
COMMON SENSE II

Capitalizing on the familiarity and influence of Thomas Paine's "Common Sense" pamphlets that provided American colonists with exposure to the conversation of great thinkers in the pre-Revolutionary period, this paper assumes the name COMMON SENSE II. Similarly, today's series of pamphlets strives to give a direct response to great political events and ideas of our time.

April 2019 The Green New Deal Issue Volume 14 Issue 4

I Love the Green New Deal

By Vicki Andrews

No question about it. I love the Green New Deal. As I read through the resolution, I kept thinking, "Yes, this is what we need!" and again, "Wow, this is the answer!" I know it's a resolution, not a bill, but let's dream for a bit. There's been some criticism that the it tries to do too much, tries to fix everything at once, but I say, "Why not?" It's what we need to do! Why



Agence France-Presse/Saul Loeb via Getty Images

tiptoe around trying to fix a little here and a little there, a little of this and a little of that. Let's buckle down and get it done. The climate situation is reaching extremely critical proportions, and we have so little time left.

The basic truth is—and we all need to face this—we don't have a choice in this if we want to leave a livable planet for our children and grandchildren. A recent report (10/8/18) from the United Nations International Panel on Climate Change states that we will reach a critical threshold in 12 years, bringing extreme climate devastation around the world. How old will your children be in 12 years? Your grandchildren? The forecast is for extreme drought, raging forest fires, increasing number and intensity of floods, tornadoes, and hurricanes which will lead to destabilized governments, severe food shortages, and massive waves of refugees. Melting polar ice caps will cause the seas to flood all coastal cities worldwide as well as the sixth great extinction of plants and animals. Unfortunately, this doesn't mean we can wait 12 years and then begin working on this. Then it will be too late; we need to start now and work fast!

As you read about all the issues addressed in this resolution, a natural reaction is "Where is the money going to come from?" That's a fair question. Well, I love the Green New Deal, and I love Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez' suggestion: let's pay for at least a part of it by an increased marginal tax on the super wealthy—a 70% tax rate on income earned in excess of \$10 million, for example. Perhaps another part of the cost can be covered by taxing the more than \$33 trillion that wealthy Americans have stashed in off-shore accounts that we currently don't collect taxes on. Let's change that system and put the money to good use. We need to remember that the cost of climate devastation is increasing at an amazing

rate and is projected to reach trillions of dollars in the very

near future. Do we pay to prevent and/or reduce the damage, or do we wait and pay to fix the destruction after the fact? If we're smart, we'll pay up front to prevent the devastation in the first place. Remember what your grandma said, "Don't be penny wise and pound foolish!"

Yes, we can have it all! The Green New Deal plans to create 20 million jobs by transitioning to 100% clean, renewable energy by 2030 as well as reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40%. It will ban fracking, tar sands, and off-shore drilling and build a nationwide grid to provide clean, democratically controlled energy for all. The 10 year transition mobilization will build resiliency against climate change devastation, repair and upgrade infrastructure, guarantee

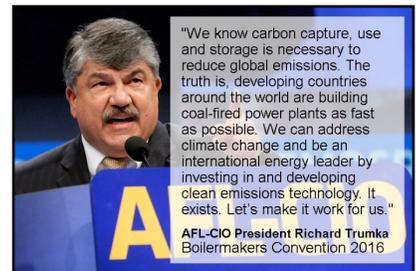


universal access to clean water, as well as reduce risk posed by future climate impacts.



One of the biggest fears when we talk about the need to end our reliance on fossil fuels and turn to renewable energy is that we will be taking jobs away from the people working in the fossil fuel industry: the

pipeline workers, the drillers, the coal miners, etc. This bill will provide money to educate and train these folks in building the solar, wind, and other renewable systems we so desperately need. We'll need to switch our workers from fossil fuels, the energy of the past to renewable energy, the energy of the future. We'll also need to swiftly change from gas powered transportation to electrically powered transportation; cars, trucks, buses can all be run on electricity, and that electricity can come from renewable energy. We can do it quickly and efficiently if we make up our minds that we need to. And we really need to. For your



"We know carbon capture, use and storage is necessary to reduce global emissions. The truth is, developing countries around the world are building coal-fired power plants as fast as possible. We can address climate change and be an international energy leader by investing in and developing clean emissions technology. It exists. Let's make it work for us."

