



our developing world's voices winter 2015

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for full winter issue click: [http://blank.hypersurf.com/~odw/pages/voice winter '15](http://blank.hypersurf.com/~odw/pages/voice%20winter%20'15)

At the California Council for the Social Studies Annual State Conference odw will be giving a session "Learning from History to Build a Better World." It's hard in such dire times to find the positive. But certainly Selma is one.

On *our website lessons page:

* A statement by a State Department official that war is not the solution in the Middle East, that we have to deal with the root problems of lack of jobs, the economy, etc was ridiculed by Congress persons and media alike,,but at least it was verbalized.

* Prof. Lawrence Lessig's TED talk, "[We the People, and the Republic We Must Reclaim](#) _The system isn't broken, it's fixed. (by and for the 1%. *

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YJSehRIU34w> Erica Chenoweth/ Non violence more successful than violence: history that surprised her!

* **Learning from El Salvador** PBS film by

Bob Gliner

(Watch on YouTube)

shows positive things Salvadorans have accomplished.



CHANGE IN REALITY TOUR!

Meet people who find ways to work together to build a better life for their communities: Join our **Cuba People to People Reality Tour June 16-23, 2015**

\$1325 not including air Includes: license, all transport in Cuba, lodging, breakfasts, welcome and farewell dinners

Limited to 12 flexible travelers with human services experience (Health care, Education, Social Work, Law, Clergy, Farmers' Markets, etc.) who want an experience among warm hospitable Cubans in similar professions to learn the similarities and differences. We'll be with people in different regions of the



island

\$300 non refundable deposit saves your place. www.ourdevelopingworld.org to download application below the flyer

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Joseph Mutti will be facilitating as before.

odw Reality Tours began going to Cuba in 1981. [Cuban breezes abound on the island](#)
This may be our last tour!

Itinerary will reflect interests of participants. Music is everywhere in Cuba!



What keeps us sane is satirical comedy: John Oliver has really done it this time. In [this hilarious but chillingly honest video](#), he reveals the stunning truth about how drug companies bribe and trick doctors into pushing drugs.

Everyone we know who's watched this piece has had their sides splitting with laughter - and their consciousness expanded in ways that are truly important. [Check out this powerful HBO video here](#) on Big Pharma.

He's also done one on Tobacco marketed to kids especially in developing countries.



We will miss The Daily Show with Jon Stewart when he says goodbye later this year. His mentoring John Oliver, Stephen Colbert and Larry Willmore (The Nightly Show offers yet another opportunity for different perspectives.

Global Perspective: Looking at the US through the eyes of the world is what our Reality Tours help us maintain. Thanks to Catherine Curtis for sending us this: Ann Jones: Is This Country Crazy? Inquiring Minds Elsewhere Want to Know. <http://commondreams.org/views/2015/01/11/country-crazy-inquiring-minds-elsewhere-ant-know>

"Americans who live abroad -- more than [six million](#) of us worldwide (not counting those who work for the U.S. government)

-- often face hard questions about our country from people we live among. Europeans, Asians, and Africans ask us to explain everything that baffles them about the increasingly odd and troubling conduct of the United States. Polite people, normally reluctant to risk offending a guest, complain that America's trigger-happiness, cutthroat free-marketeering, and "exceptionality" have gone on for too long to be considered just an adolescent phase. Which means that we Americans abroad are regularly asked to account for the behavior of our re-branded "homeland," now conspicuously in [decline](#) and increasingly [out of step](#) with the rest of the world. I still remember a time when to be an American was to be envied.

