

# Laborism



A Bloodless Revolution



## Our Fair Share

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## What is Laborism?

For the past 150 years, we have all been sold on a big lie. The lie is that we must choose one of two economic systems. In the first, capitalism, the profit from your labor goes to capital, namely the people who, commonly through their parents, had excess money and invested some of it early in the life of a company. In the second, socialism, the profit from your labor goes to society, specifically the government where it is controlled by people who managed to get into power. People have strong views as to which of these systems is the least bad, just as they have strong views as to which of our two primary political parties is the least bad. In the same way that Americans have been convinced that we must choose one of the two awful candidates the parties offer us, we have believed that we must choose one of these two economic systems.

If we open our eyes, we can see that there is a third choice. The profit from your labor could go to you. If it is capitalism when the profit from labor goes to capital and socialism when the profit from labor goes to society, then the system where the profit from labor goes to labor is laborism.

The fact that we have all learned not to see that the profit from what we produce should go to the people who produce it is a triumph of propaganda. Who produced that propaganda? Who owns and controls the media and publishing houses? Who funds the academics who write papers on economics? They are the rich, parasitic financiers and speculators<sup>1</sup> who benefit from our capitalist system. They don't want you to open your eyes. They will fight tooth and nail to convince you that the idea that the profit from your labor should belong to you is ridiculous, that it is unfair, that it could never work and that you are foolish and ignorant if you believe that it could. They are lying to you. Don't listen to them.

Moving from capitalism to laborism does not require taking any property away from anyone. All that it requires is treating capital the way we have traditionally treated labor.

The basic change in laborism flows from the idea of "residual profit". Capitalists and socialists use the same trick that multinational corporations use to put profits where they want them. When corporations produce and sell products or services using operations spread across multiple

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<sup>1</sup> Let me immediately halt a trick of the financier propagandists and their pet media. At some point they will claim that when laborists refer to parasitic international financiers and speculators we are using that phrase as a so-called "dog whistle" that really means something else, something bigoted. That is garbage, and anyone who says it thereby proves that they have nothing worthwhile to say. The international financiers and speculators, the group that the elites refer to as the haute bourgeoisie, can be WASPs, Catholics or Mormons, or Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, atheist, or any other religion. What they have in common is that none of them practice the core values of their religions, as their activities are denounced by every religion. Their only true god is Mammon, and they have corrupted the soul of society. They come from all ethnic groups and nations, and they work together in places like Davos. Anyone who tries to say that a reference to financiers and speculators is a reference to a particular ethnic group is either a knowing, malicious tool of the financier class or an ignorant, stupid tool of the financier class. Laborists view honest members of the productive class as our partners and siblings regardless of their religion, race, ethnic group or anything else. The days when we allow the master manipulators of the financier class to divide us by encouraging focus on unimportant differences are over. We won't fight each other in cage matches for their profit and amusement any more. We stand together.

countries, the law requires them to price each of the pieces at their fair value to figure out which countries get to tax which parts of the profit. To do that, you look at the price that is applied to the pieces by parties dealing with each other at arm's length, a requirement called "transfer pricing"<sup>2</sup>. So, if you develop technology, manufacture a product, and sell that product to customers, you should price the R&D, the manufacturing, and the sales activity based on what unrelated parties charge to do those things. The trick is that if you price all the pieces you can see, you will almost always have substantial profit left over. That is the residual profit. Under the international rules, you deal with that by pricing the pieces that are easy to price, and leaving the leftover profit with whichever part of the operation is the most complicated and hardest to price. A corporate group will put that complexity, and so the residual profit, where they want it.

The capitalists do the same trick with society in general. They say "Hey, we can value the labor of our employees as being equal to what other companies pay their employees for similar work. But who knows how much capital is worth? Any profit left over *must* be the fair return on capital!" But that is garbage. There is no logical reason to split the money that way. We can put a reasonable value on actual capital invested instead, and conclude that the residual profit must belong to *labor*. That gives a very different result, and laborism calls for changing the economy in a few pretty simple ways to yield that result.

Briefly, that involves doing the following:

- 1) changing stock so that it just provides a limited risk-based return on actual dollars invested in the enterprise, leaving residual profit for the employees whose labor produces it;
- 2) eliminating so-called "time value of money" charges on both stock and debt, aside from bank deposits of normal savers;
- 3) ending speculative activity through the measures above and more specific controls on other assets;
- 4) making certain tax and currency adjustments;
- 5) limiting the wage multiple in corporations so that the top-paid employee can only make as much in 2 weeks as the bottom-paid employee makes in a year;
- 6) stopping 19th-century-style practices that undercut the power of American workers;
- 7) making it easier for employees to organize;
- 8) increasing market competition and transparency; and
- 9) making certain other adjustments to the way corporations are run so that they operate as the beneficial state-chartered entities that they are supposed to be.

These steps are all described here, first in overview and then, in later chapters, in more depth. This book also discusses other policy matters that are not part of the basic laborist economic mechanism, but are important for the success of a laborist America. These include supporting family farms and restoring rural America, shifting our foreign policy back to what George

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2 The term "transfer pricing" is often used as a curse word by politicians who say that evil corporations practice "transfer pricing" to cheat on their taxes. That shows their ignorance. Transfer pricing is a legal requirement. When you move a product or service across a border, you are required to price it. The price is supposed to represent its fair value. What is objectionable is when companies try to avoid *fair* transfer pricing.

Washington and the other founders wanted instead of the current policy that just serves international financiers, and family and child policies that will allow the success of working people and take pressure off of issues that the financiers have used to distract and divide us.

The financiers have been clever in the way they set up the economy. Most of us, to varying degrees, get some financial income on our savings. The financiers get us to all think of ourselves as being mini-financiers who benefit from their system. They succeed when we fail to ask the question “and where does that income come from?” The answer, of course, is that it comes from us. If you have financial income, that income comes from you and from people who are poorer than you. It does not come from thin air, and it does not come from the financiers. We can transition in a way where you won’t lose out on your savings and you have a comfortable retirement, but we still convert over to where you keep the profit from your labor rather than letting the parasites drain it off.

The thought that parasites should not be permitted to suck the profit of labor away from those who produce it is not complicated, and it is not new. Movements such as the Fabians were pointing it out in the 1800s. Why do we not hear about it now, or if we do hear about it why do we immediately dismiss it as unrealistic? It is because the financiers use their ownership of the media, government, and academia to make us feel foolish if we think anything other than what they want us to think. The financiers are carnies, and to them working people are the rubes. Every time we turn to each other and say “well gee, Claribell, it seems strange to me, too, but this smart city feller says that everybody in New York City knows this is true, so I guess it must be!”, they have to hide their laughter. It’s time for us to wise up. We need to reject what the financier media says we should do in our economy and instead follow common sense. The financiers sold us NAFTA and the 2008 taxpayer bailouts of the financiers and the 2020 flood of borrowed cash to financiers and grifters. Stop buying into their carny patter and open your mind to laborism.

The financiers have trained us to be embarrassed to use common sense. The movie *The Big Short* acts like only really smart, really plugged-in Wall Street experts saw the 2008 financial crisis coming, and even they were embarrassed to contradict what the financiers were saying. But it isn’t true that they were the only ones who saw it coming. I did. Everyone I know did. We all talked about it. If you were an adult in 2007, I bet you saw it, too, unless you were totally blinded by financier propaganda. You may have been brave enough to talk about it with your friends. It was freaking obvious! Normal people can see true things that 100% of the financier-owned media and 100% of the financier-funded academics say are just crazy talk. Don’t trust your “intuition” when it is really just your prejudices that are trained by a lifetime of relentless financier propaganda, but definitely pay attention to your common sense when it tells you that the financiers and their hirelings are lying to you. Laborism is common sense. The financiers hate it, so you can trust that common sense.

While any major change requires a lot of attention to detail and some experimentation, these changes are pretty simple to design and implement. America is in a unique position to break the power of international financial capital and make these changes. Further, while the financiers

would never agree to this, we have the power and mechanisms right now to make it happen if we just get off our couches and organize to do it. We already had the revolution, back in 1776, and we won. We just need to use what our revolutionary founders gave us and use our institutions the way they were intended to be used. To quote Colonel Lawrence in *Lawrence of Arabia*, when contemplating a seemingly impossible desert crossing to attack Aqaba from the land, “Aqaba is over there. It’s only a matter of going.” If we have the will, if we expend the effort, we can make this happen, and all the bankers and billionaires in the world can’t stop us.

## **The productive class and the parasitic financiers**

We are free today substantially, but the day will come when our Republic will be an impossibility. It will be an impossibility because wealth will be concentrated in the hands of a few. A Republic cannot stand upon bayonets, and when the day comes when the wealth of the nation will be in the hands of a few, then we must rely upon the wisdom of the best elements in the country to readjust the laws of the nations to the changed conditions. -

**James Madison**

When economic power became concentrated in a few hands, then political power flowed to those possessors and away from the citizens, ultimately resulting in an oligarchy or tyranny. - **John Adams**

I sincerely believe that ... the principle of spending money to be paid by posterity, under the name of funding, is but swindling futurity on a large scale. - **Thomas Jefferson**

History records that the money changers have used every form of abuse, intrigue, deceit, and violent means possible to maintain their control over governments by controlling money and its issuance. - **James Madison**

Communism is a hateful thing and a menace to peace and organized government; but the communism of combined wealth and capital, the outgrowth of overweening cupidity and selfishness, which insidiously undermines the justice and integrity of free institutions, is not less dangerous than the communism of oppressed poverty and toil, which, exasperated by injustice and discontent, attacks with wild disorder the citadel of rule. He mocks the people who proposes that the Government shall protect the rich and that they in turn will care for the laboring poor. - **Grover Cleveland**

We had to struggle with the old enemies of peace—business and financial monopoly, speculation, reckless banking, class antagonism, sectionalism, war profiteering. They had begun to consider the Government of the United States as a mere appendage to their own affairs. We know now that Government by organized money is just as dangerous as Government by organized mob. - **Franklin Delano Roosevelt**



Great accumulations of wealth cannot be justified on the basis of personal and family security. In the last analysis such accumulations amount to the perpetuation of great and undesirable concentration of control in a relatively few individuals over the employment and welfare of many, many others . . . Such inherited economic power is as inconsistent with the ideals of this generation as inherited political power was inconsistent with the ideals of the generation which established our Government. – **Franklin Delano Roosevelt**

The spirit of the times may alter, will alter. Our rulers will become corrupt, our people careless... From the conclusion of this war we shall be going downhill. It will not then be necessary to resort every moment to the people for support. They will be forgotten, therefore, and their rights disregarded. They will forget themselves, but in the sole faculty of making money, and will never think of uniting to affect a due respect for their rights. The shackles, therefore, will be made heavier and heavier, till our rights shall revive or expire in a convulsion. – **Thomas Jefferson**

Our revolutionary founders predicted what would destroy the great experiment in democracy and freedom that they fought to create. It would not fall to foreign invaders. Instead, it would fall when the wealth of the nation became concentrated in a small class of financiers who had the power to make democratic elections basically irrelevant. They told us that when that time came, as it has today, we would have a choice. We could get off our couches and change the system to throw off that fatal corruption of our nation, or we could become serfs and pawns of that elite financial class. Laborism is not about jealousy. It is about basic patriotism and the love of freedom. If we want to be worthy of our flag, if we want to feel pride when our national anthem is played, if we want to honor all the soldiers who have died in our wars because they had been told that they were defending freedom, if we want to respect the revolutionaries who gave their blood to give us a great democracy, then we must now work to make the change that Madison and Jefferson told us we would need to make. That change is laborism. We don't need to shed blood to make it happen. We just need to talk to each other and take the time to organize.

Laborism favors everyone who gets (or got, or will get) most of their income from productive work. Everyone who works to produce some useful product or service is part of the productive class, even if they are well paid because their work is valuable. In 2023, the average income of a family<sup>3</sup> in the productive class was \$85,091. The people who get most of their income from dividends, interest and capital gains - in other words from parasitically sucking away income from those of us who produce the goods and services - are part of the financier class, as are a group of their aides who spend their time not producing goods and services, but instead manipulating, investing, and siphoning off other people's money.

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3 There are a lot of ways to define families and households, which makes the government statistics on median family income or median household income very hard to interpret. For example, if the economy takes a dive so that people lose their homes and move in with relatives, median household income will *increase* because of that. Here I am defining "family" as a unit that files an income tax return per the IRS statistics. That's pretty close to the figure the census describes as "households", and it is convenient to define family that way in using the IRS data. Note that the number I used here is "average", i.e. adding up the total income of all productive-class families and dividing by the number of families, rather than "median", which is the level of income where half of the families earn more than that and half earn less. The median is usually lower than the average.

The IRS statistics tell us who those people are. It has become common to talk about “the 1%”, but the 1% includes a large number of professional couples who make their income through productive work.<sup>4</sup> A favorite trick of the true financier class is to pretend that working professionals are the enemy, and to then propose high taxes and other penalties on *their* income<sup>5</sup> so that politicians can look like they are taxing the wealthy without actually going after the financiers. In fact, if you carve the top 0.1% out from the top 1%, the rest of the 1% gets the majority of their income from wages and small-business income. The top 0.1%, in contrast, gets only 20% of its income from wages, and even there that’s really largely CEO stock compensation (income from stock speculation) that is classed as wage income for tax purposes. They get most of their income from parasitic finance and speculation.

That group has income of at least \$3,271,387 a year, averaging \$10,909,151, and has average assets of \$145,199,186. They, one family in 1,000, receive as much income as the bottom 50% of the population *combined*. If all of America was made up of 1,000 families and collectively received \$100 in capital gains, that one family would receive \$54.17 while the bottom 500 families taken together would receive \$1.89 and the bottom 800 families taken together would receive \$4.74. If America collectively earned \$100 of interest income, that one family would receive receive \$34.20 while the bottom 500 families collectively received only \$8.26. If America collectively earned \$100 of dividend income, that one family would receive receive \$27.54 while the bottom 500 families collectively received only \$5.31 and the bottom 800 families received \$15.49.

They are not small business owners or wage earners. They receive 4% of small business income<sup>6</sup> while the bottom 80% receive 47%. However, they receive over 28% of the benefit of the special business income deduction that was sold by the politicians and media as being for small business. Their relatively small share of small business income is similar to the split for wage income, where the top 0.1% earns 3% and the bottom 80% earns 44%.<sup>7</sup> The financier class is very different from the productive class, the working people who actually produce all the goods and services. In a big corporation, almost all of the employees are members of the productive class. The CEO and a handful of other top executives, who earn the bulk of their income not from wages but from the price of the stock, have moved into the capital class.

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4 In 2022, the 1% cut-off was family income of \$663,000. While that is a lot of money, it is within the reach of two working professionals or even one well-compensated professional. The average for the top 1% excluding the top 0.1% is \$1,178,829. The financiers probably cut in around the top 0.25%, but the public data does not have that level of detail.

5 History shows us that there is a universal pattern in the rise and fall of great nations. Madison and Jefferson predicted our fall based on that history. Over time, a wealthy elite develops. For a long time, that class is kept in check by what I call the pressing class, a layer of smart, productive people that the wealthy elite needs to produce their wealth and make society work. Eventually the wealthy class gets so greedy that they drain the pressing class, who lose interest in keeping the game going. Then the nation falls. The financiers are currently causing any attack on unacceptable concentration of wealth to be redirected to the pressing class, in order to discourage people in that class from complaining about over-concentration of wealth, thus neutralizing the people who are the greatest threat to the financiers.

6 IRS Schedules C and F.

7 The true financiers don’t even earn that much in wages. As noted above, a lot of what is classed as “wage income” is stock compensation for CEOs. Plus, the top 0.1% includes star athletes and some other people who produce things for a living and earn real wages; you can’t cleanly sort the parasitic financiers out from top-end productive people using IRS data.

The parasitic financiers and speculators get power from all that money. They own the politicians. They own the media. Through university contributions and funding of think-tanks and research grants and ownership of academic journals, they control what academics research and publish. They control what you see, what you hear, what you are taught in school, and who you get to vote for.

Laborism would take that power away. It would let them keep their assets and spend their time hosting lavish parties on their yachts and in their mansions, but it would stop their money from making infinitely more money. Laborism would put an end to speculation and gambling with our economy.

The power of compound interest is so great that the financier class must constantly make the economy grow exponentially so that they have enough assets to buy with each year's growing addition to their wealth. Just from September of 2023 to September of 2024, their assets grew by over \$3 trillion dollars, or in other words by over 3,000 billion dollars. Adjusting for inflation and growth in population between 1992 and today, total assets grew by 86.22%, but assets of the top 0.1% grew by 242% while those of the bottom 50% grew by 55%. So, in 1992 the top 1 person in 1,000 had 8% of all assets while the bottom 500 people collectively had 7.9%, while in 2024 the top 1 person had 12.5% while the bottom 500's share had shrunk to 5.5% (and the next 400 people's share had shrunk from 37.4% down to 31.8%). If the top 0.1% keep the same 7.3% annual increase in assets they've had since 1992, in 2055 they will have \$200 trillion, or 11% more assets than *all Americans* have today.

The international financial class runs our economy like a giant Ponzi scheme because they have to, or else their money will stop making money. They have learned to love giant federal deficits because they give them another couple of trillion dollars worth of investment assets each year, essentially allowing them to buy the future income of working taxpayers and their children and grandchildren. Deficits turn your and your children's labor into an asset that the financiers can buy. Unless we make a change, your grandchildren will be forced, on penalty of prison, to spend most of their working hours to pay interest to the grandchildren of the financiers.<sup>8</sup>

But like all Ponzi schemes this one must collapse. Even if you disregard limits to growth like climate change and the destruction of farmland, the rest of us can't keep supporting the financiers' desire for infinite growth in their income and wealth. If the wealth of the top 0.1% keeps increasing at the rate it has since 1992, and if the wealth of the rest of us increases at the same per capita rate that it has grown since 1992, then by 2077 the top 0.1% will own over half of all assets<sup>9</sup> in America, growing to 68% by the end of the century. The parasitic financiers can only suck so much life from the body of productive labor without killing the host. Within the lifetimes

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8 Under the Congressional Budget Office forecast, which is conservative, by 2035 interest on the federal debt will amount to 15% of the inflation-adjusted current total income of the bottom 90% of the population, at \$1.8 trillion. From there, it would grow at an accelerating rate, while interest rates would necessarily rise. The grandchildren of today's college students will be serfs forced to turn their pay over to the financiers.

9 Here excluding real estate and household goods. Including those the top 0.1% have more than everyone else put together by 2093.

of today's children, the capitalist system as we know it *has to* collapse. That is the ruthless logic of compound interest.

Laborism would keep us from heading further down this road to disaster. It would also stop the subtle forces that steal our souls, making us wage-slaves who check smart-phones and computers on our family vacations and who feel like we constantly have to buy more junk we don't need.<sup>10</sup> Because the financier class needs constant, accelerating growth in consumption, our society never asks what we need or really want as people, but instead drives us to consume more and more of what corporations can produce. Our inflation-adjusted Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has more than quadrupled since 1972, but those of us living in 1972 can tell you that that increase has not made our lives better. The financier-owned media shouts again and again that when members of the productive class remember the pre-1973 period as a better, more humane time it's some sort of an evil illusion, but on average those were in fact better days for members of the productive class. Financier-centered policies and financier-driven mindless growth have had many destructive effects. Laborism would let us shrug off those dark forces and get back to using our time and labor to serve our real needs and desires. We, the productive class, would get our lives back. Laborism would do this mostly through the simple device of only allowing capital to earn the profit that capital deserves. So, let's consider how this would work.

## Stock

Start with equity, in other words the return to shareholders. The financier-owned media will tell you that Wall Street is all about making sure that people's investment dollars go to fund the operations that create the most valuable goods and services for Americans.<sup>11</sup> That is a lie. Most corporations in America whose shares trade on the stock exchange don't sell additional stock for money to invest in their company. The stock market is not supplying constant flows of new cash into corporations for them to invest in productive activities, but instead is just a market where people trade in and gamble on existing shares. When a company is a young start-up, before its shares trade in the market, it will ask private investors for cash to fund the losses that a start-up usually suffers in its early years. Normal people, who are not "qualified investors", are not even allowed to invest in companies at that stage. When it gets to a certain level of success, then either an existing big corporation buys it, or else it does an Initial Public Offering (IPO), selling a lot of stock to the public for cash. It uses that cash to ramp up its operations to get to its initial scale. After that, it makes money and can fund its future investment from its operations. It will issue new

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10 Paul Kingsnorth describes this soul-and-society destroying force as The Machine and ably describes its effects on us. It operates in ways we don't notice, but we feel its effects on ourselves, our families, our relationships, and our spiritual natures. <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/756181/against-the-machine-by-paul-kingsnorth/> The discussion below will help to show how the nature of international parasitic finance and speculation drives the forces that fuel The Machine.

11 The financiers also claim that Wall Street influences corporate management to do a better job of running their companies. Anyone who has been involved in corporate management knows that is ridiculous. Wall Street drives stupid, inefficient behavior.

stock to its executives as compensation, but it does not usually keep selling stock to the market. Instead, it buys back stock from the market in order to give the illusion of earnings growth.<sup>12</sup> So, basically a company needs money in its start-up stage when there is a high risk that it will end up worthless, and another big injection of cash when it has shown that it will be successful and just needs funds to ramp up quickly.

People who invest cash during that early, risky start-up phase (so-called angel investors and venture capitalists) deserve to earn a good return on that money if the company is successful. If there is a 90% chance that the company will fail, then they legitimately want to earn at least 10 times their investment if it is successful.<sup>13</sup> Fine. But our system instead gives them a gigantic profit share forever. I helped write a creative investment instrument for a foreign company that instead structures the return the right way. It provides that the investor will, if the company earns a profit, get a return on each dollar invested equal to a multiple of that dollar that varies depending on how long it takes to become profitable. But that return then caps out once the investor has been compensated for taking that start-up risk, and after that the investor only receives a 5% continuing-risk return for the actual dollars invested. So, if there is a 4 out of 5 likelihood that the company will fail, and the investor invests \$100, then if the company succeeds she will get something over \$500 (a five-times return) on her investment, and then \$5 a year (a 5% return for continuing risk) for as long as she holds the stock. The rest of the profit will remain with the company and can be used to pay employees. That is a perfectly reasonable deal for both parties. I invested some of my own money based on that deal, and I'm happy with it. I am not one of the people who are spending their time developing great new technology and products that will help the world. I'm just a person who put some of my spare money at risk to support the people doing that work until they can get it going. There is no reason to give me, as a mere supplier of cash, some large percentage of the profit from the employees' work forever.

When a shareholder invests at the IPO ramp-up stage, after most of the risk is gone, a different return profile makes sense.<sup>14</sup> All stock has a level of riskiness, because even big corporations like Enron or Lucent can go bankrupt, and the price may go down so that you can't sell and get all your money back unless and until it goes back up, or the firm may not have enough earnings to pay dividends in a particular year. So, anyone buying stock can reasonably ask for some level of risk return for the actual dollars they invest. But that risk return should be at the level of typical equity risk returns for the market. Economists measure that number all the time because they use it in the Capital Asset Pricing Model ("CAPM"), and it runs at about 5%. If they invest \$100, then

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12 Wall Street focuses on earnings per share. If you reduce the number of shares by buying some back, earnings per share increases faster than actual earnings do. Corporate CEOs are rewarded for that.

13 Wildcat oil wells have about a 10% chance of success, on average, and that is about as risky as business investors get. I had a friend whose father was a wildcatter at Spindletop when she was a girl (she still wore a silver oil drill pendant that Howard Hughes gave her). While her father was waiting for a well to come in, he would start playing cards, and by the time the gusher started he had already lost his profits in the game, so she was working as a secretary. Wildcatters had that gambler mentality. Most investments have a higher probability of success.

14 Of course, some companies do IPOs when they are still pretty risky. The type of investment interest I described above allows you to account for such situations. You just set the initial premium return for a particular share of stock for whatever level of risk exists at the time of the investment.

they should get a risk return of \$5 a year on those actual dollars invested, so they should be entitled to a \$5 dividend in any year the corporation makes that much profit. That risk return covers both the likelihood that the company will fail, and the much more significant likelihood that the shareholder's investment can't be cashed out when the investor wants it, because the market prices have declined for reasons that may have little to do with the company itself.<sup>15</sup>

What about those shares that are issued to executives or start-up employees for compensation? Those should be a special class that operates more as plain deferred compensation. It makes perfect sense for executives or other employees to say "I don't need to get all of my pay for the full value of this year's work right now – I can let the company use it for a while to increase profits, and pay it to me later." But that doesn't mean they need to earn a risk return on that stock. Really, they are *shedding* risk rather than accepting risk. The other alternative would be that they are simply paid less in hopes of being paid more when the investment of the firm's cash pays off. The risk they are taking comes from not being paid as much now, and they take that risk because they hope to work at high pay for the more profitable company later. If they get stock now, that's giving them a more fixed claim to a part of those future profits, reducing their risk in case they get fired or die. So, an employee instrument that simply gives them their deferred pay on a priority basis, without interest, when the investment pays off would serve the purpose.

If stock was restructured this way, then pure speculation in stock would end. You would not buy a share of Nvidia in the market hoping that the price would triple, because it wouldn't. Angel investors or venture capitalists who invested in Nvidia as a start-up would have gotten a nice return early on, and they could have sold their shares to other risk takers early subject to the same cap on value based on their actual dollar investments. Persons who invested \$100 of new cash in Nvidia in its IPO would get \$5 a year on those shares, and the market would price their shares at something close to a constant \$100. All of the nonsense that Wall Street does would be unnecessary. A huge, well-paid Wall Street industry is all about gambling. Stock analysts perform the same basic function that is performed by people who provide data for your fantasy football team in sports betting. None of that is socially useful,<sup>16</sup> but those people skim off a huge amount of money that could otherwise go into the pockets of employees of productive businesses. Wall Street would really, really hate it, but it would be fantastic for the rest of us. If you prefer gambling, then you could still do it on football or horse racing or the lottery, but not with our economy.

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15 For a typical company with a credit rating of BB, the likelihood of default on its bonds over 1 year is about 0.2%, and the total likelihood of default over 5 years is 2.8%. A 0.56% annual return would cover that 5-year risk even if you assume that every time a company defaults on its bonds the shareholders are wiped out, which isn't true. But the likelihood of not being able to sell your stock for 100% of what you paid a year from now is more significant. The observed 5% equity risk return covers both elements, plus a risk premium to account for the fact that unstable income is not as attractive as stable income, unless you just like gambling. Under laborism, both the liquidity risk and the risk premium should shrink, because we will take the wild speculation swings out of the market. Prices will be more stable.

16 Again, the mouthpieces of the financier class say that Wall Street is a wonderful and necessary thing because all that activity ensures that money flows to the investments that are the most valuable to the economy, but that's poppycock. The shares trading on the market are not new money. Those investments were made years or decades ago, and now the shares just change hands between gamblers, or are sold by carnny hucksters to unsuspecting rubes. Useful investing generally ends with either the venture capital stage or the IPO.

Our Supreme Court, in its wisdom, has made rulings to the effect that corporations are people who have the same rights as flesh and blood people.<sup>17</sup> But despite a lot of loose talk in summarizing such holdings, the actual Supreme Court precedent recognizes that corporations are very much *not* people, but rather are creations of the state. In *Hale v. Henkel*,<sup>18</sup> the Court stated

the corporation is a creature of the State. It is presumed to be incorporated for the benefit of the public. It receives certain special privileges and franchises, and holds them subject to the laws of the State and the limitations of its charter. Its powers are limited by law. It can make no contract not authorized by its charter. Its rights to act as a corporation are only preserved to it so long as it obeys the laws of its creation. There is a reserved right in the legislature to investigate its contracts and find out whether it has exceeded its powers. It would be a strange anomaly to hold that a State, having chartered a corporation to make use of certain franchises, could not, in the exercise of its sovereignty, inquire how these franchises had been employed, and whether they had been abused, and demand the production of the corporate books and papers for that purpose.

So a corporation, and likewise a limited partnership and any other limited liability entity (that is, any entity whose investors are not fully personally liable for its actions) exists only because the state allows it to be created and to have certain powers and privileges, and the state only grants that existence and those powers if the entity is “incorporated for the benefit of the public.” Traditionally, American corporate law has been controlled by the financier class, and that class has found it desirable to have corporate stock function in a way that awards all of the residual profit to the shareholders, i.e. the financiers. Of course they did; it has resulted in their getting trillions of dollars that otherwise would rightly go to the working people who produced the goods and services that generated that money. But we, the productive class, are free to determine that such a commercial entity is not in fact “incorporated for the benefit of the public,” but rather is incorporated for the benefit of financiers and to the detriment of the productive class and of the nation as a whole.

Congress may enact a law, under its power to regulate interstate commerce, that provides that no limited liability entity may sell goods or services in interstate commerce<sup>19</sup> unless its ownership shares are structured like the equity instrument described above, so that capital gets only a limited return and the working people who produce the value get the rest. If we take the political action described later in this book, then we could make that change any time.

As with all of the changes described here, one must account for the fact that we would be transitioning from our current capitalist system to a laborist system, so there would be some messiness, grandfathering and transitioning involved in the change. Regular working people have invested part of their retirement savings in corporate stock under the current capitalist model,

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<sup>17</sup> See, for example, *Citizens United v. FEC*, 558 U.S. 310 (2010).

<sup>18</sup> 201 U.S. 43 (1906).

<sup>19</sup> This would then likewise apply to foreign groups. If their corporations did not fit this model, they would have to set up a US subsidiary that did. Other aspects of laborist policy would ensure that competition with foreign-based sellers would not be a problem, and neither would US capital flight. The US has a unique ability to do this.

paying prices that reflect a value far in excess of a 5% return on the cash originally invested in the corporation. So, we need to change the system in a way that allows them to preserve their investment. That can easily be done. If one uses the IPO model, they can be allowed a 5% dividend (assuming the corporation has adequate profit to cover it<sup>20</sup>) on the market value of the stock as of a certain date. Because that value would then be frozen, being equal to a 5% return on a fixed number, further speculation in that stock would stop. The Wall Street gambling house would shut down. If the corporate operations increased in value beyond the level that covers that 5% dividend, that increase would go to the employees. This would create an instant beneficial effect, and with the passage of time and the rise of new corporations we would get very close to the pure equity model described above. This is easy.

Would financiers be able to avoid this change by buying up corporations and liquidating them, running the corporate operations as their personal business? In theory they could if they had large enough fortunes, but then they would be personally liable for the corporation's actions in every state in the union and in every foreign country. One need look no further than to the recent troubles of PG&E, Hawaiian Electric, or 3M to see that having personal liability for the activities of even a boring utility or a well-reputed corporation can be a very scary thing. If you had a billion dollars, more money than you or your family could ever spend, would you risk losing all of it just to try to turn it into two billion? Laborists would want to make some reforms to the bankruptcy laws to ensure that this is not an attractive option for financiers. Ensuring that in a Chapter 11 bankruptcy the owner would be entirely wiped out and that the operations would be carried on by and for the benefit of the employees (with anyone investing new money doing so under the new form of equity) would help. If it became apparent that other tweaks were needed due to the creative activity of scofflaw financiers, they could be made and the abuses could be stopped.

## Debt

I believe that banking institutions are more dangerous to our liberties than standing armies  
– **Thomas Jefferson**

Laborism would maintain the right of working people to earn 5% interest -more than they have made since the free-money era starting in 2008 - on up to \$1,000,000<sup>21</sup> of personal savings and \$1,000,000 in an IRA. I will explain that mechanism later. This discussion relates to the debt held by financiers.

In the above discussion I have only discussed risk return, the share of profit that an investor deserves for taking the risk that their money would be lost. We have all been trained to also

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20 Currently, the S&P companies have a median price to earnings (PE) multiple of 15, meaning that they could cover a dividend of 6.7% of their price. Investors in companies with a higher multiple would have to hope that the company profits in fact grow to the level that the PE multiple suggests the market expects. Any investor who buys a high-PE stock is taking that risk today, so one can't complain about that aspect.

21 This would be enough to cover the average productive class family even in the top 10% of the population, and would be more than enough to cover the average family in the lower 90%.



believe in another kind of return, called “the time value of money.” We parrot that phrase and think ourselves wise and educated because we know about it. In reality, that return is an illusion created by the bankers, and it has no right to exist. In a later chapter, I will go into the history and purpose of money and explain where the myth of time value of money came from. Here it is enough to note that it is a myth, as the recent history of German government bonds proves.

People saved money even in times when they were not allowed to earn interest (which was much of history). They felt that having it to spend later was simply more valuable than spending it now, when they didn’t particularly need anything. There was a positive value to holding off spending. The same is true today for working people saving for retirement, as demonstrated by the fact that they continued to save, and indeed spent less, during the recent long period of negative real interest rates when the value of their money in the bank was falling (with the value being transferred to financiers). Having the security of money in the bank is worth more to them than extra current spending. As recently as 2021 German government bond yields were actually *negative* even before inflation – investors paid money to the government to hold their excess funds, so they paid money for the privilege of *not* spending their money right now. Investors did this to the tune of many billions of Euros. The propaganda about money having an inherent time value is thus clearly and demonstrably false. If someone mansplains to you with a superior air that money has a time value, you are justified in looking on them with an expression of pity for their foolishness and gullibility.

Today wealthy financiers have more money than they want to spend. They don’t really lend it out at interest based on a mental trade-off between the value of buying their 1,007th pair of shoes now or getting additional interest income. Money only has a time value to them *because* they can lend it out at interest. If they couldn’t earn interest or dividends or speculative profits, they would still leave it in the bank. But because interest charges are allowed, a selfish rational person wouldn’t let somebody else use their money for a year without getting back at least as much as they would have had if they had deposited it at interest. To say that we must pay interest because there is a time value to money, though, is circular logic, since that is only true if we pay interest. If we don’t pay interest, then money commonly does *not* have a time value, and so we don’t *need* to pay interest.

There is no moral tradition holding that it is right or just to make a charge for the “time value of money.” In a later chapter I will show that, to the contrary, moral tradition opposes such charges. Again, without a right and practice of making such charges money didn’t really have a time value. It just sat there. Governments are free to make laws restricting or prohibiting the charging of interest. They did so at the time of the Revolution, and they generally continued to do so up until the Volker interest rate spike in 1981, when the Fed subjected all of America to previously illegal interest rates and the banks took advantage of the opportunity to get state restrictions repealed. Forbidding interest charges purely for the time value of money would not be a taking of anyone’s property. Rather, for most of history in most of the world, the charging of interest for time value (with that time value being set based on whatever rate of interest the lender might get from borrower B if he didn’t lend to borrower A) has been looked on as a form of theft, a taking from the

productive citizen of the rightful product of her labor to put into the pocket of someone who contributed nothing but idle gold. Laborism therefore seeks to eliminate any charge for the so-called time value of money (aside from limited bank deposits and some other lending as described below), as opposed to charges for placing money at risk.

The devil, as always, is in the details. Because we have long tolerated lending at interest, we have an economic system that in many ways is based on lending at interest. We therefore cannot wave a wand and abolish the practice overnight without first creating other ways to make idle money be available where it is properly needed. But that does not mean that laborism is just a Utopian vision. The laborist program has an immediate agenda that would eliminate the bulk of charging for “time value” without hurting the economy, and that would in fact make the economy more stable and productive.

First, as background, it is important to note that Article I of the Constitution provides that “No State shall ... pass any ... Law impairing the Obligation of Contracts.” There is no equivalent provision applying to the federal government. Therefore, Congress may use the Commerce Clause power or its other powers to provide that certain terms of debt instruments or other agreements should be prohibited or modified. Further, the United States stands in the useful position of being the greatest economic power in the world. Where other countries tend to lack the power to stand up to the international financiers and the governments and armies that do their bidding, America has the practical ability to do what it wants.<sup>22</sup>

Further, the international financiers are caught in their own trap. They have so much money that it is extremely difficult to dispose of it. US Treasury debt held by the public is currently \$29 trillion. Total US GDP – all money spent for all purposes in America – for 2024 was \$29 trillion. That included \$5 trillion of investment spending. For the holders of US treasuries to cash out and spend their money, then, they would need to buy every good and service in the US market for a year and leave the entire rest of the US population starved in the dark, or they would have to increase all US investment by a factor of 5, which we absolutely lack any capacity to do. There is no place for that much money to go. Like the investors in German government bonds, if interest payments disappear or even if they went negative they would still need a safe source – here the US government – to hold their money.

Therefore, the American government has the Constitutional and practical power to simply declare that federal debt instruments no longer accrue interest. Payments on the debt instruments would still be made as scheduled, but any payments that would otherwise have been interest would then be principal, thus reducing the amount of principal to be paid when the instrument matures.

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22 America has long acted as the primary enforcer for the international financiers, using sanctions and death to punish anyone who tried to thwart their will. This is why other countries would have a very hard time switching to laborism. America, however, has the power to rebel and throw off the yoke of the financiers. Others may then follow. America’s destiny is to be a beacon of freedom, but as discussed below that will happen by America leaving everybody else alone, not by America “liberating” them.