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka
Boilermakers Convention 2016

AP Photo

Initial Thoughts about The Green New Deal

By Eric Grimsrud

I applaud the Green New Deal movement for the attention it is generating on the subject of Anthropogenic Global Warming (AGW) and for the sense of urgency it conveys in addressing it. Given the magnitude of the problem, any successful climate change plan might indeed, require the



extraordinarily rapid changes that the GND recommends. We don't really know for sure yet how rapidly the ravages of AGW will unfold, and it will be better to error

on the conservative side. At the same time, however, there are a couple aspects of the plan that I fear might lead to its failure at its very onset. If so, we should be aware of them and do our best to avoid them.

One concern is that in its most aggressive form, its proposed time frame for bringing all CO₂ emissions of the USA to zero is by 2030, just 11 years hence. Very few knowledgeable scientists and policy makers are likely to consider that timeline to be physically possible. So far, our scientific leaders have been challenged to envision how the world can get to zero emissions by 2050, 31 years hence. The sad fact might be that over the last 150 years, mankind has dug itself into a hole that is much deeper than the GND acknowledges, and from now going forward, we must address the problem with complete honesty and not just wishful optimism if we want public support to be robust.

Another potential problem with the GND as it presently exists is that it also includes a wide variety of social issues such as universal healthcare and guaranteed federal jobs. I believe this is a huge mistake. The climate change problem all by itself will challenge us to our very limits and

should be placed front and center all by itself. We should not share that spotlight with other ongoing issues even if the others are meritorious and long overdue. Immediate action on the AGW problem is of paramount importance. We will have the



time and inclination to address other issues either sooner or later—but only if the big one is being successfully addressed. Just as there would be little point in replacing the windows of your home if the house itself were on fire.

In a world warmer than 2° C, organized efforts and even organized civilizations, as we know them today, are likely no longer to exist. Due to what we have already done to our atmosphere, we are already halfway to that 2° C limit. In addition, it should be noted that many scientists believe that the exceedingly dangerous temperature limit that we must not exceed is closer to 1.5° C. than 2°.



Our next swing at this approaching fastball might very well be our last. So for the sake of your children, grandchildren, and all of our other descendants that manage to be born prior to the onset of uninhabitable conditions on this planet, please pay very close attention to the plans presently being formulated for the stabilization of our planet's temperature. For starters, I believe that the GND should be modified as suggested here, so that it has a snowball's chance of public acceptance in our rapidly warming world.

Misconceptions

By Nancy Rudd

The late Senator John McCain is known for his thumb down vote against completely eradicating the Affordable Care Act or Obamacare.



The misconception is why he voted that way. McCain was disappointed that the Senate didn't follow regular order. Instead, the Republican



leadership skipped committee consideration, had no committee hearings, and rejected input from the opposing party all for political victory on this bill.

What does this have to do with the Green New Deal? The Green New Deal is a resolution, not a bill. It passed the House. Senate Majority Leader McConnell brought up the resolution to trap the Democrats in a deceptive vote. For that reason while the Republicans voted against it, the Democrats voted present. Again, regular order was deliberately not followed. No experts were brought in to testify, people obviously and directly affected by climate change were not allowed to tell their stories, and Senators were not allowed to debate.



For the past eight years, six under Obama and two under Trump, when the Republicans controlled the Senate, McConnell has abused his power to bring or refused to bring legislation or appointments (think Merrick Garland) up for votes. That has put him in the running for the title of Worst Majority Leader of the U. S. Senate. We can only hope that the 2020 election will give us a Democratic majority in both Houses of Congress and a Democratic President. Then the government will have the ability to do the work of the people it represents and to respond to the catastrophic issue of climate change.

It's MEMBERSHIP TIME!!

Send your \$20-\$25 check to:

Itasca Progressive Caucus

DFL Office

809 NE 4th St.

Grand Rapids, MN 55744

The Green New Fuels

By Deanna Ensley

My first reaction to the Green New Deal was that it was pie in the sky. I wasn't really against it, but I didn't think it was realistic. But then, I had not read it.