Question Time

Take the questions stumping Europeans in the Obama years (which [1.6 million](#) Americans residing in Europe regularly find thrown our way). At the absolute top of the list: "Why would anyone [oppose](#) national health care?" European and other industrialized countries have had some form of [national health care](#) since the 1930s or 1940s, Germany since 1880. Some versions, as in France and Great Britain, have devolved into two-tier public and private systems. Yet even the privileged who pay for a faster track would not begrudge their fellow citizens government-funded comprehensive health care. That so many Americans do strikes Europeans as [baffling](#), if not frankly brutal. In the Scandinavian countries, long considered to be the most socially advanced in the world, a [national](#) (physical and mental) health program, funded by the state, is a big part -- but only a part -- of a more general social welfare system. In Norway, P2



where I live, all citizens also have an equal right to [education](#) (state subsidized [preschool](#) from age one, and free schools from age six through specialty training or [university](#) education and beyond), [unemployment benefits](#), job-placement and paid retraining services, paid parental leave, [old age pensions](#), and more. These benefits are not merely an emergency “safety net”; that is, charitable payments grudgingly bestowed upon the needy. They are universal: equally available to all citizens as human rights encouraging social harmony -- or as our own U.S. constitution would put it, “domestic tranquility.” It’s no wonder that, for many years, international evaluators have ranked Norway as the best place to [grow old](#), to [be a woman](#), and to [raise a child](#). The title of “best” or “happiest” place to live on Earth comes down to a neighborly contest among Norway and the other Nordic social democracies, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Iceland. In Norway, all benefits are paid for mainly by [high taxation](#). Compared to the mind-numbing enigma of the U.S. tax code, Norway’s is remarkably straightforward, taxing income from labor and pensions progressively, so that those with higher incomes pay more. The tax department does the calculations, sends an annual bill, and taxpayers, though free to dispute the sum, willingly pay up, knowing what they and their children get in return. And because government policies effectively redistribute wealth and tend to narrow the country’s slim income gap, most Norwegians sail pretty comfortably in the same boat. (Think about that!)

Life and Liberty

This system didn’t just happen. It was planned. Sweden led the way in the 1930s, and all five Nordic countries

pitched in during the postwar period to develop their own variations of what came to be called the Nordic Model: a balance of regulated capitalism, universal social welfare, political democracy, and the highest levels of [gender](#) and economic equality on the planet. It’s their system. They invented it. They like it. Despite the efforts of an occasional conservative government to muck it up, they maintain it. Why?

In all the Nordic countries, there is broad general agreement across the political spectrum that only when people’s basic needs are met -- when they can cease to worry about their jobs, their incomes, their housing, their transportation, their health care, their kids’ education, and their aging parents -- only then can they be free to do as they like. While the U.S. settles for the fantasy that, from birth, every kid has an equal shot at the American dream, Nordic social welfare systems lay the foundations for a more authentic equality and individualism. These ideas are not novel. They are implied in the preamble to our own Constitution. You know, the part about “we the People” forming “a more perfect Union” to “promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity.”

(Ed’s question): Why, when Latin American, Asian, Middle Eastern or African countries try to invent their own model does the US Regime Change policy kick in with mega bucks tax payer dollars?

Bob Koehler writes moving insightful essays:

Abolishing the CIA
Healing the Criminal Justice System
Partners in Terror
Turning Our Backs



War in Two Directions

This from excerpted from “Alive and Bleeding”
<http://commonwonders.com/world/alive-and-bleeding/>

Good and evil leap from the headlines: “Egyptian planes pound ISIS in Libya in revenge for mass beheadings of Christians.”

It’s nonstop action for the American public. It’s the history of war compressed into a dozen words. It’s [Fox News](#), but it could be just about any mainstream purveyor of current events.

Once again, I feel a cry of despair tear loose from my soul and spill into the void. Our politics are out of control. There’s no sanity left — no calmness of strategic assessment, no impulse control. At least none of that stuff is allowed into the mainstream conversation about national security, which amounts to: ISIS is bad. The more of them we (or our allies of the moment) kill, the better. USA! USA!

We’re in a state of perpetual war and have no intention of escaping it. Certainly we have no intention of critiquing our own actions or — don’t be silly — questioning the effectiveness of war, occupation or high-tech terror (think: “shock and awe”) as a means to create a stable, secure world. The interests of war have dug in for the long haul, fortified by the cynicism of the media they own. The voices of reason cry from the margins. When a trickle

of sanity finds its way into the mainstream, it’s mocked until it goes away. [Marie Harf](#), deputy State Department spokesperson, had her moment of right-wing ridicule when she said of ISIS this week, during an interview on MSNBC with Chris Matthews:

“We’re killing a lot of them, and we’re going to keep killing more of them. So are the Egyptians, so are the Jordanians — they’re in this fight with us. But we cannot win this war by killing them. We cannot kill our way out of this war. We need in the medium to longer term to go after the root causes that lead people to join these groups, whether it’s a lack of opportunity for jobs, whether . . .”

