

Fresno Center for Nonviolence 2022



Daylight Savins
Ends



November 2022

At this time of writing, a demonstration is being held at the Federal Building in downtown Fresno. Various groups being led locally by Peace Fresno is demanding the United States stop supplying weapons to all warring states like Ukraine and negotiate and end to the possibilities of all out nuclear war. Why is that considered so controversial to our leaders?

Edited by
Richard
Gomez.

Dedicated to PEACE and SOCIAL JUSTICE through

SIMPLICITY ~ JUSTICE ~ INCLUSIVENESS ~ NON-INJURY

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This unabridged article is of Human-Carbon Nature by Wes Jackson and Robert Jensen. The entire contents can be seen at <https://www.counterpunch.org/2022/09/16/human-carbon-nature/>.

Who's To Blame For Climate Destabilization and the many other ecological crises driving us toward collapse?

Looking for the villains in the story is understandable, given the depth of human suffering and the extent of environmental destruction. Judgments of individual and institutional failures are necessary as we develop not only new policies but different economic and political systems. Penalties are just, and reparations are justified. But changing the trajectory of the human relationship to the larger living world—that is, imagining new living arrangements consistent with the necessary worldwide down-powering—requires going beyond the obvious targets. We must acknowledge that the dense energy of fossil fuels makes our lives easier in many ways that most people enjoy and will not want to give up, and that no combination of renewable energy sources can replace the work that coal, oil, and gas do for us. That doesn't mean all our uses of energy are necessary, nor is this an argument against renewable energy. But we must accept the dramatic changes coming, a just and sustainable human future requires living within limits much more severe than affluent societies have experienced, and more severe than most people would choose.

That simply means that every organism has a genetic endowment that makes some things possible and some things impossible. There are parameters within which all organisms, including we humans, operate. That said, everyday experience reminds us that human nature produces widely variable behavior and that there is little we can predict with certainty about any specific human's behavior in a particular situation. Take the example of whether violence is a part of human nature. There is no reason to believe that any human society has been completely aggression-free. We are a species capable of violence toward one another. It's likely that all humans—even those who may never have been violent in their lives, if such a human has ever existed—have the capacity for violence against others. Under what social conditions is violence more or less likely? What individual differences, interacting with those social conditions, might increase or decrease the likelihood of violent action? Socialization shapes the expression of human variation, and there are patterns in how people respond to that socialization. We never know as much as we would like to know about these kinds of questions and are usually left to act on informed hunches based on limited evidence. Our focus here is on what we call our human-carbon nature, a phrase borrowed from our colleague Bill Vitek to remind us that we are carbon based like all other life on Earth. Our answer for purposes of this conversation is one that Jackson has been offering for some time: "Life is the scramble for energy-rich carbon." It is our human nature to seek out energy-rich carbon. Over time, humans have gotten exceedingly good at tapping into five major carbon pools—soils, forests, coal, oil, natural gas—and maximizing the extraction of all the carbon we can get our hands on. Our greatest success as a species has become our most profound failure, given the many negative consequences of all that carbon grabbing. Understanding and changing our response to our human-carbon nature is a new challenge for which we have no road map. With nearly eight billion people on Earth, no existing ideology or culture is going to provide us with a template for dealing with what lies ahead, a world of fewer people consuming less energy.

Renouncing First-World dominance is a start, as in imagining a world beyond capitalism's obsession with growth and consumption. The end of those systems is a necessary but not sufficient condition for change. We agree with the eco-socialist goal "system change not climate change," but we disagree with that network's claim that "the current ecological crisis results from the capitalist system, which values profits for a global ruling elite over people and the planet." The current ecological crisis is shaped by, but not the result of, capitalism. Human degradation of ecosystems predates capitalism and will continue after capitalism, unless we develop a deeper understanding of the crisis. As one scholar of collapse puts it, "History suggests that complexity most commonly increases to solve problems and compels increase in resource use." The end of capitalism won't necessarily disrupt that pattern. Placing our hopes in non-capitalist complexity will not magically reduce resource use. We have to not only reject capitalism but also confront our own carbon-seeking nature. If we start with an awareness of the scope of the change needed and the lack of a plan for dealing with human-carbon nature, we can at least be clear about the direction in which we need to move. And that requires committing to being the first species that will have to impose limits on itself, which means a collectively imposed cap on the carbon we use and rationing to ensure fairness. This will be harder than most people acknowledge, perhaps harder than anyone can imagine. Reducing wealth concentration and eliminating uses of energy that most everyone agrees are wasteful would be only the first in what will have to be many more reductions. These observations require us to acknowledge the existing disparities in the distribution of wealth and the need to pursue redistribution policies. We also must find ways to reduce dramatically our aggregate consumption. It's one thing to support the idea of a down-powering, quite another thing to power down, to give up all those uses of dense energy. But to put it as bluntly as possible: Any policy that does not understand and account for the temptations of dense energy will fail. Human-carbon nature matters.

On November 19th, World Toilet Day, from 2 to 5 pm. Come and Reflect with Us on Past Efforts to Meet the Sanitary Needs of People Living with a Home in Fresno, and to Learn About Recent Efforts Here and in Other Homeless Hotspots. Human Progress Depends on Basic Sanitation and on You Understanding the Facts. Speakers are Mike Rhodes, Gordie Ochiner-Bermudez with Q & A after each. A cadre of homeless advocates will read aloud reading aloud from the article at: <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/toilet-urination-disability-access/tnamp/>. A YouTube video playlist (2 hrs.), accompanied by handout to promote deeper understanding of homeless advocacy bearing on this public health issue with breaks. For more information contact: fresnohomelessadvocates@gmail.com



KFCF 88.1 FM Stir it, UP! Wednesday November 9th at 3 pm



This month's show with your host Josh Shurley will be talking about Armistice Day with members of Veterans for Peace. For more information call on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at (559) 237-3223 or check our website at www.centerfornonviolence.org

In October, our show was with host Josh Shurley with guest Bernard Navarro, Native American Instructor at Fresno City College.