On March 19th, KDLH-TV in Duluth ran an interview with Lourenco Goncalves, the chairman and CEO of Cleveland-Cliffs, a taconite mine, that caught my attention and irritated me. First, Mr. Goncalves talked about how unrealistic was the prospect of electric cars in Northern Minnesota. I, too, had thought about that. I had recently gotten into an argument with a woman about how the lack of charging stations and the long distances from Grand Rapids to anywhere



seemed to make electric cars impractical at this time. I thought the cold winters could be a negative factor. Of course, I am not a scientist, but my experience is that batteries only hold charges so long in subzero temperatures.

Anyway, Mr. Goncalves prompted me to look at and read HR 109, The Green New Deal. Boy, was I off base! This resolution gives the year 2050 as the ultimate goal for "net zero global emissions," 31 years.



That is a long time, certainly no big rush. I am 64 years old, so I reflected on the changes I have witnessed in the past 30 years. After reading the GND in its entirety,

I think the socio-economic progress portion of the resolution alone should not be ignored. There are many parts of this proposal that are for the long-term improvement of the United States and its people.

Back to Mr. Goncalves and why his interview irritated me: as the president of Cleveland-Cliffs, he of course has a huge interest in consuming large quantities of electricity with the hope of not spending one red cent to provide improvements on the source of the electricity and then spending even less on preserving the environment—except for mining preservation. He is the corporate fat cat. Like Trump, he has little regard for the people and their futures. The socio-economics of our people are not likely his prime interest. His socio-economic status is his interest. He likely is in the percentage of people who may be able to buy their way out of environmental difficulties—for a time. There is also the fact that he is not a young man and only has a limited number of years to possibly suffer the ill effects of poor environmental practices.



Again, I am not an energy expert, nor am I a scientist, but I do know that producing steel consumes a lot of energy, and I know that is Mr. Goncalves' prime interest in life. I can agree

with him that we will need steel into the future. His company's mining does provide jobs but so can the development, implementation, and upkeep of alternative energy sources. This is not about the need to produce steel; it's about how to produce steel in an environmentally responsible manner. I believe we need electricity into the future, but here in Minnesota on the Iron Range, if the continued thinking is to use coal as the primary source for providing electricity, there will be a rude awakening. Coal is not a renewable resource, but its impact on the environment is the concern. I literally was raised on hydroelectric energy projects. I grew up on a large hydroelectric project that my dad worked on his entire career. I am aware that hydroelectricity has its downfalls that are different from coal, mainly that it has basically reached its culmination.

Mr. Goncalves stated, "No more planes, only trains, this is pie in the sky; that is not going to happen. The Green New Deal is just a bunch of ideas that even in theory do not work, let alone in the real world." This is when he referenced the difficulty of using electric cars in Northern Minnesota and the cold weather. Even I realize that batteries can be improved over the next 30

years to be more efficient. Why can't a more efficient jet fuel be invented? As a matter of fact, Marshall Medoff has an innovative method of turning plant life to fuel. (*60 Minutes*, 1/6/19, "The Unlikely, Eccentric Inventor Turning Inedible Plant Life into Fuel.") The only things stopping alternative fuel progress are oil and coal companies that have no interest nor incentive. Similar reasoning is behind pushing gas operated vehicles. Car manufacturers are developing alternative energy vehicles faster than the companies that would be producing the alternative energy can keep up.



As I read about the Green New Deal, I found that expanding nuclear power may be one way to meet the huge demands of manufacturing like aluminum and steel. Coal certainly is not the future. Once again, I will refer to Mr. Medoff; he is investing millions of dollars in his fuel and does not believe he will immediately beat out oil companies but thinks he can capture a good percentage of the market plus do no more further damage to the environment. That's the kind of thinking the Green New Deal is promoting.

Editor's Note: The non-original graphics we use are from Bing and are in the public domain. Any unattributed use of any copyrighted material is unintentional.

A Green New Deal

By Bob Passi

The Issue:

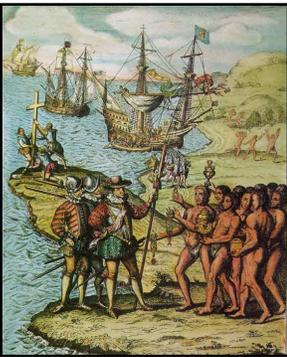
The Green New Deal is a proposed set of legislative changes that will lead us back to a more humane society, some balance, and a healing relationship with nature to provide a sustainable system for human survival. We all understand the need to save the planet, our home and the basis of human existence as we know it. This planet would get along just fine without us, but we cannot survive without the cooperation of this planet.