To protect ordinary American working people who have invested in Treasuries, they would be authorized to exchange their Treasuries for CDs in a federal bank (as described below) of an equivalent term. Total debt securities held by the lower 90% of the population amount to about \$1 trillion, including both government and non-government, so this could be absorbed without much difficulty, effectively just paying off those treasury instruments when due.

The law could provide that likewise state and local debt instruments would no longer accrue interest, subject to the requirement that payments continue to be made as scheduled with the principal being repaid accordingly, and with a similar right of exchange for CDs of equivalent terms. The state and local governments whose debt was exchanged for CDs would be expected to repay that principal amount to the federal government on a feasible time schedule, either over the term of the original instruments or, if necessary, longer, but in general the interest savings to the governments should make repayment easier.

That brings us to corporate debt. Corporate debt basically comes in three forms. The first is commercial paper, short-term debt that corporations use to maintain their liquidity when they have uneven seasonal cash flows or hit a bump. Commercial paper is important to the economy. The only market that the federal government really should have protected in 2008 was commercial paper. Laborism would tolerate the continued use of commercial paper at levels equivalent to that in current circulation, though a maximum interest rate might be applied and gradually reduced. Limitations would be applied to prevent corporations from significantly ramping up commercial paper long-term as a means of avoiding the laborist reforms.

The second is bank debt. The banks do their best to fleece the corporations that produce actual goods and services, so corporations do not like bank debt. They use it as temporary funding when they buy another business for cash, or when they run into an unexpected problem, or sometimes for particularly large projects, as with oil platform development. Many corporations are sitting on huge piles of cash within their group, and can move cash around to cover the things that they would use bank debt for. In fact, a lot of bank debt is actually a mechanism that multinationals use to, in effect, move cash around in the group, depositing excess cash in one country and borrowing cash from another branch of the same bank group in another country. Corporations could figure out how to survive without future bank debt if interest charges were made illegal in the US, including through sale of the new-format stock. Corporations could still borrow abroad at interest to fund foreign projects, if they wished. The other laborist reforms would prevent that from hurting anything here in America.

The third is bonds. Corporations use bond debt mostly to finance two things. On the one hand, they use it to buy other businesses. Commonly it is undesirable to society for them to buy other businesses. They buy would-be competitors so that they can reduce competition, raise prices, and provide inferior goods and services. They buy innovators and make them less innovative. They buy companies because they have the delusion that when they buy a company from the people who run that company and who are intimately familiar with it, and who think that getting the purchase price is better than continuing to own the company, that the buyer will somehow be

getting a good deal; 95% of the time, they aren't. They buy companies because it makes their financial results harder to follow, so they can hide their failings more easily. If abolishing interest charges made it more difficult to do this, society overall wouldn't lose anything.

On the other hand, they use bond debt to do stock buy-backs. Stock buy-backs benefit corporate executives by artificially raising the price of their stock compensation. That operates to transfer value from regular shareholders (who otherwise would get more dividends) to the executives, and is basically a form of theft. Stock buy-backs benefit Wall Street by making it appear that stocks are getting more valuable. Rising stock prices make working people feel like they are missing out if they don't give their money to Wall Street to buy stock. Stock buy-backs don't benefit regular working people or society. During America's best years, they were illegal. If they became more difficult because interest charges were banned, that would be a good thing for society. Wall Street pressures corporations to borrow to do buy-backs, up to a certain debt ratio, because the interest payments are deductible and Wall Street likes the Earnings Per Share increases.

How often is bond debt used for actual investment in producing goods and services? Not very often. Start-up companies can't borrow money because they don't have the positive cash flows to support the borrowing. IPO companies use equity from all those excited new shareholders. Companies with stable operations generally can just use the cash they generate instead of borrowing and suffering interest charges. If interest charges were banned and corporations had to rely on the new form of equity if and when they needed cash for investment, our economy would do fine, assuming the other changes discussed below. The financiers will deny this and claim it would be the end of America, but that is not true.

Hedge funds and private equity firms (the companies formerly known as corporate raiders before they rebranded) use a lot of debt. Banning interest charges would presumably cut them off from access to loan funds. That would be good for society. There is plenty of good analysis out there showing the destructive effects of debt-fueled private equity in terms of eliminating productive activities and jobs and harming consumers and renters.<sup>23</sup> Metlife Investment Management predicted that private equity ownership of single family rental homes would skyrocket from 5% of the market in 2022 to 40% by 2030. The Gordon Gecko business model hasn't gotten any less bad for society. Even the LA fire disasters were aggravated by a private equity firm that concentrated the fire equipment industry, jacking up prices for equipment and maintenance so that much of LA's equipment was unavailable. During the post-2008 free money era, the Fed made sure that parasitic private equity and hedge funds could borrow unlimited billions at low rates, subsidized at the cost of productive-class retirement savers. Laborism would simply shut down the ability of these parasites to borrow from anyone other than each other.

Laborism would ban interest charges on new corporate bank debt and bonds, instead leaving it to corporations to use risk-based investment instruments (which could come from banks, in a new business model). It would provide transition rules for existing debt. In return, it would provide for appropriate new government assistance in deserving cases as discussed below.

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23 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=shv9g-4xXww> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6m49vNjEGs>

Laborism would get rid of the time value of money component of various kinds of consumer debt – payday loans, refund anticipation loans, credit card interest, etc. – and cap interest rates at an amount that reflects the risk of loss to the lender. It would further help consumers by providing non-predatory assistance for their personal liquidity problems, while still maintaining incentives to keep stable employment and to accumulate a savings cushion. In our current system, the most honest borrowers, the ones who try the hardest to pay off their debts, suffer the most, effectively paying for the sins of deadbeats (including high-income deadbeats) who blow off their debts. The system should be rebalanced so that virtue is rewarded, not punished. However, such reforms require eliminating predatory practices designed to get people to enter into perpetual debt that they can't repay, with the usurious lender raking in heavy interest payments.

Laborism would greatly improve the Small Business Administration to help small businesses to thrive without the burden of predatory bank debt. The new practice one sees in commercials of encouraging innocent would-be business people to run up high-interest credit card debt to fund their risky business investments would end. As one can again tell from commercials, we are long past the days when everyone graduating from an American high school understood the basics of small business bookkeeping and finance. Hard-working people with good ideas and energy try to start a business and quickly get under water financially, causing their useful businesses to fail. With better support and guidance, and if freed from unbearable interest costs, they can be helped to succeed, which will benefit all of us.

## Capital gains

The financier class does not just make undeserved profits from interest and dividends. They are heavily involved in speculation, seeking to receive gains by buying assets at low values and selling them at high values. The Thomas Pynchon novel *The Crying of Lot 49* provides a key insight about our economy: for the wealthy, the goal is to “keep it bouncing”. Where there is movement and volatility, the wealthy can make gains. Sometimes that involves making bets. More often, their gambling recalls the WC Fields line in *My Little Chickadee* when asked if poker is a game of chance: “Not the way I play it, no.” Besides the gamblers themselves, a whole Wall Street industry makes fabulous amounts of parasitic profit by taking a piece of the action on asset trades. When Fed policy had kept interest rates at the floor for too many years and people had stopped believing them when they kept saying “we’re going to raise them soon ... really ... we mean it this time ... not this time, but soon ...”, the Fed policy makers (who serve the banks and traders) expressed concern that the lack of volatility in bond prices was making it hard for the traders to make money, and the Fed wanted to take action to make prices more unstable.<sup>24</sup>

We see this currently in the Artificial Intelligence field. Consumers have not really said “gee, we really need X, Y and Z and we need AI to get it. We want AI to replace our jobs! We want AI to replace being able to talk to a human being! We want to lose the ability to tell what’s real!”

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<sup>24</sup> Policy makers can be surprisingly explicit when they think they are just speaking to their fellow insiders, as in trade magazines and other paywalled forums.

Instead, the ever-growing financier capital needs a new thing to invest in, so all of their pet consultants, media, academics and politicians have started the drum beat of “we need AI – if we don’t invest hundreds of billions there will be an AI gap!” AI stock prices rise and financiers and speculators make more money, regardless of any human need for the products.

Similarly, much of cryptocurrency is basically a big pump-and-dump scheme. Financiers love crypto because it provides the ultimate outlet for their excess trillions – an asset that does not have any use whatsoever in the real world, and therefore can grow infinitely large. Because most crypto is not backed by anything except dreams, financiers can buy in, talk it up in the media as a hot investment opportunity, then sell out, repeating the process again and again. They don’t have to demonstrate any reason to believe that there will be growth in underlying production like they do for stocks, and likewise because there is no underlying value for the crypto they can crash the price at will. Fortune favors those with fortunes.

Laborism will stop the destabilizing games designed to generate capital gains. As discussed above, the new form of equity will make gambling in existing stocks obsolete. Taking risks on start-up companies developing new products will still happen, with lots of cash chasing those opportunities, but it will not be like the current Wall Street casino. If a speculator invests in 5 companies and 4 go bankrupt but he increases his money by a factor of 5 on the 5<sup>th</sup>, then he will have made a worthwhile investment, but it will not be wildly profitable. Laborist policy will place controls on speculation in real estate (discussed later) and will provide that trading in commodities for the account of persons having no corresponding interest in the production or use of those commodities is forbidden. Trading in derivatives will be limited in order to remove the gambling (as opposed to hedging) element. Cryptocurrency will be regulated to restrict its use to legal transactions and to require that it be supported by currency holdings or other valuable assets, so that its price will not be governed by the enthusiasm of misguided investors. As would-be speculators invented new ways to gamble with the economy, those channels would be shut down. Our economy should not be disrupted so that billionaires and hedge fund managers can use it as a giant casino, making leveraged bets with other people’s money and getting taxpayer bailouts if they lose.

Laborism will also reduce the component of capital gains produced by inflation, because inflation will be reduced. The Fed policy of actively seeking 2% inflation will be abandoned. The corporate strategy of raising prices to create a profitable lag between price rises and employee raises will be discouraged because with the new form of equity shareholders will not benefit from price increases but would be hurt by inflation. Financiers, deprived of the ability to earn unlimited profits on their money, will become inflation hawks.

The equity and debt reforms discussed here will naturally tend to result in international financiers seeking to move their money to countries lacking these reforms. For this reason, laborism will require certain policies to control these effects, policies designed at the same time to help to rebalance the economy and reduce the power of existing concentrated wealth. The details of the

items below may be adjusted based on further discussion, but they suggest the practical tools that we have to ensure that laborism works as intended.

## Supportive policies

The Federal government and many state and local governments are currently run in a manner that pleases the financiers and speculators, but otherwise doesn't make sense. The American revolution began with a declaration that there should be no taxation without representation. Yet, with our giant deficits, currently we are spending money and sending a large part of the tax bill to our children and grandchildren, who don't get to vote on how that money is spent. That is no better than King George III and the British Parliament spending money and sending us the tax bill. To break out of the financier trap, we have to become more responsible. The policies described briefly here outline what that could look like, along with policies to prevent capital flight by the financiers and to soften the effects of the debt changes.

1) The tax rate on income above \$1,000,000 would be increased to 40% while income above \$3,000,000, the cut-off for the top 0.1% financier class, would be raised to 84%,<sup>25</sup> matching the rates in America's strong growth years of the 1950s and 60s.<sup>26</sup> The theory that advocates give for lowering the top tax rate is that it gives people incentive to do more work, but the financier class does not do productive work; they parasitically take profit away from people who do productive work. If we want to increase the incentive for productive work, then raising the rate on the top 0.1% and adopting laborist policies is the best thing to do. Special low rates for capital gains and dividends would be eliminated. Estate tax on over \$25,000,000 per individual/\$50,000,000<sup>27</sup> per couple would likewise be raised to 84%, and certain other reforms would be enacted as described later to shut down the ways the wealthy use to avoid paying income tax. The resulting taxes would be applied towards eliminating the current deficit, repaying federal bonds and reducing any currency that needs to otherwise be issued in repayment of bonds coming due.

2) If an individual renounced their US citizenship and therefore was leaving the US tax net, it would trigger full taxation at that 84% marginal rate on all unrealized gains. This is in line with current law but would be tightened up.

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25 Generous income averaging would be allowed to account for people like athletes or musicians who earn a lot of money but only for a short time. In other words, if you didn't earn over \$3,000,000 on average over a 10 year window, then you wouldn't be subject to the 84% rate.

26 Real per capita GDP rose by 39.2% over the 13-year period between 1950 and the beginning of 1964 when top rates were between 84% and 92%, by 33.9% between 1966 and 1980 when top rates were between 70% and 77%, and by 34.4% between 1987 and the beginning of 2001 (before the 9/11 crash) when marginal rates dropped to between 28% and 39.6%. Real median wages for the same periods grew by 37.2% from 1951 to 1964, 12% (the equivalent of 32% over a 13 year period) from 1966 through 1972 before declining 7.4% from 1973 to 1980 (bad things happened in the late 1970s), and grew 15.2% from 1987 to 2001. Lowering marginal rates did not do anything good for the economy or working people. We tried that experiment, it didn't pay for itself, and it didn't work. Laffer's theories are laughable.

27 I have yet to see what any of us would think of as a family farm or small business worth more than \$50MM.

- 3) Currency controls would be enacted, allowing corporations to transfer money abroad only for investment by their foreign branches or subsidiaries in assets for the production of goods and services for foreign sale that can't be covered by existing foreign cash of the corporate group, and allowing human beings to transfer up to \$1MM per year for their own use or investment. US individuals and entities holding bonds and equities would have the value of those holdings treated like US cash and so subject to the foreign exchange controls, so that any conversion of the assets to cash will require the cash to be received in or transferred to the US, with any violations resulting in forfeiture of the illegally exported assets. Over time, these currency controls would be loosened to permit the dollar to gradually weaken relative to other currencies, effectively raising the price of imported goods and services and thus creating incentive to invest in US manufacture or provision of such goods and services.
- 4) Import tariffs would be imposed on foreign products, probably at a 15% to 20% rate equivalent to what other countries charge consumers under their Value Added Tax regimes. Effectively, when a US company exports a product to Europe, for example, the importer has to pay a tax of between 15% and 20% on the value of that item, which is then passed along to the consumer. In practice, that has the same effect as a tariff, but it is a one-way tariff that other countries charge on American goods and services but the US does not charge on foreign goods and services. The revenue from these tariffs would be used to reduce wage taxes and increase social security, leaving working people even. We are currently running a trade deficit of about \$75 billion a month. In other words, we buy \$75 billion more of stuff from foreign countries each month than we export for sale to foreign countries. That leaves that money in foreign hands for them to use buying American assets. Our cumulative trade deficit since 1992 is \$15,600 billion. That is much more than the total value of all assets owned by the lower 50% of Americans. We are selling off America bit by bit to pay for imported junk. Raising tariffs to discourage that is a good thing, even if it increases prices at Walmart and the dollar store for a while. Because the revenues would be used to reduce wage taxes (starting at lower income levels) and increase social security, working people wouldn't suffer from these tariffs, unlike the Trump tariffs.
- 5) The federal government spent some \$889 billion on interest expense in 2024, with state and local governments spending another \$100 billion. Those savings could be applied to reducing debt.
- 6) For reasons discussed below, America's war policy is a product of pressure from international predatory financiers and speculators. That has generally been true of the war policies of most countries for the past 200 years. Our revolutionary founders would have been disgusted by America's recent foreign adventures. We have oceans on either side of us. We have a nuclear force that is an absolute deterrent to foreign invaders. We spend more on the military than the next 9 countries *combined*. We could reduce our military expenditures by 90% and still be absolutely safe from any military threat. We could save \$800 billion a year with no reduction in safety or global respect, while improving our security by freeing ourselves from debt to foreign nations. Laborist policy would replace part of the income tax with a war tax that would be a separate item, clearly visible as a shared-sacrifice payment to every taxpayer, that would be paid at steeply progressive



rates by everyone except serving military and reservists. Deficit spending for war would be prohibited.<sup>28</sup> If we choose to fight a war, then everyone should pay.

7) For reasons discussed below, our healthcare costs twice as much as healthcare in other advanced countries, but our outcomes are substantially worse<sup>29</sup> than those in other countries, including less access to doctors and hospital beds. Our outcomes are generally worse even for the sorts of diseases that benefit most from high-tech treatments. The parasitic financiers and speculators drive this cost growth without providing a health benefit to working Americans. We could implement relatively simple reforms that would take half the cost out of our system with no reduction in care or in medical choice, and while giving doctors more time to practice medicine instead of doing paperwork. That would save \$850 billion a year (a figure that is growing rapidly) for the federal government alone, with huge savings to small business and individuals.

8) Advertising beyond a threshold appropriate to small business would be subjected to an excise tax of 50% of the expenditure. The 1.36% of our GDP that is spent on advertising has an outsize negative effect on personal manipulation, privacy, children, and driving the consumption of junk that people don't naturally want. Manipulative advertising (as opposed to factual advertising to make a business and its products known) should be viewed as a disease and treated accordingly. The proceeds of this excise tax would be used to pay down the federal debt. Laborist policy would encourage reasonably-priced, consumer-focused subscription services or public utilities to minimize the role of manipulation-focused ads in the economy.

9) America would form a non-profit government bank equivalent to the post office savings bank that many European countries have. This might absorb many existing private bank locations and jobs.<sup>30</sup> Individual human beings would be allowed to convert up to \$1,000,000 of existing and previously owned federal and state bonds into interest-bearing deposits in the postal savings bank plus another \$1,000,000 for existing and previously-owned bonds held by their IRA/401(k). Further, individuals could deposit other money in the postal savings bank at 5% interest up to those personal and IRA limits. This would offset any loss of interest income for regular working people.

10) The postal savings bank would use the deposits to fund mortgages at non-profit rates. Experience since 2007 has proven that low mortgage rates don't do much to help home buyers, but instead act to help bid-up prices given our housing shortage. Likewise, the ultra-low rates did not encourage home builders. Housing completions *declined* during the free-money era. Eliminating mortgage interest on existing housing simply wouldn't be helpful. So, mortgages at reasonable

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28 The philosopher David Hume wrote an essay explaining why this is the just and practical rule, which Jefferson read and supported, and his reasoning remains valid today. <https://davidhume.org/texts/empl2/pc>

29 These worse outcomes for patients are piled on top of Americans dying more from preventable causes like overdoses, murder, and auto accidents than the people in our peer countries. Of the Americans under age 65 who died in 2023, 46% would not have died if they had lived in another high income country. <https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/covid-19/national-scandal-us-excess-deaths-rose-even-after-pandemic-far-outpacing-peer-countries>

30 Private banks would still perform reasonably profitable functions under laborism. They would still sponsor credit cards and earn swipe fees. They would still perform cash handling services for businesses and move money around. If they behave, they would still have a role in small business financing.

rates of around 6%, reflecting the risk to the lender, would still be permitted. The postal savings bank would thus operate much like the angelic Bailey Building and Loan in *It's a Wonderful Life*, except with better liquidity.

11) Further, the Federal government would engage in a new policy, described in a later chapter, that would create good-quality, inexpensive new and rehabilitated housing in the areas where it is most needed, as opposed to in the places that make the most money for private equity pirates. This housing would be provided under a system that would allow young people who don't have the advantage of assistance from well-to-do parents to become homeowners and build equity, without a net cost to taxpayers. Laborism would also free exploited renters from being the victims of piratical landlords, limiting rents to a level appropriate to the actual work, risk and worry of the landlord (which is admittedly substantial for a decent landlord) rather than permitting private-equity speculators to hike rents up to the sky. This system would also encourage responsible behavior by homeowners and renters for the benefit of their communities.

## **Fair pay allocation**

Keeping capital from taking the profit earned by labor is part of the story, but those profits also need to be fairly distributed among the employees who collectively produce them. Our current system tends to assume that the CEO is as valuable as 300 regular employees put together. That is not true. It is true that a bad CEO can pretty much single-handedly wreck a company, but the best CEOs are the ones who assemble a great team of other employees who are competent at getting the work done. A high-performing company is an assembly of a lot of employees each adding value and connecting with each other without needing a lot of managerial oversight.<sup>31</sup>

For this reason, and to help correct the assorted social ills that flow from over-concentration of wealth, laborism calls for the pay multiples within a company to be kept within limits. It is fair for the CEO to be paid more than other people, and it is fair for college graduates (who invested time and money in getting their degree) to be paid more than those who started working for pay straight out of high school. It is fair for the hardest workers and the most creative employees to be paid more than those who work less long or intensely or who are less talented at creativity or problem solving, and for those with more experience to be paid more than those with less. But should a CEO earn more in 2 weeks than another employee earns in a year? Elon Musk, whatever you think of him, has been a valuable creator of companies, but he likes running things. The fact that he has more money than a small country but is still working shows that he likes being a CEO. Not being allowed to earn so much would not change that. The same is true for many other good CEOs. If they are good, they like their jobs, and they don't necessarily want to take the risks of a true individual entrepreneur. If they would quit because they aren't paid millions, then they are the type of vain and greedy grifters that wreck corporations.

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31 One of the companies I worked for got a new CEO who didn't feel the need to do a lot of things like foolish acquisitions or consultant-fueled projects etc., and the company then made substantially more cash money precisely because he just behaved himself and let the employees do what they knew how to do without needless distractions.

Laborist policy therefore provides that the highest-paid employee should not earn more than 8 times as much as the median employee (that is, than the employee who earns more than the lowest-paid half of employees but less than the highest-paid half), and the median employee should not earn more than 3 times as much as the lowest-paid employee. The CEO would then not earn more than 24 times as much as the lowest-paid employee, earning as much in 2 weeks as that employee earns in a year. If the CEO was paid \$1,200,000, then half of the employees would have to be paid at least \$150,000, and the lowest-paid employee would need to earn at least \$50,000 full-time equivalent.<sup>32</sup> The median weekly wage for an Hispanic female (the lowest-paid ethnicity and gender combination) works out to \$42,900 for 2024, while the median for all workers was \$59,228, so this element of laborist policy would tend to pull the lower-paid employees up towards the current median, while also helping out mid-range employees. There would be supportive rules to prevent employers from cheating (for example, it would be prohibited to use a Kelly Services type of company to provide de facto employees who are paid less because technically they work for Kelly).<sup>33</sup> Subcontracting of lower-wage activity to unrelated companies could further be controlled through look-through rules that could also help to discourage offshoring, though one would want to see how things go and tailor that accordingly, starting with stricter limits on changes and gradually loosening those if appropriate. The changes in corporate governance discussed below could in large part make strict controls unnecessary.

While these ratios will only apply to entities with limited liability created by the state, laborist policy will also favor pro-union rules for all businesses with multiple employees. This will both provide important support for the ratio rule (by encouraging unions with the strength to ensure that the ratio rule is implemented in a sensible, good-faith way) in limited-liability companies and to help ensure that genuine, risk-taking individual entrepreneurs recognize the value contributed by their employees. Risk-taking entrepreneurs should not be limited on pay the way corporate CEOs are. An entrepreneur actually creates value by starting the enterprise, invests time and money in making it work, and likely has particular creativity. That makes her different from most CEOs, who are instead awarded the position. Someone like Taylor Swift employs a number of people, and because she is an excellent businessperson she pays her people well even in the current system. Laborism would not interfere with her. Further, as noted above, few entrepreneurs would be willing to keep operating outside of a limited-liability entity beyond a certain stage of success. Still, employees should be able to give a reminder that their contribution is valuable, too, if that is needed.

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32 These figures might be phased in or adjusted to avoid situations in which many employees have their salaries reduced to achieve the median-to-lowest ratio, but the 24X CEO-to-lowest ratio should be prioritized. The median-to-lowest numbers might also be adjusted for different kinds of companies. The ambition is to cause the profits to be shared across a broad group by creating an incentive to raise the mid-range as well as raising the lowest-paid employees, and to reduce the incentive to just get rid of the lowest-paid employees. All rules have unintended consequences, and one wants to provide enough flexibility to minimize those consequences while still keeping the intended benefit of the rule.

33 There would still be incentive to automate, and therefore society would still need to focus on finding good alternative employment for workers whose jobs can be automated away. Laborism seeks to ensure that the profits from production go to the employees who do the work, but stops short of sharing those profits with persons whose work is not needed for the company to do what it does. Still, laborism seeks to ensure that everyone willing to work can have a good-paying job.

## Changing corporate board composition

Again, limited liability entities are creations of the state and are supposed to serve a public purpose. However, until now we have given control of them to private financiers, people who have only their own interests at heart. Corporate managements sometimes talk a good game of caring about the social and environmental impacts of their operations, but how often does a corporation tell the stock analysts at their quarterly call “Yes, we recognize that that business opportunity would be profitable, but we think it would be bad for society so we aren’t doing it”?

Laborism is not socialism, and so laborism does not favor using government controls when more flexible and responsive mechanisms can serve the public instead. A relatively easy one is to change the way corporate boards are elected in order to make them serious management devices that are responsive to employees and the public good. A simple rule would be that any limited liability entity above a certain size would have to have at least 4 board members, with at least 25% elected by the employees on a one-employee-one-vote basis, and at least 25% appointed by a relevant government agency with expertise in environmental protection, consumer protection, health, or other relevant areas. The appointing agencies would quickly develop a group of qualified candidates who are competent general board members as well as competent representatives of the public interest.<sup>34</sup> The remaining board members would be elected by the shareholders from a slate selected by the board. A board composed this way could be expected to require management to explain itself if management wanted to try to avoid the wage-spread rules, to continue engaging in ruthless exploitation of consumers or the environment, or to engage in other misbehavior. At the same time, because the board would be having serious discussions with management and among the board members, they would be able to find sensible solutions to addressing legitimate competing concerns.

That should be substantially more effective than much of what occurs with government regulation, where agencies try to issue rigid rules under heavy pressure from business lobbyists to make those rules all show and no bite. We would still want regulations, because individual businesses would not want to fund the studies necessary to figure out the best standards for various activities and would not want the possibility of having to compete against irresponsible outlaws, but we could take pressure off of the current system in which businesses regard any activity that is not specifically forbidden as being OK. It is too much to ask agencies to write detailed rules that manage to clearly forbid every action that shouldn’t happen while authorizing every action that makes sense. In the end, a civilized society depends on competent decision makers making a good faith effort to do the right things. If we can make that happen at the board level, then government can have a more sensible and realistic role. We need to give corporate management incentive to act like responsible adults, not thieves and greedy children.

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<sup>34</sup> A laborist government would ensure that the selection of this slate is done with great public transparency to minimize cronyism and industry capture.

## Avoiding desperate employee competition

Anyone who has read Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* knows how 19<sup>th</sup> century northern industrialists treated immigrants like disposable property. They subjected them to terrible and dangerous working conditions for starvation wages, knowing that if they died or were too injured to work or managed to quit there would be replacements available from the next boatload of immigrants. Their American colonial ancestors had literally worked their indentured servants to death to get the maximum profit from them, knowing that they could buy a replacement indentured servant shipped from the English poor houses and jails at any time. Powerless, desperate immigrant labor has always been the capitalist's dream. It was even more profitable than slavery, because you didn't need to keep the immigrants alive.

I always find it strange when people who claim to be liberal and enlightened make a statement along the following lines. "This country has so many jobs that Americans don't want to do! We should be happy that we have lots of unauthorized immigrants that are willing to do that work! We should support keeping them here and letting more come!" The view of life that underlies that statement is monstrous. It is easy to picture Hetty Woodstone, the ruthless Victorian industrialist on *Ghosts*, saying "Thank goodness for immigrants – there are so many jobs that Americans won't do anymore!" and these people laughing at her brutal attitude, completely unaware that they are just like her.

Why don't Americans want to do those jobs? Because they have terrible pay and working conditions. The workers do back-breaking and/or gross labor, which may involve being exposed to pesticides or doing other dangerous things, for substandard pay, often living in awful housing. Often employers will seek to take advantage of them sexually as well as economically. Nobody in America should be doing jobs with that combination of unpleasant work, bad conditions and bad pay. The view that it's OK because there are people in other countries who are desperate enough to make a dangerous trek to enter our country illegally, and then are afraid enough of deportation to be unwilling to complain or unionize, is utterly inhumane. Yet people parrot such statements all the time without even a whiff of shame.

Likewise, at the other end of the job spectrum employers have done an amazing job of propaganda in getting people to believe that it is great for them to bring in as many cheap college graduates as possible from India, China or elsewhere in order to undercut the US pay scale. Given their first choice they just export the work to poor and desperate countries, but if they can't do that then they import the workers from those poor and desperate countries to here. Tech workers in India may be paid 10 cents on the dollar relative to American workers, so for them it is a great thing to work here and send money home, but it is a very bad thing for US employees. The financiers admit that they use immigration this way when they think they are just talking among themselves, as when Fed chairman Powell notes with satisfaction that high immigration rates reduced workers' ability to get raises.<sup>35</sup>

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35 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4lOZTAxUhNA&t=14s>

The financier propagandists also love to say that we need to import millions of desperate low-wage immigrants in order to save the social security system, because we need more people paying in to the system. That is a pure Ponzi-scheme con. Our social security system is designed, as it should be, to ensure that low-wage workers can have a reasonably comfortable retirement. It should even be more generous in that regard. But that means that the contributions from low-wage workers don't cover their benefits when they retire. Low-wage workers receive annual social security benefits equal to 56.6% of their average wage.<sup>36</sup> High-wage workers get annual benefits of 19.9% of their taxable wage. When we went from 200 million people in 1972 to 340 million now mainly by importing desperate low-wage workers, we violated the assumptions underlying the funding of social security. Now the parasitic financiers behind all that want to renege on the promise of a decent retirement for working people by letting social security fail, but first they want to run the Ponzi as long as they can by bringing in ever-increasing numbers of new Ponzi "investors", i.e. desperate low-wage workers to pay into the system, knowing that there will be no funds to cover their social security when the Ponzi collapses.

None of that has anything to do with race or heritage. If you are a US-born Hispanic with a high school degree, competition with an endless number of desperate immigrants is bad, even if they are blue-eyed people from the Ukraine. If you are a US-born Indian or Chinese heritage tech worker, competition with an endless number of desperate immigrants is bad, even if they are blue-eyed people from Poland. Just because most of us had ancestors who came from someplace else within the last 400 years (quite a lot of them, both black and white, involuntarily) it does not mean that we therefore have to say that if the several billion people in poor countries want to come into our nation of 340 million, it is a good idea to let them.

America hit its ideal population of between 150 million and 200 million by 1972. The 140 million new high-consumption residents added since then as part of our Ponzi-scheme economy have not made anything better for America or the planet, and as climate change increasingly shows its effects the problem with having so many people pressuring our cities, countryside and environment is showing itself. It's not a question of who the immigrants are, but simply that there have been so many of them. If our American-born population had expanded by 140 million during the same period, rather than contracting, it would have been just as much of a problem.

I lived and worked in Switzerland for a while. I was not allowed to work a day until I was given a work permit. My wife and I were fingerprinted and retina scanned and issued biometric IDs that we had to keep with us, and we registered with the police and had to be examined by the health authorities. When my work permit expired after 6 months, they tossed us out of the country. That is why our secretaries in Switzerland were paid as much as college graduates in the US, and why the janitors had comfortable lifestyles. It was similar when I lived and worked in China and in the UK.<sup>37</sup> We registered with the police and had to notify them if we changed our address. We were

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<sup>36</sup> <https://www.ssa.gov/OACT/NOTES/ran9/an2024-9.pdf>

<sup>37</sup> Neither China nor the UK had the same visible benefit from these restrictions as Switzerland. China still had poor people from the countryside pouring into the cities for work, and the UK was overloaded with immigrants from the old empire and the newly expanded EU that they had to accept in large quantities.

examined by the health authorities. We had residency papers and nobody could hire us to do so much as mow a lawn without our having to show our work permit and have authorization for that work. By the time we left the UK, my youngest had lived there for as long as he could remember, our older two spoke with English accents and had well-established friends and habits, we loved the house we were renting, and we all suffered culture shock when we came home to the US. But that was the deal. None of this had anything to do with ethnic antagonism of any sort. Sensible countries control immigration like that, and they ensure that the number and type of immigrants they take is beneficial to the country and its existing work force. They have a preference for temporary immigrants who can be sent home if a citizen becomes available to do the work that the immigrant was doing. They don't take immigrants who will be desperate enough to undercut local pay or working conditions.

Laborism will control immigration by controlling employment. It will be a serious offense with serious enforcement to hire anyone for anything without seeing a reliable ID card verifying their authorization to work (which will be issued both to citizens/permanent residents and to temporary authorized immigrants) and entering the ID number in a convenient government website, along with information as to whether the person you paid also had employees helping with the work.

Immigration will be metered with input from existing American unions such as the United Farm Workers and United Food and Commercial Workers, construction and slaughterhouse and hotel workers unions, the people feeling the front-line effects of competition, as well as from unaffiliated American employees, to allow workers to gain strength to obtain better wages and working conditions. Temporary workers would be admitted (subject to such input) where they had commitments from local sponsoring employers, but subject to regulations requiring that they receive better-than-average pay so that employers retained incentive to find Americans to do the work. Employees, including these authorized immigrants, will be encouraged to complain about poor working conditions and will be protected from retaliation for doing so. Authorized immigrants will be introduced to American union organizers who will educate them about American work standards and protections, and because they will be authorized they will feel free to exercise their union strength. Foreign criminals and gangsters will be rigorously excluded so that American immigrant communities would be safe and family-friendly places.<sup>38</sup>

America has a moral obligation to accept a certain number of true refugees.<sup>39</sup> However, laborist policy would also put an end to brutal American sanctions<sup>40</sup> on the people of other countries and

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38 Neoliberals tend to take the racist and classist view that because poor neighborhoods tend to suffer from high crime rates, that means that poor people *like* criminals and want the government to leave criminals alone. Poor people are mostly law-abiding. No law-abiding person wants to have their person or property threatened by criminals.

39 Many people claim refugee status but have zero interest in moving to a less wealthy country, as evidenced in part by the fact that they pass through several other countries on their way here. A true refugee is one who is fleeing some horrifying situation such that they would be happy to be allowed to settle in India or the Philippines so long as they were safe and could find some way to earn a living.

40 In 1996, then-Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was asked "We have heard that a half million children have died [from US sanctions on Iraq]. I mean, that's more children than died in Hiroshima. And, you know, is the price worth

to needless foreign wars, so that the number of true refugees would plummet. Look at where our refugees have been coming from. They are not from Myanmar or the Sudan or other places with dangerous conditions that America had nothing to do with. They are from countries that we have interfered with, or countries like China that our financiers would like to interfere with. People won't need to try to flee to our country if we don't ruin theirs. America's foreign policy has been conducted on behalf of international financiers who want to destroy any foreign government or people that does not bow to their will, using unrelenting propaganda through the financier-owned media and politicians to get the American people to support it. If we instead follow the advice of George Washington and our other revolutionary founders to have a foreign policy that is fair and friendly to all, the world will be a less desperate place, American workers will be more prosperous and more secure, and we can have a fairer and more sensible immigration policy.

### **Increasing competition and letting in sunlight**

Even with the corporate reforms discussed above, we can't rely on companies to do the right thing. We need to make sure they have the right incentives to serve us. Laborism would use the power of markets and information to do that.

Capitalists do not really believe in markets. When companies are subjected to real, effective competition it is hard for them to make gigantic profits. This is why neither wing of the Uniparty has traditionally supported vigorous enforcement of the antitrust laws designed to encourage strong market competition. It is why the government tolerates abuse of the patent laws. It is why neither wing of the Uniparty has supported giving consumers easy access to information about products that would be useful to them in making market choices. It is why the internet has never developed in a way that really makes it easy for you to comparison shop, despite the creation of lots of data-harvesting sites that pretend to help you to compare prices. It is why both wings of the Uniparty focus on government regulation instead of on also forcing companies to internalize and price in the external costs – pollution and other dangers – that their operations inflict on society.

People may not like corporations, but corporations are really good at certain useful things. If you set their financial incentives correctly, they will apply a great deal of work and creativity to follow those incentives. If they have to pay the full cost of consuming energy, they will find the most efficient investments for reducing that consumption. If they have to pay for the health and environmental cost of the poisonous chemicals they inflict on your children, they will find the most efficient ways to reduce the use and release of those chemicals. Further, to the extent that the corporations try to pass on those costs to consumers, consumers will reduce their purchases of the more harmful products in favor of less harmful things. Market forces can be a wonderful thing

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it?”. Her response was “I think this is a very hard choice, but the price—we think the price is worth it.” Sorry, but nothing is worth killing 500,000 innocent children. Those sanctions were on a country that had never attacked us, and had never attacked anyone else without our government's express permission. Our government thought it was “worth it” because the country did not obey the international financiers. This is typical of US sanctions programs.



if you actually use them. Unlike crony capitalists or socialists, laborists believe in using markets to do what they do well.

Antitrust enforcement is about more than clamping down on conspiracies to set prices or forming a monopoly. Existing legislation like the Clayton Act prohibits improper bundling, for example, where a company uses its power in one area (think computer operating systems or internet mail order delivery) to push into and crush competition in another area (think spreadsheet software or streaming services). Still, antitrust, as the name implies, has been mainly aimed at giant players who seek to completely dominate a market. Laborist policy will take more active steps to promote efficient, competitive markets that serve working people and maximize the responsiveness of businesses.

