The neglect of state politics by Democrats seems to have taken off under Barack Obama. That critical area of American politics was handed over to Republicans who, by that time, were already moving toward their current stance of rejecting democratic politics as an impediment to their task of "saving the country" (the version for the voting base) and maintaining power so as to serve the rich and the corporate sector (the understanding of the leadership).

*So far, there have been, surprisingly enough, no breakthroughs in the House committee investigation of the January 6 attack. Do you think that the congressional select committee involved in this task will establish accountability for what happened on that infamous day? And if it does, what could be the political implications of such an outcome?*

The Republican leadership has already neutralized the select committee by refusal to participate on acceptable terms, then by rejecting subpoenas — a sensible strategy to delay the proceedings by court proceedings until they can simply disband the committee, or even better, reshape it to pursuing their political enemies. That's the kind of tactic that Trump has used successfully throughout his career as a failed businessman, and it is second nature to corrupt politicians.

That aside, the events of January 6 have been investigated so fully, and even visually presented so vividly, that nothing much of substance is likely to be revealed. Republican elites who want to portray the insurrection as an innocent picnic in the park, with some staged violence by antifa to make decent law-abiding citizens look bad, will persist no matter what is revealed. And though there is more to learn about the background, it is not likely to have much effect on what seems now a reasonably plausible picture.

Suppose that the select committee were to come up with new and truly damning evidence about Trump's role or other high-level connivance in the coup attempt. The Rupert Murdoch-controlled mainstream media would have little difficulty in reshaping that as further proof that the "Deep State," along with the "Commie rats" and "sadistic pedophiles" who supposedly run the Democratic Party, have conspired to vilify the "Great Man." His adoring worshippers would probably be emboldened by this additional proof of the iniquity of the evil forces conniving at the "Great Replacement." Or whatever fabrication is contrived by those capable of converting critical race theory into an instrument for destroying the "embattled white race," among other propaganda triumphs.

My guess is that the committee's work will end up being a gift to the proto-fascist forces that are chipping away at what remains of formal democracy, much as the impeachment proceedings turned out to be.

It's worth proceeding for the sake of history — assuming that there will be any history that will even care if the plan to establish lasting Republican rule succeeds.

No exaggeration.

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primary authors, 2020); *The Precipice: Neoliberalism, the Pandemic, and the Urgent Need for Radical Change* (an anthology of interviews with Noam Chomsky, 2021); and *Economics and the Left: Interviews with Progressive Economists* (2021).

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# California's Cap-And-Trade System Proves Limits Of Market-Based Climate Action



CJ

*Polychroniou*

*California is not making sufficient progress to meet the 2030 emissions goals. With current policies, it could take easily at least a couple more decades before the 2030 goals are met.*

California has cast itself as a leader in the fight against climate change and global warming. The state set the stage for its transition to a low-carbon economy with the passage of AB32, the [California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006](#), which called for a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, and ultimately reducing them 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. AB32, signed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger (R), was carried out by various state agencies, and its implementation was funded by a fee collected from large sources of greenhouse gas emissions.

AB32 was the first program in the country to embark on a comprehensive approach to address the looming threats of global warming while keeping economic growth on a solid track. And it was, initially, a moderate success. Emissions [fell](#) for the first time below 1990 levels. In fact, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions [returned](#) to 1990 levels four years ahead of schedule,

while California's economy kept growing.

In 2016, Governor Jerry Brown (D) extended AB32 with the passage of SB32, which raised the goal for greenhouse gas emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030.

California's greenhouse gas emissions reduction policies revolve around the promotion of zero-emissions electric vehicles, imposing limits on the carbon content of gasoline, and implementing a cap-and-trade mechanism for polluters.

Briefly, a cap-and-trade system is one where the government sets a cap on the maximum level of emissions and creates allowances in tune with that cap. Polluters obtain and surrender a permit for each unit of emissions. They can obtain permits from the government or through [trading](#) with other emitting firms. California's cap-and-trade program is the main component in the state's plan to reduce emissions and bolster a clean energy economy

The current Governor of California, Gavin Newsom (D), has also taken some bold measures to combat climate change and global warming by moving the economy further away from fossil fuels. These include ending the sale of new gas cars by 2035, phasing out harmful oil production by no later than 2045 statewide, and pushing forward a \$15 billion climate package to tackle wildfire and drought challenges.

All in all, California has aligned itself with the emissions reduction targets set by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change for [limiting](#) global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. It has committed itself to reducing emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 and going carbon neutral by 2045.