We also know that the present economic system—unfettered free market capitalism packaged as new-liberal economics—essentially sees the planet in terms of resources to monetize and control in order to produce wealth for an economic elite. The focus of that system is about profit and not about people or the planet, except as another exploitable resource. The system is not concerned about the planet's waning ability to support human existence.

Those who would focus on human life and sustainability understand the incredible dislocation between that economic system and the planetary need to provide a platform for continued human existence.

Here is what we seem to have missed. We need to change our strategy to fit the needs of this issue.

We are all aware of the advantages that horses, steel weapons, and gunpowder gave to the invading Europeans in their confrontations with the indigenous population in the Americas. We know that those things did not make the European social or economic systems ethically or morally superior, only that those weapons allowed them to dominate, control, or destroy the indigenous populations and/or enslave them and impose another way of life on them.



New technology always gives an advantage to those who control it. That in itself has no real bearing on the human qualities or the sustainability of those imposed new systems; it only leads to an oppressive state until those who are oppressed find the appropriate tools to use to create a road forward.

We now have an economic elite who have the economic and technological advantage and use it to propagandize the population as well as to create a surveillance state. In addition, they have built the most dominant military in the world and are beginning to militarize the police. They have created a machine built for dominance and control, and it is based on an assumption that change must come through competition, confrontation, and conflict. In other words, the only way to find the better solution is through confrontation and dominance—a strange kind of “might is right.”

Within this framework their idea is to develop overwhelming superiority in all areas of potential threat to protect power and dominance of the system. Since this power is held by a small group of economic elites, the ordinary citizens who do not share in the power of decision-making become the source of outside threats.

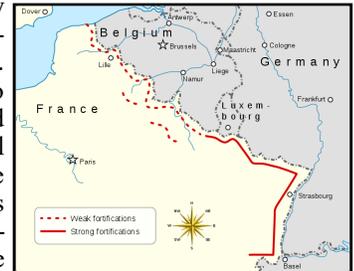
Change comes in many forms and can emerge from many

Change

Change comes in many forms and can emerge from many

sources. When a system ceases to be effective in providing the necessities of life, people and even nature search for new ways to change and use their impressive creativity and energy to adapt to accomplish changes, especially when those changes are required for survival.

One of the weaknesses of the existing system is its defensive position. Nearly all winning systems establish a defense to ensure their survival. Often when a group wins a war, they tend to prepare for the next threat based on what they used to win the last one. An example of that is the fortified bunkers of the Maginot Line built by the French after WWI to prevent a German invasion of France only to find that in WWII the Germans simply went around them. The enemy, the others who want change, eventually find tools and weapons that will neutralize whatever defensive devices have been built. It is like trying to devise cybersecurity only to find that the hackers have once again found a way around it.



After WWII the American military was dominant and continued to be expanded to defend against wars waged by nation-states in which armies confronted each other on the defined battlefield. Once again, those who wanted change used guerilla warfare: asymmetric techniques to counter those large conventional militaries. Popular uprisings of civilian populations don't fit that conventional mode nor do non-state groups like Al Qaeda or other groups we might describe as terrorist groups, even though they may see themselves as fighting for necessary change against an opposition with overwhelming conventional power. And of course, the nuclear option is a whole other ballgame.

The question is how do people deal with a state that has limited access to the change mechanism and has made itself invulnerable politically, economically, legally, technologically, and militarily? Well, of course, it would be a waste of time and resources and perhaps even suicidal to try to confront them on those battlefields.

So we need to be creative and devise routes to change that use different means, methods, and tools. We can choose the weapons and tools. We can choose a new vocabulary. We can even choose the location in which to carry out the process. I say “means, methods, and tools” because they want this process to be in their ballpark, with their rules and their umpires, and using their weapons of choice. In other words, they want the path of change to be determined by power, confrontation, conflict, violence, and ultimate domination.