As one example, consider video streaming. If you want to see the handful of good TV shows out there and to follow all of your sports teams, you now need to subscribe to all of an increasing number of expensive services. 95% of what's available on any one of those services is of no interest to you, but you have to pay to subscribe to the whole bundle. We could, instead, have a system where you had access to 100% of the video content out there under a royalty system where you would basically pay small royalties by the hour and the content owners would receive amounts tracked by the streaming services, with the streaming services put into the role of competing to provide the best interfaces and doing the best job of helping you to find things you'll enjoy. That is how radio stations have worked for decades, having access to all recorded music out there and competing to provide the best curation of that music for listeners. But that won't happen in our current system, because all those companies make so much money forcing you to buy their little bundle of stuff. In a laborist system, we will not merely prohibit extreme abusive bundling under the Clayton Act, but will go further and seek to de-bundle products where the market has not progressed in a way that serves consumers by allowing them to spend their money on the things that interest them.

Similarly, laborist policy will be more strongly pro-competitive in terms of corporate acquisitions. There are certain kinds of corporate acquisitions that are good. A start-up company may invent a product and figure out how to manufacture it efficiently, but lack the skills and resources to implement ideal quality control, distribute the product to all the relevant markets, and so on. An existing, efficient corporate group can buy that company and use the group's resources to get the product to market quickly and efficiently, providing a benefit to the inventors and to consumers. Other acquisitions are bad. A pharma company may buy a start-up working on cures for chronic diseases, and then find that they can't financially benefit from continuing to fund that research because the cure would make their profitable chronic-treatment drugs obsolete, so the research dies. More broadly, the basic theory of price competition is that you will match a competitor's price reduction unless the amount of business you would lose to that competitor is small relative to the amount of profit you lose by cutting your price. If you supply 1000 customers, you are not going to cut your prices 20% to match a competitor who can only serve 10. The government generally does not care about big companies buying out small ones, but those small companies are

precisely the ones who will cut prices to get business, knowing that it is not worthwhile for the big ones to cut prices to match them. Laborism will require would-be acquiring companies to show that the acquisition will promote competition rather than tend to reduce it.

Maximizing the number of players in the market this way will help to keep down prices. It will make companies be more responsive to other incentives. If you have a lot of players in the market and you impose a carbon tax, for instance, the companies will figure out the best ways to be energy efficient, or know that someone else will and will undercut them. If you have only three players in the market so that it is easy for them to raise prices, they will do that and may not bother to reduce energy use.

As consumers, we would like to have labeling telling us if the products we buy for our children have chemicals that have been banned in other countries. We would like products to have country of origin labels that are meaningful, and to be able to find more detail if we want to. We would like to know in advance what our medical procedure will cost and what the alternatives are. We would like to know if our doctor has been sued for malpractice a lot and on what grounds, and if our hospital follows best practices for infection control. We would like to have the little signs in restaurant windows with happy, sad or sick faces, like they have in China, showing how the last health inspector report went. If our government is not really going to protect us from harm, then we want the practical ability to make informed choices to protect ourselves.

Back in the 1970s there was a social movement based on the idea that “sunlight is the best disinfectant”. We believed that disclosure and labeling are good, that they help voters and consumers to act to reward virtue and punish vice. That movement was correct, but it has been consistently undermined by parties who want to hide in the dark. The US government has sought to enter into trade agreements that forbid country of origin labeling. People who disclose the illegal actions of the government are sent to prison. Regulators tolerate misleading labels aimed at fooling consumers into thinking that food products meet certain standards that they don’t actually meet. Court records on matters of high concern to consumers are easily sealed and subjected to non-disclosure agreements. Laborist policy will be strongly biased in favor of disclosure, truth in labeling, and sunlight.

America was founded on the idea that an educated public will do a lot to take care of themselves. Laborists want to restore that basic American value. Even with the corporate reforms discussed above and the political reforms discussed below, there will always be a tendency for large and powerful organizations to try to serve special interests rather than the public. Competition and sunshine are strong weapons for working people to use in resisting that tendency and using their own collective power to keep special interests in check.

## **Getting there – laborist organizing**

Many Americans were depressed by our last election, where it was quite clear that rich and powerful forces controlled the election system and didn’t care about working Americans. People

on social media wrote about needing a revolution to take back power for the people. Historically, revolutions generally end up killing some of the people who previously held power, and then the people supporting the revolution say “Oh, now what?” Bloodthirsty people with big egos and a desire for power take over, the rich people who managed to avoid the guillotine gradually emerge and take control again, and the whole thing proves to have been pointless.

But in America we already had a revolution, in 1776. We won. We were lucky enough to have Jefferson and Madison, really smart guys and good students of history who designed a system that the people could use to keep the result of the revolution from decaying. They knew how difficult that would be, though. Jefferson predicted exactly what has happened:

The spirit of the times may alter, will alter. Our rulers will become corrupt, our people careless... From the conclusion of this war [the Revolution] we shall be going downhill. It will not then be necessary to resort every moment to the people for support. They will be forgotten, therefore, and their rights disregarded. They will forget themselves, but in the sole faculty of making money, and will never think of uniting to affect a due respect for their rights. The shackles, therefore, will be made heavier and heavier, till our rights shall revive or expire in a convulsion.

Our revolutionary founders had to risk their lives and homes to win the power to govern themselves, but due to their good work we don't need to do that now. We just need to get off our couches and do some work. We need to pay our respects to our founders by taking a little time out from focusing on making money and instead uniting to force due respect for our rights. We need to use both the new tools of technology and the old tools of talking to people. We need to free our minds and hearts, shrug off the distractions that the financiers have used to keep us down, and work with each other.

Step 1 is to free your mind. Recognize that most of what you hear or read in the corporate media is propaganda designed to make you a good little servant of the financiers, and to make you fear and fight your fellow members of the productive class. Recognize that it is OK to step away from that propaganda and to think about other things and ask other questions. Recognize that it is OK to question authority. If the corporate media and social media<sup>41</sup> say that what you think is stupid or crazy, recognize that that likely means that you are smart and sane. Truth is out there, and we just need to be good at looking for and thinking through the evidence for different views.<sup>42</sup> Laborism makes sense, and as the detailed part of this book shows, it is well supported by the evidence. If we

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41 Social media is largely populated by agents of PR firms working for financiers, whose whole job is to make it uncomfortable for anyone to speak the truth. The government and the companies have worked hard to try to suppress voices that they disagree with, because they know that Americans are notoriously unwilling to stick to a viewpoint that they think most people reject.

42 Recognize the “men in black” tactic that the financier media uses to suppress truth. The concept is named after the rumors of men in black who show up and do weird things when someone has seen a UFO, so that the person will sound crazy when he talks about it. Any time the government or other powers can't contain a truth, they go ahead and let it out, but they mix it with some hard-to-spot lies and some clearly crazy lies. That way, anyone who discusses the true thing can be fooled into repeating the hard-to-spot lies (which are later shown to be false) or linked to the crazy lies, so that they seem foolish. So, when you read about something, be aware that parts of it may be wrong or silly, but parts may still be true. Think about each fact on its own merits.

are attacked for our views, that is not something to feel uncomfortable or embarrassed about; it is a badge of honor.

Step 2 is to spread the idea of laborism. Write in support of it on social media, blog about it, e-mail everyone you know with links to laborist material. Write letters to the editor or editorials. Show the laborist symbol on t-shirts and buttons and bumper stickers and banners to let others know that they have fellow supporters and can feel strength in numbers. Sign up as a supporter.<sup>43</sup> Talk about it. Talk about it at your workplace or university, in church groups, in union halls, in neighborhood meetings, at the VFW or lodge, at block parties, in the hair salon or barber shop. Talk about it with people who aren't like you and with people who are. When somebody asks about the laborist symbol you're wearing, take time to educate them. Talk with your family and friends and neighbors and encourage them to talk with their friends and families and neighbors. The point is, if we try to just rely on the media to discuss laborist ideas without us forcing them to, we can expect results some time after hell freezes over. The single most effective strategy of the financier media has always been to just not talk about things that the financiers find inconvenient, and to only bother attacking them if the people challenging the financiers make so much noise that the media can't ignore them. We need to cut media out of the middle and communicate person to person. Doing a post on X or Bluesky and hoping it will be promoted to a wider audience is probably a false hope. Communicate in ways where you are reaching people directly.

Step 3 is where the fun starts. The idea is to accumulate a list of supporters tagged with their political districts. When enough supporters have signed up in a district, then it becomes worthwhile for organizers to get out in their blocks and neighborhoods and recruit people to attend laborist caucus meetings.

In Minnesota, where I reached voting age, the Democratic Farmer-Laborites and Independent Republicans (my family caucused in both) had live party meetings in churches or meeting halls where any voter could show up and participate. A given precinct had the right to elect X number of delegates to the next level. So, say you had the right to elect 20 delegates and 200 people showed up for the caucus, so that 10 votes equaled 1 delegate. People announced that they wanted to form a group, which could be based on pushing for a particular issue or a particular candidate or both, like Environmentalists for Jerry Brown. If 10 people joined your proposed group then you could sponsor a delegate; otherwise you'd give up and join some other group. If a group got 30 people, they'd be able to sponsor 3 delegates. You would talk within your group, people who wanted to be delegates said so and explained why they would be a good choice, and you would vote. The people elected as delegates would go and do the same thing at the district level, and so on. This is direct democracy, selecting people at each level that you meet, talk to and quiz. Regular working people can participate successfully.

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<sup>43</sup> <https://substack.com/@laboristmovement> This is my substack site. Until I manage to get a dedicated website established, becoming a free subscriber is the best way to record yourself as a potential supporter. In time I plan to enable members to communicate with each other by legislative district using communication that won't be spam laden, but I won't make that significant investment until we reach a critical mass of interested people.

Laborism would use this concept to select candidates for office from among caucus participants. If you wanted to be considered for city council or mayor or state senator or Congress or President, you would say so at your local caucus and ask to be a delegate to the level that chose that type of candidate. If and when you got to that level, you would put your name forward and explain your qualifications and goals and the delegates would choose who they wanted. You would not have candidates chosen for you by some corrupt party elite. Candidates would not have to prove to the newspapers and networks that they could raise enough money from rich donors to be considered a “serious candidate”. You would not have to be a tried-and-true political hack. You would just need to persuade your fellow working people that you would be an honest, hard-working representative of their interests.

Once candidates were selected, supporters would receive an official communication from the movement advising on the names of the candidates selected. What then? The laborist movement does not seek to create a new political party. The Uniparty has gotten good at making life difficult for would-be third parties to get on the ballot. Further, the financiers have trained American voters to be scared to death of voting for third parties. They have largely been convinced that if they vote for a party other than the two favored by the financiers, then they will split the vote and effectively just hand the election over to Truly Horrendous Candidate B rather than their preferred Moderately Horrendous Candidate A. If we had commonly had a system of ranked choice voting in this country it could help to reduce that fear, but we don’t. But as a practical matter we don’t need one, because the laborist solution will work perfectly well without one.

With sufficient popular muscle, laborist organization can simply hijack the major parties and eject their insider candidates. That is how the laborist Nonpartisan League did it when they took power in North Dakota a century ago. We will hijack whichever political party is dominant in the relevant district, getting the laborist candidate nominated by petition and elected in the primary through laborist support. Filing for the party nomination by paying a fee or filing petitions is generally not very difficult. For example, here in Texas 500 valid signatures will do the trick for a candidate for US Representative. Come the general election, nobody will need to fear splitting the vote. We will have dumped the insider Horrendous Candidate and replaced them with an excellent laborist candidate with enough laborist votes to win.

Laborism is designed to get past all of the divisive fake “issues” that the devious financiers have designed to keep working people from seeing their common interests. Laborism will never capture the hearts of 100% of working people. Many people have been hopelessly programmed by the financier propaganda and won’t be cured by any amount of facts or argument. Many others just love being critics, thinking that being an extremist critic will impress people of their preferred gender and enjoying the fact that they don’t have responsibility to design policies that actually work. But we don’t need 100%, and we won’t screw up our program trying to get it. If we can get 60% of voting working people to support the laborist platform, then we can completely transform America into the country it was always meant to be.

Notice what is NOT involved in this process. No big campaign donations. (Small-donor support would be needed for operating expenses.) No commercials. No trying to fool people with meaningless promises or fake issues. No rejecting any policy that can't be reduced to a bumper sticker slogan. No buy-in from the corporate media who ignore any candidate that doesn't receive large donations from financiers. No blessing from "superdelegates" or other insiders. All that is needed is talking with each other, reading the official e-mails, and getting out to caucus and vote. In fact, watching political ads and listening to political horse-race commentary from the corporate media would be best avoided as a waste of time that rots our brains. We have heard enough lies and propaganda from the tools of the international parasitic financiers and speculators. Now we should spend our time listening to each other instead.

This is entirely doable. It can be done within the system we have. It has been done before in certain places. All it takes is will and effort. Are you willing to make an effort to make this the country it should be, for yourself and your children and grandchildren? Will you work to restore what our revolutionary founders fought and died for? Or will you just sit on the couch while capitalist America collapses around you?

## **Our symbols and their significance**

The red and blue wings of the Uniparty work hard to create division between working people and to convince us that the other wing is the Devil. But they agree on many things. If you look at their actions as opposed to their meaningless words, the purple overlap zone where the Uniparty wings agree contains the following:

- Serve Wall Street financiers and speculators

- Love and promote war in all its forms for the benefit of financiers and the military-industrial complex

- Run up gigantic deficits to enslave taxpayers and their children and grandchildren to international financiers

- Promote Big Brother surveillance to learn how to manipulate the people to believe financier propaganda and to love Big Brother

- Promote censorship to prevent the people from learning or trusting the truth and to prevent members of the productive class from finding each other and learning that we have common thoughts, goals and values

- Classify, seal and hide information on government activity and government lies to prevent us from seeing that the propaganda is false, and persecute anyone who spills the secrets

- Undercut American workers with cheap, desperate foreign labor here and abroad to increase profits to the financiers

- Promote fracking and other destructive exploitation of the land to increase profits to the financiers without regard to the concerns of local people affected

Protect wealthy pederasts and other rich criminals so that wealth gives immunity from law, so that the parasitic financiers can revel in their power, giving general pardons for anything they may have done without requiring them to admit to doing anything

Funnel unlimited money to Big Healthcare, forcing a choice between health or prosperity, to increase profits to the financiers

Promote big agribusiness over family farms, destroying the independent yeoman farmer that Jefferson hoped could stand against Big Money, to increase profits to the financiers and destroy opponents

Hide information from the public about poisons in food and products, medical costs, country of manufacture, and other things consumers rightly should know, so that the people cannot intelligently act in their own interests to oppose the financiers

The red and blue wings agree on these things because they both serve the same group of parasitic international financiers and speculators, those who want these things that harm us and destroy our freedoms, making us spend our lives serving them rather than helping each other.

Laborism opposes everything in this purple overlap, so our color is green, which lies on the opposite side of the color wheel. Our symbol is the balance scales, because we seek to rebalance the economy and society and to restore justice and fairness. Our motto is “Our Fair Share”. In wearing or displaying the green scale, we show that we support the voice of the working people of America, the productive class. We stand united. Our race is “human”. Our nationality is “American”. Our preferred pronoun is “we”. Our commonalities are much more important than our differences, for we must all be together if we are to stand up against the power of the parasitic international financiers and speculators. By standing together we can restore America to the path that our revolutionary founders intended, a land where all are free to earn a good living and live a decent, happy life, to think and speak as they please and to live in peace and friendship with all the world, and where every child born in America has the same chance to become whatever they want to be. Together we can do this within the system we have, a revolution without blood or pain or dictators, if the productive class simply gets up out of their chairs and exercises their rights together. We will open our eyes and throw off the filthy blanket of darkness, distraction and deception that the financiers have buried us under for too long. Our time is now, before it is too late.



# Our Fair Share



## Why we don't need to bow to the financiers

We are trained from birth to believe that borrowing money at interest and paying out corporate profits to shareholders is just how the world works. All of the financier-funded academics and the financier-owned media use a clever propaganda trick. When you make an argument to somebody as if a point is debatable, then the listener is put on guard and judges if what you argue seems to make sense. If you instead just always speak as if everybody “knows” that a thing is true, then people tend to accept that as being reality. That is why TV shows that preach about something tend not to be very effective, but TV shows and commercials that simply show people acting or believing a certain way as background “reality” are effective in making people think that is how the world really is. That is how we are designed to learn about the world. The propagandists know that. So, they never say “we should be allowed to charge interest because ...” or “the shareholders should get all the profits because ...”, but instead just represent those things as being the natural order.

As a result, people usually don't challenge the basic idea. Socialists instead argue that the government should be the shareholder and receive the profits, not that profits shouldn't go to the shareholder.<sup>44</sup> Liberals complain about corporations doing stock buybacks on the grounds that if they didn't spend money that way they would pay their workers more; at the same time, they accept that corporate profits belong to the shareholders, in which case a corporation would never really say “I can't buy back stock, so I'll just give my money to the employees.” They don't question the system, but instead expect the existing system to act in crazy ways that would never happen. It is like saying “if I stop giving my dog bones, then he should catch the mice.” If you want a pet to catch the mice, you need a cat. If you want a corporation to prioritize paying employees for the true value of their work, you need laborism. Still, the idea that we could easily just change the system does not occur to them.

Corporations, or joint stock companies, are a relatively recent invention. Back in early feudal times, the basic deal in European countries was that a gang of armed robbers would come into a town and tell the local farmers that from now on the robbers owned the land and most of what the farmers produced was to be given to the robber gang, or the farmers would be tortured or killed. After a generation or two when people had gotten used to this situation as being normal, the robbers were renamed “nobles” and the theft was renamed “taxes”. Local robbers paid tribute to more powerful robbers and so on up to the top guy, who called himself king. Farmers produced clothes and dishes and tables and things in their spare time, and some skilled people like metal

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44 While Marxist/socialist theory comes in a lot of flavors, from “property is bad concept and nobody should own anything” through collectivist forms of communism to state socialism, in practice socialism has involved stock ownership by the state. When I was having discussions with the state petroleum company officials of newly post-communist Poland, they were struggling to understand the concept of profit seeking (“You'd make enough to cover your costs in a success case – isn't that enough?”), which is a very different mindset from workers receiving payment fully reflecting the value produced by their work.

workers made full time jobs of producing things. The noble descendants of the robbers took a share of all of it. This system endured for centuries.

Then came technology, and with it the ability to instead produce a lot of products in a factory. Somebody had to build the factory and get it going. That was generally done by either the local landowner (the descendant of the robber) or a second or third son of the local landowner, who didn't have land but had money. Farmers left the land to work in the factories. They were used to being treated badly, so they likewise accepted whatever the factory owner was willing to pay and did the actual work of production. The factory owner got the profits, and that was seen as natural because in that world everyone was used to the property owner getting the profit from work. In larger factories the owner would hire people to oversee the production work, and those people were paid more, which gave rise to a new class of people who had more money than they needed to live on. Some of them used that extra money to build their own factories, which worked the same way.

Joint stock companies were invented as a way for a number of people with spare money to combine their money together to build a big factory or fund a profitable international venture or do something else big. Because everyone was used to the factory owner getting the profit, and because the shareholders were joint owners, nobody questioned the idea that they should get the profit or that workers should still just be paid whatever they could extract from the owners.

When communism came along and Karl Marx started writing, he didn't question this accepted idea as such. Instead, he argued that the workers or the state should be the owners. That was the simple way to get from the way people thought to a new thought that ended up with the workers having money.<sup>45</sup> Communists believed in violent revolution and many of them got very odd and unrealistic ideas about human nature, thinking that people would be happy to not have any property of their own. That frightened people or turned them off, so state socialism replaced it (sometimes still keeping the name communism), which looked basically like capitalism except with the government as the shareholder of some or most or all businesses.

This path did not generally lead to people instead backing up a step and saying "Hey, why should the owner get the profits? He just put up money he didn't need and that his ancestors probably stole. The workers are producing the stuff. Why doesn't the guy who put up the money just get a limited return for putting his money at risk for the success of the company?"

Because it is an obvious question, though, some people always asked it. Capitalists feared the question above all else and used their propaganda and control to discourage the question from spreading. In the late 1800s the Fabian Society, which included a number of smart and well-known people as supporters, started pointing out that the aristocrats and financiers didn't deserve to get

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45 Other movements, like anarcho-syndicalism, were opposed to the general idea of anybody (including the government) owning the means of production and preferred the idea of workers in trade unions just cooperating together, but you can see why laborism is a much more practical way to get to their general objectives of workers getting the benefit of their work and avoiding exploitation by the rich and powerful. The financiers hate anarcho-syndicalists even more than they hate communists.

their “unearned increment” on land, and it would have been an easy jump for that idea to carry over to stock. The financiers fired up their hirelings to say a number of things to keep people from thinking that way. They wrote about what wonderful things joint stock companies were, because they pooled a lot of money from a lot of people and so could fund big ventures. Because joint stock companies paid the profits to shareholders, they wrote with the assumption that giving the profits to the shareholders, rather than just a limited return for putting their money at risk, was an essential part of the idea, and assumed that none of those ventures would have happened without stock working that way.

Because the stock was initially sold on a stock exchange, they wrote that stock exchanges are wonderful things, because they help money to get to where it funded those big ventures. When people quickly began speculating on the price of *existing* shares on those stock exchanges, defrauding each other and running Ponzi schemes and doing other things that caused social harm rather than benefit, nobody questioned the basic system. Anything that happened on a stock exchange *had* to be good, because stock exchanges were involved in capital getting into those big ventures.

In America, the east coast banks had a special opportunity. As the government stole increasingly large swaths of land from the Native Americans, making and breaking treaties, that land was generally not just given to farmers. Instead, settlers had to pay the government for land, and to do that they had to borrow money from local banks, which in turn borrowed it from the big eastern banks. The big eastern banks invested money in railroads and grain elevators and suchlike that allowed products from the farmers to get to far-away markets. The farmers gave money to the financiers every year for their loans, and sold their produce cheaply to the local grain handlers who moved it via the railroads to the mills, with the financiers taking a piece at every step. In this way Wall Street and other eastern centers made vast fortunes, which they invested in other corporations to do other things. When the Civil War came along, after decades of America being a peaceful and therefore prosperous nation, we developed a permanent arms industry. This was so profitable that the military-industrial complex that President Eisenhower warned about a century later was born, and the financiers never let it go.

The Wall Street banks and stock exchanges, handling these gigantic piles of money, thus became the envy of the world in terms of funding Big Things. That funding ability was, of course, assumed to be directly related to the fact that the profits went to the shareholders, with the workers being paid as little as possible. The establishment discouraged the thought that we could have accomplished the same things even more efficiently if we didn't have parasitic financiers feeding off of our productive work at every step.

We generally don't learn much about any of this during our school years, because the financiers are happiest when we simply don't think about why our economy is run the way it is. If you ask most high schoolers why America is the overall richest country, they will say it is because of the Protestant Work Ethic and Freedom. That answer suits the financiers well enough, because if called upon they can warp it into “and obviously the rich people were the hardest workers, not

parasites at all, and they need to be free to ruthlessly exploit workers for the benefit of everybody!” When we get into classes on economics in college or start reading books or magazines on the subject, though, we are fed the financier propaganda before we start getting any ideas of our own. Then we are told of the wonderful capital-raising power of Wall Street, and we are told that America became Top Country because of that power. The fact that we gave birth to a number of creative working people who developed most of the technology giving rise to the modern world in and around the 1880s is regarded as not-so-important. The fact that we had a nearly infinite supply of ruthlessly exploited labor is not regarded as significant. The fact that we had a seemingly infinite amount of fertile land formerly under the control of the Native Americans (and then farmed largely by people who had to flee Germany and other countries after their unsuccessful revolutions of 1848 and 1849) is not considered significant. The fact that we had large reserves of coal and the Mesabi iron range in Minnesota and the great lakes as a cheap and easy means of bringing the two together to make steel is disregarded. The fact that, mainly as the result of female social reformers, we had public education that produced an educated population matched only by Germany is considered unimportant. It was Wall Street capital that did it.

Likewise, bank lending at interest and Wall Street-traded bonds have always been presented to us both as the natural order of things and as part of the secret of America’s success. Those immigrant farmers buying land in the Midwest couldn’t possibly have gotten the land on interest-free credit from the government. Corporations couldn’t possibly have gotten loans for a rate that just compensated for risk, rather than “time value of money”. War bonds couldn’t possibly have been financed interest free, or temporary currency issued, to reflect the fact that consumer manufacturing was being displaced by military manufacturing anyway. Rather, America’s economic success was all explained by the wonderful ability to attract investors with those high returns to financiers, and it couldn’t have happened any other way. That’s how things worked while we were developing, so we accept that must be true, despite some other notable countries having accomplished remarkable industrialization very quickly and under difficult circumstances without bank loans, traded bonds, or Wall Street.

As explained above in the overview, these days corporations use debt for stock buy-backs and acquisitions of other companies, but it is not normal for them to say “gee, I have all these productive investments I’d like to make if only I could borrow more money at lower rates.” The post-2008 free-money era provided good evidence on that front. Corporations didn’t have much that they wanted to invest in. Instead, they built up huge piles of cash.<sup>46</sup> Private equity buyers used the free money to buy and wreck things, but that is different from productive business investment.

Does the fundamental idea that money should earn more money make real sense? Is it good? Or should we agree with John Stuart Mill, who wrote

The ordinary progress of a society which increases in wealth, is at all times tending to augment the incomes of landlords; to give them both a greater amount and a greater proportion of the wealth of the community, independently of any trouble or outlay

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46 <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/graph/?id=QFRTCASH2INFUSNO>,

incurred by themselves. They grow richer, as it were, in their sleep, without working, risking or economizing. What claim have they, on the general principle of social justice, to this accession of riches? <sup>47</sup>

To think about this, it will be helpful to look at the history of money and lending.

Money, in its proper state before the rise of financiers and speculators, is just a means of making it easier to barter goods and services produced by work. Take the example of a farmer in ancient times whose hens produce 10 dozen eggs a week more than she needs. She wants to get a new rocking chair for her baby. The work-value of a rocking chair is equal to about 50 dozen eggs. She already has 10 dozen eggs, but she can't accumulate more than that without them going bad. The local furniture maker does not like eggs much, and in any case would not start making the rocker she wants based on her promising to deliver 10 dozen eggs now and 10 dozen a week for the next 4 weeks. However, he really wants 5 new pairs of shoes (which have a work-equivalence equal to a rocking chair) for his children next month. The shoemaker loves eggs, but really can only use 3 dozen a week. So, the farmer would have to get the shoemaker to agree to make 5 pairs of shoes in the next 4 weeks in exchange for a promise to deliver 3 dozen eggs each week for the next 17 weeks, 7 dozen eggs a week would still go to waste, and the farmer would have to wait a month to get her rocking chair. With the invention of money, the farmer can sell her eggs to all the people in the town who want them. She can start selling them well in advance of needing the money for anything. She can then go to the furniture maker and pay for a rocking chair. The furniture maker can take that money and go to the shoemaker and order 5 pairs of shoes. This is the proper function of money – to allow all kinds of different goods and services produced by work to be traded with all kinds of different people in an efficient way, and to allow time lags where you can produce work products and sell them now, and use the money to buy different work products later when you've saved enough or when you need them.

Traditionally, a person who had surplus gold kept it in a bag in his home or buried in his yard until he needed it, and meanwhile worried about it being stolen. Sitting there in the bag the coins did not magically reproduce. This provides context on the ancient evolution of lending. In barter days a person who had as many dairy goats as he could take care of might lend 6 kids<sup>48</sup> to another person who had none and who wanted to start a herd. The goats, by their nature and following their own desires, made more goats, with the borrower adding the work of looking after them and moving them around grazing lands. The borrower would promise to return 6 grown male goats as his herd increased over time, so that the lender could use them for meat etc., and might add 1 or 2 out of his increasing number in gratitude for the loan. Likewise a farmer, finding that he had gotten through the winter with 10 bushels of wheat more than he would need, might lend it to someone as seed to start a new field, and receive back 10 bushels of fresh wheat from the harvest, with perhaps another 10 thrown in if the wheat had done well. In such cases, the extra return was a product of the fact that the thing that was lent naturally increased over time, with the addition of some work. In ancient Sumeria and Egypt, the word for interest was the same as that for “calf” or “births”, because this natural increase of the thing lent was the basis for sharing some of the increase.

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<sup>47</sup> Principles of Political Economy, Book V. Chapter ii. § 5 (p. 492 of 1865 Edition).

<sup>48</sup> Baby goats that is, not children. I realize that people today are not as connected to the farm as they once were.

But coins don't do that. A coin that you have saved because you don't need to spend it now, but will later, does not naturally increase. It has no time value. Economists say that money has time value because you have a choice between spending it now or waiting and spending it later, which is supposed to be less satisfying. If you are a child usurer who has just enough money for a candy bar now, and you want that candy bar, but instead you lend it to another child in return for two candy bars next week, then maybe that is true. But that's generally not a valid description.

As discussed in the overview, ever since the invention of money people have saved simply because they wanted to save. Again, that was part of the point of money. You couldn't save excess eggs or wheat or milk for long and goats and cows needed feeding and work. Those nice metal coins, however, didn't rot, so you saved them and only spent the money when you had enough for what you wanted or when you needed to spend it. So you saved. People roving around the European countryside with metal detectors find centuries-old coin hoards all the time, left by people who saved large sums with no thought of time value of money, but who happened to get murdered by invaders or died of some mass plague before they spent it. People today save money for a down payment on a house, or to send their children to college, or to take a nice trip, or to live on during retirement. They would save for these things even if there was no such thing as interest or dividends. In fact, they saved after 2008 when the value of their savings decreased every year, despite earning some pathetic amount of interest. In Europe, when the Euro interest rate was negative, people still saved money, paying their bank to hold it or paying the government to promise to give it back (less the negative interest) later. Working people save because they want to save.

The financier class saves because they have more money than they can reasonably spend. Even buying private planes and superyachts and grotesque mansions and fleets of luxury cars and flocks of servants and plastic surgeons, it is just tough to spend that much money.

We have all been hornswoggled into believing that money naturally has time value, and so just as naturally we would need to pay interest. This idea has risen and fallen repeatedly over the centuries. When people first started charging interest for the lending of money, the bad effect of interest charges on working people and society was soon seen. At first the royal houses of near eastern kingdoms would periodically declare all debts forgiven, because the working people who produced the food and everything else were in a pitiful state. In ancient Greece, charging interest on money had a terrible effect on farmers. They would borrow money to buy seed to plant in the spring when grain supplies were low and expensive in cash terms, and would try to pay the loans after harvest when grain was plentiful and cheap in money terms. Farmers became unable to keep up with the interest charges and lost their farms. When loans were foreclosed on their lands many farmers still owed more, and were bound into slavery. By about 600 BC free small farmers were vanishing, with farmland becoming concentrated into the hands of the oligarchy using the former free farmers as slaves to work the land. When Solon came to power in Athens in 594 BC, he had to institute reforms wiping out all debts, forbidding debt slavery, and giving land back to the farmers. Not surprisingly, when Aristotle came along he despised lending at interest. The Jewish religion prohibited charging interest to other Jews (but not to gentiles). Islam forbids charging interest even today. Hindu law limited compound interest.

Christianity was opposed to charging interest from the beginning. Under Charlemagne (768–814 AD), the Church extended the prohibition against usury to include laymen as lenders, defining usury simply as a transaction where more is asked back than is given. In the middle ages, the Catholic church condemned charging interest for what we now call the time value of money. Charging interest to make up for risk that the lender would not be repaid was fine, for the reasons discussed above regarding equity. Charging interest on a non-risky loan just for the passage of time, however, was considered sinful and was prohibited.

This distinction is important. Given a choice, sensible people would not want to put their money at risk if they don't have to. People bought German government bonds at negative interest rates and put money in Euro bank accounts at negative rates because they didn't want the risk and bother of keeping cash in their house or vault, and gold bars and other assets might fall in value. People would rather pay a small, certain sum to be certain of keeping their savings than to take a risk that they might lose a good part of their money. If they take the risk of making that money available to a business that might fail or that might not be able to repay them when they expect the money, then they want to get something for that. Reasonable risk-based compensation makes sense. Time value of money, on the other hand, is a story that rich con artists tell to working people to get us to give them our money for no good reason. "Time value of money" charges have been condemned or prohibited for much of history, and for a good reason. They don't make sense, unless you are a person who has a lot of money and would like some working person to do extra work just to earn more money for you.

That said, laborist policy will make certain exceptions, at least in transition, from eliminating compensation for the fictional "time value of money". The first is to protect working people who have relied on it, who incidentally were badly hurt by Fed policy following the financier-caused crash of 2008. Because we have lived with this myth for 300 years or so, working people have made reasonable plans based on the expectation that they would earn something on their secure savings. Further, because the Fed has purposefully pushed up inflation to or above 2%, when working people don't earn any interest the real value of their savings accounts drops. When the Fed decided to keep regular working people from earning interest after 2008 so that they could give the benefit to the banks<sup>49</sup> who had created the mess, working people suffered, particularly retirees or people who had hoped to retire but now found that they couldn't afford to. Because of these legitimate expectations, laborist policy will protect these savers, and in fact allow them to earn a safe, better return than the financiers running the Fed would allow.

This return will be paid by a new post office savings bank owned and run on a non-profit basis by the federal government. Other countries have post office banks, which are quite popular with their citizens. Postal savings accounts will pay 5% interest on deposits. Depositors will be limited to \$1,000,000 in personal deposits and \$1,000,000 in IRA deposits. Those limits will be more strictly enforced than the current limits on FDIC insurance. The postal savings bank could allow checking

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49 For example, look at the 2009 annual report of JP Morgan, <https://www.jpmorganchase.com/content/dam/jpmc/jpmorgan-chase-and-co/investor-relations/documents/2009-AR.pdf>. From 2007 to 2009, interest income fell \$5 billion but interest expense dropped \$30 billion, so JP Morgan alone made an extra \$25 billion in 2009 due to the Fed policy, taking that money from the pockets of ordinary savers in what amounted to an 80% tax on the interest they would otherwise have earned. The banks didn't show huge profits because they were gradually writing off bad debts, using the rate benefit to cover the losses from their reckless gambling. Working people didn't profit from those wild bets, but they got to pay the cost.

accounts and provide other services, but will not operate as a full-service commercial bank serving business customers. American individuals holding US treasury instruments could convert them into postal savings bank CDs of equivalent terms and rates up to the deposit limits.

The 5% return on these savings will come from non-profit mortgage lending, because mortgages are an unusual animal. Because we have a housing shortage in many areas, families will pay as much as they can afford to get a suitable residence, even if it is weirdly expensive. People think in terms of monthly payments, so one would expect that if they are buying a house and mortgage rates have fallen, then someone will bid more for the house, and that will drive up prices to where nobody gets a net benefit from the lower rate. When we look at what happened during the low-rate post-2008 period, the mechanics don't seem to have played out that way for the most part, but we got to the same bottom line. Interestingly, people with incomes below the top 1% did not increase their levels of mortgage debt during the free-money period, which seems to indicate that for most of us our ability to take on more mortgage debt is limited even at low interest rates. The average amount of mortgage debt<sup>50</sup> per household<sup>51</sup> did not increase significantly between September of 2007 and April of 2022, but the US median home price skyrocketed,<sup>52</sup> becoming unaffordable<sup>53</sup> to a median family<sup>54</sup>. Why did home prices inflate when consumers were not generally taking on more debt? At the top through the mid range of income that came from two things, both driven by the magic of the bidding effect. At the higher end, the 1% gang did boost debt and, together with foreign investors<sup>55</sup> with cheap investment capital, bid up prices in higher-end neighborhoods, which created an updraft for prices in nearby neighborhoods. In the brackets somewhat below that, just enough people were willing to take on higher principal debt so that bidding wars began and set precedent for prices being higher, and most other people in the market then basically swapped one inflated-price house for another without increasing their mortgage balance (although now they paid realtor fees, insurance and other costs at twice the rate due to inflation of home prices). This thus did not reflect a lot of new money coming into the market, but more properties being effectively swapped<sup>56</sup> for higher and higher stated prices. At the lower end, private equity stepped in and there free money made a big difference. PE firms bought up distressed housing<sup>57</sup> in the Great Recession, and began a strategy of trying to corner the rental housing market. Institutions owned an estimated 5%<sup>58</sup> of single-family rentals in 2022, projected to rise to 40% by 2030. As young families are priced out of the market because they can't cover the down payment, they become a renter class that PE can squeeze. People in this bracket did not take on more mortgage debt prior to Covid because they simply couldn't, and that meant either that they became homeowners only because their parents gave them money, or in many cases that they had to give up on home ownership and become renters. During the Covid turmoil people in the bottom 20% of the income range were apparently forced to take out home equity loans<sup>59</sup> to get by, but that is different from spending more in response to low mortgage rates.