The snort of contempt began immediately, as Matthews interrupted her. It spread through the conservative media, as the Society of Media Chicken Hawks gleefully pecked her words apart, joking that she wanted to defeat ISIS with a jobs program, etc. What fun! “Can political correctness defeat terrorism?” the [Wall Street Journal](#) asked. That was it. End of discussion. **Well, no it’s not.** I insist on opening it back up:

“We cannot kill our way out of this war. We need . . . to go after the root causes that lead people to join these groups . . .”





James Taylor's song "Which Side Are You On?" for Occupy Wall Street

Rep. Grayson:

If today's movement for justice, equality and peace has an anthem, it's this. Here are the lyrics, as Jackson recorded them in his new album last year, *Standing in the Breach*:

WHICH SIDE?

You might be a young man, with the mountain in his step,
In search of El Dorado, but you haven't found it yet.
Or you might be an old man, with his whole life at his back,
And you can hear eternity whispering down the track.
Or maybe you're a woman, or just about to be.
And you can feel the generations, swimming in your sea.
But you know that it's coming, as surely as the dawn:

The battle for the future, baby. Which side are you on?

Chorus
Come on, come on, come on -- if you're coming.
Come on, come on, come on.
Come on, come on, come on -- if you're coming.
Which side are you on?

Come on, come on, come on -- if you're coming.

The battle lines are drawn.

Come on, come on, come on -- if you're coming.

Which side? Which side are you on?

Which side?

The corporations attacking

The natural world: drilling and fracking.

All done with the backing

Of the craven and corrupt.

Or the ones who fight

For the Earth, with all their might,

And in the name of all that's right,

Confront and disrupt.

There's a question in the air:

How long, if this theft goes on, will our country still be here?

People know the game is rigged, even as they play.

They see their expectations slowly slip away.

They've got subsidies for billionaires,

there's a bailout for the banks,

A monopoly on medicine, and a sale on armored tanks.

The whole damned country's being

sold, out that revolving door

Between Washington and Wall Street,

like it's one big Dollar Store.

Repeat Chorus

The bankers and their special friends,

Who rob you time and again,

Who like to pretend they're the only game in town?

Or The People, who

Hope, with everything they do,

They can build something new,

And turn this world around?



Who owns the elections? Who profits either way?
 Who ends up with all that money [the] politicians pay?
 To be the fearless leader, to put themselves across,
 To be the one entrusted with the profit and the loss.
 You try hard to believe that when you cast your vote it counts.
 But elections are won with money, in ever larger amounts.

**Take the money out of politics, and maybe we might see
 This country turn back into something more like democracy.**



Maya Angelou left us quite a legacy!

Her bestselling autobiography, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, had been released just four

years before her earliest interview with Bill Moyers. In it, she explored issues such as identity, rape, racism, and literacy. On our lesson page of our website, Bill opens their conversation by asking Angelou about the progress of the civil rights movement and the burgeoning women's liberation movement, and what both meant to black women like her who were trying to get free of clichés and stereotypes.

"Fighting for one's freedom, struggling towards being free, is like struggling to be a poet or a good Christian or a good Jew or a good Muslim or good Zen Buddhist," she tells Bill. "You work all day long and achieve some kind of level of success by nightfall, go to sleep and wake up the next morning with the

job still to be done. So you start all over again.

"I don't know if society doesn't know who I am. And I mean: I a woman, I a black, I human.

"I don't know if I quite believe that. I think it knows and doesn't itself want to cope. And that is the society's problem, not mine."

Couldn't these words be said today And not just here in the US, but many places around the world. We must learn from history to build a better world.

Why Aren't Nicaragua's Children Fleeing to the United States?