But we do not need to adopt their vocabulary or their definition of change. We know that change happens in many ways. We know that evolutionary changes make other unworkable paths irrelevant. We know that human choices leave older and now irrelevant options to wither and die, *i.e.* the change from analogue to digital or the change from horse power to the internal combustion engine.

We also know that without the support of the ordinary people, whether outright or even just tacit, any system will crumble. So if people begin to migrate to better and more sustainable solutions to living, the older system will begin to decline as the energy of that support wanes.

Think about it in terms of a medieval model. If all the power and control are contained within the castle walls and the peas-

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

ants are exploited to provide the resources and human power to keep the castle functioning, if those peasants can see a



better way to survive by going to the towns and working as free laborers or craftspeople or shop owners, they will migrate to the towns and leave the castle without an exploitable workforce and therefore unsustainable.

Nowhere in that scenario is there a need to storm the castle and breach the walls to declare victory. It is simply a quiet and effective change based on people making their own choices.

The change we require to survive as human beings on this planet will be based on cooperation, healing, and connection—all the human qualities we most admire. That change will come from our beginning to disengage from the old and outmoded system that has now turned destructive. Instead of spending all of our resources on confrontation and resistance, we can begin to put our energy into supporting positive change that will lead us back to reconnection with our humanity, with life, and with the planet that sustains us. It is a turn toward humility and away from arrogance and domination.



The planet can survive without us, so the urgency is up to us. If we begin the process of rebuilding our connections, the planet will respond in positive ways. But the energy must come from us.

This is not so much to discourage pursuing political or legal solutions, nor to stop demonstrations against abuses. It is



about adding another layer of activity by

spending some of our energy and resources supporting people, projects, and actions which actually heal the planet and our relationships to the planet and to other human beings. The first of these options, political and legal, may require, to some extent, playing in their ballparks, since they control the political, legal, and economic agendas. These continue to be their preferred means of confrontation since they hold the advantage.

Just to clarify, I am not suggesting that people quit their jobs or give away all their possessions; I am suggesting that people rethink how they use their private time, energy, and resources, that is, the time they have after they have finished their work within this economic system.

Hearts and Minds

The real weakness of the existing system is its dependency

on economics to solve problems. That means the solutions tend to appeal to the pocketbook and not to the hearts and minds and souls of a populace.

That is their real weakness: they have not attended to the human heart, the human mind, or the human soul; all are crucial to give people a sense of value and belonging and incentive to act for their own survival.

We can use our time and energy in ways prescribed by them. For instance, we can find ways to distract ourselves from our spiritual emptiness with entertainment. We can find escape from that emptiness with drink, drugs, or even sex. We can do extreme sports or activities just to feel alive. We may even, out of frustration, move to abuse and violence when all feels lost. We may also rage against the system, spending our time and energy thrusting ourselves against the walls of the entrenched system in some vain hope to break through.

Or we can use our time and energy to find creative ways to help heal the planet, help form healthy communities, and devise ways to work with others of like mind in powerful cooperative projects. We can add our time and energy to those already doing the work of forming a more humanly positive and sustainable future.

The economic elite may think that their economic narratives and their schemes to justify their exploitation have captured the hearts and minds of the populace. But we know that there is no spirituality in their system only emptiness of heart and soul-crushing realities in the path they have chosen for us.

If we reclaim our hearts and minds and begin to move in directions that provide support for the human spirit and our connection to the life of this planet, that individual spark within each of us will emerge and begin to join with others who truly understand what human life is about as well as our purpose on this planet to connect and heal the life-giving ecosystems.

The very planet confronts us with the ultimatum of global warming; the old system is not only dysfunctional but is also exacerbating the problem. We are aware of the power of our numbers (the good and caring people of the world) and our internal power as human beings born to act and thrive in cooperation with others. Even the New Millennium suggests a time for review and change, resetting our human goals.



Everything has conspired to prepare this moment for us. It is only up to us to unify and to take the initiative as true human beings to act.

COMMON SENSE II is published by the Itasca Progressive Caucus in Grand Rapids, Minnesota

Editor: Valerie Conner conray@arvig.net

ITASCA PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS

Chair: Jeanne Newstrom itascaprogressive@gmail.com

Visit us at www.itascaprogressive.org

computer generated/volunteer labor



Earth Day *

at Central Square Mall

April 27, 2019 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

*We know, the official Earth Day was on 4/22, but every day should be Earth Day!