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50 [https://www.federalreserve.gov/releases/z1/dataviz/dfa/distribute/chart/#quarter:127;series:Home mortgages;demographic:income;population:all;units:levels;range:2006.3,2022.4](https://www.federalreserve.gov/releases/z1/dataviz/dfa/distribute/chart/#quarter:127;series:Home%20mortgages;demographic:income;population:all;units:levels;range:2006.3,2022.4)

51 <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/graph/?id=TTLHHM156N>

52 <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/MSPUS>

53 <https://dqydj.com/historical-home-affordability/>

54 <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/MEFAINUSA646N>

55 <https://www.statista.com/statistics/610369/total-property-sales-to-foreign-buyers-in-the-us/>

56 These "swaps" could be pretty indirect, such as couples getting an inheritance from their parents consisting largely of the parental home, which then enabled them to buy a house.

57 <https://www.propublica.org/article/when-private-equity-becomes-your-landlord>

58 <https://www.yardimatrix.com/publications/download/file/2530-MatrixBulletin-SFRSector-July2022?signup=false>



A mortgage rate of around 6% would be low by historical standards, but not so low as to further drive home price inflation. If this interest is paid from productive class people to productive class savers, then there is no reason to interfere with it. The financier bankers who seek to extract high profits from mortgage lending, on the other hand, need to be excluded.

The postal savings bank might also be authorized to give certain other types of consumer loans on a non-profit basis.

The other major exception is for corporate commercial paper. This type of instrument is the main thing that corporations use to ensure their liquidity. If they have expenses early in the year and make most of their money around Christmas, or if they get hit with a judgment on a lawsuit that exceeds their current cash, or they otherwise have timing issues or hit bumps in the road, commercial paper makes it OK. In the 2008 financial crisis, the government bailed out the wrong things. Most of the banks and companies bailed out with taxpayer money would not have been missed, but having the commercial paper markets seize up was a real problem. If the government had taken care of those and then called it a day and otherwise let chips fall where they may, America would have been alright and the financiers would have suffered appropriately. So, prudence dictates that laborist policy leave commercial paper alone, except to keep it from being expanded beyond what corporations actually need. Once corporate managements had become used to operating in a laborist manner any transitional limits on commercial paper issuance could be lifted, and there would be a natural competitive pressure to reduce rates.

Small businesses, priority homeowner investments, construction of certain residential housing, and certain other social priorities will be financed in a new way discussed in a later chapter. Most of these things currently get limited assistance from our supposedly wonderful financial system. Under laborism, socially beneficial investments of this sort will get priority attention.

With equity returns reduced to a reasonable risk return and time value of money being eliminated, the parasitic financiers and speculators will desperately seek new ways to use their money to breed more money. While a laborist system will be fully capable of financing everything we want to finance, it will be important in transition to keep these financier responses from creating needless turmoil or distortions. This means that we will need certain controls in transition.

First, we will need to keep the over \$22 trillion of financier assets from suddenly moving outside of the United States. This would be done with currency controls, which will apply to both money as such and ownership of financial assets (including assets such as foreign stocks or bonds). Businesses will still be permitted to move money abroad to the extent actually needed to fund foreign productive investments for the production of goods and services for foreign markets, but otherwise cash, bonds, stock, etc. will stay here on penalty of confiscation. Individuals could still move a reasonable amount of money (\$1,000,000) abroad each each year, either as currency to spend or to use to make foreign investments. If a financier wanted to renounce his US citizenship and move to Monaco, he would be subjected to immediate 84% taxation on all his unrealized gains,

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59 [https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/scf/dataviz/scf/chart/#series:Home\\_Equity\\_Lines\\_of\\_Credit;demographic:inccat;population:1,2,3,4,5,6;units:mean](https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/scf/dataviz/scf/chart/#series:Home_Equity_Lines_of_Credit;demographic:inccat;population:1,2,3,4,5,6;units:mean)

and would still only be able to move his money abroad to join him at the rate of \$1,000,000 a year. Over time, those limits could be loosened.

Second, we will need to control derivative instruments and similar financial instruments that financier magicians use to move value around. America has long been extremely tolerant of financial creativity, allowing people to create any kind of contract they wanted so long as it was not specifically prohibited by law. Other countries have not been so tolerant, and yet they have done well. Any financial instruments or contracts that worked to circumvent currency controls, equity controls, or the ban on interest or to create financial turmoil will be prohibited. There is already an American legal doctrine of contracts that are “void for public policy” like contracts for prostitution or murder or other bad things. This doctrine will be used to void any agreement that is contrary to core laborist policy. In Norway they have a legal concept known as “loyalty to the law”, which basically means “the law may not have been entirely clear, but we know that you know what we meant.” That concept would also be used here in this context: you know what the core policies are, and if you try to get around them through fancy contracting we will void it out and leave you in what may be a very awkward position, so don’t try it.

Third, we will need to keep financier money from flowing into speculation on particular assets. Trading in commodities (wheat, silver, pork bellies, etc.) will be restricted the way it should have been for the last 100 years, to the players who do that trading just to increase the certainty in their business. Wheat contracts used to be contracts between farmers and millers so both had more certainty on pricing before they knew what would happen to prices at harvest time. Other commodity contracts were similar. Commodities trading, however, was long ago taken over by speculators making pure gambling bets. We will eliminate that speculation and allow farmers and buyers and other people actually in the business of producing, selling or using commodities to get the price stability they used to get before speculators took over.

We will implement transitional controls on residential real estate and farmland purchases. The future purchase of residential property will be restricted to personal use plus a limited amount of rental property, with the limit perhaps being the amount that the purchaser was actually prepared to personally manage. The laborist government will have a strong interest in ensuring that residential rental property is well designed, well maintained, safe and affordable, as explained further in a later chapter. Anti-speculation limits will be designed to help move in the direction of those reforms, and would evolve as America progressed down the path of better housing.

Farmland will be reserved for farmers. Laborist policy will seek to restore Thomas Jefferson’s independent yeoman farmers as much as possible. Part of that effort requires preventing the price of farmland from being bid up to where farmers can’t afford to run a small farm. Foreign ownership of farmland and residential real estate (aside from a personal residence) will be prohibited. Ownership of farmland<sup>60</sup> by anyone not farming the land will be restricted, though in an educated manner designed to let new farmers obtain land through labor.

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60 Defining farmland is tricky of course. Anyone who has lived in a suburb where cornfields or cows exist side by side with residential neighborhoods know that, but they also know that the farmers are all self-declaring their land as agricultural land for real estate tax purposes, because it gives them a lower tax rate. They will be given a transition year to declare either “yes, I really mean it’s agricultural land and it can be restricted” or “no, I was just playing a game while I held the land for speculation, and I admit it is not agricultural land.”

If the speculators started buying up anything else and distorting the markets or turning small-business people into serfs, the laborist government would intervene to stop it, generally in a manner that would make no effort to keep the would-be speculators from losing money due to the intervention.

Finally, laborist tax policy, by restoring rates of income and estate tax that applied when America had a fairer and healthier economy and by closing gaping loopholes, will accelerate the reduction of insane wealth in the hands of the financiers, thereby reducing any worries regarding what they choose to do with their money. Again, laborism would not object to the Taylor Swifts of America who simply make a lot of money by doing work. In fact, laborist tax policy will help them by providing generous income averaging<sup>61</sup> for earned income of people who have the kind of job where you make a lot of money for a few years and then largely stop. They will be allowed to pass down up to \$50,000,000 to their children who could then use their time as they pleased. But the tax rules would reduce the ability of anyone to create generations of trust-fund children who rule society without doing honest work.

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61 Income averaging but it is only allowed in limited cases today. It means that where you have unusually high income for a couple of years, you can elect to apply a tax rate based on your income averaged across several years.

# The harm that the financier economy does to our lives

The world is too much with us; late and soon,  
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers  
**William Wordsworth**

Money, and not morality, is the principle of commercial nations. - **Thomas Jefferson**

We know that, by siphoning off income rightly belonging to the workers who create that income, financiers harm working Americans. The harm that international parasitic financiers and speculators do goes far beyond that theft, though. The economy designed to allow them to continue having their money breed money hurts our lives and souls in many profound ways.<sup>62</sup> We don't recognize this because we have been brought up to think that these financier-caused ills are just the way the world naturally works. To see them, it helps to start again with the history of money.

The purpose of money is to exchange goods and services for other goods and services. An individual may save money, and so defer one side of this exchange, either to make a bigger purchase or for a later time when he is out of work or retired or needs a slug of money for children's education etc., and within limits that's OK, though society should provide a comfortable universal pension that takes pressure off of individuals having to save to retire. In terms of investment, though, the natural order would be that a person uses accumulated money to buy assets to which he will apply labor to produce more goods and services, so she would only buy the assets for a particular work-using task, and she wouldn't do that task unless she saw that people wanted the product. So, in the natural order there is first a need or desire for someone to produce a product or service, a person or group of people interested in providing that good or service pays someone to do work to produce the assets needed to do the further work to produce the needed good or service, and they then do the work and produce it. Without the need, nobody spends time or resources working, and instead they spend their time on other things and leave the resources alone.

In our financialized economy, in contrast, the money hoarders have money that they insist earn a return on itself without their having to do productive labor. The power of compound interest is enormous. At a 5% compounding interest rate, money doubles in 15 years. In 150 years, a penny will become 1,000 pennies, and every 150 years after that the total will multiply by 1,000 again – a million, a billion, a trillion, a quadrillion. If someone had invested a single penny in an account earning 5% compound interest at the birth of Christ, that account would now have a value equal to 73,383,000 balls of solid gold the size of the earth (that number is obsolete as it is written, as it would earn a new earth-size ball of gold every couple of seconds), or 9 billion trillion trillion

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62 Paul Kingsnorth describes his forthcoming book *Against the Machine* as the story of “the dehumanisation of the world at the hands of techno-capitalism, spiritually rootless technologies and a culture that has lost its moorings in place, time and faith.” That is a good short summary of what the financiers have wrought.

dollars. That is why it used to be<sup>63</sup> illegal to create a trust that lasted longer than the life of an existing person plus 21 years, to keep such an accumulation from happening. Financiers don't start with a penny, they start with millions or billions or hundreds of billions of dollars. Because of the power of compound interest on such fortunes, there is enormous pressure to create a return adequate to cover the geometric growth on all that accumulated idle cash.

That pressure means that the financiers can't possibly be happy with a system in which the productive class thinks about what they need or want, and financier cash is used to buy the things needed for productive workers to produce just those products and services. The cycle can't be need → fund productive assets → work to produce. Instead the cycle starts with "this money must produce more money". But how? Part of that equation is to get productive class people to want and buy things they wouldn't otherwise want to have. Thus we have the pointless consumerist advertising economy, where huge resources and batteries of psychological researchers are applied to get us to constantly focus on wanting some garbage that adds nothing significant to our lives.

Another part is to get us to keep re-buying things, rather than buying a well-made thing that we use all our lives and pass down to our children and grandchildren. This gives rise to the crap goods throw-away-and-replace economy, where things wear out quickly. When I was a child I didn't get any new clothes except gym shoes until I was in junior high, instead getting hand-me-downs or used clothes that my mother got at the church rummage sale in our middle-class neighborhood, and when I was done with them we donated them back to the rummage sale. When my children were little, we often got them new clothes but they handed them down and then re-handed them down to younger cousins. My grandchildren's clothes now are bought new and fall apart before they are done with them.

Other products are intentionally obsoleted quickly. The old fashion trick of having things go out of style has been put on steroids, with young girls and women persuaded that they can only wear an outfit once or twice. I kept using my daughter's former iPhone 4 until it would no longer run any of the basic things it used to run, because the apps (which never changed in a way that made them more useful) were "updated" to refuse to run on my operating system.<sup>64</sup> Less stubborn people are convinced that they need to throw their old phone away every year and get a new one because "this one is a new color!" or "this one uses energy-intensive, planet-destroying processes to create new emojis!". Lousy building materials and housing fashion result in constant home maintenance costs and in having perfectly good tile, stone, metal fixtures, etc. being torn out and thrown away. Our landfills are bulging with the often-toxic waste of the throw-away society.

Yet another part is the "everyone needs to work, all the time" development. Within memory, most families had the option of living comfortably with just one working parent. By squeezing wages and boosting consumerism, families were persuaded that both parents needed to work their

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63 The financiers have now gotten rid of that restriction in several states, because they want to create empires in which a lucky one of their descendants will own the whole world.

64 This came after an extended period when my phone had developed a battery life of about 2 minutes. I refused to give in and just kept it plugged in, and then one day the battery life returned back to the level it been originally. They had given up on me.

whole lives, and spend a goodly amount of their income on daycare. 1950s sexism was a bad thing, but by the 1960s and 70s families had choices. My mother was a college graduate who had worked as a county social worker, but chose to retire temporarily to focus on her children. By the time I was 8 she was deeply involved with political work and social causes, and she simply dragged her children along with her, which gave us a lot of interesting experiences. When I got to middle school she started working for pay again, but in a low-paying job that she wanted because it was socially useful. She didn't feel forced to look for high-paying work as a serf of the financiers, but instead could spend her time on things that interested her and that she felt were useful, and that the financiers would have hated.<sup>65</sup> Today, when females out-compete males in most college majors and have come to dominate a number of professional fields, families might choose to have a different parent be the primary earner, but instead they feel like neither parent can have the freedom to use their time to do interesting or useful things. Both need to focus on making money. Further, now they are tied to phones and computers that make unconnected free time a thing of the past. They check mail on vacations and at home, forever on call.

Financialism also seeks the monetization of children. It is not just a matter of every product relating to children being expensive. Kids used to play in the neighborhood. Now they take lessons and attend camps. Sure, there were always piano teachers and such, but now you can't learn football or basketball or baseball just playing with other kids – you need professional instruction, or by middle school you won't be allowed to play the sport. The financiers snuck that in as part of getting parents to work all the time, so that summer activity camps became an extension of daycare. With that foot in the door, they expanded. Chain franchises got involved, and private equity cornered the market on certain uniforms. Raising a child was never cheap, but now it involves constant expenses, and that system worsens the social divide, because families with less money lose the ability to have their children do normal things or things that are necessary to look good on a college application.<sup>66</sup> Meanwhile, corporations reached into the schools, from vending machines to software that enables helicopter parents to monitor all of their child's work to video units and teacher tools.<sup>67</sup>

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65 I find it odd that when people revisit history to try to prove that women have been important, they usually try to pick out women who managed to do well in a male-dominated field and say “see, we were always doing this stuff, and it just wasn't appreciated!” What they don't focus on is the fact that nearly every useful social movement in history was led by women, and that these contributions really were extremely important. That, of course, is excluded from our history books because the financiers don't like us to think about the rise of social reforms that were typically opposing the financiers.

66 America has decided that the SAT and ACT tests are racist and evil and should be factored out of the college application process, but that was the one area in which a bright child from a working class family could shine brighter than a child from a rich family. For-pay test-prep services and the like hurt the ability for poorer kids to outshine others, but the door was still open. Now the focus instead is on “activities”, meaning largely things that poorer kids can't afford to do, and essays, which have a whole highly profitable industry around them. And, of course, “legacy” admissions, which Detective Green of *Law and Order* rightly described as “affirmative action for white folk”, are still a major thing because they serve the financiers.

67 My granddaughter complains that a huge amount of time in her public school is spent on computer screens doing mindless things. Many better private schools don't do screen time.

The tech era found a new way to double down on economic perversity. The tech industry spends much of its time figuring out how to get us addicted to “services” that provide no service. Before Facebook came along, nobody felt a need to post the details of their lives online, or to publish their opinions to strangers in exchange for “likes”. Nobody felt a need to spend hours a day watching cat videos. Yet, companies have found ways to make us, and especially our children, desperately want those things, want them to the point where they can’t put them aside. How do they profit from that? In large part, it is by selling advertising to people who want to make us want to spend money on *other* things we don’t naturally need or want. So we have an industry worth trillions that produces not services, but rather addictive wastes of time designed to deliver our attention to other companies to sell us goods that are not good and services that do not serve, all using an advanced understanding of psychology and propaganda to successfully manipulate our behavior and opinions.

Even with all of these things, people can’t consume and throw away enough stuff to keep feeding idle money. One of the things that the tech companies sell, therefore, is “products” that exist only in the virtual world of games. Rather than selling another thing we don’t need, they can get us to pay for a picture of a thing that our avatar can wear, or for a cheat code that allows us to get more quickly through a game that we have paid to be able to play because we wanted to use it to fill our time.

Back in the real world, the government starts bloody and hugely expensive wars in places that have nothing to do with America, and that allows them to buy and explode tons upon tons of weapons. Not having enough wars of our own, we spend taxpayer dollars to supply weapons for other people’s wars. After the Biden administration blew up the Nordstream Pipeline to stop Russia from selling gas that was the foundation for Germany’s economy, we started selling what my Congresswoman calls “freedom fuel” to the Europeans at much higher prices, and she argues that this is why we should support continuing the pointless bloodfest that is the Ukraine war. As with other financier businesses, we are constantly looking for new ways for the financiers to make money from war.

But even making products designed to blow up neighborhoods or blowing up cities and then rebuilding them is not enough to feed the beast of money. So, we have financialized the economy. From cryptocurrency to sports betting we make money on trying to make money, with no actual good or service being produced. We pump up the stock market and take steps to try to maximize trading and money management and advising, again with no actual good or service being produced. Corporations spend heavy resources on administrative work trying to boost their share prices rather than focusing on inventing and making things.

The rise of joint stock corporations helped to drive the financier agenda. When Henry Ford founded his company, it was to produce products that he invented and to manufacture them in the way he thought best. He paid his workers well because he thought they deserved it and because he understood that that would be good for his company and his community, plus he wanted them to be able to afford to own his cars themselves. Corporations today are mostly anonymous and

depersonalized. The shareholder isn't connected to the factory or office, doesn't know the workers, doesn't interact with the customers. He just looks at how much money he gets from owning the stock. This depersonalization degrades the economy. An old-fashioned entrepreneur like Henry Ford had a sense of honor. He considered it a matter of personal pride to produce a good, high-quality, lasting product that served the real needs of people. That attitude is entirely different from that of the shareholder who trades shares on the stock exchange looking to maximize profit. Whatever business strategy leads to double-digit earnings per share growth is the right one from that shareholder's point of view. If the company produces lousy, short-lived goods that need constant replacement, that's fine. If it manages to make money doing something, like financial speculation or manipulation, that produces no goods or services at all, that's even better – then you don't need to worry about consumer demand being sated. Production no longer flows from what people in society need or naturally want, with an entrepreneur taking pride in efficiently fulfilling that need. Instead, financiers cleverly create desires and addictions through fantastic levels of advertising designed by experts in manipulating us, or cause us to pay for things we don't want, or get us to pay for “things” that don't actually exist at all.

And because the corporations need double-digit earnings growth to feed financier money, they do whatever they can to increase their earnings at the expense of consumers. That includes the well-known things like exporting jobs to countries where they can pay workers a tenth of that they would pay in America, but it also includes their whole way of interacting with customers. Efficiency, justice, entrepreneurial spirit, energy, and mutual trust are the indispensable ingredients for the prospering of every economy. In our economy of cunning financiers, speculators and corporate greed, mutual trust has fallen by the wayside. People try to cheat each other in business, businesses try to cheat consumers, employers try to cheat employees, taxpayers try to cheat the government, and politicians try to cheat the productive class at every turn. Regulators fail to ensure that products are safe or that ads aren't just fraud. Businesses try to maximize “friction”, i.e. the effort it takes to get a fair result. You may have theoretical rights, but if you have to sue to enforce them, or if you have to sit on a phone for an hour and listen to a sales pitch to complain about your rate being increased again and to get it adjusted or to cancel, or to hunt for an hour to try to find a way to contact the business, then your rights aren't worth much. Businesses and consumers waste countless hours dealing with the friction created by dishonest practices. Consumers try to deal with this by complaining on review sites, and then those review sites turn around and charge high fees to honest businesses in order to have potential customers see their reviews or to see favorable reviews, and dishonest businesses pay to make unfavorable reviews go away. That devotion to creating friction increases profits for the financiers, but clearly it isn't a service.

Propagandist economists, funded by the financiers, tell us that our current capitalist system automatically, via the “invisible hand”, allocates resources to giving consumers the products and services they want at the lowest feasible price. Is that your experience? Do you find the products you really want? Can you buy durable, quality goods made in America? Do your kids' clothes last so that they can be handed down in good shape to their younger siblings and cousins? Will your



electronics-heavy car last for 20 years without crazy-high repair costs? Can you buy affordable food that is not contaminated with pesticides and chemicals? Do your vegetables taste the way they used to? Can you make Christmas eggnog with raw eggs without risking the lives of your children? How is the construction quality in your home? Do your appliances last a lifetime? Are you going to be passing down your furniture to your grandchildren?

Our economy is not designed to give you what you need and want. It is designed to sell you what makes the most money for the financiers. Products that wear out and break so that you need to buy new ones are more profitable. Industrial food may not taste great and may harm you and your children, but it is profitable to the financiers. Cars and trucks designed to get you to buy expensive ongoing subscriptions and to have to junk them and get new ones when the electronics go bad (or get “outdated” and lose tech support) are profitable. Timeless design that you will always love is not profitable, but goofy trends that are quickly dated and embarrassing are hugely profitable.

The financiers and their pet media sell us on thinking these developments are good because they increase Gross Domestic Product. If you buy a quality item for \$110 and use it for 20 years, that’s \$110 of GDP. If you buy a crappy item for \$100 and have to replace it every 5 years for 20 years, that’s \$400 of GDP. \$400 of GDP is better than \$110, right? Wrong. GDP does not measure quality of life. It measures profits available to financiers and speculators. Financier capitalism will always move towards making the crappy item. Laborism will shift back towards giving you what you actually need and want at an affordable price.

The official keepers of the statistics – the people who tell you that inflation is just in your imagination – say that America’s real, inflation-adjusted GDP is more than 4 times as high as it was in 1972, the year just before things started going south for most working Americans. Yet our annual federal deficit in 2024, again adjusted for inflation, is more than 10 times what it was in 1972. Back in 1972, if you had been told that our national production could be quadrupled the next year, what would you have expected America to be like after that quadrupling? There would be 4 times as much tax base that the government could use, 4 times as much total money going into people’s pockets. What would you have predicted about the government deficit? What would you have predicted about poverty and homelessness and the quality of public education? What would you have predicted about young people’s ability to afford a college education or to buy a home or car? What would you have predicted would happen with public transportation and public safety? The quality of our roads and bridges and water supply? Is the country you would have imagined the country that we are living in? Those of us who were around in 1972 can tell you that, for the most part, quality of life was better then than it is now. We could afford college. We could afford houses. (Even in 1985, my federal pay – equivalent to \$63,163 a year now – was enough by itself for us to buy a house and have two cars despite mortgage rates being above 10%.) We had nice, well-maintained school buildings. Public parks and services were pretty good in most places. People could afford to retire at 65. GDP does not measure anything truly meaningful to your life. It just measures profit available for speculators and parasites.

Money says to people “find a way to feed me more money, I don’t care how – milk the human cattle for additional supply so that I can grow and grow and grow.” That is a warped and perverted system that replaces the goal of serving human needs and wants with a goal of endlessly and geometrically feeding money, replacing the spiritual God of heaven and nature with Mammon the destroyer of souls.

Timothy 6:8-10 tells us

And having food and raiment let us therewith be content.

But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful wants, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

For the love of money<sup>68</sup> is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Likewise Isaiah 55:2

Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? And your labor for that which satisfieth not?

And Luke 18:25

For it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

And the Quran 9:35

And those who hoard gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah – give them tidings of a painful punishment.

And Gautama Buddha

The fool is his own enemy. Seeking wealth, he destroys himself. Seek rather the other shore.

And Tao Te Ching chapter 53

Some have lavish garments, carry sharp swords, and feast on food and drink. They possess more than they can spend. This is called the vanity of robbers. It is certainly not the Way.

And chapter 46

There is no greater misfortune than greed.

People tend to blame the decline of spirituality in society and the rise of what Paul Kingsnorth<sup>69</sup> calls The Machine on the rise of science, but science is not hostile to spirituality. Scientists may conclude that the human beings who wrote the creation stories of various religions long ago didn’t get the details right, but that is a very different thing from being hostile to spirituality. Science is largely devoted to understanding and appreciating the brilliance of creation and the wonder of Nature’s God. I doubt that any child has ever gone into the field with a competent biologist or geologist and ended up feeling like they were just looking at a can opener rather than at a

68 This is often misquoted as “money is the root of all evil”. Money in itself does not create evil. It is the lust for money in itself, particularly for money flowing from money, that begets evil.

69 <https://paulkingsnorth.substack.com/p/bring-that-hammer-down>

wondrous world. The best scientists fully appreciate the brilliance of creation and caution us to be very careful about messing with it, urging us to protect it in all its wondrous and dimly-understood complexity. They remind us that we are stewards of God's creation, not beings who are entitled to just wreck things at whim. Physicists often speak in terms of trying to look into the mind of God, as they try to work out the rules by which the universe does what it does. They judge competing theories in part by their elegance, because scientists have observed that the most elegant rule is probably the correct one. God favors elegance. Good science is fundamentally a spiritual quest.

No, the demon that has been undermining spirituality and giving rise to The Machine is compound interest. Because Mammon, the god of compound interest, demands to be fed with an ever-increasing, infinite amount of sacrifice of labor and attention, he can tolerate no other gods. The God of every other religion calls for us to limit the time and attention we spend on material things, to reserve our time and attention for love of family and friends and for listening to the Voice that one only hears in stillness, and to go quietly and respectfully into God's nature and feel the Presence that makes us whole. Mammon cannot tolerate that kind of behavior. He is a jealous god, and he demands everything from us.

The Old Testament says we were cast out of Eden when the serpent tempted us with the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, but modern humanity has been cast out by the serpent tempting us with the knowledge of compound interest. This insatiable lust, the society-wide desire to do whatever it takes to serve Mammon by feeding the demon of money producing money, is not our natural state. Earning money from labor to spend on the things we need to live and love and be safe and healthy and to learn and experience the world is fine and good. That is natural. Instead we labor and spend our energies trying to get (not necessarily earn) money just to have it, so that it can produce more money, and we give up living real lives, being safe or healthy, and spending time with family and friends, and subject ourselves to financier propaganda and to an Instagram selfie experience of the world. Whether we are atheist, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist or whatever, we can feel that the world built around enabling money to breed money is not the world we were meant for.

We don't need to stay in that world. We can find our way back to the garden. It is just a matter of returning to the natural cycle. Need or want leads to labor to produce the assets needed to produce a thing followed by labor to produce it followed by life and love and enjoyment. The cycle of "figure out how to fabricate an unnatural desire followed by labor and resources to produce things followed by consumption followed by throwing away followed by pay money on money followed by use that money to fabricate more unnatural desires and repeat infinitely" has to stop. Our world can't support 9 billion of us on that cycle. Our humanity can't support it. It is not sustainable. Laborism offers the off ramp leading to the road back to sanity and virtue.

# Laborist funding of socially useful things

## How laborism allows market failures to be corrected

Again, one of the great lies is the financier-funded propaganda that the invisible hand of capitalism causes us to use resources efficiently to get everything we need or want. Frequently the capitalist economy fails to provide funds for things society needs, because financiers can't make enough money from those things. An easy example today is solar and wind energy. Regardless of what one thinks about climate change, in much of the country solar and wind energy is simply cheaper than fracked oil and gas, even without government subsidies. However, financiers can easily make a lot of money from a fracked well.<sup>70</sup> Making financier-type money from investing in home solar is more difficult. While the solar pays for itself over the lifetime of the solar panels, it does not pay for itself plus a double-digit return on the initial capital. Individual homeowners who have enough money may choose to make the investment, but far fewer do than would make sense overall for society, again just from the pure viewpoint of minimizing total cost. That is a market failure.

Laborism offers a cure. The government is entitled to print money. As I will discuss below, the effect of printing new money depends strongly on how that money is used. Many things can be funded with new money if that thing generates savings or income that, over time, can be used to repay and eliminate that new money. This is true so long as those things are not otherwise being purchased by consumers and so long as they can be produced without competing too much for industrial capacity with other products. If the government tries to increase production of a thing 100-fold overnight, that will likely be a problem. However, if the government announces that it will just soak up excess capacity now but will also make sure that new capacity will be used efficiently, then new capacity can be created without driving inflation.

For solar panels, then, the laborist government can, in a carefully metered way, make new money available to fund investment in panels. That can be done by making money available to homeowners (along with unbiased, competent advice on what to buy and who to have install it, and proper regulation of the producers and installers to suppress scams). Alternatively, it can be done by making funding available through public utility companies that would install the panels (again with an unbiased evaluation to determine what is overall efficient). If the money went to the homeowner to invest, then they would pay the government interest-free out of their electricity savings as power is generated by the panels. The government would take the money back out of circulation as it is repaid. (These days, most "money" is in the form of entries in a

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<sup>70</sup> Even there, the market doesn't work well. My house sits on top of a fracked gas well. At a time when gas prices were higher, a company got leases and drilled and fracked the well, then did more fracture injection periodically to maintain the leases. Because local gas prices were now lower, nobody wanted to pay to connect the well to the local gas pipelines, and it was eventually plugged and abandoned. So, our water table has been poisoned, the ground has been destabilized, and nothing was or ever will be produced, all because speculators bid prices up and down rather than providing products in response to needs.

computer, not physical greenbacks, so creating it and taking it back out of circulation on a case-by-case basis is pretty simple). If a utility was used, then it would charge the homeowner for power, with the solar generation just being charged at a rate designed to repay the interest-free loan from the government, and again the new money would be taken out of circulation as that repayment occurred. This program would be metered to keep the new demand from bidding up the price of solar panels to a level where they were no longer competitive with other forms of energy. Unlike solar credits, which cost taxpayers money, this funding would never cost taxpayers a dime.

Laborist policy favors maximizing the number of reasonably efficient producers in a market. With enough competitors, natural market competition could be relied on to minimize the threat of inflation through government funding. What if there were only a limited number of producers? What if they would be likely to use their control of the market to boost prices to, in turn, boost profits in the face of government-assisted demand? Then the laborist government would use its market power to enforce contractual controls to prevent that profiteering. Manufacturers would earn a reasonable return for their effort, not more. Still, because the manufacturers in fact have limited capacity and because they in turn must buy materials from other companies to make their products, the laborist funding scheme would have to be sensibly run. The certainty of demand created by the laborist funding scheme would be likely to result in manufacturers entering the market or increasing their capacity in a very satisfying way. However, any ramp-up would need to allow appropriate time for that to work. The government would consult with manufacturers regarding how quickly they could satisfy demand.

## **Why laborist market correction would not trigger inflation**

But I see you straining at the leash and shouting “But no, if the government prints money like that it will create hyperinflation and we will be in the Weimar Republic!”<sup>71</sup> My economics teacher says that any time the government prints money (unless it is the Fed, owned by the banks, printing trillions to buy dodgy assets that the financiers got caught holding) it will have that effect! It is fine to borrow 2 trillion a year from the financial markets and never repay it, and pay perpetual interest, but not to print! I can’t listen to this!” So, before going further let’s address that concern. Let’s address where government interest-free funding works and where it doesn’t.

Before discussing why laborist policy won’t tend to create inflation, it is important to understand the two forms of inflation: monetary inflation and financier-driven inflation. To understand monetary inflation we should again consider the proper nature of money.

As discussed above, money was invented as a medium of exchange, not as a demonic creature that feeds and breeds without labor. The farmer who produces 10 dozen eggs a week sells them to various people in the town for money, saves that money and uses it to buy a rocking chair from

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<sup>71</sup> The real story of Weimar is much more complex, and is ably told in *Germany Tried Democracy* by Samuel Halperin. <https://archive.org/details/germanytrieddemo00halp> . He wrote before the financier-backed propagandists crystallized their desired mythical version of history.

the furniture maker, who then uses the money in turn to buy 5 pairs of shoes from the shoe maker, who uses some of it to buy eggs from the farmer. In every case, money is a unit of account representing a good or service produced through labor.

Notice what this means about how money works in the economy. When money is just a unit of exchange, then supply and demand will always balance and clear. In other words, if I have money it is because I worked and produced goods or services that somebody else wanted and was willing to buy. Otherwise, I never have money in my hands. Money therefore always represents goods or services that someone produced and someone else wanted.

Now enter the government and its printing press. The government ideally produces an amount of money that is adequate to allow everyone doing all the trades they do to have the cash to do them. The people collectively, through the magic of the market, “agree” on the value equivalence of eggs, shoes, rocking chairs, make-up, manicures and airplane flights, and they do their exchanges at a money price that fits the relative values of the different products. But if tomorrow the government prints another trillion dollars and mails it out to people just for fun, as it did during Covid, that money does not represent a work product. Nobody produced anything of value to get it. The system is unbalanced. The people who got that cash will go out into the market to buy things, but since they didn’t do work to produce anything to earn the money, there aren’t things to buy. So, the people who have done work to produce things start charging more, because the people who got helicopter money compete with each other to get the products that exist and so bid up the prices. This is monetary inflation – new money put into the system that was not produced by doing work to make products and services that somebody wanted, and was not taken away from a worker through taxes or parasitic financiers. The Covid inflation was monetary inflation (aggravated in that case by the peculiar circumstance of supplies drying up at the same time that helicopter money was being printed).

The key thing to realize here is that there is a fundamental difference between temporary governmental money issued to cause the production of new value through work versus governmental money or debt issued as helicopter money or corporate subsidies, given to people or corporations to spend without the compensating creation of new value through work. In the former case, the government is just facilitating an exchange of labor that otherwise wouldn’t happen due to a market failure. If the government pays workers to lay streetcar tracks and the workers take their pay and buy television sets, then the government is just acting to enable the barter of streetcar tracks for televisions. There is equivalent value of goods and services produced by work on both sides of the equation, and everything is right with the world. On the other hand, if the government prints or borrows to hand out helicopter money or corporate subsidies, then the government is stealing from working people. The printed money, which has no inherent worth, is used to get the products of worker labor from the market without any new goods being created in exchange, meaning that people who produced goods and services through work can’t get the full value of their work. They have been cheated. The way that cheat works is through inflation. Prices of the things that the recipients of helicopter money or of corporate subsidies buy increase, and

the money that workers received for their labor therefore can't buy an equivalent amount of value in exchange.

Financier-driven inflation is different, and it is the type of inflation that we more normally experience. The Federal Reserve actively wants us to have financier-driven inflation at 2% every year. Here, think in terms of a corporation and its employees. The corporation makes and sells a product, and in general makes profits of about 10.25% of those revenues<sup>72</sup>. So, if it sells \$1,000 worth of product, for simplicity we can say that it pays its<sup>73</sup> employees \$900 and that the other \$100 is profit that goes to the financier shareholders. If it is like most corporations, then each year it produces a salary budget which is equal to current salaries plus the official prior-year inflation rate. It only allows raises that, in total, equal the budgeted total raise amount, and it gives those raises around March. So, in year 1 this corporation (like all the other corporations in the market) decides to raise its prices by 1% in January and another 1% in June, so after June the revenues are up to \$1,020 per year. That increase was phased in, though, so its total revenues for the year are \$1,015<sup>74</sup>. The workers are paid \$900 for the year and financier profits are thus \$115. Because the price rises resulting in 2% inflation, by year end the worker pay is worth \$882.35 and the financier profit is worth \$112.75 in terms of start-of-year dollars. In year 2, the company sets a salary budget. The workers are unhappy because prices have gone up 2%, so what used to cost them \$900 now costs \$918. So, the raise budget is set at the rate of the prior year's inflation, or 18, but the employees only get that raise in March. That means that in year 2 they are paid \$913.50<sup>75</sup>. However, the financiers also raise the prices the same way in year 2, resulting in revenues of \$1,035.30, and so get a profit of \$121.80. Because prices have inflated by another 2%, in terms of original dollars the workers get \$878.03 and the financiers get \$117.07. If there is another 2% price increase in year 3, then this same math shows that the workers will get pay of \$931.77 and the financiers profits of \$124.24, but in terms of original dollars those will again be worth \$878.03 and \$117.07, respectively, and that will remain true in every year if the inflation keeps steady at 2%.

Now, assume that in year 4 the price increases, and so inflation, ends. Then the workers start to catch up. In year 4 they get pay worth \$895.59 in original dollars while the financier profits are worth \$104.41, and in year 5 the worker pay is worth \$900 and the financier profits are worth \$100.

So, what has happened? In every year where the financiers inflate prices and drive inflation, they get a boosted share of the revenues from the business, which comes out of the pockets of the workers. Why does the Federal Reserve want a 2% inflation target? They give a number of reasons for that, but we know that this one is enough. 2% inflation will put more money into the pockets of the financiers and less in the pockets of workers.

There is another thing worth noting while we are playing with these numbers. In our example, while the financiers have increased prices by \$20, when they do fully increase wages they only

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72 At least, that's the average for the S&P 500. <https://dqydj.com/sp-500-profit-margin/>

73 In reality it certainly doesn't pay its employees that much. A lot of the revenues go to suppliers, and at each level of the supply chain the parasitic financiers skim revenues away from the workers who create them.