California's efforts in leading the fight against the climate crisis is the result of bipartisan political support and overall public support. According to a 2019 study by the Public Policy Institute of California, majorities of Californians regard global warming a very serious threat and are in support of the state's renewable energy goals. A plurality of adults (48%) and likely voters (45%) also [said](#) that policies to combat global warming will lead to more jobs.

This is not to say of course that there hasn't been opposition to California's global warming policies. California Business Roundtable is one organization that has consistently raised objections to aggressive climate policies because of its concerns that such efforts were hurting companies. Many progressives, on the

other hand, have been quite critical of the state's cap-and-trade system. They oppose it as being too business friendly, a stance probably vindicated by the mere fact alone that California Business Roundtable has offered enthusiastic support to this "market-based mechanism" for controlling emissions.

Originally passed as part of the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, the cap-and-trade program began operating in 2013 and was extended to 2030 with the passage of AB398 (2017), and on the basis of [bipartisan](#) support.

Yet, there are legitimate concerns with California's cap-and-trade program. The Sierra Club [opposed](#) the 2017 extension of the program by saying that it would not do enough to cut emissions on account of giving too much power to the oil industry. Indeed, some experts checked the math on cap-and-trade claims and [said](#) it doesn't add up. Analysis of state data by ProPublica showed that carbon emissions from California's oil and gas industry actually [increased](#) since the cap-and-trade mechanism was introduced.

California statewide greenhouse gas emissions did not go down at all in 2017 and actually rose slightly in 2018. From the period 2000 to 2018, emissions went down by 20.2 metric tons, [reflecting](#) a 5.4 percent decline.

Obviously, things are not going very well with California's emissions reduction strategies. There is more than enough of a meaningful trend in the emissions reduction figures to conclude that California is not making sufficient progress to meet the 2030 emissions goals. With current policies, it could take easily at least a couple more decades before the 2030 goals are met. As for the net zero target by 2045 or 2050, we could be looking well into the next century, [according](#) to a recent report.

It is therefore unsurprising that the backlash against the cap-and-trade program as a key strategy for combatting climate change and global warming has grown considerably over time, even prompting its [re-evaluation](#) by state authorities. However, in spite of various reports indicating that California isn't cutting greenhouse gas emissions fast enough to meet the 2030 target for reductions, the state's own review of the cap-and-trade-program [declared](#) recently that the mechanism is working and that California is on track to meet the 2030 emissions target.

Yet, experts and many environmentalists remain unconvinced that California's

cap-and-trade program is a sufficient enough mechanism to deal with the growing threats of climate change and global warming. In fact, a few years ago, even Governor Newsom openly stated that he [preferred](#) a different approach—namely, carbon tax—to reducing greenhouse gas emission.

California's cap-and trade program is one of the largest in the world, following the cap-and-trade models of China and the European Union. And without a doubt, California has made progress in the fight to combat global warming by lowering emissions. To be exact, emissions per capita in California are 40 percent lower than the US average. Only New York has lower emissions per capita, according to data [compiled](#) by researchers at the Political Economy Research Institute for a study on how California can make a complete transition to clean energy. But it's highly doubtful whether the cap-and-trade system can make further progress.

A cap-and-trade system is an approach that relies on market forces to reduce emissions at the lowest cost. But as a market-based mechanism, it has severe limitations. First, it is [susceptible](#) to powerful political forces, which is why the oil and gas industry prefers a cap-and-trade system over a well-designed regulation regime on its products. Second, cap-and-trade systems permit carbon offsets, which end up overstating emissions reductions. Simply put, there are too many free allowances and offsets under the cap-and-trade system. Third, as a market-based mechanism, a cap-and trade system favors overwhelmingly big business and works to the disadvantage of frontline communities. This is the primary reason why California's landmark cap-and-trade program has been under attack by [environmental justice activists](#) almost from day one.

In sum, while progress has been made in the state's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, its market-based environmental approach has major shortcomings. California's much-admired cap-and-trade program, which served as the template for Washington's [Climate Commitment Act](#), does not constitute a transformative climate change policy by any stretch of the imagination, and an alternative plan to combat global warming is very much needed.

The study already mentioned by PERI researchers, titled "A Program for Economics Recovery and Clean Energy Transition in California," is a thorough plan for the building of a clean energy infrastructure in California which will secure 100 percent reductions in carbon emissions by 2045, while generating about 1 million net new jobs across the state. It is the sort of bold and aggressive plan that not only California but every state in the US needs in the age of global



warming. It is also enforceable because it is more than cost-effective. Also highly encouraging is the fact that more than 20 unions, including fossil fuel unions, have already [endorsed](#) the plan for a clean energy transition in California.

The economic benefits of a clean energy transition have become [indisputable](#). The fight for saving the planet is mainly political now.

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