A letter writer to the editor to counter all the right-wing letters in her local paper commenting on the humanitarian crisis on the border caused by children fleeing Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador:

Editor:

We read that children are streaming across the Texas border from Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador...but....not Nicaragua? Why aren't Nica's children fleeing the left wing Sandinista government that the US has been trying to crush ever since their revolution in 1979? Could it be that Nicaragua, despite its poverty, provides more security for its population than other Central American countries? Yes! Check out the stats: lowest homicide rate, no death squads, little gang activity: "least violent country in Central America and safest in all Latin America"! Wow! Maybe Obama could shift gears, and, instead of sending military equipment to 'fight' the 'war' on drugs, and the 'war' on youth, he might support education, health and small farmers in Central America, and repeal the disastrous free trade policies that are making the rich richer and the poor ready to head for the border. That might help convince young people to stay home."



Also on *our developing world* facebook page
 Maestra (teacher) Trailer



The final scene from Maestra, the return of the teachers! Those are huge pencils!

www.maestrathefilm.org of the Cuban Literacy Campaign of 1961 when teens who were literate were recruited to teach reading and writing to children and adults in urban and rural settings, bringing the literacy rate to 6th grade in 6 months! Cuba has sent many volunteers to other Latin American countries to help them with literacy training. Much more successful in making friends than sending weapons or trying to overthrow elected governments!

We'll be visiting the Literacy Museum and talking with some of those teachers when we're in Cuba in July! And we'll show Maestra at our Reality Tour Orientation.

We've been impressed with the **Cambodian Childrens Advocacy Foundation** that works with the grassroots villagers who universally want pre-schools for their children. CCAAF provides the materials for the villagers to build the buildings. They also teach organic vegetable and

medicinal farming methods and fish farming and now have an aquaponic project to help fund the teachers' salaries. See What's New on our website. You can help!

Take Action!

Being informed is important. And we find that taking action sometimes makes a difference, even signing a petition: Internet Neutrality certainly is alive due to the multiple signatures on myriad petitions and Keystone XL Pipeline is dead at least for now.

We find these email list helpful:

Quaker organizations
 Friends Committee on National Legislation: <http://fcnl.org/action/>
 Friends Committee on Legislation California
www.fclca.org/take-action.html

Founded by Norman Solomon
[RootsAction](http://act.rootsaction.org)
act.rootsaction.org

PUBLIC CITIZEN ACTION ALERTS

www.citizen.org/action

As CCR works on advocacy initiatives around human and civil rights issues, we often need to call on the public to urge policy-makers to do the right thing.

There are many more!

For those who want to get together with others around specific topics to plan on



how to build a better world we have the opportunity to join the US SOCIAL FORUM this June.

The US Social Forum will be June 24-28, 2015. This year's Forum takes place in three



locations Philadelphia, PA, Jackson MS, and San Jose CA. You can register as an individual or as an organization. If odw gets 10 it will only cost \$20 each. So let us know if you want to register as part of *our developing world (odw) Register through odw*

The US Social Forum is happy to announce registration for the first official polycentric US Social Forum is OPEN!!! Our website is up and we are ready and roaring to go.

You can check out our new digs here:

<https://www.ussocialforum.net/>

Register for the US Social Forum here:

<https://www.ussocialforum.net/registration>

For out of towners **odw** is offering bed and breakfast for a couple or two singles in double room &/or a single or double on a futon in the lanai for a tax deductible donation to **odw** scholarship fund in lieu of hotel cost.

San Jose CA area

Guatemala Photo Report

Mi Mundo Photographs by James Rodrigues

The IXil, Life After Genocide

Unfortunately, This is what US foreign policy reaped. President Clinton apologized, but we still support these kinds of governments there and elsewhere.

<http://www.mimundo.org/2146469-the-ixil-life-after-genocide#1>

All over the world mining companies are forcing governments, even our own in the US, to ignore their own laws that give residents the right to stop mining, that give the environment protection. The affluent nations protect their corporations in this matter. So-called Free Trade agreements give corporations the right to sue governments for profits they couldn't earn because they were not allowed to mine (or to privatize the water, etc.) Unfortunately, in the secret courts they usually win, bankrupting those poor countries: Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador have citizens protesting such today. Reason to say NO to fast track and TPP.

JOIN US FOR A GREAT ADVENTURE IN CUBA IN JUNE!