74 That is,  $25\% * \$1,000 + 75\% * \$1,020$ .

75 That is,  $25\% * \$900 + 75\% * \$918$ .

increase them by \$18.00. In principle, if they are selling \$1,020 worth of stuff and working people only have \$918 to spend then somebody else is buying the rest and absorbing the other \$2.00 worth of price increase, but reality is complicated. It is not just the financiers themselves buying the other \$102 worth of stuff. The government is buying things, and may be borrowing money to do so. Working people borrow money to buy things. The more that financiers can get people or the government to borrow, the more of the extra \$2 they get to keep without shrinking the economy.<sup>76</sup> At the end of the day, the financiers get to keep that extra \$2 in their pockets – or in practice the extra \$17 in real value, as illustrated by the math above – and current or future generations of working people pay for it.

But the financiers are not satisfied with that 17% increased pillaging of the annual profit from the sweat of the working people, of course. They know that they only need to allow inflation-based pay increases to the extent that working people know that there is inflation. We have been trained to think as if the government inflation statistics are reality, and that an increase in the salary budget based on those inflation statistics is reasonable. But the financiers have discovered the magic of hidden inflation. What does the financier do to squeeze a bit more blood from the workers? He makes the products a little bit worse every year, so that working people get poorer without quite realizing it.<sup>77</sup> In concept, this is similar to shrinkflation, where the 16 ounce package of spaghetti you used to buy for \$2.50 becomes a 14 ounce package for \$2.50. When I was young milk came from cows who ate grass and hay and who weren't injected with chemicals. The agribiz financiers started feeding cows grain contaminated with pesticides and injecting them with chemicals that will make young girls reach sexual maturity sooner than they naturally would. If the milk that cost \$3.00 then is generally replaced with chemical milk that cost \$3.00 now, then the government says there has been no inflation. The fact that milk from uninjected cows who eat grass now costs \$6.00 is considered irrelevant. The same holds true for kids' clothes that used to be made with American cloth that lasted 10 years but now is made with foreign-produced junk cloth that lasts 1 year. The working people, finding their money squeezed, buy the low-grade clothes because clothes that last like they used to now cost 3 times as much, and the fact that they need to be replaced next year instead of handed down to a younger sibling or cousin or donated to a church rummage sale and used by another neighbor kid is not this year's problem. This year, they can buy what they need to get by, of lower quality, for the money they are paid.

Over time, the result of hidden inflation is that consumers overall pay more money to buy 10 sets of crappy clothes instead of 1 set of durable clothes, the financiers make a lot more money, GDP increases, and supposedly there is no inflation. The government tells us we are all better off. However, workers have a worse lifestyle. Our families' health suffers and our landfills bulge with

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76 A significant problem with the American economy today is that the financier skim is so high, and financiers can't spend all the money they get even if they wanted to. If the revenues went to working people who spent them, then the \$1,020 would keep cycling through the economy. If the financiers skim \$102 and put it in the bank, then basically somebody needs to borrow \$102 or the economy will shrink. This makes capitalism unstable and will contribute to its collapse. Laborism inherently right-sizes the economy without needing to encourage debt.

77 The TV show *The Good Place* has a good line on this, when Michael says "I love that about humans – you make everything a little bit worse, so that you can have more of it."



garbage. This is why “real” GDP now is 4 times higher than it was in 1972, but your life isn’t better. This does not bother the financiers. They buy the organic milk and eggs and buy high-end durable clothes, and have plenty of extra money left over.

What does this mean in terms of laborist policy on government finance and spending? First, it does not make a significant difference to inflation whether the government borrows money from a bank or just prints money. If it borrows money, then it gets a tradeable asset (money) from the bank and gives the bank a different tradeable asset (federal notes). Either one can be used at its full face value to buy something else, so the bank still has the same financial wherewithal it had before, plus it gets interest from the government. On the government’s side, it does not matter whether it pays back principal on a loan or just reduces cash in the system as it collects taxes. So, the government’s position (aside from the interest effects) is the same whether it borrows money from the banks or just prints money and then takes it back out of circulation in the same time frame that it would repay debt. If the position of both parties is the same whether the government borrows or temporarily prints, then both paths are equivalent.

Second, what does matter a lot is what the government does with money. If it sends it out as helicopter money without funding those distributions by taking money away from somebody else through taxes, then it drives monetary inflation. That is true because now actual work products in the world don’t match the money supply any more. On the other hand, if the government uses the cash to build a valuable public work, balance is maintained. Consumers are not otherwise bidding to build a better public transit system or high-speed rail line or improved city water pipes. When the government uses new money to produce these things it is just initiating the money cycle, causing real new work products to be produced. Overall, the money supply remains balanced by actual goods produced by labor. Moreover, in these cases the government can be repaid the capital expenditure by user fees, and take that cash back out of circulation. The workers who produce these things then get paid for having done so, and use that money to buy other things (including paying user fees for the new transit or improved water supply), but there is matching real value of things in the system.<sup>78</sup> Similarly, if the government prints money to lend out to people to buy solar panels that pay for themselves over time with reduced need to buy gas or oil or coal or uranium, and if the people repay the government out of those savings and the government then takes those repayments out of circulation again, that does not create an imbalance between money and actual work-products. It merely makes use of the ability of money to adjust for timing differences.

Now, if the government lends out money this way beyond the capacity of the market to respond, that will drive inflation in the price of the particular goods involved. The price of solar panels may spike to where they no longer pay for themselves, causing the scheme to collapse. Any policy maker would have to be mindful of such effects and plan to avoid them. Within the range of our powerful economy’s ability to adapt, though, the government can make or facilitate such investments with new money without creating significant problems. It does not have to borrow

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<sup>78</sup> There can be a small bidding effect, where the government’s use of workers and steel and so on may cause the market to bid a bit more to buy labor or steel, but generally such effects are small, though see the warning below.

from financiers and enslave taxpayers to a lifetime of interest payments in order to do so. The financiers and the academics they fund and the media they own will all deny that, but it is true, and the historical examples are consistent with this truth.

So, contrary to what many young activists think, the federal government can't just print money and use it to give every American an upper-middle class lifestyle, or to raise the entire populations of Africa and the poorer parts of Asia out of poverty. Money, as such, is just a piece of paper, and unless it represents the value of goods and services that have been produced through labor, or the value of fares or savings that will be received over time, then it is worthless. In such cases, the issuance of new money just degrades other money and causes inflation. But if money is just used in a natural way to solve the timing problem, then that is part of the basic function of money, exchanging today's work with yesterday's work or tomorrow's work. Then the money has its proper value, and all is right with the economy. So, temporarily printing money can be a market correction rather than a market distortion.

The government can and should fund, on an interest-free basis, capital investment to produce socially important goods that otherwise would not be produced, if Americans would be willing and able to pay for those goods once produced. This is contrary to what many Uniparty supporters think, because they have listened to financier-funded academics and financier-owned media, but it is true. Making this market correction is not Utopian socialism. Rather, it is a proper understanding of flaws in the market mechanism that flow from the worship of compound interest, and of how the markets can be made more efficient by correcting those flaws. Money and markets are supposed to allow people to exchange labor for other labor that produces the goods they need and want. That is their purpose. A system that does not efficiently serve that goal is defective. Capitalism has that defect. Laborism corrects it and makes markets more efficient.

Again, though, that comes with the limitation that a national government program buying something is not like Joe and Jane buying something. The government, as a consumer, is a whale in a minnow pond. The government always has to think about how the production capacity in the market will be able to respond to a government demand, and what the side effects of that response might be. A laborist government would need to be careful. It would not declare that it will cause the full US energy grid to be backed up by rare-earth-and-lithium batteries within 5 years. In fact, a laborist government, unlike a socialist government, would avoid any goal that looks like that. Laborism responds to product and service demands that working people have, it does not try to create demand. If people want solar panels but the defective market interferes with supplying that need, laborism will correct the market defect. Laborism will not fund the production of a billion compact fluorescent light bulbs that nobody asked for, and then find that the correct technology that people wanted was LED bulbs.

In fact, even if every consumer in the market is sold on the idea that they want to put solar panels on their house, a laborist government would not provide funding that exceeds the level at which production can efficiently ramp up. Further, it would be actively cautious to ensure that it is not funding a white elephant that will prove to be misguided technology before it has had time to pay

for itself. Laborism favors economic diversity, with multiple players and multiple solutions for a healthy economic ecology. It does not favor fads that chase a particular “solution” like a little league soccer team chasing the ball. Our system and people have been trained by generations of financier-funded advertising selling us on wanting a particular thing, whether it was good or not. Millions of us can be sold on buying a pet rock, and we probably could be sold on buying a copper engraving of The Great Emancipator Abraham Lincoln for \$20. While government financing for socially useful things can be a powerful force for social good, financing for fads, fraud and nonsense can be very bad. Until we as a people and a system become more sophisticated and can be sure we are not rubes falling prey to the carnies, we need to recognize that about ourselves, and be very careful not to let that habit lead us astray.

## **The power of market-correcting interest-free funding**

So, having addressed that point, if you can now put your hand down and sit calmly in your seat, we can think about the power of laborist funding for social goods.

Solar panels have been addressed above. It was obviously silly to believe the liberal capitalist idea that the preferred way to move towards non-carbon energy was for the federal government to borrow hundreds of billions of dollars at interest (with that interest amounting to the right of the financiers to demand that much value of labor from American workers every year forever), in order to give consumers of green energy products money if and when they give the same money to green energy businesses who give much of it to financiers. Sure the money was to be used to buy green energy things, but it isn't clear how much a dollar of subsidy did to reduce carbon consumption, while it was certain that we were taking money from future taxpayers to do it. It is a great goal but a bad mechanism.

Even if one still rejects the idea of climate change despite the North Carolina floods and the Los Angeles fires and all the other evidence of our own eyes, carbon-based energy is highly polluting.<sup>79</sup> Kamala Harris standing up and saying both that she is a wonderful environmentalist and that she is proud that America is producing more oil and gas than ever before through fracking was enough to make a person ill. But providing taxpayer-funded or, worse, interest-bearing debt-funded subsidies to particular technology bets is just not a good way to pursue that goal. It is the method chosen by the politicians of both parties who voted for the law, and they chose it because financiers liked it. The one thing that was certain was that they would make money from it.

A laborist government will instead provide interest-free capital funding, metered to only boost consumption at a rate that the market could supply without inflation, for investments that would reliably pay for themselves and that consumers wanted. This would also apply to wind chargers

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<sup>79</sup> <https://oilfieldwitness.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Oilfield-Witness-Unmonitored-and-Unregulated.pdf> When I moved my family out of Houston it was partly because of the following incident. My 7-year-old drew a picture of a beach scene. He drew a number of black dots on the yellow sand. When I asked what that was, he replied “that’s the tar balls.” He viewed that as part of the nature of a beach.

and heat pumps and other things that faced similar timing problems. It would also apply to replacing lead water pipes and other infrastructure that would be repaid from water bills and similar sources. This would not cost present or future taxpayers money. It would just allow consumers to make investments that made sense for them and for society.

A laborist government would also be favorable to providing interest-free funding for things like public transit if, but only if, that funding would be 100% repaid from user fees that users<sup>80</sup> would actually be willing to pay. For example, in Dallas most of the annual operating expense of the Dallas Area Rapid Transit system is paid by tax money, not rider fees. The DART authorities explain that this is because the transit removes cars from city traffic and makes it easy for people to staff city jobs, allowing employers to stay in the city; the transit thus has a value to the city that goes way beyond the value to riders. If so, then we should think about the best way to link the benefits with the cost, whether the beneficiaries are downtown employers or merchants or people commuting on the less-crowded highways, or a combination. If a project is not corrupt or a product of some politicians' vanity, we should be able to identify beneficiaries who are willing to pay. But what if, as with DART, the problem starts with people making harmful decisions (here on urban and suburban development and highway design) for their own profit, and not being willing to pay for the cost of addressing the side effects of those choices? That gets us to another area where the concept of laborist funding becomes particularly powerful.

Many American businesses produce bad things as a side-effect of their operations. One example is pollution. Under the capitalist system of regulation, a federal or state agency will spend many years thinking about putting a restriction on emitting pollution. The businesses will complain that that will make it hard or impossible for them to operate, and the agency will eventually produce some light regulation that still allows a lot of pollution. That pollution can then be emitted without penalty. Usually it is emitted in an area in or near where poor people live, because that is how cities and towns are traditionally designed. The financiers get the benefit of the profitable production, and the poor people and, to a lesser extent, the rest of us get the pollution. That is not a good system.

As will be explained further in a later chapter, laborism will make more use of markets. It will do this by using taxes to put the cost of the pollution or other bad things onto the business. Initially, the business will try to raise its prices to cover the taxes, knowing that its competitors face the same taxes. If people won't pay that higher price and if the business then can't make a profit making that product, that's OK. That means that having that product in the market is not worth its total cost. Financiers just *thought* it was worth the cost because they got the benefit while the rest of us (especially the poor people) got part of the cost. By correcting the market through the tax, by internalizing the external cost, we have made it clear that no, that product just wasn't worth it.<sup>81</sup>

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80 "Users" here may not be direct users. For a transit system, for example, it could include employers or merchants or others who benefit from the existence of the transit.

81 Traditionally businesses may try to escape such taxes by moving the pollution from an American poor neighborhood to a poor neighborhood in China or India, offshoring the factory. Laborist tariffs will make it harder to do that. We like American production, and we don't like dumping on poor people even if they live in a foreign country.

In most cases, though, the product will still be manufactured. The company will then have an ongoing incentive to reduce the amount of pollution it generates. It will be able to do what corporations do well, which is to consider investments it could make to reduce the pollution and see if they are cost-efficient. If they are, then the company will make that investment. Of course, some forms of pollution should just be flat-out banned, and they still would be, but in our current capitalist system anything that isn't banned is considered OK and nothing is done about it. Laborism will keep up pressure to reduce the harm.

But we can guess that in some cases an investment needed to reduce the pollution would take more money than a business is reasonably able to spend. Even with the new form of equity, where the business would pay a 5% return on new cash invested to fund the pollution reduction, a major re-do of a factory could be hard to sell to investors. However, if the government provided interest-free financing repaid from the taxes saved through the investment in reducing pollution, the investment could go forward. The government would need to be careful to make sure that the business would be highly likely to be able to repay the advance, but this could go a long way towards making sure that businesses prefer to reduce the harm rather than just paying a tax for inflicting it. As long as the savings exceed the cost over time, why wouldn't they?

Our current capitalist system has been described as "crony capitalism". That means that the financiers have control of state and federal governments and use that control to get taxpayer-funded grants to their businesses to increase profits to the financiers. This happens through many channels, from direct cash subsidies for factories or stadiums to military spending to various tax credits and incentives (either directly to the business or to consumers if they spend money with the business) to government contracts. The laborist system will frown on grants, because laborists believe in the market. If something produces a social good that people want, then people will be willing to trade the value from their labor to get it.<sup>82</sup> Instead, laborism will focus on correcting market defects that might keep that natural result from happening. In this way, taxpayers would not be forced on pain of prison to give the value of their labor to businesses for things the taxpayers wouldn't have asked for. They will not be forced to give the value of their labor forever to the financiers for the interest on debt-funded boondoggles. Instead, laborism will correct timing issues with temporary funding. Laborism will also help consumers to pool their demand for social goods like transit systems. It will allow people to charge for being victimized by pollution and other negative side-effects, and will help to provide the incentive and means for businesses to reduce those side effects. Always, though, laborism will start by asking what people actually want and need. Through encouraging competition and avoiding grants laborism will help make sure that the market provides those things, with each party getting the proper and fair compensation for the value of its labor. Crony capitalism, which siphons off the fair compensation for labor and gives it to financiers, and which makes the markets unfair and inefficient, would end.

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82 Of course, individuals may not be able to afford to pay the cost of the value that they would receive from the investment. In those cases, the question becomes whether we, as citizens of a civilized society, think we should use tax subsidies collected from others to make up that gap. Particularly when it comes to ensuring that people have an equal chance in life or a healthy and safe childhood, the answer is going to be yes. But that's a separate issue, and one that would become less significant due to the effects of core laborist policy increasing the incomes of working people.

## Corporate boards, competition, and clarity

I hope [that] we shall crush in its birth the aristocracy of our monied corporations which dare already to challenge our government to a trial by strength and [to] bid defiance to the laws of our country – **Thomas Jefferson**

The core laborist reforms defeating the destructive power of compound interest will do a lot to improve behavior. Corporate behavior would change immediately, even with the step of allowing existing stock to be exchanged for shares providing a 5% return on the transition-day value of the stock. The current focus on increasing earnings per share and doing stock buybacks would become pointless, and would end. Short-termism, the focus on this quarter's results at the expense of long-term improvement, would fade away. If Wall Street is not constantly gambling on your stock and if executive pay isn't driven by that gambling, then executives will want to ensure stable success instead. But even when speculation is impossible and profits flow to employees, employees can still be greedy. For generation after generation we have been brought up in the financier culture of relentless profit growth, growth at all costs. Curing that mindset won't happen overnight. We need other measures to get corporations and other businesses to behave in a socially useful ways.

## Sensible regulation is good for the economy, but it is not enough

Laborism supports sensible regulation, but government regulation isn't enough. Regulation is good and necessary. Having lived in China for a year, I can say with strong conviction that good regulation is extremely important for a successful market. China is the wild wild east. Nobody trusts anything there, and for good reason. Your restaurant food may be cooked in what they call gutter oil. Your yogurt may be laced with melamine plastic in order to register as having more protein than it really has. Food is likely to be contaminated with all manner of chemicals. If you buy meat there, you may discover that it glows blue in the dark. You look for the certified safe seal on food and hope that it really means something, or shop in the Japanese grocery store because they have standards. Most importantly, you are very careful and trust nothing, especially nothing new. It is very hard for a good new product to get rapid market acceptance when the consumers don't know whether it may hurt them. That's a market failure.

Americans don't realize that our country's success in the 20<sup>th</sup> century didn't come from avoiding regulation, but instead was produced by good regulation. Look at old newspaper ads from the 1900s. They include things like "buy our candy – it is certified not to harm your child!" Would you try buying an unfamiliar candy for your children if you thought there was a good chance that it would poison them? When America adopted the Food, Drugs and Cosmetics Act and made it possible to buy things with reasonable assurance that they were unlikely to kill you (or at least that they would be labeled as likely to kill you if that was the case), consumers became much more willing to try new things. When our stock markets were regulated to be largely honest, investors

poured into the markets. Back in 1972, we seriously said “well, that has to be true, because they said it on TV”, because our standards of advertising enforcement clamped down heavily on lies. The confidence that good regulation gives to consumers is a wonderful thing for business, but especially for smaller businesses and innovative businesses seeking to get people to try new things. Laborism would use sensible, well-enforced regulations to allow Americans to have that kind of confidence in our products and advertising. We would also use it to set limits on business behavior, banning them from doing needlessly harmful things and really enforcing those bans.

But regulation will never be a substitute for morality or for social pressure. No law is. When I worked in law enforcement we didn’t view our role as being to prevent any violation of the law, because that was impossible. Instead, our role was to at least enforce the law in a way that allowed people who voluntarily obeyed the law not to feel like suckers for doing so. If 330 million Americans were all trying to break the law any time they thought they could get away with it, no amount of investment in law enforcement would be able to keep society livable. We need to have most of the people most of the time trying to do the right thing just because it is the right thing, and then do our best to deal with the fairly small number of scofflaws who can only be controlled by government force and punishment.

The same thing applies to businesses. Regulations provide accepted limits, but that’s not enough. We can’t afford to have businesses be scofflaws who violate standards and just try not to get caught. We also can’t afford to have businesses think that operating just within the limits allowed by the regulations is fine. We need businesses to seek to do the right thing and to reduce harm.

We have a very complex economy, with lots of businesses doing lots of things that have the potential to harm us if they don’t use proper care. In many cases they will harm us even if they do use care that is considered “proper”. Pregnant women have to watch how much fish they eat – despite the fact that fish should be a great food for pregnant women – because our oceans are contaminated with mercury from our burning of coal. Our cities are covered with orange domes of smog from driving cars, even with catalytic converters and other anti-pollution measures, and that smog significantly harms us even at low levels.<sup>83</sup> Where I live, basically every day in the summer is an “ozone action day” and we are supposed to avoid doing anything that makes us breathe hard – sort of a blanket warning against fun. Our water is full of PFAS, the “forever chemicals”, largely because PFAS were used in firefighting foams that military and civilian airports spray around in practice exercises. You can choose to burn up in a plane crash or to drink poison. Our children are full of pesticides that are specifically designed to damage nerves and brains. They are also filled with a variety of chemicals that are estrogen emulators, chemicals that act like female hormones with a variety of bad effects that we know about and others that one might guess at. With stronger regulation, less controlled by the financiers, we can reduce these things. America allows many chemicals that are known to be bad and that are banned in Canada and Europe with no harm to their economies. Still, we will never be able to get rid of all of the bad things by regulation.

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83 <https://usrtk.org/healthwire/traffic-air-pollution-liver-damage/>

To understand that, it is helpful to consider how regulation of industrial chemicals works. Consider a chemical that has been determined to be harmful. Showing that it is harmful is a big step in itself, since we are exposed to literally thousands of poisons on a routine basis and it is difficult to sort out the effects of low levels of exposure to just one chemical. At that point, the government tells industry “this thing is bad, we don’t want your workers or society in general to be exposed to it, so if you use it tell us why, what you do to control exposure, and what it would take to completely eliminate exposure.” That sets off a long process with businesses claiming that it would be really expensive for them to stop using the chemical or to fully prevent exposures, or that they could do it but it would take 15 years to replace their equipment in the normal course to make it affordable to do it, etc. The regulators ultimately, perhaps after many years, propose a compromise restriction with some special exceptions for certain businesses, and workers and civilians are still exposed for a while or forever, but less so than they used to be. On very rare occasions, the chemical is totally banned, after some phase out.

Even if you switched to assuming that every chemical is harmful unless specifically proven not to be (a pretty good assumption), and even if you were much less sympathetic to the businesses, this type of process is not going to get you to the ideal answer. It will always be a balancing act where the businesses have motive to lie and where the regulators don’t have the ability to always know when they are being lied to. Further, there are many effects of human activity that neither the regulators nor the businesses understand, and in a system where businesses can do whatever they want unless it is prohibited, they don’t have much motive to figure out what those other harmful effects might be.

The same holds true in the other areas where businesses may harm us. Child safety rules are a good case in point. We want stuff designed to be safe for children. If we just ban what’s on the market because it’s imperfect, then we would be forced to use alternatives that are less safe. So, we use regulations intended to push manufacturers to make things that are as safe as they can make them while still being cheap enough for parents to afford. Some businesses try to go above and beyond and to gain the special trust of parents in the safety and quality of their goods, but others try to do the bare minimum required by the regulations and to compete on price or through lots of advertising. The regulatory tool, in itself, doesn’t get us to the ideal result. It is a blunt instrument.

If we really want the best results, the results that make industry work for our welfare, then we need regulation but we need much more than regulation. We need tools to get businesses to want to do the best they can to serve our welfare. Neoliberalism ignores those tools. Laborism focuses on them.

## **Corporate boards of directors**

Today, corporate boards of directors are basically an expensive joke. They are made up of current or former corporate CEOs and corporate consultants, who are nominated by corporate management or current boards, with shareholders getting a yes or no vote on their election. They understand their job to be seeking to maximize the return to shareholders of the company, period.



Sometimes if corporate management is caught seriously misbehaving the board will act to replace them, but that is very unusual. Sometimes they veto big things that management wants to do, but that is also unusual.

As discussed in the overview, limited-liability corporations are creatures created by the state. The shareholders are protected from personal liability for the actions of the corporation because the benefit that society gets from corporations is supposed to outweigh the harms they do to us. But we have forgotten that corporations exist only because we say they can, and that we say they can only because they are supposed to provide benefit for us, for all Americans, not just for their shareholders. If we focus on why corporations exist, we can see that it makes no sense for them to be run by people who are selected by management and approved by the shareholders, and who are told that their only concern in life is to increase shareholder profits. Regardless of what some financier-funded propagandists and for-hire academics tell you, that cannot possibly give us the best result as a nation.

Laborism would change this. Laborism would still allow up to half of the board members to be elected by the shareholders. Because the shareholders would no longer be able to earn unlimited profits, under laborism they would want to make sure that the corporation acts carefully, not recklessly. Reckless profit-maximizing behavior would not increase the money received by the shareholders. However, if the corporation fails because it does something stupid or does something evil and gets sued out of existence, the shareholders would lose their investment. Shareholders and the board members they elect could be expected to push for stable, honest, sustainable operations. They would act as a real check on the management employees, who would be motivated to boost corporate profits because the profits would go to the employees.

Laborism would require that a quarter of the board members be elected by the employees on a one-employee, one-vote basis. This would serve multiple purposes. First, just the process of electing those board members would help to change the way employees think about each other. We have been trained to think of labor and management as being two separate things. If you work on the factory floor or in a warehouse you are labor, but if you work in an office or cube you are management. That is a weird, artificial division. Traditionally, the top executives seek to exploit all of the employees, including those who work in offices. The labor-versus-management division is a device designed to limit solidarity with the employees who tend to belong to unions. If the cube dwellers join with the warehouse workers in electing a board member to represent all of their interests, it will help them to learn to think of all employees as being “us”. That would be a good thing in itself. The laborist emphasis on strengthening unions could build on this new sense of a broader “us” to resist management exploitation of *all* workers, strongly assisted by the employee representation on the board.

The employee representatives on the board would help to make sure that the top executives don’t take too much of the company profits for themselves. CEOs are not the wonderful creators of success that they think they are. As discussed in the overview, the best CEOs create great teams of employees who are willing and able to work with each other in a way that makes much of

management unnecessary. I have worked in environments where good employees worked with each other across departments doing great things for the company, and actively tried to keep the top executives from noticing so that they wouldn't screw it up. A board member elected by all of the employees would remind the top executives that value is created by every employee in the company, all working together, and that pay should be distributed in a way that reflects that fact.

The employee representatives would also be the advocates for allowing management to pursue new, higher-risk projects that would help the company to prosper. Because laborism would make the shareholders more conservative, this voice in favor of productive risk would be needed. The employee representative would not favor reckless risk, because it is the lower-down employees who generally suffer when a reckless risk blows up. They get laid off, while the executives do fine or, if they get fired, get big payouts. A representative elected by all the employees would favor good risks but would not favor stupid, greedy ones.

The employee representatives would also be a voice for the natural pride of any sort of team, the desire to behave in a way that allows them to feel good about themselves. One of the standard items that people consider in judging whether a company has a valuable brand is whether people would feel proud or embarrassed to work for that company. Back in the 1990s, I worked in an oil company where the CEO favored using company money to suppress any discussion of, or research on, whether burning carbon was changing the weather. That company had the largest reserves of natural gas in America, and in the 1990s the fastest thing you could do to reduce carbon emissions was to switch from coal or oil to natural gas. Still, he wanted to suppress true information just to please his evil colleagues in the American Petroleum Institute meetings, even if that hurt the company. That was embarrassing to me as an employee. As an employee, you want to be able to feel like you are working for a good organization that people will admire, not for an evil stain. I expect that most companies have lots of instances of the executives deciding to do or lobby for things that would make the other employees cringe. A representative of all of the employees would be sensitive to that desire to protect a justified sense of pride in your employer.

Laborism would require that another quarter of the board members be appointed by the state secretary of state from a slate of candidates approved by relevant public-interest organizations or regulators. Those candidates would be required to have enough business knowledge to be useful board members and business investigators and to understand what the other board members were talking about, but they would also have a public interest mindset. Depending on the company and the issues most relevant to that company, they might have a background in product safety or in environmental protection or consumer fraud or antitrust. They might have a background in more positive-effort areas, like helping small farmers if they worked for Tyson or another company in a position to help or hurt farmers. Most importantly, they would see their role not as maximizing profit, but as helping to make sure that the corporation served its state charter by being good for society. They would bring this point of view into any discussion.

Today, corporate executives spend a great deal of time and effort on trying to please Wall Street analysts and speculators. Under laborism, they would no longer feel a need to please that

audience, and instead could focus on satisfying the restructured board of directors. They would need to show the board that their policies were good for the employees, were stable and sustainable, and were good for society. They would need to show that their policies would make the company prosper over the long haul, the working lifetimes of the employees, and that anyone working for the company could be proud to be there. That would be quite a difference from today's world.

Laborist policy calls for one other mandatory change in corporate charters. The Supreme Court, in its wisdom, has held that corporations have First Amendment free speech rights, or more precisely that corporations are effectively assemblages of people who have Free Speech rights, and that restricting corporate speech (or corporate spending of money for speech) therefore violates free speech. But corporations, as creatures created by state charter, only have authority to do the things the state says they can do. The state does not need to allow people to form for-profit, limited-liability companies for purposes of making their speech louder than everyone else's. Laborism would require the charters of for-profit corporations to prohibit political campaigning, lobbying, or propaganda (aside from truthful advertising of the corporation's products) as authorized corporate purposes or functions. As such, corporations would not be authorized to engage in those activities or to fund them. This would not contradict the Supreme Court authority, since the shareholders would remain perfectly free to engage in such speech or spending, but just wouldn't be entitled to use the particularly potent form of a state-chartered, for-profit, limited-liability corporation to do it. Further, the restriction would be content-neutral in terms of the particular messages or positions, as opposed to the particular mechanism of the collective shareholders using a for-profit corporation to do their speaking. That is a perfectly reasonable restriction on manner of speech, since there is no reason to think that owning a share of a particular corporation implies endorsement of any of the types of political or propaganda messages that corporations engage in. Corporate speech today therefore involves corporate management taking money that would otherwise go to a shareholder and using it to spread propaganda that the shareholder may vigorously disagree with. Corporations would remain entitled to truthfully answer questions regarding their products and activities and how particular legislative proposals might affect their activities.

## **Promoting real free market competition and consumer choice**

We discover that the fortunes realized by our manufacturers are no longer solely the reward of sturdy industry and enlightened foresight, but that they result from the discriminating favor of the Government and are largely built upon undue exactions from the masses of our people. The gulf between employers and the employed is constantly widening, and classes are rapidly forming, one comprising the very rich and powerful, while in another are found the toiling poor. ...

Corporations, which should be the carefully restrained creatures of the law and the servants of the people, are fast becoming the people's masters. - **Grover Cleveland**

Indeed, it is doubtful if free government can long exist in a country where such enormous amounts of money are allowed to be accumulated in the vaults of corporations, to be used at discretion in controlling the property and business of the country against the interests of the public and that of the people for the personal gain and aggrandizement of a few individuals. It is always destructive of individual rights and of that free competition which is the life of business, and it revives and perpetuates one of the great evils which it was the object of the framers of our form of government to eradicate and prevent. It is alike destructive to both individual enterprise and individual prosperity – **Republican Senator John Sherman of Ohio, 1890**

Consumer choices, our power to buy from one company and not others, should rightly work as a powerful control on corporate behavior. But that requires an efficient market with lots of meaningful choices, and we don't have that today. We don't have a successful market because neither wing of the Uniparty wants one. Financiers want corporations to grow into monopolies or oligopolies (where a handful of companies control a market and are able to coordinate their behavior), because that enables them to extract more money from us and feed it to the financiers. Since the financiers own both wings of the Uniparty, neither the Democrats nor the Republicans make a serious effort to promote effective markets with many competitors and lots of choice. In America, instead of ordering "coffee, regular, please",<sup>84</sup> you can order "skinny double shot Kenyan dark roast latte with two pumps of hazelnut", but the chances are you can no longer choose between a national chain coffee shop and the real, home-grown coffee house you used to have.<sup>85</sup> You can choose between two computer operating systems or the non-profit rebel Linux, you can choose between Apple or Alphabet for your phone software, you can choose between Home Depot and Lowe's and maybe one other for your lumber and such, and if you live in a smallish town you can choose between Walmart or Walmart<sup>86</sup> for everything.

Laborism seeks to give Americans back a real power of choice. This involves several pieces. First, the antitrust laws would be vigorously applied to prevent business combinations that reduce competition. Recent policy under both wings of the Uniparty defined "anti-competitive" as meaning only "tending to increase prices in the short run." When Walmart destroys all the local, privately-run stores in a town, that is considered not to be anti-competitive because Walmart will (at least initially) sell similar items for lower prices, although often those will be versions made in

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84 This is how one ordered in New Hampshire in the early 1980s, when coffee was served in places like the Honeybee Cafe.

85 When I lived in Wheaton we had an authentic coffeeshouse in the beatnik style, with tables and atmosphere and alternative newspapers. My wife and I stopped in one day and ordered coffees made up a certain way, which were quite good, and then a month later we stopped in again and the wonderful woman who owned it remembered our orders from our single prior visit, despite having lots of customers. Then Starbucks came to town and put her out of business. That remarkable woman's independent middle-class lifestyle was replaced by minimum-wage thralls of a union-busting corporation.

86 For more information on the effects of Walmart, watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXmnBbUjsPs&t=5214s> or read [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e0fdcef27e0945c43fab131/t/658e09c4c7f8563efb2a60fe/1703807458668/JustinCWiltshire\\_JMP.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e0fdcef27e0945c43fab131/t/658e09c4c7f8563efb2a60fe/1703807458668/JustinCWiltshire_JMP.pdf) and <https://www.iza.org/publications/dp/17323/imprint>.

China to inferior specifications dictated by Walmart.<sup>87</sup> Laborist policy would instead let the word “competition” have its normal meaning. If you had 6 competitors in the market before your acquisition but now you have 5, it is anti-competitive. Companies seeking permission for an acquisition would have to show that they were not reducing competition. Many acquisitions are legitimate. Start-up companies are often just designed to do R&D and figure out how to manufacture a product, but not to bring it to market or scale up or do the other difficult things that corporations do. A corporation with a full set of functions in the US and internationally may acquire such a company and bring its product to market quickly, increasing consumer choice. In other cases a competitor may be about to go bankrupt due to the incompetence of its management (as opposed to from pressure from the would-be acquirer), so that buying it out is not really eliminating a competitor. But companies would have to provide good proof of that.

We have seen the rise of Meta/Facebook and how it bought a variety of potential social-media competitors, until the Chinese managed to resist them with TikTok. Then TikTok was banned.<sup>88</sup> We have seen how pharma companies buy start-ups working on cures for chronic diseases, and then find<sup>89</sup> that they can’t financially benefit from continuing to fund that research because the cure would make their profitable chronic-treatment drugs obsolete, so the research dies. We see company after company getting larger by buying out competitors, and the government does not become interested until there are only 3 “competitors” left in the market, a small enough group so that they know that if they cut prices the other 2 will match them, so they don’t cut.<sup>90</sup> A laborist government would change these games. If two giant grocery chains want to combine based on the stated reason that they need to in order to compete with Walmart and Amazon, they would have to prove to the government that otherwise they would inevitably die. Further, instead of giving approval to such a facially anticompetitive move, the first response of the government would be to launch an inquiry into why even giant chains can’t compete with ultragiant Walmart and Amazon, and look to fix that situation by taking action against the ultragiants.

Second, a laborist government would actively go after all the anti-competitive tricks that companies do besides acquisitions. An important one of these is bundling, the practice of using your market power in one area to gain advantage or take over in another area by tying the two

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87 For example, an employee of Weber told me the story of how Walmart got Weber to enter into a big contract to sell grills through Walmart, but only if the grills were cheaper made-for-Walmart rustbucket versions that didn’t meet Weber’s previous high standards. That greatly damaged the Weber brand when customers bought grills thinking they were the same as the American-made versions available in other stores, and had them quickly rust out into trash.

88 It is reasonable to worry about China-source software being on American computers and phones, but one suspects that the real reason for going after TikTok’s Chinese ownership was that the Chinese would not play ball with US government censors and propagandists or with US oligopolist corporations.

89 I can testify that the company may be acting in good faith when it buys the R&D program, and truly believe that they just want to be in a position to benefit from the target new product when it makes their existing chronic-treatment drugs obsolete. But that sincere belief is unreasonable, because it is clear that the first time they run economics on the benefit of giving more funding to the research, they will see that it wouldn’t be net profitable. They are too conflicted.

90 The basic theory of price competition is that you will match a competitor’s price cut unless the amount of business you would lose to that competitor is small relative to the amount of profit you lose by cutting your price. The government generally does not care about big companies buying out small ones, but those small companies are precisely the ones who will cut prices to get business, knowing that it is not worthwhile for the big ones to cut prices to match them.

together. It is fundamentally illegal under the Clayton Act, and tech companies get an occasional brushback by the government for doing it too blatantly, but we see lots of it all the time.