Please join the Earth Circle and learn more about our planet and how we can help her

Information tables, movies, popcorn and beverages (coffee and lemonade), Earth Wheel Game for kids, visits from Plastic Bag Monster and Big Mama Earth

Featuring our

“Used a Bit, Loved a Lot Sale”

a chance to purchase treasured items at very low prices



**Plastic Bag Monster
with Earth Wheel Game**



Big Mama Earth

Watch for us at Central School for First Friday May event

Big Mama Earth Speaks Up!

I'm Big Mama Earth and I'm here to say
You're destroying me in the cruelest way

You're heating up the oceans, the fish aren't gonna last
The coral reef is very ill and fading awfully fast

The trees, the bees, the little frogs, they are all dying out
You're making me so gosh darn mad, I'm gonna stand and shout.

Now please just stop and listen, please just stop and think
you're taking all the life on Earth to the very brink

There's got to be another way to care for this creation
If you can't turn this mess around, you're headed for damnation

Stop the use of fossil fuels, they're killing you, you know
Consider sun, consider wind, now that's the way to go

Big Mama Earth's been good to you, I've given all I've got
Please be good to me as well, stop making me so hot!

Now I can survive forever, just spinning on through space
But if I give a great big shake, you may fly off this place.

I can manage fine without you; I'll get by, I have a hunch
Maybe I can start from scratch and build a better bunch.



The New American Dream

By Valerie Conner

Often the book reviews in *Common Sense II* are of dystopian novels. The purpose of the dystopian genre is to alert people to the possible result of the path we're on. It's easy to get caught up in the negative, especially when digesting the news and the regressive direction of the Trump Administration. The Green New Deal as introduced by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (H Res 109) and Sen. Ed Markey (S Res 59) seeks to turn things around by addressing climate change and tackling economic disparity. It is a modern day utopian piece.

Just for a little while, put aside our steady diet of gloom and doom and dream of what life could be like.

- ◆ Imagine a world in which we positively affect the climate by adopting clean, renewable energy which would in turn provide better, healthier, and better paying jobs than those associated with the coal and petroleum industries.
- ◆ Imagine a world in which our infrastructure was updated and included light rail and electric vehicles.
- ◆ Imagine a world in which vocational or academic education were accessible by all.
- ◆ Imagine a world in which everyone were able to have a good job that paid adequately and had safe and just working conditions.
- ◆ Imagine a world in which quality healthcare were accessible by all.
- ◆ Imagine a world without homelessness.
- ◆ Imagine a world with new, adequate, and secure power grids.
- ◆ Imagine a world in which agriculture did not add to pollution.

Those are the issues addressed by the Green New Deal.

We can make great strides toward achieving these goals, but first we will have to put aside obstructionist politics, hatred, the idea that money is the only worth of a person, and the idea that the only way to get ahead is to put others down. It's time for cooperation and to work together.

Are those pipe dreams? No. Will they be easy to attain? Of course. Are they worth trying to achieve? Absolutely.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS—GET INVOLVED AND GET IT DONE!

Event	Date /Time	Location
DFL Headquarters Open (326-6296)	Tues & Thurs 2-5 pm	DFL Headquarters
Itasca Progressive Caucus (259-4490)	3rd Monday 6:30 pm	DFL Headquarters
DFL Central Committee Meets	4th Monday 6:30 pm	DFL Headquarters
DFL Social Club & Lunch	1st Wednesday Noon	DFL Headquarters
DFL Pot Luck (Open to the Public)	3rd Wednesday 5:30 pm	DFL Headquarters
Earth Circle	3rd Saturday 2:00 pm	GR Public Library
Itasca Working families Alliance	2nd Monday 6:30 pm	Dutchroom
Itasca Indivisible	2nd Tuesday 7:00 pm	Dutchroom
GR Human Rights Commission	Last Wednesday 4:00 pm	GR City Hall
GR Healthcare for All	1st Thursday 5:00-6:00 m	DFL Headquarters
Circles of Support	Every Thursday 6:30 pm	811 NE 4th St.
Deadline for <i>Common Sense II</i>	May 10, 2019	conray@arvig.net