We have seen the rise of Microsoft. They managed to get an exclusive contract to supply an operating system to IBM, which other computer manufacturers imitating the then-market-leader IBM also adopted. Because businesses used those computers, Microsoft got in the door with businesses across America. Before and after copying Apple's operating system design with Windows, Microsoft used the power of that access to destroy superior products one by one. Anyone who used Lotus 123 or WordPerfect knows that the Microsoft imitations were awkward, clunky, bloated and inferior. My wife used Lotus 123 on floppy disks that actually flopped, with a tiny 250 kilobytes of capacity, to do a download from the accounting software of a corporate group with international activity and spit out completed, high-quality federal tax returns printed on the government forms. The Excel on my computer uses 97,000 kilobytes of RAM just sitting there with a blank spreadsheet, is harder to use, and tends to get glitchy. It took me only two days using WordPerfect on 720 kilobyte floppies on an IBM PS/2 with 640 kilobytes of RAM<sup>91</sup> to create a tool that gave the user a screen that asked a series of questions, and then generated a full 20-page package of fully-tailored discovery documents for any one of several types of litigation that I commonly did.<sup>92</sup> The Word program on my computer uses 99,500 kilobytes of RAM just to show me a blank piece of paper, and I would much rather use my old WordPerfect. Nonetheless, Microsoft was able to destroy Lotus and chase WordPerfect into a niche serving law firms, just using the power of bundling its operating system with the other business software. The government responded to this by telling them that they had to debundle their internet browser, but otherwise Microsoft succeeded.

We have seen how Alphabet/Google used the power of a leading search engine to conquer the universe and obtain everyone's data. We have seen how Amazon bundled delivery discounts with other services to move in on music, video, and grocery stores, among other things. Our economy is filled with this sort of behavior. Laborism would enforce the antitrust laws in a manner designed to stop it, helping smaller businesses with better products to succeed against the choice-destroying giants.

Further, in any case where a company tried to use bundling, a laborist government would launch an inquiry into why that company had so much market power in one area to begin with. My one-time boss Professor Areeda, the antitrust guru, believed that bundling usually shouldn't be a problem, because a company with limited market power from a strong product would just hurt its

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91 The computer I am typing on now has 50,000 times as much working memory.

92 Less productively, in one 30-minute lunch hour I programmed a WordPerfect macro that, when installed on my secretary's machine (secretaries existed then), waited for her to hit a particular key, then protected her document, showed a black screen with a pirate flag and the statement "Avast, matey, your computer has been taken over by pirates. Answer me these questions 3 ere your document you'll see", then asked "What is your name?", "What is your quest?", and then "What is your favorite color?", and when she typed an answer to that last question said "WRONG!", showed an explosion, went black, and then restored her document right where it had been. It was super easy to use even for things that the software company did not have in mind. Try doing that in 30 minutes using Word today.

profits from that product if it tried to bundle it with something else.<sup>93</sup> For bundling really to succeed as a strategy, the market has to have failed in regard to the strong product, giving the company a level of power it shouldn't have.

Laborism would go beyond that and generally seek to debundle things and create freely accessible platforms to maximize consumer choices. Video streaming should operate on a system where you could watch everything out there on a pay-by-the-hour system, with streaming services competing to make it easy for you to find and watch things you like. You should not need to subscribe to 15 different services or to have businesses centered around trying to help you keep track of, and cancel, your subscriptions.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology, a little bureau that nobody ever hears about, should be a big deal. In web technology, commonly the American and global markets need a backbone of standardized things. If someone wants their app to be able to reach the full market, they need to have one or two operating systems on computers and phones so that they don't have to make and maintain 15 different versions of the program. If someone wants to have a website, they need it to work reliably and securely on any internet browser that people want to use. If someone wants to sell in the market, they need to have a system that can handle customer information and process credit cards securely. In the Tech era, companies gain huge power by being the first mover in an area, because the web needs those basic, near-universal standards, and that creates monopolies or oligopolies. So far, the American government has been happy to let private companies get that power. But that isn't necessary. Instead, the government can simply set standards, with heavy input from industry and consumers, to allow the market to work in a way that favors new and small businesses and that increases competition. We wouldn't have to worry that the NIST wouldn't be as creative as private enterprise, because private enterprises operating under those standards would have full incentive to suggest useful improvements as they think of them, and if other companies agreed they would be added.

Think about that one a bit. If you are not one of the people who just likes to throw away your computer and phone every year and get a new one, then you have probably experienced the annoying situation that something that your machine did perfectly well last week no longer works. The private companies do updates to add new features that they want, they frequently screw up the programming so that it gets glitchy, and you suffer through their process of debugging it. Eventually they say that your version of the operating system or browser is no longer supported, and applications that did all the things you wanted before stop working entirely until you buy a new product. The companies do that because it lets them get more of your money. A laborist NIST setting standards wouldn't work that way. It would favor change management that allowed your existing products to keep working rather than forcing you to throw them away and buy new things.

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<sup>93</sup> You may question this based upon the 50 commercials a day you see promoting bundling home and auto insurance, which probably does harm companies that just sell one or the other, but that sort of thing is not a substantial problem.

This kind of debundling would give us a much wider range of choices. It would give businesses more choices, too. For example, Epic Games sued Apple in this country and in Europe because Apple required iPhone apps to be sold through its app store, which gave Apple power over app writers. They lost here but won in Europe. In Europe, alternative app stores on the iPhone then started selling porn apps. That makes Apple very unhappy, because they have tried to keep their phones family-friendly and non-sleazy, and it hurts the reputation of their product to have sleazy stuff being sold for the iPhone. The problem here, though, is that since for smart phones one can only choose between an Apple system or an Alphabet system, letting Apple control what can be put on their phones provides Apple with a huge amount of market power. If, instead, we had an operating system standard set by the NIST that any would-be smart-phone producer could use without giving either Apple or Alphabet power over them, we would have enough successful competing products in the market so that we could fully respect the choices of the different manufacturers. If Apple wanted a sleazegate controlling what went on their products and somebody else wanted to market the sleazephone, that would be fine.<sup>94</sup> Having enough viable choices allows everyone to have more freedom.

Another monopolistic trick of the Tech era is data. If you have more data, then you can produce products that allow users to better understand the market. But if your data product becomes the one that everyone uses because it has the most data (and so stretches its advantage even further because now everyone is using it and you get the data of all the users), then your advice can become problematic by virtue of the fact that you have such a dominant position. This kind of problem can be unintentional or intentional.

In principle, a dominant player could do a great job managing complexity. When a freeway shuts down, then in theory Google Maps could do an optimization exercise and send cars down a number of different routes to do the best overall job of clearing the traffic. In practice, that's unlikely because companies don't want to be accused of advantaging some by giving them shorter routes and disadvantaging others. Have you noticed that Google Maps now gives self-defeating advice? I was on a cross-country trip recently and we ran into an accident shutting down a major interstate, and so drivers were using Google Maps to find alternate routes. But Maps gave everyone the same advice, so everyone tried to go down the same little roads instead of using different alternatives. Maps would then change its advice about every 2 minutes, telling you to go one way and then changing its mind, but any way it told you to go was a problem because it told everybody the same thing. We got out our old road atlas and navigated ourselves, which allowed us to get out of the madness and make real progress. The situation where having a dominant player could in principle be a good thing doesn't usually work that well in the real world.

In other situations this herd movement phenomenon can turn what may seem like a good thing into a problem. Take the example of investment advice (in the current world, not the post-speculative world of laborism.) A company with lots of data can give particularly well-informed

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<sup>94</sup> Laborism would, however, make a much stronger effort to eliminate human trafficking than either wing of the Uniparty makes today. The lack of interest of the government in dealing with that horrendous problem makes one wonder why they seem determined to allow it to prosper.



advice on which stocks to buy based on data as to what prices people have bid under particular circumstances, but once they get to a certain level of dominance then prices will be driven by what they say, not by the underlying facts. If the company tells all their clients “buy Z”, that will spike the price of Z and distort the market, making the Z stock a poor investment for the buyers who come in late and artificially good for the investors who buy on the front end of the price spike and sell out near the top. Investors would start to game that system to try to get their order in a millisecond faster than the next person at the front end of the price spike. If the company tried to avoid that by just publishing what they thought was the right price for every stock, then prices would effectively be capped by the company, not by the market or by the true underlying facts, because nobody would want to “overpay” relative to the price the company published. This would effectively replace the market with the adviser’s directives, and over time the adviser’s directives would be driven largely by its own prior directives (because all the new data on consumer behavior would be based on consumers following its directives), not by the collective wisdom of a market. If the stock market actually served a socially beneficial purpose (which it doesn’t), that would be a problem.

That kind of thing, the destruction of a competitive market by data dominance, becomes downright evil in other areas. American renters have been suffering from the fact that a data company has been selling a program that gives landlords information on the rents that other landlords are charging. This is described as being just a helpful tool to allow landlords to understand the market and whether the rent increase they are thinking about would be too high, but in practice it has been used to drive up rents. Anyone charging less than the other landlords in the area is advised that they should be charging more, and so the average keeps increasing and renters don’t have enough other choices to allow them to rebel against the rent increases. If that kind of power is placed in the hands of consumers so that they know they should be getting a better price than what a particular salesman is offering, that is a good thing. But when that power is in the hands of the sellers, so that they can all raise prices and know that the others will stay in step, then that is a bad thing.

This area is difficult, because the same basic information can either help or hurt consumers. A laborist government would at least recognize the problem, and would do several things to help. First, systems visible to sellers but not to buyers would be banned. If both sides have the same information, then consumers can reward any seller who breaks ranks and offers a lower price. Increasing the number of sellers makes it more likely that one will choose to compete on price and undercut the others, and laborism would increase the number of sellers. Laborism would also encourage competition based on things other than just price. By increasing transparency about quality, consumers wouldn’t all be drawn to the cheapest junk in the market, but instead could choose to go with better products. If the sellers then used a data system to coordinate on prices, the sellers with the not-so-good products would get crushed, so they would be motivated to break from the scheme.

That brings us to another current area of market failure, the Amazon phenomenon. In the early days of the web, lots of people tried to set up websites that were devoted to curating products. In other words, they did the work to see what products were in the market, study and test them, and recommend and sell the good ones. In those naive days, that was how we thought the web should and would work. That business model got undermined by paid “influencers” and by the rise of Amazon. Amazon does not curate things. More than half the products they sell come from China, and they don’t come with any assurance of quality. Anyone who has purchased supposed brand-name goods on Amazon will have run into cases where what they get is an inferior knock-off. Amazon relies on its review feature to inform consumers that what they buy from a particular seller is likely to make them unhappy, but there is a whole industry out there that is devoted to distorting reviews for a fee. If you are willing to spend a lot of time you can more-or-less sort through the noise in the reviews, but we shouldn’t have to spend our limited free time that way.<sup>95</sup>

Why is Amazon an e-commerce superpower when they don’t do the curation function that we have always relied on stores to do for us? That magic comes on the shipping end. It is quite expensive for small businesses to send things to you. You have likely run into cases where you are buying from some small merchant and then, when the postage is added in your cart, find that the postage is as much as or more than the price of the products. Amazon bundles products together in a package and gets an edge on shipping costs both by using its high-volume in-house delivery fleet and by getting special volume-based deals from major delivery services and the US Postal Service. We know that shipping costs are a huge factor limiting the success of small businesses that would like to sell to a large base of potential customers. When the web first became a thing, we thought that between good curating websites and the ability of small businesses to sell to a national audience we would make it easy for the good stuff to get to everyone. That is not how it played out, and in large part shipping costs are the problem. A laborist government would invest to create a cheap, efficient, and green system of shipping products that would enable small merchants to get their products to customers without maintaining a for-profit parasitic organization that takes a big slice from each transaction and that crushes would-be rivals who perform a real curation function.

Laborism will also reduce the problems of tech company size by requiring truth in labeling on search engines and review sites. We have seen the properly labeled ads that are shown at the top of the search results on search engines. Currently, search engines can also put companies that pay them fees at the top of the results without disclosing that they have been paid to do so. Likewise review sites like Yelp can promote or give special privileges to businesses that pay them fees without disclosing that to users. If a site wants to post things properly labeled as ads on their sites, that’s fine. Then users know why those results are there and what they mean, and if the company puts too many ads above the regular results users can choose to use an alternative service that doesn’t make them scroll down as much. When a company promotes a result for a secret fee, that

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95 The book *The Paradox of Choice* by Barry Schwartz does an excellent job of explaining how the choices we have as consumers actually make our lives worse, mainly by causing us to waste our lives deciding what to get. Recall that Wordsworth’s poem warns that we waste our lives both earning *and* spending.

is different. That is particularly bad because it also results in the demotion of a good small business that can't afford to pay all those parasitic fees, so would-be customers never see them. The web should make it as easy as possible for good businesses to be found. Therefore, a laborist government will ban skewing search results or review results in exchange for fees.<sup>96</sup>

Finally, laborist policy will promote useful consumer choice by promoting useful labeling and seriously enforcing against deceptive advertising.

Labeling and certifications will be permitted and encouraged to tell consumers things they might want to know, and would be supplemented with web-based information that would be easy to find and use. For example, country-of origin labeling will be not only allowed but encouraged, it will be subject to reasonably strict standards as to what "made in America" means in terms of total US content, and it will be supplemented by web information giving further detail on where the pieces of the product come from. As another example, those who want to get eggs laid by happy hens instead of unhealthy salmonella bombs have seen all the terms used for eggs – cage free, organic, free range, pasture raised, etc. The eggs may have certification stickers from various organizations, some sincere and some industry fronts. Laborism will seek to simplify these and to have easy-to-access web information regarding what they mean, with real enforcement of the stated standards. If something is on a label, there will be easy-to-find information indicating why you might want to know about that thing. Government inspection reports would be posted on-line in an easy to read form that is easy to find. Then you could put pressure on companies through your choices on what to buy. Organizations like the Environmental Working Group, which seeks to let consumers know what bad stuff may be in their products and which products don't have that stuff, will be consulted to find ways to make it as easy as possible for consumers to look out for themselves and their families without spending all their free time trying to do their own research.

Laborist policy will seek to shed sunlight into other areas where consumers are currently in the dark. Medical things are one big example. There is no reason why you shouldn't know in advance how much a treatment is going to cost<sup>97</sup>, or at least a range of costs depending on what the doctor encounters. You should know if an alternative is cheaper, and if so why the doctor recommends the more expensive one. Doctors shouldn't be allowed to have any financial interests that interfere with their motive to give you the best treatment at the lowest cost, but if for any reason it isn't possible to ban all such conflicts, they should at least be clearly disclosed. There should be clear, easy-to-find information on whether a hospital or doctor reliably follows best practices, malpractice information should be easy to find and lawsuits, even if settled, should exclude patient identities but otherwise not be sealed. The NIST should set standards of care and treatment, and while doctors should be able to agree with their patients to do something else, in that case the doctors should be required to get a signed informed agreement by the patient or their family.

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96 Having the government just put out its own unbiased, non-profit search engine could be a problem. Even a laborist government is, at the end of the day, the government, and having it in the role of being able to control the information you see is frightening. Having a government-sponsored review site would be less of a problem.

97 This is true even in a universal single-payer insurance system. Even if the government pays, you should know if your choice makes a huge difference in cost.

Doctors and hospitals kill many more Americans than wars, criminals, or car wrecks. It is crazy to have so little ability to get information to protect yourself.

These laborist reforms should be viewed as a package of things needed to put our society back on track. As President Cleveland warned in his State of the Union address, corporations have gone from being the intended servants of society to being our masters. The financier culture of profit growth at all costs has so infected our economy and our minds that it will take a lot to purge it even after smashing the tyranny of compound interest. But, once we have solved the primary problem of financiers demanding ever-growing ways to get more money for having money, then we can take these other steps to heal our economy and society. If we change the way that corporations are governed, have good regulation and good financial incentives for reducing harm, restore and encourage real competition with many meaningful choices, and give consumers access to useful information, then we will put the structures and incentives in place to drive businesses to serve our needs and to avoid harming us. That world will be as different from our current one as a sunny day differs from a drizzly night.

## Putting the tax burden on things we don't want to encourage

"A wise and frugal government... shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned." – **Thomas Jefferson**

"Any tax is a discouragement and therefore a regulation so far as it goes." – **Oliver Wendell Holmes**

"If anything, taxes for the lower and middle class and maybe even the upper middle class should even probably be cut further. But I think that people at the high end — people like myself — should be paying a lot more in taxes. We have it better than we've ever had it." – **Warren Buffett**

"Armies, and debts, and taxes are the known instruments for bringing the many under the domination of the few." – **James Madison**

"The tax which will be paid for the purpose of education is not more than the thousandth part of what will be paid to kings, priests, and nobles who will rise up among us if we leave the people in ignorance." – **Thomas Jefferson**

Laborist tax reform has two distinct aims. 1) It seeks to change what we tax from the current focus on labor and homes/farms to a focus on things we want to discourage, without increasing the total level of tax or the burden on regular working people. It will continue to tax at a level needed to fund the things that make our society function and thrive, but do it in a better way. 2) It seeks to eliminate our federal deficit and gradually repay our federal debts by gradually returning the \$22 trillion in assets held by the financier class to society. We allowed the financier class to suck wealth out of the economy for too long, and it is fair to undo that damage over time. If the top 0.1% had the same average level of assets held by the top 90%-99% of the population, they would have a little over \$21 trillion less than they have now. Laborist reform would not seek to seize that excess money, but would limit the ability of the wealthy to pass it on to their trust-fund children and grandchildren. They could give their children and grandchildren very comfortable lives, but not dangerous levels of wealth.

## Don't tax the things you want to encourage

The first principle of taxation is that you should avoid taxing things that you want to encourage. Two primary things that Americans wish to encourage are productive work and secure ownership of homes and family farms. Yet federal and state taxes are heavily weighted towards taxing income from labor, and local taxes are heavily weighted towards property taxes, and property tax assessments tend to treat McMansions more favorably than middle-class homes. Income from capital is lightly taxed, and we don't do much to tax things that we would like to discourage. A

smart society will be willing to impose taxes to provide the services and infrastructure that make society and industry work well. But a smart society would tax differently than we do now.

Today, the federal government gets most of its money from three things. First, it imposes tax at the rate of 15.3% on wage income and small business income up to about \$170,000. Half of that is imposed directly on the employee and half of it is hidden by imposing it on the employer paying the wages. (Self-employed people pay both sides.) Really the burden of that employer portion falls on the employees in the form of lower pay than they would otherwise receive, unless they are just receiving the statutory minimum wage. Financiers don't pay these taxes. Parasitic income is only subject to a 3.8% tax on income over \$250,000. There is a loophole to avoid even that 3.8% tax, and in 2022 the financier class routed \$467 billion through that loophole, which was more than the bottom 99% of the population combined. In 2023, about \$1.6 trillion came from these wage taxes, so \$1.6 trillion is coming from working people mostly making less than \$170,000 a year.

Second, it imposes personal income taxes at graduated rates on both wage/small business income and on passive and parasitic income. This part is something of a leveler, but less so than it seems. The financier class in the top 0.1% received 11.4% of total adjusted gross income in 2022 but paid just under 20.6% of the tax (so about \$0.44 trillion), and had a 26.2% tax rate. However, that figure is grossly misleading. Most of the increase in wealth of the financiers doesn't show up in their adjusted gross income – it is unrealized gains that are never taxed. Tax-return income only amounts to 60% of the economic income of the top 1%, and only 17% of the income of the top 0.01% of households. So, the financier class really pays income tax at an effective rate of 10% or less, substantially lower than the 15.3% wage tax on regular working people.

The top 10% excluding the top 0.1% received 38% of total adjusted gross income and paid 51.4% of total income tax in 2022. The bottom 50% received 11% of AGI and paid 3% of the income tax. This is where the income tax really works as a leveler, hitting upper-income wage earners much more than wage earners in the lower 50%. Wage income and small business income are subject to tax rates ranging up to 37%. Parasitic capital gain and dividend income is taxed at rates that max out at 20%. Altogether, personal income taxes in 2023 amounted to \$2.2 trillion, coming mainly from households earning more than \$90,000 who are not financiers. That group pays income tax at an average rate of 15.9%, so those earning \$90,000 but not over \$170,000 (basically the fifth of Americans between the top 30th percentile and the top 10<sup>th</sup> percentile) are paying about 31.2% in wage and income taxes. Non-financiers in the top 10% pay about 27% on average.

Third, the federal government taxes corporate income. In 2023, this amounted to \$0.4 trillion. The corporate income tax is kind of a stupid tax in concept, but it is necessary in our current system. Corporations are not people, and the burden of corporate tax falls on a combination of employees and shareholders. (The math on that is complicated – when US corporate tax rates persuade corporations to move operations abroad, that reduces the market power and wages of American workers by an amount that can be a multiple of the tax involved, which saves shareholders money by reducing corporate wage costs.) Ideally, we would instead have the corporations pay out their profits as earned and tax them at the shareholder level at progressive rates. For years I pushed a

proposal, Shared Economic Growth<sup>98</sup>, that would have done that in a simple way, and in 2017 I actually got the Senate Finance Committee to put a placeholder for that proposal in the tax bill, but the politics of the early Trump 1 days got in the way and it died forever. Without Shared Economic Growth, corporations pile up earnings that need to be taxed somewhere, so we are stuck with a dumb tax that hits the dividend income going into your supposedly tax-deferred IRA as hard as it hits the dividend income going to Warren Buffet. A huge amount of political theater has centered around corporate taxation, all of which was designed to distract people from actually doing something useful about the concentration of income and wealth in the hands of parasitic financiers.

In 2023, all other federal taxes (tariffs, gasoline taxes, airport taxes, excise taxes, estate and gift tax) added up to only \$0.2 trillion.

At the state and local levels, there is again a lot of income and wage tax and corporate income tax. In 2023 these amounted to about \$800 billion of income taxes and \$140 billion of specific wage taxes. There was also \$750 billion of property taxes, largely on homes and farms. States collected \$830 billion in sales taxes. Sales taxes are basically neutral – as a policy matter it doesn't matter much if we put a tax burden on consumption, since we will buy things anyway and it would actually be good if we consumed less junk. We just need to make sure that sales taxes don't burden the poor too badly. States and localities also collected about \$750 billion in user fees of one sort or another, which are a sensible form of tax. Again, we just need to make sure that they don't burden the poor too badly.<sup>99</sup>

From the above overview, we can see that we have some \$1.6 trillion of federal wage taxes that are unfortunate. We also have about \$470 billion of federal income taxes on wage income of people in the lower 90% of the population (those with 2023 AGI of \$179,000 or less), and maybe \$400 billion of real estate taxes on the bottom 90%.

So, we could impose up to something like \$2.5 trillion of new taxes on things that we would like to discourage, and use the proceeds to reduce these unfortunate taxes (plus raise social security payments and other fixed-income sorts of payments for working-type people who don't pay wage taxes) to improve the effects of our tax system without hurting working people.

There are a lot of things that it would make sense to discourage. Here are a few suggestions.

#### **A) Unnecessary imports.**

We are currently running a trade deficit of some \$75 billion a month, importing that much more in goods and services than we export<sup>100</sup>. We have been running that kind of a deficit for decades. That

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98 This is explained in my article in the Pace Law Review, *It's Not That Difficult: The Shared Economic Growth Solution to Tax Reform*, at <https://digitalcommons.pace.edu/plr/vol35/iss3/4/>.

99 Note that working people pay more in sales taxes and more in user fees than the financiers pay in income taxes.

100 The words "import" and "export" here are a bit loose. In the trade deficit figures, money spent by foreign tourists visiting the US are counted as an export of services, for example.

is bad. We shouldn't buy so much foreign stuff. One way to discourage that is through tariffs (a tax on the value of goods, imposed when they are imported) on imported goods and services. While the Trump administration has been imposing tariffs in an incorrect way, tariffs are a good instrument if we use and implement them properly.

The Trump administration has been comparing tariffs with the Value Added Taxes (VAT) imposed by most other countries. European VAT rates are typically between 19% and 25%.<sup>101</sup> A VAT is like a complicated sales tax. When a UK company buys a product from a US manufacturer for \$100 and sells it, or a product containing it, to a UK customer, that UK customer will pay \$21 worth of VAT with regard to that US product (disregarding any mark-up by the UK reseller). If a US company bought a product from a UK manufacturer for \$100 and sold it, or a product containing it, to a US customer, and if the US imposed a 21% tariff, then that US customer will likely pay an extra \$21 for the product due to the tariff. In that respect, the VAT and the tariff are alike. However, the Europeans will argue that the two are not at all the same because the UK VAT is charged whether the \$100 product is imported from the US or is manufactured in the UK, while the tariff applies only if the product is imported. That is true. On the other hand, when a UK manufacturer sells a product to the US no VAT is charged (so it can charge the customer \$100 rather than \$121), while if it sells it in the UK it must charge the VAT. That amounts to an export subsidy. A \$21 US tariff will make a UK manufacturer indifferent between selling its product to a UK customer or to a US customer. So, both the Trump Administration and the Europeans have valid points, but from a laborist point of view it makes the most sense to say that if the tariff doesn't hurt the foreign product relative to what it sells for in its own market, then that's fair. The tariff isn't hurting foreign innovators. Since we have state sales taxes that are generally in the 6% to 8% range, we could impose tariffs at something like a 15% rate and still be good international citizens. It would make sense to impose a base tariff in that amount, potentially varying by country of source if we can easily keep people from gaming the rate differences. That would yield about \$500 billion a year from imports of goods.

Note that laborism doesn't buy into the globalist "free trade" theories to begin with. We believe in markets, so we want quality innovators around the world to have a fair chance to succeed and we think that is part of being a good international citizen. But that is different from globalist theory. The Wall Street pundits object that tariffs interfere with free-trade globalism. The economists who parrot trite, unproven theories in favor of the globalist agenda say that tariff-free trade is great for everybody because it allows the theory of "natural advantage" to operate. That tired notion was the idea that a given country may have resources that make it a particularly efficient producer of a thing, and we should allow the low prices flowing from that cost advantage to flow through to global consumers. So, for example, if Chile has copper reserves, then Chile should produce finished copper goods so that we don't have to ship heavy ore around, and everyone would benefit. In practice, of course, Chile does not produce the finished copper goods. When a country like China tries to take advantage of its reserves of rare-earth minerals to manufacture batteries and

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<sup>101</sup> It is 16% in Mexico. Canada's system is more complicated.



computer chips, it makes the US very angry. The only “natural advantages” anybody really believes in are low-wage workers and tolerance for toxic emissions. That brings us to our next type of tariff.

## **B) Virtue tariffs.**

The discussion above relates to tariffs imposed just to discourage imports. A different kind of tariff seeks to protect American manufacturers from the effects of US regulations or discouragement taxes that increase the cost of US-produced goods. The different types of regulations that might do that in an easily measurable way are discussed below. A virtue tariff is a tariff imposed on a product imported from a country that does not impose an equivalent regulation or tax. This has most commonly been discussed in regard to carbon taxes. Those are also discussed below. If a country imposes a carbon tax that affects its domestic manufacturers, then it is wise to also impose a virtue tariff on imported products that more-or-less equals the price difference you would expect if the foreign manufacturer had been subject to the same carbon tax. Then everybody selling in the US is playing on a level field. If the foreign country of manufacture is virtuous enough to have imposed its own equivalent carbon tax, then we would exempt products from that country from the virtue tariff. Such exemptions can also be given on an individual company basis if that company voluntarily meets the US standards.

Similar rules would apply to the various excise taxes discussed below. If we impose a tax on our own manufacturers, then it makes sense to impose an equivalent tariff on goods from countries that don't subject their manufacturers to an equivalent tax or regulation.

Virtue tariffs can also be imposed based on things like foreign wage rates. Buying cheap products from a country where the manufacturers pay their workers starvation wages<sup>102</sup> makes us complicit in the evil things those companies are doing. The only “natural advantage” that the global financiers have really focused on is cheap labor, being happy to move production to wherever cheap labor can be found, undercutting the market power of American workers. That is a “natural advantage” that we should specifically discourage with tariffs. If the US puts a labor-based tariff on imports that is designed to be equal to the cost of the labor to produce them computed at \$25 an hour, but exempts a company from the tariff if its workers are in fact paid at least \$15<sup>103</sup> an hour, then a corporation operating in a third-world country will have incentive to pay its workers \$15 an hour rather than 50 cents. Either way, US workers will be reasonably protected from competition (after considering shipping costs) and can successfully demand higher wages, and the

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102 Financier propagandists will argue that the foreign workers would rather work for starvation wages than not have the jobs at all. That same kind of argument was made for child labor and other evil practices. Powerful financiers can effectively enslave workers, either by literally snatching them or by destroying their other options and ruthlessly suppressing any attempts to strike for better conditions. It makes sense for Americans to say “If we are going to buy from you, then you need to have decent working conditions and pay a wage that is a decent living wage in your country.” Even evil US oil companies setting up operations in a third world country will generally pay well above the local norm just because it would feel creepy not to.

103 The \$15 in this example is, of course, higher than the current US minimum wage. The US minimum wage in 1968 was equivalent to \$14.82 per hour after adjusting for inflation. We should restore the federal minimum wage back to real 1968 levels and then use that as a standard for judging wages on foreign imports.

carbon cost of shipping things around will be reduced. That is good for everyone. Meanwhile, if the third world country wants to pay its workers 50 cents an hour for producing things for its domestic market, it can do so, but that domestic market will be a lot more successful due to the money from the export workers being paid \$15 so that they can buy the domestic products. Then the export workers won't feel a need to emigrate to the US to earn a decent living. Everybody wins from the virtue tariff, while everybody loses from race-to-the-bottom globalization.

Virtue tariffs can also be used to prevent us from rewarding foreign actors (which may be subsidiaries of US companies) when they do things like leveling the rainforest. We shouldn't go too crazy with virtue tariffs for everything,<sup>104</sup> but it is in our own interest to impose them based on certain basic values where we don't want our manufacturers to be punished for doing the right thing.

This is different from the neoliberal/neocon hegemonic<sup>105</sup> "sanctions" discussed below that are just punishing poor foreigners for having governments that don't do what our government wants them to do. It is just avoiding having us pay foreign financiers to do things that we think are too evil to do ourselves.

America imports about \$510 billion a year from Mexico, \$463 billion from China, \$142 billion from Vietnam, \$91 billion from India, \$54 billion from Malaysia, \$44 billion from Brazil, and smaller amounts from a lot of other countries where we might worry about employment conditions and environmental practices. To the extent that those products are coming from companies that the US importer controls or has reliable information for, it could apply for a waiver of the virtue tariff if it can show that its controlled company uses good practices. The point of virtue tariffs isn't to raise money or to hurt foreigners, but rather to protect businesses in America and abroad that do the right thing but can't afford to compete against sleazy, evil companies undercutting their prices by doing the wrong things. Imposing true virtue tariffs (as opposed to extra tariffs just masquerading as virtue tariffs) makes America a good global citizen, not a greedy one.

### **C) A carbon tax.**

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104 Regardless of your personal moral principles, virtue tariffs are properly aimed only at things where the foreign misbehavior would result in improper profits. So, for example, even if you really strongly believe that every country in the world should implement an ultra-DEI agenda, that belief necessarily includes a belief that DEI initiatives are good for companies. DEI tariffs would therefore not be countering an improper foreign profit, but instead would be a form of hegemonic sanctions. That is a very different ballgame.

105 "Hegemonic" has taken on an unfortunate tone from its overuse and misuse by college students wanting to sound smart and rebellious, but there isn't really a good alternative word. Hegemony is seeking to control another. Hegemonic policies like the ultraviolent policies of the Bush, Obama, Trump and Biden administrations are those where the US seeks to make every other country on the planet kneel before us and do whatever the US President wants them to do, and sing our praises while they do it, or suffer the consequences if they don't. Any time you hear anyone in the US foreign policy or military establishment use the word "freedom", replace it with "hegemony" and you'll know what they really mean. Our revolutionary founders would vomit at the thought of how America operates in the world today.

Again, even if you are not persuaded that climate change is real, despite the North Carolina floods, the LA fires, and all the other things that have been happening for decades now,<sup>106</sup> burning coal and oil and gas is polluting. It puts mercury in our fish, orange domes of death over our cities, poisonous chemicals in our homes, and it particularly harms people in the poor neighborhoods where we tend to put all of our bad things. It's bad, and we should be working to stop doing it. Financiers will disagree because they make a whole lot of money from it.

That said, a lot of what has been happening or proposed in the name of addressing climate change has also been bad. Restarting the infamous Three Mile Island nuclear plant is not a good thing. My father served on the governor's nuclear panel in Minnesota and learned horrifying details of things not made public, like the time a Minnesota nuclear plant had an incident and the guy in charge responded to the whooping alarms by locking himself in his office with his head down on his desk. My uncle consulted on nuclear safety elsewhere and could give alarming details on what could happen when there was the next New Madrid earthquake or other things that no human construction can withstand.<sup>107</sup> I understand that there are new nuclear designs that are actually safe (though they still have spent-fuel issues), but restarting old-version nukes is not green. Similarly, proposals to dredge all the deep ocean seabeds to get more rare-earth metals for rapid electrification of everything are not green or prudent. Even with an urgent crisis, running around like a chicken with its head cut off or throwing hundreds of billions of dollars at corporate lobbyists who make green promises are not good responses.

Other things are clearly good. Solving cash timing issues for solar and wind investments that pay for themselves even without subsidies is a good idea. Thoughtfully leasing areas for offshore and onshore wind generation that pays for itself is good, so long as those particular projects would pass an environmental impact statement. Energy efficiency, especially energy-efficient ventilation using modern heat exchangers, is good.

But who among us is smart enough to make all the right choices? Certainly not Congress or the President or the head of the Department of Energy, an agency closely aligned with both the Department of Defense and the oil industry. This is the kind of area where contests and incentives work really well. Offering cash prizes for technology that solves particular problems has proven to

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106 I grew up in Minnesota, where the weather is extreme so you really notice it and its patterns. By the early 1980s, I was already saying "something weird is happening with the weather", and other Minnesotans agreed. When I learned of the carbon dioxide greenhouse theory of climate change, it made everything I had been noticing make sense. So, I admit to being easily convinced by the science, even though I am generally skeptical of "jump on the bandwagon" science. (Science is better at disproving things than at proving them.) I don't see any strong reason to doubt it. In any event, given a choice between taking an otherwise sensible action that helps with climate change or stubbornly doing nothing and having to say "oops, sorry, I guess I was wrong and now we are all hopelessly screwed", I choose the former.

107 My wife worked as an auditor on a nuclear plant construction project. She got death threats twice from one of the contractors. The first time a guy on site responded to her question by opening his desk drawer, taking out a gun magazine, pointing to a picture of a silencer, and saying "You know what I need? I need one of those. I could really use that." He then put the magazine away and just stared at her. The second time she traveled to their office in another city and a lawyer in black shirt and white tie responded to a question by saying "You know, I'm surprised your company sends a young woman like you out on a trip like this. I mean, things can happen when you travel. You might ... not ... come ... back." Knowing that those were the kind of people building the plants also didn't do much for my confidence in nuclear safety.

be a highly cost-effective way to progress technology. Incentives harness the full creativity and problem-solving ability of American business, and American business can do amazing things with the right incentives.

But handing lots of incentive cash out of our bankrupt Treasury is not a good idea, both because we don't have it and because we generally try to tie positive incentives to some goofball's idea of what the winning solution will be, or to what some lobbyist wants to sell. That is how we get things like compact fluorescent light bulbs. A tax, on the other hand, is solution-neutral and allows full rein to corporate creativity. Impose a cost, keep it from seriously harming our businesses, then step back and watch them find ways to reduce it.<sup>108</sup>

Few governments have imposed actual carbon taxes. Instead, they tend to do like the European Union, imposing a foolish alternative called "cap and trade". That supposedly works by setting limits on carbon emissions that reduce over time, and allowing companies who reduce faster or who develop carbon "offsets" to get credits that they can sell to companies that reduce more slowly. That system is a gold mine for con artists, scammers, and parasitic speculators, who all heavily lobby for it. That is what Obama proposed for America in place of a carbon tax, because he was afraid to ever use the word "tax". I met with the heads of tax of a number of American manufacturing companies at that time. They could all deal with a carbon tax. You can compute what a carbon tax will cost your company, compute the value of doing things to reduce it, compute how you and your competitors need to adjust prices in the meantime, etc. It gives you a new way to compete for profits. You can't model or predict cap and trade over the payback term of a typical corporate investment. You can't do good cost-benefit computations for reducing your carbon use or pricing. They all hated the thought of cap and trade.

A carbon tax coupled with a virtue tariff (and possibly an export exemption) would not hurt American manufacturers. Coupled with a reduction in wage taxes and increases in social security and other fixed-income programs, it would not hurt working Americans. What it would do is harness the power of American industry to find the most efficient and useful ways to reduce the use of fossil fuels, ways that are not currently in the minds of anyone in the government or even any environmental campaigner. With a whole world seeking to reduce the use of fossil fuels, the American technical innovation and know-how that it would drive would give our industries a powerful international advantage. Today we are seeing that China's embrace of climate-change action has given its companies a serious technological advantage that has the Europeans quaking in fear. America's Uniparty chant of "drill drill drill" has caused our industries to lag far behind. A carbon tax is smart policy to make us strong and successful. Even if you are absolutely convinced that climate change isn't real, you should be able to see the American business advantage of having an incentive to be the best country in the world at reducing fossil-fuel use.

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<sup>108</sup> This only works really well, though, if we implement the competition reforms discussed above. Companies in an oligopoly situation can choose to just pass the cost on to customers and not worry about reducing it, knowing their competitors will do the same.

If we imposed, at the level of the fuel sales, a carbon tax equal to 50% of the price of a barrel of crude oil, with carbon-equivalent levels of tax on the price of natural gas and coal, it would raise about \$328 billion a year and increase the price of regular gas at the pump by about \$1.10 (1/3 of its 2024 average price), and the price of natural gas to your house by about 8 cents on the dollar. If we went for a trillion dollar tax and reduced wage taxes and increased social security/pensions by a total of a trillion dollars, it would still not be a super-radical change. Wage taxes would be reduced from the bottom up by exempting the first \$X of wage or self-employment income for an individual from the tax, so that people earning the least would get just as much of a benefit as people earning the most.

A good carbon tax would ramp up over a period of three years to give businesses a chance to plan and do low-hanging-fruit things to minimize their carbon use. It should then settle at a level high enough to provide a strong incentive to reduce. The offset, as with the excise taxes discussed below, should be computed based on the amount of actual carbon tax collected. The three-year ramp up would make it easier to match up the new cost being passed through to consumers with the consumer offset coming through in their wage taxes and social security payments.

#### **D) Toxin taxes.**

We have a lot of laws and agencies that are supposed to protect us from being poisoned. Yet despite the regulations by the Food and Drug Administration, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency, you and your family are poisoned by hundreds or thousands of known toxic chemicals all the time. If you don't filter your tap water before you drink it then you are taking a significant risk with your health, and even if you do you will be exposed to toxins from lots of other sources. Your and your children's bodies are full of all kinds of poisons, including pesticides designed as nerve gas, carcinogens, chemicals that mutate your cells including eggs and sperm, a whole list of chemicals that have the effect of the female hormone estrogen and things like the German company Bayer's and the Chinese company Syngenta's neonicotinoid pesticides that lower testosterone<sup>109</sup>, things that damage every one of your organs, and microscopic bits of plastic. The chemicals and plastics are in babies in the womb and in mother's milk. Wouldn't you like to have less of them?

In America we have a number of chemicals in our food that are banned in other countries. You might think that if other countries are doing fine without them we could ban them here, too, but at the very least shouldn't we discourage them? Shouldn't we provide incentives for businesses to find alternatives to all the poisons they expose us to?

We could impose a comprehensive toxin tax regime applied at the level of production – if you make a toxic substance, intentionally or unintentionally, you pay an excise tax on it. The tax could be applied based on estimated lethality, or in other words on how many people would be likely to die prematurely from the release of a pound of the stuff. That would depend on how lethal it is and

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<sup>109</sup> <https://www.leefang.com/p/this-pesticide-rapidly-eradicating?> They also have terrible effects on farms and the environment, as discussed further below.

on how long it typically lasts in the environment. If a toxic chemical is used in manufacturing but is carefully controlled so that none of it escapes, then presumably you won't pay much extra from the tax, because you won't have to keep getting more of the chemical. If a toxic chemical is actually consumed by being turned into something else, then a tax credit could be given for the amount of the toxin you can prove you turned into something else. With some chemicals we have a pretty good idea of how lethal they are. Others would be categorized into estimated lethality buckets based on other chemicals that they resemble. If it has a hexane ring or carbon linked to chlorine or fluorine, then it will tend to be at the high end. If it is an amino acid or carbohydrate, then it probably gets no tax. The cost per lethality unit can be taken from average wrongful death awards in lawsuits. While we may think of life as priceless, in fact we put a price on it<sup>110</sup>, so we may as well be honest and transparent about that. For some chemicals that aren't very lethal but have heavy environmental impacts, like some pesticides and fertilizers, the taxes would be adjusted to account for that damage. Bayer's and Syngenta's neonicotinoid pesticides, for example, kill bees and butterflies that we depend on to pollinate crops. We know the economic damage if we lose those crops, so we can use that to put an extra cost factor on those chemicals, if we are unwilling to ban them.

Imposing a toxins tax would raise the price of consumer products by increasing the cost to produce them, but again we would use the proceeds of the tax to reduce wage taxes/increase social security, so working people would not suffer from those price increases. We would impose virtue tariffs as needed to keep US companies from suffering inappropriately from competition with foreign manufacturers that don't pay an equivalent tax.

#### **E) Waste taxes.**

Again, one of the toxins we are exposed to even before birth<sup>111</sup> is microplastics, tiny bits of plastic that break off from fast-fashion polyesters, plastic bags, plastic diapers, plastic packaging, etc. and get in our air, water, and food. We have landfills full of plastic waste, while the global production of plastics continues to grow alarmingly. We could address these plastics as toxins under the toxins tax, but it would make more sense to have waste taxes on plastics that do not fully decompose and that are not in fact<sup>112</sup> recycled. These taxes would be imposed at the level of the manufacturers of the plastic resin at a rate that represents not only the harm from illness and death caused by microplastics, but also waste disposal and general environmental harm done by plastic that doesn't end up recycled or in the landfills.

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110 To be crystal clear, laborism would NOT replace regulation or lawsuits by actual victims with these taxes. It would not say "you can do what you want so long as you pay the tax." Here we are discussing taxes on products that the regulators have decided not to ban, and that businesses are still required to handle in a non-negligent manner.

111 A recent study found that 100% of a sample of placentas from American mothers were contaminated with microplastics. Throw-away plastics are an insidious threat to the health of our children.

112 Tracing a particular plastic item would be impractical, but the rate of the tax on manufacturers of a certain type of plastic, such as LDPE, could be reduced based on the percentage of that type of plastic produced that gets recycled. This would encourage actual recycling, as opposed to the "collect and dispose" charade that applies to most plastic "recycling" today.

Waste taxes have the particular virtue that they would drive consumer choices as well. We can choose to buy durable natural fabrics including hemp<sup>113</sup> instead of plastic fast fashion. We can buy less plastic stuff. We could even use regular diapers. We used cloth diapers attached with a Velcro outer wrap and a thin little liner cloth on our babies, while they use disposable diapers on theirs, and from what I can tell our method was just as easy, no more messy, better for the baby, and a lot cheaper, although probably not practical for day-care centers. If we impose the waste taxes and reduce wage taxes, then a family could choose to come out ahead by adjusting their habits in a socially desirable way.

#### F) Felony forfeitures.

Once upon a time, part of the penalty for conviction on a felony was that your property was forfeited to the state. When it comes to things that you want to discourage, what better than felonies? Fines are not a tax as such, but these fines would be a smart revenue source.

The Eighth Amendment prohibits “excessive fines”, and it is true that some felonies are a whole lot worse than others and some instances of a specific felony are also a whole lot worse than others. Assault with a deadly weapon can include pulling a knife and telling someone to back the hell off when they are troubling your family, or it can include shooting up somebody’s house with a Mac 10 just for fun. Not every felony conviction logically merits taking all of the criminal’s property.

Still, the old law that causes 100% of the property of a felon to be forfeit to the state can make a lot of sense in some circumstances, especially for white-collar crimes. The Sackler family, for instance, should have had every dollar of their money go to the state to be used to combat opioid addiction and its effects. Looking at case sentencing reports does tend to support the idea that our system is very reluctant to put rich white people (or, more accurately, any rich people) in jail, but if they have committed a crime against the public they should at least not end up still being rich. All of the criminals one sees on *American Greed* should end up penniless, as should their families. Any criminal who has a lot of money that is not easily explained as coming from legitimate sources should not end up with money. Bringing them down to the financial status that a large number of Americans have had all their lives, and that most of their victims probably share, is certainly not overly harsh.<sup>114</sup>

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113 The World War II USDA propaganda film on hemp growing is still pretty interesting. It’s a great fiber.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3rolyiTPr0>

114 Back in my law enforcement days, we had a white collar criminal whose attorney argued as follows at sentencing. “Your honor, this man shouldn’t do jail time. He has lost his money. *He will probably need to work for other people* for the rest of his working life. He has suffered enough!” We were pleased when the judge responded by giving him a sentence in a medium-security prison, and even more pleased when we learned that his new roommate had set his mattress on fire.

The punishment would not be imposed where the crime was against the felon's family, to avoid punishing them financially for being victims, and the law would not be enforced in a way that hurts innocent poor families.

More broadly, we should re-frame criminal fines into percentages of income/wealth for anything serious, including white collar crimes and drunk driving. In Norway you get fined a month's pay for drunk driving, no matter how high your pay may be, and so nobody drives drunk and highway deaths are a fraction of ours. This would help to eliminate affluenza. To quote Hannah Grae from her excellent song *Propaganda*,<sup>115</sup> hit 'em in the spot that hurts most, 'cause why the hell not?

### **G) Other behavior modification.**

The financier culture of easy money at all costs has led to a lot of bad cultural developments in our society that need to be healed. Because these largely flow from the lust for money, it makes sense to use money penalties to reverse them. Excise taxes also have the advantage that they are not prohibitions, they are just burdens. There are a number of behaviors that are generally undesirable, but where you wouldn't really want the government to come in and do a flat ban.

For example, in these days of the #MeToo movement, why is it that we have a particular industry that pretty much all of us use that requires talented young women to take their clothes off to get a job?<sup>116</sup> Does that make any sense? Many actresses, like other people, would like to be mothers and grandmothers some day, and they have parents. Why are they placed under heavy pressure to disrobe when we would sue the hell out of any corporation that tried to impose that requirement on its office staff? Now, government censorship as such is un-American, and a flat ban on content involving too much skin would be problematic. However, if we imposed a tax equal to 50% of the royalties from any new video content that involved showing body parts normally covered by modest swimwear, that would merely be an incentive for producers to figure out how to sell entertainment without making improper demands of actresses. That would improve content and give us all more choice in what to watch with our families. It would not oppress anyone. If producers still wanted to make some cheap R-rated movies for male audiences and some actresses were happy to be in them, they could, but the current situation where any attractive rising actress is under pressure to undress would become obsolete.

Likewise, a 100% excise tax on the cost of advertising, aside from truthful and informative ads of small businesses that are clearly labeled as ads, would help to get past our culture of creating artificial demand for products we don't really want or need. There wouldn't be improper content

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115 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1wnAhyNsfa0> I encourage everyone to listen to it before reading any article in the corporate media.

116 This has long been a puzzling trend, that people who think of themselves as being big on women's rights also think that it is primitive and bad to think that actresses shouldn't be required to do exploitative or embarrassing things. Do we have such an urgent societal need to see skin on TV that we have to throw out values that we enforce in other businesses? Generally, skin scenes do nothing to advance the flow of the story or serve any non-prurient purpose. Stage theater mostly gets along without them.



regulation, but we would decrease the incentive to use the power of the new media to turn us into consumer robots.

We should also use taxes as part of recreational drug regulation. We have cigarette taxes and alcohol taxes because it is a bad idea to smoke or to drink too much<sup>117</sup>, and we all end up paying part of the healthcare costs flowing from those bad choices. When marijuana was effectively legalized in much of the country, though, the process was completely botched. Legalization advocates had explained for decades how to do it properly – legalize, regulate THC content, sell through outlets unconnected to criminals, make it difficult and unprofitable to re-sell to minors, and tax it enough so that kids under 18 generally won't be able to afford a lot of it.<sup>118</sup> Instead we did not regulate the content or form of the drug, prohibited using banks for the money so that criminal gangs were instantly heavily involved, had anarchy on method of sale, and didn't tax it. Americans, sadly, are going to use recreational drugs. Decades of enforcement<sup>119</sup> have done nothing to stop that. We can, however, make effective efforts to get people to choose non-lethal and less-addictive and less-nasty drugs and to not fund an industry of horrific, murderous criminals who destroy communities and whole countries. Legalize some less-bad drugs, regulate them, get criminals completely out of the supply chain, destroy illegal competitor products by seriously going after the money, engage in really good propaganda to make drug use uncool, and tax them at a level that leaves them significantly cheaper than the illegal drugs but not so cheap that they are encouraged, while keeping the drug-production industry from making so much profit that they will fight to keep it going.

You will be able to think of many other instances where an excise tax would help to discourage businesses from doing certain things that are bad for society, and to encourage them to figure out how to operate in a better way. Decibel taxes would encourage the production of quieter machinery for our neighborhoods, private jet taxes would discourage those highly polluting luxuries, etc. Most of these sorts of taxes will tend to cost working people money in the form of

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117 A drink a day is probably actually good for you, though it's a mixed thing. But the alcohol taxes on one drink a day won't break anyone.

118 While THC is a relatively harmless recreational drug, that is much less true for persons whose brains are still developing. We should make a serious effort to help high schoolers find ways to be adequately entertained without drugs or pregnancy. I know that is easier said than done but I have known perfectly normal high schoolers who managed to do it.

119 To be fair, the enforcement was half-hearted at best. Leave aside the fact that in the country with the scariest, most effective propaganda masters in the world the best anti-youth-drug campaigns we came up with were Nancy Reagan saying "just say no" and the fried egg "this is your brain on dope" ads. We did not, for example, have graphic ads of Mexican cartel violence saying "this is where your money is going – this is *your* fault." We didn't have "users are losers" ads. If that is not enough to make you doubt the motives of enforcers, consider the following, the facts of which I happen to know. A federal money-laundering task force was pursuing drug money in response to the crazy 80s cocaine issues. In those days, a colleague of mine was involved with a search warrant raid on an apartment in Miami where they accidentally got the address wrong, but it worked out because the random apartment they raided instead also was filled with automatic weapons and drugs, because Miami was like that. It was always clear that the best way to enforce against narco traffickers was to go after the money. The task force did their job well and had good evidence against certain banks. Higher powers then told them their job was done and they were being disbanded with no further action. Look up the old investigative reports on Iran-Contra to see why that was.

higher prices for the ultimate products they buy, but if we give them back the money by reducing taxes on their productive work, then that's not a problem.

We got away from these sorts of taxes because they tend to reduce corporate profits and so hurt the financiers. The financiers sold us on wage taxes that cap out at a relatively low income level, taxes that have very little effect on the financier class, by claiming that they were “insurance premiums”, when really the government never treated them that way. While our supposedly progressive income taxes are sold as being a disproportionate burden to the rich, in reality the rich figured out how to keep income taxes from being a large cost for them, while they were a really effective way to get money out of working people. The big government programs funded with those income taxes allowed for big contracts going to financier-owned corporations, and provided lots of opportunities for banks and Wall Street and the war machine to make money. Laborist reforms would do far more to reduce the parasitic incomes of the wealthy than income taxes ever did. The tax adjustments discussed in the next section will do the rest. With those changes, we can drop the ruse that wage taxes and residential property taxes are the best, and instead restructure those kinds of taxes so that their progressive effect really helps to keep society balanced. Where feasible, we can instead tax the things we want to discourage. That will help America to keep getting better as a nation.

## **Pay down our deficits by taxing those who got the most benefit from our system**

I published an article<sup>120</sup> on digital taxation that explained that we pay taxes largely to support the society and infrastructure that made it possible for us to earn the income that is being taxed. Let me begin here by quoting from that explanation.

### **“Taxes are what we pay for civilized society”<sup>121</sup>**

In making this statement Justice Holmes was not expressing the view that if we want nice things we have to pay for them. Rather, he was stating that the ability to *make money from which to pay tax* was itself derived from the civilized society made possible by government, and the beneficiaries of that capability should be required to pay their share of the cost. Taxation is a mechanism by which the government receives a share of the profits from operations enabled by civil society, recognizing its role as an effective partner in the enterprise. Hence, the sentence containing the quoted language goes on to say “including the chance to insure”, explaining why the insurance company in issue should be compelled to pay tax to the jurisdiction that was providing protection for the insured property, thus enabling the insurer to conduct a profitable business. Justice Holmes was distinguishing between the rules pertaining to penalties, which are an exercise of pure power to discourage, and the rules pertaining to taxes. “It is true ... that every exaction of money is a discouragement to the extent of the payment required, but that which in its immediacy is a

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<sup>120</sup> <https://www.taxnotes.com/tax-notes-international/international-taxation/philosophy-digital-taxation/2019/02/25/294vh>

<sup>121</sup> Justice Holmes dissenting in *Compania General de Tabacos de Filipinas v. Collector of Internal Revenue*, 275 U.S. 87, 100 (1927)

discouragement may be part of an encouragement when seen in its organic connection with the whole.”<sup>122</sup>

Taxation, in other words, is used to support the economic foundations that make wealth creation feasible, and when kept in appropriate balance is a logical element of the social contract. The most brilliant innovator, born and residing in Chad,<sup>123</sup> is unlikely to be able to do much with her talents. She will have limited access to education or an educated and diverse workforce capable of doing all the things that need to be done for a business. She will have limited ability to raise and deploy capital. She will have limited access to the infrastructure needed to produce, market, and transport products of any sort. She will lack fundamental security against crime and war. The same person, residing in the United States, will have much higher odds of success. Our government long ago recognized education as a public good. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century America realized that consumers are much more likely to try a new product if they are reasonably assured, through sensible regulation, that the product will do what it is supposed to do and will not hurt them. We realized that investors are much more willing to make their savings available through banks if they can be assured that the money they put into the bank will be there when they want it, and will be willing to invest in stocks if they believe that the corporate accounts are reliable, the markets are fair, and the statements of the promoters are required to be reasonably consistent with the truth. Entrepreneurs would be willing to risk their time and assets to enter the competitive fray if they were assured that Rockefellerian monopolists could not use entrenched power to crush them. We built roads and power grids and telecommunications facilities with government facilitation, allowing businesses to succeed with ease. America did not reach new economic heights in the last century because we were a laissez-faire anarchy, but rather because we were good at applying government power and resources to create the foundations for success.

The Supreme Court had long recognized this relationship between the activities of government and the propriety of taxation. Thus, in *Union Refrigerator Transit Co. v. Kentucky*<sup>124</sup> the Court stated

The power of taxation, indispensable to the existence of every civilized government, is exercised upon the assumption of an equivalent rendered to the taxpayer in the protection of his person and property, in adding to the value of such property, or in the creation and maintenance of public conveniences in which he shares, such, for instance, as roads, bridges, sidewalks, pavements, and schools for the education of his children.

For generations, the financier class has gotten more than their share of benefit from the government that we all have supported with our taxes. The immigrants who were worked to death in the slaughterhouses of Chicago got little benefit from our government. The farmers who watched their land blow away in the dust bowl were not helped. The residents of Watts, a neighborhood of perfectly nice homes to begin with, who lived lives of fearful desperation because the government failed to provide them with education, services or safety, got little benefit. The

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122 Id.

123 No offense to Chad is intended, but it is the country ranked by Forbes as the worst place on the planet to do business.

124 199 U.S. 194, 202 (1905).

Astors, Rockefellers, Goldmans, Vanderbilts, Mellons, Schiffs, Goulds, Pritzkers, Morgans, Waltons, Buffetts, Kochs and the like received gigantic benefits from our government and infrastructure.

That has resulted in the financier class having a level of wealth that is fundamentally dangerous to a democracy. John Adams, Madison and Jefferson predicted that the concentration of wealth in the hands of such families would destroy American democracy unless we acted to rebalance the nation and restore the power and independence of our working people. They took the trouble to make the revolution that makes our lives today possible. We owe it to them to take those actions now, not out of jealousy or greed but out of devotion to the revolution that made us free and prosperous.<sup>125</sup> We don't need violence, hatred, or the guillotine. We do need sensible tax policy.

That policy requires just a handful of things, none of them particularly revolutionary, and all of them easily done.

- 1) Eliminate special low tax rates on dividends and capital gains. Parasitic income should not be more lightly taxed than income from work.
- 2) Restore income tax rates on AGI above \$3,000,000, the cut-off for the top 0.1% financier class, to 84%, matching the rates in America's strong growth years of the 1950s and 60s. Do the same thing for all income other than wages and Schedule C business income<sup>126</sup> above \$1,000,000. For wages, Schedule C income and self-produced royalties, allow 10-year income averaging, so that star athletes, musicians, and others who have a short period of making a lot of money can pay lower rates on a total of \$30,000,000 worth of it.
- 3) Tax all unrealized gains upon renouncing US citizenship at the 84% rate. People leave the US tax net when they are authorized to renounce their US citizenship. Taxation of unrealized gains is the normal cost today for exercising that privilege. It would just become more expensive. Further, give a choice between paying 84% tax on the value of all assets (with a credit for the gains taxed above) when expatriating, or else remaining subject to US estate and gift tax despite expatriation.
- 4) Raise the estate and gift tax rate on amounts over \$25 million per person/ \$50 million per couple to 84%. A \$50MM farm is not a "family farm". A \$50MM business is not a "small business".
- 5) Don't allow the wealthy to escape estate tax using trusts. Impose a 10% annual tax in supplement of estate tax on the value of all non-charitable trusts funded by a single donor (alone or, in proportion to his or her donation, in combination with other donors) in excess of \$25 million. A credit would be allowed for gift or estate tax paid, or gift or estate exemption used, in funding the trust.
- 6) Don't allow the wealthy to avoid income taxes or estate and gift taxes by playing games with charitable foundations that aren't actually charitable. Eliminate the income tax deduction for charitable contributions. Today, most Americans get no income tax benefit for their contributions

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125 Obviously, it made some of us free later than others, but today we all have that revolutionary freedom as our inheritance.

126 Royalty income for royalties on works that you produced yourself would also be excluded.

to charity, though they contribute anyway. High-income people get the government to give them back 37 cents on every dollar they donate, and often they are “donating” to foundations that they control that pay their families salaries and that may or may not ever pay much to actual charities. That makes no sense. Further, high-income people often get a double benefit by donating appreciated stock or using money from an IRA. There is no reason why the government should pay them to make donations to the things they like but not pay you when you donate, so just get rid of the deduction. Further, eliminate estate and gift tax exemptions for contributions to charitable foundations that do not pay out 50% of their value to 501(c)(3) public charities or in charitable mission payments each year. Limit estate tax charitable donation exemptions to \$100MM, but allow unlimited gift tax charitable exemptions for donations at least 1 year before death to encourage distributing large fortunes to charity early.

We might need some further steps to counter the creativity of the financiers and their expensive lawyers, but the above steps would go most of the way towards keeping them from passing dangerously large fortunes on to future generations. \$50 million is plenty to keep their children and grandchildren rich and happy and independent. For the Elon Musks of the world, even 16% of their current wealth after tax is still billions, but since they would no longer be able to keep increasing their fortunes at the rate they do today, the problem of those ultra-billionaires would be reduced to a manageable level. Further, most financiers really, really hate paying tax, so if they have an option of not paying estate tax by donating most of their money to legitimate charities during their lifetimes, they are likely to do that. The places they donate to will name buildings after them and put up statues in their image, and then in a couple of generations a committee will complain about honoring a jerk, and the names will change and the statues will come down,<sup>127</sup> and we can forget them.

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127 “It’s my estimation that...every man ever got a statue made of him, was one kind of sumbitch or another.” –Mal Reynolds in the Jaynestown episode of *Firefly*.

## War. What is it good for?

By living in peace, we can help and prosper one another; by waging war, we can kill and destroy many on both sides; but those who survive will not be the happier for that. -

**Thomas Jefferson**

I hope...that mankind will at length, as they call themselves reasonable creatures, have reason and sense enough to settle their differences without cutting throats; for in my opinion there never was a good war, or a bad peace. - **Benjamin Franklin**

My first wish is to see this plague of mankind, war, banished from the earth. - **George Washington**

Of all the enemies of public liberty, war is perhaps the most to be dreaded, because it comprises and develops the germ of every other. - **James Madison**

He who is the author of a war lets loose the whole contagion of hell and opens a vein that bleeds a nation to death. - **Thomas Paine**

If they are made war upon, their country invaded, or their existence at stake, it is their duty to defend and preserve themselves, but in every other light, and from every other cause, is war inglorious and detestable. - **Thomas Paine**

War is an instrument entirely inefficient toward redressing wrong; and multiplies, instead of indemnifying losses. - **Thomas Jefferson**

If an American is concerned only about his nation, he will not be concerned about the peoples of Asia, Africa, or South America. Is this not why nations engage in the madness of war without the slightest sense of penitence? Is this not why the murder of a citizen of your own nation is a crime, but the murder of citizens of another nation in war is an act of heroic virtue? - **Martin Luther King Jr.**

I believe that human life is a very special gift from God, and that no one has a right to take that away in any cause, however just. I am convinced that nonviolence is more powerful than violence. - **Cesar Chavez**

Not all the treasures of the world, so far as I believe, could have induced me to support an offensive war, for I think it murder - **Thomas Paine**

The desire to preserve our country from the calamities and ravages of war, by cultivating a disposition, and pursuing a conduct, conciliatory and friendly to all nations, has been sincerely entertained and faithfully followed. - **Thomas Jefferson**

[America] has, in the lapse of nearly half a century, without a single exception, respected the independence of other nations while asserting and maintaining her own. She has

abstained from interference in the concerns of others, even when conflict has been for principles to which she clings, as to the last vital drop that visits the heart. ...

Wherever the standard of freedom and Independence has been or shall be unfurled, there will her heart, her benedictions and her prayers be. But she goes not abroad, in search of monsters<sup>128</sup> to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own. - **John Quincy Adams**

Don't let anybody make you think God chose America as his divine messianic force to be a sort of policeman of the whole world. God has a way of standing before the nations with justice and it seems I can hear God saying to America "you are too arrogant, and if you don't change your ways, I will rise up and break the backbone of your power, and I will place it in the hands of a nation that doesn't even know my name. Be still and know that I'm God. Men will beat their swords into plowshafts and their spears into pruning hooks, and nations shall not rise up against nations, neither shall they study war anymore." I don't know about you, I ain't going to study war anymore. - **Martin Luther King Jr.**

Testimony of all ages forces us to admit that war is among the most dangerous enemies to liberty, and that the executive is the branch most favored by it of all the branches of Power. - **James Madison**

I am for relying for internal defense on our militia solely till actual invasion, and for such a naval force only as may protect our coasts and harbors from such depredations as we have experienced; and not for a standing army in time of peace which may overawe the public sentiment; nor for a navy which, by its own expenses and the eternal wars in which it will implicate us, will grind us with public burdens and sink us under them. - **Thomas Jefferson**

If our nation is ever taken over, it will be taken over from within. - **James Madison**

If Tyranny and Oppression come to this land, it will be in the guise of fighting a foreign enemy.

It is a universal truth that the loss of liberty at home is to be charged to the provisions against danger, real or pretended, from abroad.

The means of defense against foreign danger historically have become the instruments of tyranny at home. - **James Madison**

To establish any mode to abolish war, however advantageous it might be to Nations, would be to take from such Government the most lucrative of its branches. - **Thomas Paine**

Each generation should be made to bear the burden of its own wars, instead of carrying them on, at the expense of other generations. - **James Madison**

That there are men in all countries who get their living by war, and by keeping up the quarrels of Nations is as shocking as it is true... - **Thomas Paine**

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128 "He who fights with monsters should be careful lest he thereby become a monster. And if thou gaze long into an abyss, the abyss will also gaze into thee." (Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Dover Publications, 1997, p.52)

Short of changing human nature ... the only way to achieve a practical, livable peace in a world of competing nations is to take the profit out of war. – **Richard Nixon**

When a whole nation is roaring Patriotism at the top of its voice, I am fain to explore the cleanness of its hands and purity of its heart. – **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

Governments constantly choose between telling lies and fighting wars, with the end result always being the same. One will always lead to the other.

Never was so much false arithmetic employed on any subject, as that which has been employed to persuade nations that it is in their interest to go to war. – **Thomas Jefferson**

Wars are caused by financiers. They are fought by working people. Our nation was founded by those who fought a revolutionary war so that they could create a nation that would set a new example of evenhanded friendship with all countries and alliances with none. They hated war, and considered it to be stupid. They believed that wars are caused by rich and powerful people who seek to profit from them. They rejected the idea of fighting wars abroad to interfere in the concerns of others, and warned that wars are routinely built on lies. They considered war and militarism to be an unacceptable threat to liberty and democracy. They predicted that the American experiment in liberty and democracy would be undermined and destroyed by two things – concentration of wealth in the hands of a few and the rise of militarism. War, in short, is un-American and a betrayal of the fundamental principles of the American revolution.

War costs the lives and health of working people. That does not really bother either wing of the Uniparty, but laborism stands for the protection of working people. American soldiers generally start out brave and good. I have spent time on military bases with some of our elite soldiers, sailors and pilots, and I have found them to be good, sensible, competent, level-headed citizens worthy of admiration<sup>129</sup>. I would gladly put veterans like Jesse Ventura and Michael T. McPhearson in charge of US military policy in place of the chickenhawk draft evaders and rich boys who have pushed our recent wars. Young men and women sent into the horrors of war can be corrupted, and we have had our share of soldiers who have brutally slaughtered women and children, while the incidence of sexual assault on our female soldiers by other soldiers has been unacceptable. But the people who volunteer to put their lives at risk, based on the promise that they will only be used to protect America, deserve our thanks and admiration. Laborism expresses such thanks and admiration by only risking their lives to counter an actual attack on America, and does not permit them to be used as tools and enforcers for financiers. Using our men and women in uniform to serve the financiers is the worst form of disrespect for their valor, and no truly patriotic American will stand for it.

War also costs us a fabulous amount of money. President Eisenhower warned us about the rise of the Military-Industrial Complex (MIC). Even he, the former Allied Commander, with all the power of the Presidency, was unable to suppress the power of the financier-driven MIC. Listening to

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<sup>129</sup> I have a number of relations who served in every branch in a variety of wars, again all honorable people, but my base visits were a more random sample.



recent federal budget discussions tells you all you need to know about the power of the MIC. The financier-owned politicians in Congress demanded that the military budget be increased by a large percentage, just because. They did not cite any particular need, any particular things that were needed for American security that the Pentagon didn't have quite enough money to buy. They wanted to spend more just to spend more. In 2024 that was \$928 billion in current military expenditure and foreign military aid, \$346 billion for veterans benefits relating to prior wars, and billions more hidden in other budget lines. Through fiscal 2022, the US spent over \$8 trillion on the post-9/11 wars. That is money taken from the pockets of working people and their children and grandchildren and great grandchildren, with much of it ending up in the pockets of the financiers.

Laborism would follow the policy that Jefferson approved. All of America's undeclared mini-wars would end. All of America's foreign bases would be shut down and the soldiers brought home. We would maintain a Navy sized to protect American shipping and preserve the undersea leg of our nuclear deterrent<sup>130</sup>, but not to go pick a fight with China in the South China Sea. As an update for new technology, we would maintain a re-sized Air Force and those legs of the nuclear deterrent, being similar in operation to the Navy, but would keep most of the fighter planes in the state Air National Guard units. The military academies would be kept going, but we would restore the policy that the Second Amendment is really about, of putting the military back into the state militias, now known as the National Guard.

One of the intended protections for our liberty was that even if Congress declared a war and the President wanted to fight it, if they wanted soldiers they had to ask the states to send them, and states could refuse. In the war of 1812<sup>131</sup>, when Madison proposed to invade Canada, the governors of Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island did exactly that, refusing to send their militias to invade another country<sup>132</sup>. We have seen one weak-minded Congress after another fail to fulfill their Constitutional duty to control the President, so we know that the division of the war declaration power from the war execution power is not enough. Making the federal government dependent upon the consent of the states in this way helps to ensure that no war will occur unless the people really support it. Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution gives Congress the power to maintain a standing Navy, but provides that Congress may only raise and support "armies" under appropriations lasting no more than 2 years, meaning that the framers did not intend for America to have a standing, perpetual army. Instead, military force was normally to be housed in the state

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130 A laborist government will also seek to reach agreements with the other nuclear powers to reduce our respective arsenals to levels less likely to end human civilization. However, keeping enough to make any attempt to attack the US inconceivable makes it easy to stand down the rest of the military.

131 One of my ancestors died in the War of 1812, being shot, falling overboard and then being eaten by sharks. The British were kidnapping American sailors, seizing American ships, and arming and encouraging Native Americans to attack the frontiers, which was harmful to both the white settlers and the Native Americans. In principle, then, that war was just protecting ourselves, but the proposed invasion of Canada was a different matter, and not one of Madison's better ideas.

132 The Vikings had a very sensible policy about that. Men could be drafted to repel invaders within their own country, but could not be required to cross the border into someone else's country. While they were warlike people, that did a lot to ensure that their attention was spent on voluntary expeditions to sack other countries, rather than pointless and bloody conflicts trying to conquer each other.

militias, and the occasions on which Congress could call up the militias are explicitly limited: “To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions.”

That list does not include invading Canada, or the Philippines, or assorted countries in Latin America, or North Korea, or Vietnam, or Cambodia, or Laos, or Iraq, or Somalia, or Afghanistan, or any of the countries where we have troops fighting in secret conflicts. It does not include acting as the World Police. The political hacks in Washington are very sensitive to the Constitution when the words happen to support the goals of their financier paymasters, but they completely ignore it when the Constitutional framework would require them to be good servants of the working people in the manner the framers intended. Laborism will make America the land of the free again, instead of the new imperial Rome. Under laborism, the President will have no ability to send troops across the world at whim. For the military to move, Congress will have to declare war, and the state governors will have to agree that the war amounts to repelling an invasion.

At this point, many Americans brought up to believe financier propaganda will again be bouncing in their seats and saying “Hey, the framers were living in the 1700s. Times are different now, and if America isn’t out acting as the World Police then terrible things will happen! Don’t be naive!” So, let’s examine that proposition. Let’s ask if the American people should have believed the financier calls to war, or should instead have pressed our leaders to obey the Constitution and work for peace.

## **The lie of the good war**

It is a universal truth that the loss of liberty at home is to be charged to the provisions against danger, real or pretended, from abroad. - **James Madison**

War may sometimes be a necessary evil. But no matter how necessary, it is always an evil, never a good. We will not learn how to live together in peace by killing each other's children. - **Jimmy Carter**

All wars are follies, very expensive and very mischievous ones. - **Benjamin Franklin**

There's no honorable way to kill, no gentle way to destroy. There is nothing good in war. Except its ending. - **Abraham Lincoln**

A man who says that no patriot should attack [a war] until it is over is not worth answering intelligently; he is saying that no good son should warn his mother off a cliff until she has fallen over it. - **Gilbert K. Chesterton**

If a war be undertaken...before the resources of peace have been tried and proved vain to secure it, that war has no defense, it is a national crime. - **Charles Eliot Norton**

The wars come and go in blood and tears; but whether they are bad wars, or what are comically called good wars, they are of one effect in death and sorrow. - **William Dean Howells**

They wrote in the old days that it is sweet and fitting to die for one's country. But in modern war, there is nothing sweet nor fitting in your dying. You will die ... for no good reason. - **Ernest Hemingway**

When the rich wage war, it is the poor who die. - **Jean-Paul Sartre**

Over many generations of seeking war profits, financiers have become extremely good at selling wars. They have woven war into our education and culture. As Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi propaganda minister, said, "The best propaganda is that which, as it were, works invisibly, penetrates the whole of life without the public having any knowledge of the propagandistic initiative." The financiers use the media, their servants in government, and our schools to use this kind of whole-life propaganda to keep us ready to believe the lies that get us into war. They do this successfully despite the fact that after each war the lies that we were told to get us into it become known, and that with example after example after example of how it all works every time we should learn not to be fooled again. But we are.<sup>133</sup>

This is a long chapter. But if we are to follow Dr. King's advice and not study war anymore, first we need to study the history of American wars enough to fully realize that none of them should have happened. Nothing has been so relentlessly pounded into our heads from birth as the lie that all the wars the financiers want to have are good and proper and should never be criticized or questioned, and that no one should look into why they actually happened. All of our wars are the result of failures by or active mischief of the federal government. It is only by immunizing ourselves against the propaganda that "yeah, maybe some of our prior wars weren't great, but THIS one is really good and necessary and moral and beautiful, and you're going to love it!" that we can adopt and maintain the war policy that our revolutionary founders intended: don't have any.

The tools of the financiers sell us on war in two main ways. The first was described by Nazi leader Hermann Göring while he was being questioned at the Nuremburg war crimes trials:

Göring: Why, of course, the people don't want war. Why would some poor slob on a farm want to risk his life in a war when the best that he can get out of it is to come back to his farm in one piece? Naturally, the common people don't want war; neither in Russia nor in England nor in America, nor for that matter in Germany. That is understood. But, after all, it is the leaders of the country who determine the policy and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy or a fascist dictatorship or a Parliament or a Communist dictatorship.

Gilbert (the prosecution examiner): There is one difference. In a democracy, the people have

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133 "For my entire life, I've watched the corporate media sell us war after war, always telling us who our enemies are, which countries need saving, and which governments should be overthrown. And every single time, it turns out they lied." - **Abby Martin**

some say in the matter through their elected representatives, and in the United States only Congress can declare wars.

Göring: Oh, that is all well and good, but, voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same way in any country.

The second ploy is to set up the foreign country that the financiers want us to attack as being terrible monsters who must be stopped, and that we will be acting as good and honorable Christians if we kill them all. There have been monsters in charge of various countries over time, of course, which makes it easier to sell this one. But you will notice that the war agitators never say “country X is run by a monster, so let’s use all our bombers to bomb his house.” Instead they say that the people of a country are monsters or that the whole government and military are monsters, and that the only way to deal with them is to kill a bunch of draftee soldiers and innocent civilians in the country, and then install a government that will do what the financiers want (but who may be just as monstrous).

This version works particularly well on Americans, because we generally have good intentions and it is easy to get us to think that we are being good if we attack the monsters. When the war is over, and we are told that the people of the country are now our friends, and say “oops” about killing and maiming thousands or millions of them and destroying their country, we don’t say “Hey, wait, you mean they weren’t really monsters? You mean the people we had fun meeting when we were tourists before the war and who are our friends now weren’t really suddenly and temporarily people who were pure evil?” We just hit the “forget” button and are ready to go forth in search of monsters to destroy again the next time the financiers tell us to.

Whole books can be, and have been, written about the lies that get us to support wars. Going into that level of detail is beyond the scope of this book. However, because our minds have been shaped by the kind of invisible propaganda that Goebbels approved, and because we keep falling for the war lies again and again, even when the last lie was only a few years ago, it makes sense to give a brief rehearsal of the history of our wars and the lies and distractions that were used to sell them. In this overview I will pay particular attention to two wars that we all accept as being the “good wars”, and will briefly explain that while they may have made sense, they should not have been necessary. Jefferson said “The power of declaring war being with the Legislature, the Executive should do nothing necessarily committing them to decide for war in preference of non-intercourse, which will be preferred by a great many.” In other words, when the government acts in a way that makes a war necessary, then the government has failed. In this way, the “good wars” were as much a result of financier-driven failures as the other wars. The financier-controlled government set the events in motion and demanded that working people shed their blood in dealing with the consequences.

We can briefly dispense with the Mexican-American War of 1848, which President Polk used as an excuse to take Mexican territory that he wanted. This was driven by the relentless logic of

compound interest calling for more territory to be exploited to give profit to the financiers. There was a great deal of protest against the war at the time on the grounds that it was an unconstitutional and un-American invasion of a foreign country, with both Abraham Lincoln and Henry David Thoreau declaring that the war was inexcusable. Polk had cunningly put American soldiers in harm's way in a bit of land that was the subject of a border dispute between Texas and Mexico, got the Mexican army to attack them, and then declared that he was simply repelling an invasion. In the event, it wasn't much of a war, with the Mexican army being pretty ineffective. About 1,500 American troops died from battle injuries, while another 10,000 died of disease. While the residents of California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, New Mexico and Colorado may be glad that we had that war, there is little doubt that it was just a land grab. Polk had tried to buy these lands before the war, and likely could have gotten them peacefully if he had been willing to spend more like Jefferson had been in purchasing the Louisiana territory, or had been more patient like William Seward was in purchasing Alaska. But financiers prefer spending the lives of working people to spending money.

## **The Civil War.**

The Civil War is widely counted as good because Lincoln rather reluctantly signed the Emancipation Proclamation during the war and because the Union was preserved. But Lincoln did not decide to have a war to free the slaves. To the contrary, Lincoln's position in the 1860 election was explicitly different from that of the abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison. Lincoln wanted to put America on a path of *eventually* eliminating slavery, hopefully through state-by-state repeal by the South. He believed, which as noted below was a reasonable belief, that the South also wanted to get rid of slavery and would ban it themselves in the near future without any violence. Lincoln argued for respecting the legal (though not moral) right of the Southern states to maintain it until they could be persuaded to outlaw slavery themselves. What would have happened if he and his party had been willing to work as hard for peace as for war?

From a point shortly after the war ended up through today, the war promoters have sold us all on the idea that the Civil War was fought as a crusade to end slavery in America, but that is a propaganda sales pitch designed to make us feel good about the tremendous slaughter and destruction involved. In actuality it was an utterly stupid war that flowed from northern banks and corporations and their pet politicians wanting to exploit the South, and if the Union really had just wanted to abolish slavery it could have done so peacefully and far more successfully for less money. (The secessionist leaders, of course, were also far from blameless. There were much better routes for pushing their complaints than firing on Fort Sumter, and if afterwards they looked for who to blame for the destruction of the South they could begin by looking in the mirror.) Let's look at the math.

The Union government had accumulated \$2,535,000,000 in new debt by the end of the war. (This military expenditure was the beginning of the Military-Industrial Complex and its capture of the

Uniparty, and the interest-bearing debt thrilled the financiers.) That is not counting funds spent from current taxes during the war or the cost of death and destruction or the considerable money spent by the Confederacy. At the average cost of an enslaved person in 1860 (\$800), it would have cost \$2,560,000,000 to buy and liberate all of the 3,200,000 enslaved Americans. Given the cost of labor at that time, and the ready availability of the poor immigrants that the northern industrialists were gleefully exploiting, the southern plantation owners could have done fine<sup>134</sup> using the proceeds of compensation for the liberation of the slaves to hire cheap workers. Few in the South were religiously devoted to the institution of slavery as such,<sup>135</sup> and there were significant movements to abolish it in states of the South. The two factors that had prevented those movements from succeeding were the question of how to compensate the powerful plantation owners for their economic loss, and what to do to relocate or assimilate the formerly enslaved Americans once they were liberated. So, it is quite reasonable to believe that the southerners would have been not only open to, but fairly eager to, accept a well-considered abolition proposal including such compensation and a plan to incorporate the ex-slaves into national society. Lincoln's position in the 1860 election was not pie-in-the-sky, but rather reflected a realistic expectation that the southern states themselves could be persuaded to abolish slavery if the northerners were willing to pony up for it.

On the other hand, the southerners felt exploited by the North because the federal government imposed protectionist tariffs on manufactured products, which helped northern industrialists and hurt the less-industrial South, but did not impose tariffs on raw materials or agricultural goods, allowing the raw material and agriculture-centered South to suffer from foreign competition. The tariffs collected, which constituted 90% of federal revenues in those days and came in significant part from southern consumers (who tended to buy more imports), were used to subsidize railroads and canals in the North. South Carolina had seriously threatened to secede after the Tariff Act of 1828 was passed over strong southern opposition, which had nothing whatsoever to do with slavery. After a period of lower tariffs from 1846 to 1857 deescalated the tensions for a while, the economic panic of 1857 led to new discussions of increased tariffs, again arousing fiery southern

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134 The \$800 average figure is for people of all ages and genders. The average for a prime male field hand aged 18-30 was \$1,200. Using that figure to better approximate the value of labor to be replaced, and assuming the proceeds were deposited at the 5% interest rate prevailing in the period, you can compute the white labor one could have gotten for that money at prevailing rates. At the \$9.60 a month average southern level in 1850, that would have paid for year-round replacement labor for 15 years. At the \$13.66 average northern farm wages, with room and board, prevailing in 1860 (<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112104053548&view=1up&seq=182>) it would have covered 9 years of replacement labor. The plantation owners might have been able to import European indentured servants, especially newly-freed serfs from Russia, for even less. The plantation owners would have been able to adapt without hardship.

135 There are writings and statements from the time that fervently defend slavery, but one must put that in the context of people fired up to resent anything the North might want, much as the Democrats and Republicans today fervently attack anything the other wing of the Uniparty might support. That is how hyper-partisanship works. It does not mean that people are really strongly wedded to the idea or couldn't be talked out of it if the circumstances changed to remove the partisan atmosphere. By 1860, everyone knew that the days of slavery were coming to an end, just as the serfs in eastern Europe had been or were being freed. (The ancestors of some white people now living in America were slaves in recent memory, too. The history of slavery in the world is complicated, and ran both directions in the 1600s [[https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/empire\\_seapower/white\\_slaves\\_01.shtml](https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/empire_seapower/white_slaves_01.shtml)], but by the mid-1800s everyone saw that its time had passed.) Most southerners did not own slaves and had no reason to care about preserving slavery.

hostility. Lincoln favored high tariffs and subsidies for the railroads and steel companies he worked for. He did *not* in fact plan to abolish slavery, but he *did* plan to raise tariffs and subsidize favored northern industries, and the government had plenty of reason to know that this would be likely to trigger secession, starting with South Carolina.

The slavery issue, which geographically broke down along lines similar to the tariff issue, came to be seen by many as further would-be meddling by northerners in the southern economy, but that was just fuel, not the flame. Jefferson was disturbed by the Missouri Compromise not just because he wanted to get rid of slavery, but because it tended to bring the formerly politically-manageable slavery issue into geographic alignment with the tariff conflict, which he rightly predicted would be a destructive combination, in significant part because it encouraged fiery northern abolitionists to have broadly anti-South feelings. The common man in the South, however, was not a slave owner and would not have chosen to face northern canons just to help slave owners avoid an economic loss. As it was, many southerners in the hill country, who were not strongly affected by the tariffs, chose to sit out the Civil War.

Don't believe this because of what propagandists have told you? Jefferson Davis, the president of the Confederacy who was in a position to know what the Confederacy was about, wrote as follows in *The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government* (emphasis added):

Men differed in their views as to the abstract question of its [slavery's] right or wrong, but for two generations after the Revolution there was no geographical line of demarcation for such differences. **The African slave trade was carried on almost exclusively by New England merchants and Northern ships.** Jefferson – a Southern man, the founder of the Democratic party, and the vindicator of state rights – was a consistent enemy to every form of slavery. **The Southern states took the lead in prohibiting the slave trade, and, as we have seen, one of them (Georgia) was the first state to incorporate such a prohibition in her organic Constitution. Eleven years after the agitation on the Missouri question, when the subject first took a sectional shape, the abolition of slavery was proposed and earnestly debated in the Virginia legislature, and its advocates were so near the accomplishment of their purpose, that a declaration in its favor was defeated by only a small majority, and that on the ground of expediency.** At a still later period, abolitionist lecturers and teachers were mobbed, assaulted, and threatened with tar and feathers in New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, and other states. One of them (Lovejoy) was actually killed by a mob in Illinois as late as 1837.

**These facts prove incontestably that the sectional hostility** which exhibited itself in 1820, on the application of Missouri for admission into the Union, which again broke out on the proposition for the annexation of Texas in 1844, and which reappeared after the Mexican war, never again to be suppressed until its fell results had been fully accomplished [meaning the end of the Civil War], **was not the consequence of any difference on the abstract question of slavery. It was the offspring of sectional rivalry and political ambition. It would have manifested itself just as certainly if slavery had existed in all the states, or if there had not been a negro in America.** No such pretension was made in 1803 or 1811, when the Louisiana purchase, and afterward the admission into the Union of the state of that name, elicited threats of disunion from the representatives of New England. The complaint was not

of slavery, but of “the acquisition of more weight at the other extremity” of the Union. **It was not slavery that threatened a rupture in 1832, but the unjust and unequal operation of a protective tariff.**

It happened, however, on all these occasions, that the line of demarcation of sectional interests coincided exactly or very nearly with that dividing the states in which negro servitude existed from those in which it had been abolished. ...

The truth remains intact and incontrovertible, that the existence of African servitude was in no wise the cause of the conflict, but only an incident. **In the later controversies that arose, however, its effect in operating as a lever upon the passions, prejudices, or sympathies of mankind was so potent that it has been spread like a thick cloud over the whole horizon of historic truth.**

On the Union side, Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address didn’t say “Hey, thanks for supporting the liberation of your black brethren!” Rather, he said the war was fought so that “government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.” It was a war against secession, for any reason. If the leader of the Confederacy tells us why they seceded, and the leader of the Union tells us that his mission was to keep them from seceding, then it seems that we know what the war was about, doesn’t it?

If the North had treated the South fairly and had sought an economic solution to slavery, sensible persons of good will could have achieved the end of slavery without 620,000 dead<sup>136</sup> (or 750,000, depending on how estimated - a number equal to 23% of the slaves liberated) and many more maimed, the destruction of much of the country, and the permanent corruption of the federal government by the Military-Industrial Complex. It could have been ended without the horrific legacy of racial hostility arising from the way slavery was ended, with the freed black people left adrift among southerners who blamed them for the war and for the economic troubles of Reconstruction, with no program for remedial education or assistance in transitioning to life in free society, and competing against poor white southerners who viewed the former slaves as a threat to their economic opportunities. If the Union had followed Thomas Jefferson’s recommendation, it would have paid to liberate the slaves and, as reparations, would have given them free land in the west and supplies to start farms so that they could have developed as the independent, financially secure yeoman farmers he viewed as the backbone of American liberty; they could then have integrated into white society as prosperous, independent, educated equals.<sup>137</sup> But while governments and banks are always eager to urge unlimited spending for war, death and

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136 In the spirit of full disclosure, my ancestors fought for the Union. My great-great uncle volunteered as a drummer boy and, like most of the Union casualties, died of disease. My Norwegian great-great grandfather immigrated here and soon after found himself in uniform. He was captured and survived being held in Andersonville, the Confederate POW camp that was the subject of the world’s first war crimes trial.

137 The Scandinavians in Minnesota, Germans in Iowa, Mormons in Utah, etc. did not care what broader American society thought about them. They developed themselves and, when it came time to move around the country, did so confident in their abilities. Racial prejudice over different skin tone or features hasn’t held back Asians. With an alternative, more sensible history Black Americans would have fared much, much better.



destruction, they generally lack the will to spend money on friendship and development to achieve the same supposed goal as the war. Financiers don't make money from that.

The warmongers have worked long and hard to present this war as a glorious triumph of virtue. In fact it was a needless product of greed, exploitation, and oppression on both sides. The virtuous part of the results could have been obtained much more effectively with peace and goodwill if the governments in charge had acted maturely and fairly. They chose not to, and then represented that they "had to" fight a horrific war. As Thomas Jefferson advised "History may distort truth, and will distort it for a time, by the superior efforts at justification of those who are conscious of needing it most." The truth of history is that the soldiers who fought in the war were largely heroic, with both sides believing that they were fighting for their country and for freedom, but that they should not have had to fight. Nothing was accomplished by the war that would not have been achieved more effectively by an equally strong pursuit of peace.

## **The wars against Native Americans**

These were not so much wars as a prolonged campaign of genocide. Hopefully most Americans today already accept that they were immoral, though the actions of the Biden and Trump administrations suggest that the lessons have not been learned. Here, though, let's take a closer look at how a few semi-random white people related to the native population and see what that tells us about financiers and slaughter.

We all know that the American government entered into a long series of treaties with Native Americans, and that time and time again the government broke the treaties and forced the natives to move to more remote and more undesirable areas so that the government could take their land and sell it to white settlers. We know that any time the natives tried to resist this by force the federal government sent out the military to kill them, in some campaigns slaughtering men, women and children, or using starvation or biological warfare to do the dirty work.

Those of us now living on those stolen lands may say "Yes, but that's what conquering peoples do." We may have a romantic attraction to the vision of Native Americans roaming the wide open prairie hunting giant thundering herds of buffalo, and yet feel secretly glad that our ancestors snatched the land and built farms and cities on it so that we could be here today. When modern white Americans say that the slaughter of the native population was to be expected from our primitive racist ancestors, it makes them feel better about their evolved, enlightened selves, so different from the people who came before. But did history have to play out that way? No. Our history was driven by eastern financiers seeking compound interest, not by a fundamental difference between ourselves and our ancestors, and those financier forces continue to operate today.

I am fortunate in that I have fairly detailed histories of three groups of my ancestors living over a long period of American history. One was Daniel Boone's sister. Another was a woman who went by wagon train with her family from Wisconsin to California in 1853 as part of the gold rush, and

kept a diary. Another was a couple who moved from Maine to Minnesota in 1852, traveling by train, coach and steamer before arriving in the middle of the prairie by oxcart, and founding a farm on the banks of Lake Nokomis in what is now south Minneapolis. All of these families interacted with Native Americans. On the Boone side, this was a mixed experience, as that was a period of hostilities encouraged by the British. Members of the Boone parties were bushwhacked by natives and Israel Boone was killed in an attack. A couple of women in one of the parties were kidnapped by natives and had to be rescued. Despite these difficulties, the Boones befriended some of the local natives and got along well with them. There was no general desire to wipe out natives. Overall, absent British agitation and with more goodwill on the part of the government, it seems likely that they could have come to an accommodation with the natives. The native way of life would still have become impossible eventually, but there could have been a gradual assimilation that, while not good since the natives wouldn't have had free choice in the matter, wouldn't have been terrible, either.

My 49er ancestors began their journey scared to death of the natives. Early in their expedition, when their night watchmen thought that there was a native raid to steal their horses (which would admittedly have been a very bad thing, leaving them with stranded wagons in the middle of the prairie), the men in the party went running about shooting at shadows. But during their trip they encountered more and more natives and became educated, and their views changed. By the time they were halfway across Nebraska she was writing that a Sioux band was in camp while the men of the party were off on an errand and a Sioux brave was leaning on the wagon seat as she wrote, and she said very admiring things about the Sioux and Cheyenne. The Sioux and Cheyenne, for their part, were friendly and happy to meet and trade. Indeed, these native tribes liked and respected this Wisconsin party more than they did other native tribes, and likewise the Wisconsin party liked and respected these tribes more than they did certain other groups of white settlers. Later the natives became upset as the continued wagon trains cut a big swath of wrecked and grassless land across a buffalo migration route, but again this appears to have been a situation where people like my ancestor's family and the natives they met could have worked it out.

My Minnesota ancestors arrived in the middle of the prairie near the onset of a Minnesota winter. Fortunately for them, they were adopted by the Sioux band who were camped locally, who taught them how to live in the winter in Minnesota and taught my great-great grandmother native herbal medicine, which led to an herbalist streak that still prevails in the family today. The Sioux had no hostility about my ancestors setting up their farm. They did not regard the land as theirs, exactly, so much as they felt they had the natural right to use it the way their own ancestors always had. My ancestors liked and were grateful to the natives. When the Sioux uprising occurred and a number of white settlers were killed for overly impinging on the natives' ability to live their traditional lives, and the white government responded with slaughter and a mass hanging, my family spoke up in favor of the natives and their rights. This was again a situation where reasonable people of goodwill could have worked it out, and in fact did work it out for a time.

The lesson here is that the typical modern attitude to the slaughter of the natives is wrong. Americans tend to think either “Of course, white racism, what are you gonna do?” or “That’s how people were back then – thank goodness that we have evolved so far now!”. But the fact is that people at the time were perfectly capable of thinking and behaving properly. They could quickly overcome prejudice and become friendly and cooperative. Even where they had lost people close to them to violence, they did not necessarily give in to indiscriminate genocidal rage, but rather sought to figure out who they could succeed in befriending and how to work things out. This little set of my ancestors on both sides is a pretty random sample of settler attitudes. We could have had a very different American history that still resulted in heavy white migration into the west, but a migration that was respectful and was based on the notion that it was important to come to a mutually satisfactory arrangement. That presumably would not have involved the white goldiggers taking control of the sacred Black Hills or white buffalo hunters destroying the buffalo and exterminating the passenger pigeon, but we 21<sup>st</sup> Century Americans would not be any the worse off for that. We could have worked something out where the natives could have had lives that they were OK with. Technology is a force in itself and tends to lead people to abandon traditional lifestyles, but absent the pressure of financiers it does that through the preferences of those making the change. Chief Iron Tail was an early adopter of the motor car. We had things to offer each other if both sides had taken the view that mutual agreement was the way to go. That was not the view that the financier government took.<sup>138</sup> They wanted to put mortgages on every acre of western land as quickly as they could, and get rid of anyone who interfered with that desire. They pushed the military and the buffalo hunters to harass and starve and abuse the natives until they pushed back violently, and then used that pushback as the excuse to do full-on ethnic cleansing.

Slaughter and genocide were products of the relentless, infinite demands of compound interest, carried out by the government that the financiers own and control, not the natural attitudes of the generally decent people who moved into western lands. Only two kinds of people naturally say “You have something I want – give it to me or I will kill you.” Those are: 1) violent criminals; and 2) parasitic financiers. When working people want something, they work to get it, either producing it themselves or producing something to trade for it. Even if the people they are dealing with have a significantly different culture, working people naturally seek to work something out where everybody is satisfied. In contrast, when parasitic financiers want something they seek to extract it from working people. That is their nature and function in the world. If the working people won’t give it to them, the parasites seek to crush them. Because the parasites don’t even work to crush people, they use the politicians, media and academics they own and fund to fire up working people to do it, whether that be slaughtering and removing Native Americans, roughing up and killing indigenous Mexicans for NAFTA, pillaging other poor people in other poor countries

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138 People who want to feel generally morally superior to all of our ancestors try to accuse Jefferson of approving of the genocide of the natives, but that is wrong. He specifically reached out to native tribes pushing for the “let’s find something that works for all of us” solution, and simply warned them correctly that choosing the war option would not end well for them. Jefferson was not a fan of the white people who wanted to just rob and kill the natives, and believed that we should have been able to reach peaceful full assimilation. But Jefferson never got along with the financiers.

or bringing down foreign governments that don't play ball. When we don't recognize this, when we don't see that we are being manipulated into using the army or other forces to do things that we would never do if we were dealing with the working people involved on a person-to-person basis, then we all become pawns of the parasitic financiers in harming our own people, working people. Our own people, working people, may look different or have a different culture, but in the most important way they are like us, and we all have a common enemy.

## **Spanish-American War**

America engaged in the Spanish-American War out of a financier-driven desire to join the other western nations with colonial empires. The financier-dominated media beat the war drums based on Spain's brutal suppression of the Cuban revolutionaries, but the real American interest in the Cuban revolution was that it was interfering with US businesses operating on the island. Kicking the Spanish out made it easy for US businesses to basically take over the island. We also took over Puerto Rico and did the same there. Perhaps more significantly, we took the Philippines and Guam and established America as a far-eastern power, opening new horizons for American financiers. The Filipinos had other ideas and tried to revolt, and so we killed some 20,000 Filipino revolutionaries and 200,000 civilians to make the islands safe for business. Our treatment of the Filipinos is the best evidence of how serious the government (as opposed to American voters) was about caring about the welfare of Cuban revolutionaries. We not only wiped out whole villages, but put civilians into Spanish concentration camps, replicating the tactics that our newspapers complained about the Spanish using in Cuba.

## **Various US invasions in Latin America**

We routinely invaded, staged coups in, or otherwise interfered with a number of countries in Latin America in order to support American corporate and financier interests. Hillary Clinton was still doing this in Honduras when she was Secretary of State. While one or two of these adventures may have had some semi-legitimate reason,<sup>139</sup> in general they have been pure use of American troops and CIA resources to serve corporate financiers. The best overall account of this is by Marine Corps Major General Smedley Butler, the war hero and two-time Medal of Honor recipient who foiled an attempted coup against FDR featured in the movie *Amsterdam*.<sup>140</sup> General Butler wrote a book, *War is a Racket*,<sup>141</sup> in which he explained that he and his troops had been used essentially as Mafia-style

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139 My grandfather and his brother, wanting to replicate their father's adventure of becoming immigrant farmers in another country, bought a hacienda in northern Mexico. President Wilson interfered with the Mexican Revolution, supporting Venustiano Carranza over rival leaders Pancho Villa, Álvaro Obregón and Emiliano Zapata. That made Pancho Villa angry, and he started killing whatever Americans he found in the part of the country he controlled, resulting in Wilson sending General Pershing in to try to suppress him. My grandfather and great uncle fled on a railroad handcar with just the shirts on their backs to escape Villa's troops.

140 President H.W. Bush's father, Prescott Bush, was reportedly involved in the attempted coup, acting as liaison between the Nazis and the core actors in the Business Plot. The coup was intended to use veterans in the style of Mussolini's fascists.

141 <https://archive.org/details/WarIsARacket>

enforcers for American corporations ruthlessly exploiting the Latin Americans. He wasn't some fluffy peacenik. He just thought it was un-American and inexcusable that he and his soldiers, who had signed up to fight to protect America, were used that way.

## World War I

I believe it is universally acknowledged now that World War I was an utterly stupid and pointless war. Basically, the financiers persuaded all of the European powers to spend fortunes on weapons and armies, and then they made each other nervous and started looking for an excuse to suppress each other. Germany had the misfortune to be allied with the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which had a German emperor but whose territories were mostly eastern European, putting them into natural conflict with Russia. Germany also bordered on France, who they had beaten in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, which the French were still upset about. In 1870 France had been under the rule of Napoleon III, and the English, who had fought Napoleon I, and the Russians, who had actually beaten him, were not inclined to help France in that one. By 1914, though, the Russians were ready to forgive and forget, especially since Germany was also allied with Russia's traditional enemy the Turkish Empire. England had its eyes on cooperating with the French to take the Middle East away from the Turks, so they likewise were happy to ally with their traditional enemy France against Germany. None of this had anything to do with America or with our interests anywhere in the world.

After the Europeans had begun busily slaughtering each other, President Wilson saw the conflict as an opportunity for the United States, now a mature economic power, to become Top Country. He believed that if we entered the war on the side of England (the only country that had ever attacked us) and France, it would put us into a position to be the head of the alliance and an acknowledged leader of the western world. He knew that Americans would have no natural interest in being sent to die in a war that had nothing to do with us, and that was completely at odds with everything our revolutionary founders had intended for America's role in the world. Therefore he hired Edward Bernays, the author of the book *Propaganda*, to sell Americans on the war. The English had already generated a massive amount of propaganda lies making the Germans out to be monsters, as ably described in Arthur Ponsonby's book *Falsehood in War Time*.<sup>142</sup> Bernays was able to build on those lies. Further, with Wilson's support he ruthlessly went after German-heritage Americans, attacking them as the alien enemy within. States banned schools using the German language and removed German books from libraries and burned them. Half a million German-Americans were fingerprinted, registered and watched by the government and 6,000 were sent to internment camps in Hot Springs, North Carolina, Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, and Fort Douglas, Utah. The property of German-Americans was seized and never returned. They were fired from their jobs. One was lynched.

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142 <http://www.vlib.us/wwi/resources/archives/texts/t050824i/ponsonby.html>



My great grandfather was brave enough to spread pamphlets sensibly urging American neutrality in WWI. My grandmother was recruited to help. At first she wasn't enthusiastic about it. In her free time, though, she and her cousin visited with the WWI recruits in training. They met round after round of nice young boys who then finished their training and were shipped off to be shelled, machine-gunned and gassed, all for no reason. In the end, 116,516 Americans died and 204,000 were wounded in the effort to make President Wilson feel important. That incredible waste of lives of people she had met fired up her real hatred of the stupid, homicidal adventure of Wilson.

## World War II

This is the other war that is almost universally held out as being The Good War. That is despite the fact that it was not in fact fought to defeat fascism, since Generalissimo Francisco Franco was left in charge of Spain until he died of natural causes in 1975. It was not fought to protect the Jews or other victims of Nazi death camps. An intergovernmental conference was held in Evian, France in July 1938 among western governments including the United States, to discuss the issue of Jewish and other refugees attempting to flee Germany. In the end the only country willing to increase its acceptance of such refugees was the Dominican Republic. Hitler announced that he would be more than happy to send Jewish refugees to whoever would take them. America stuck to its quota of a maximum of 30,000 per year, while the British refused to allow increased numbers to flee to British Palestine. In May 1939 the British completely barred Jews from entering Palestine. In 1941, after the earlier plans to deport Jews and other disfavored groups were frustrated by these moves, the Nazis adopted The Final Solution.<sup>143</sup> The war was not even fought to keep Germany from conquering Europe. Hitler was very open about what he wanted to do. His preferred plan was to form an alliance with Great Britain to contain the French, take back German lands not given their promised rights of self-determination after WWI and merge with the German parts of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, and then to invade the Soviet Union to steal land for German farmers, mainly in the Ukraine.<sup>144</sup> The American government (as opposed to voters) was interested in geopolitics and the concerns of financiers, not so much in anti-fascism or saving lives.

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143 If we had elected to invite 12 million Jews, Gypsies, gays, leftists, and other people disfavored by the Nazis to come to the US, it would certainly have been a shock to the country in terms of housing and jobs, but that again raises the distinction between what we are willing to do for war, including wars that don't naturally involve America, versus what we are willing to do for peace and humanity. But again, the war was never really about saving any of the Nazi victims.

144 The Nazis left Switzerland and Sweden alone, and they invaded Norway only when they learned that Britain was about to conquer Norway as a means of flanking the Germans. Again, the Nazis were bad and defeating them was good. The issue here is the evidence as to what our government was really focused on.

That said, because the fascists were clearly bad, that implies that the allies were in the right and should be proud of themselves for defeating a villain that they could not otherwise have avoided. But is that the whole story?

Orson Wells said that “If you want a happy ending, that depends, of course, on where you stop your story.” We can also say that if you want to have a good war, it depends on where you *start* your story. In criminal law, if you do things that you know or reasonably should know will cause someone to harm someone else, then you share liability for the crime. By the same token, if a government does things that it knows or reasonably should know will cause someone to do something that leads to a war, that government shares the guilt of the war. It can’t say “Hey, at the cost of a horrifying amount of blood and destruction I brought the war I caused to an end, aren’t I good?!”

In the case of WWII, the Nazis would not have come into power and the mass slaughters, firebombings, genocide and nuclear holocausts of WWII would not have arisen if the WWI allies had not aggressively abused Germany, violating promises of self-determination votes for formerly German territories, invading the Ruhr and seizing German factories and workers for the exclusive benefit of the French, charging huge reparations at the same time that sanctions continued to be imposed so that Germany could not obtain imports it needed for production or sell its products abroad, etc. The policies of the allies triggered hyperinflation<sup>145</sup> that the rich financiers and industrialists used to, in effect, steal the assets of the German middle class, leaving widespread unhappiness and instability that fed into the Nazi message. This is all outlined by a contemporaneous writer (that is, an historian who wrote before the western powers decided on the version of WWII history they wanted us to believe) in *Germany Tried Democracy* by Samuel Halperin.<sup>146</sup> This could all have been avoided if nations had treated each other fairly and if President Wilson had acted in the manner that Presidents Washington and Jefferson and John Quincy Adams had said America should always act. Such behavior would have kept Hitler from ever taking power, and 6 million Jews and 6 million more Roma, gays, leftists, and other people disfavored by the Nazis would never have been exterminated, and the deaths of 20 million Russians and many millions of other soldiers and civilians would have been avoided. Active peace in the style of Washington, Jefferson, and John Quincy Adams would have been far more successful than war.<sup>147</sup>

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145 We have been sold the myth that the policies of the semi-socialist Weimar government caused the hyperinflation, but that is demonstrably not true. Rather, it was the combination of forced reparation payments, sanctions, and the intentional plan of German industrialists to create inflation as a means of wiping out the wage increases obtained by the newly-powerful labor unions that drove the massive inflation.

146 <https://archive.org/details/germanytrieddemo00halp> History books written long ago are a great resource for seeking truth. Over time, written history evolves to fit the narrative that the financiers want to sell. While sometimes facts emerge after an event that were buried by the propagandists at the time, often facts that were known during an event are buried later. One should read both accounts from near the time and later accounts to piece together a true view of events.

147 Another myth that the militarists sell us is that “appeasement” encouraged Hitler and was a bad thing. The militarists love this idea because it lets them argue that aggressive war is always the best answer. Once Hitler got going, though, England’s policy towards him wasn’t relevant – Hitler had a plan outlined in *Mein Kampf*, and “appeasement” didn’t create that plan and lack of appeasement would not have stopped it. But if one looks earlier and asks what would have

## Korean War

Korea had been under Japanese control from 1910 to 1945. America had never given the slightest thought to what was happening to the Korean people under imperial Japanese control during that period. In 1945, the Soviet Union and the United States did not want to give it back to Japan, but it did not have an existing government of its own. As an interim measure, the Soviet Union and the United States split the country at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel with the Soviets administering the north and the US the south. The Koreans had their own ideas and factions emerged trying to control a unified country, with forces from the north and south both periodically attacking each other. Kim Il Sung's communist forces in the north became better organized, and on June 25, 1950 invaded the south to take over as a unified government. Two days later Truman got the UN Security Council to pass resolution 83 recommending that UN members intervene in military support of south Korea, and on July 7 got the UNSC to pass resolution 84 establishing a Unified Command to be led by the United States but including troops from other member countries, all fighting under the UN flag. None of this had anything to do with American interests in anything. Korea was not an important country. No westerners visited there or cared about it in the least before this. America had no historical connection to it, and did not need anything from Korea. But the financiers did not like the Soviets or the communist Chinese, because they did not cooperate with the international financiers. American policy, as express in a National Security Council report known as NSC-68, called for America to use military force to try to prevent countries from having communist governments "regardless of the intrinsic strategic or economic value of the lands in question." In other words, we would go to war despite the fact that the country in question had nothing to do with America or American interests.

By the end of active hostilities three years later, about 1.2 million soldiers had died, which included 36,000 Americans. Further, an estimated 2.5 million Korean civilians had been killed, with perhaps another 2.5 million killed by other indirect effects of the war. The country, and especially the north, had been devastated, and possibly blighted.<sup>148</sup>

While Kim Il Sung and his heirs have been very weird and cruel people, you can judge for yourself whether between 3.7 million and 6.2 million deaths, including between 2.5 million and 5 million innocent civilian men, women and children, was a worthwhile price for repelling the invasion of the south. We will never know how the Korean government would have evolved if the country had been permitted to unify without any foreign military forces invading, and without the war then being merely suspended, rather than officially ended, for the next several decades. What we do know is that if we hadn't gotten into the Korean War, dominoes would still not have fallen and the world would not have gone communist. The propaganda used to make us believe that having

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happened if the allies had treated the German people with fairness and friendliness, you get a much different answer. The Nazis would not have been able to get the popular following that put them in power. Even with all the foreign abuse that directly fed the Nazi line, they barely pulled it off.

148 <https://www.yorku.ca/sendicot/ReplytoColCrane.htm>



Americans killed in Korea or slaughtering civilians there were good things is explained in the book *Selling the Korean War*.<sup>149</sup>

## Vietnam

It is well known that the Congressional authorization for ramping up the Vietnam war was based on a lie, the Tonkin Gulf incident<sup>150</sup>. Again here, though, it is even more interesting to start our story earlier in time.

I knew a man who was with the OSS, the predecessor to the CIA, in Asia during WWII. He had personal knowledge of the following. Ho Chi Minh, the Vietnamese revolutionary leader, approached the OSS officers with the following offer. He noted that George Washington was his personal hero (other sources agree on this) and that he was an admirer of Jefferson and of our constitution. He wanted to found an independent Vietnam with a constitution modeled on ours and to be a US friend and ally in the region. The Vietnamese traditionally hated the Chinese, so being our friend would be a good thing for them. However, he first needed to get the French colonial forces to leave and set Vietnam free. He offered that if the US would use its influence to persuade the French to leave peacefully, then he would follow this plan. However, if he had to fight a revolution to get rid of the French, then he would need foreign assistance, and he would need to get it where he could and make whatever deals that required. The OSS officers relayed that message to Washington. They received the response that our government did not want to use their political capital with France that way, so no deal. Ho Chi Minh then had to look to the Soviets, who had already expressed their interest in supporting him. If America had just agreed to lean on the French to do the right thing, Vietnam would have been our friend and a constitutional republic, without a shot fired.

Later, of course, the government changed its mind, and decided that it was vitally important to keep the communist forces from coming to power in Vietnam. When the French, tired of dealing with the revolutionaries, sued for peace in July of 1954, the parties entered into an agreement in Geneva. The Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference provided that the partition of Vietnam into northern and southern zones was just a temporary measure to allow the military forces to be demobilized in an orderly way. The agreement provided for national elections for the new government of a unified Vietnam, stating

In order to ensure that sufficient progress in the restoration of peace has been made, and that all the necessary conditions obtain for free expression of the national will, general elections shall be held in July 1956, under the supervision of an international commission composed of representatives of the Member States of the International Supervisory Commission [India, Poland and Canada]

The United States didn't like that idea, because it was clear that Ho Chi Minh would win the national elections. (Similar elections were held in Cambodia and Laos. In Cambodia that resulted in

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149 <https://academic.oup.com/book/3005>

150 <https://www.usni.org/magazines/naval-history-magazine/2008/february/truth-about-tonkin>

a free and independent national government, later undermined by the US war. Laos elected a government but remained troubled by hostile factions, as it had been for centuries, further fueled by CIA activities.) The CIA National Intelligence Estimate in August 1954 predicted that Ho Chi Minh's party "will probably emphasize social and economic reforms and the participation of all political, economic, and religious groups in state activity." That was a problem, per the Estimate, because the temporary south Vietnamese government under Ngo Dinh Diem<sup>151</sup> was unpopular, elitist and disconnected from the people, and Diem was a Catholic who persecuted Buddhists. Therefore, the US agreed with Diem to reject the scheduled national election and just declare South Vietnam to be a permanent separate country. Diem arranged a government referendum in South Vietnam in 1955 that he flagrantly rigged, and then used the army to suppress dissent. However, he remained so unpopular that in 1963 the CIA arranged a coup to replace and murder him, installing a new dictator.

We spent the next 10 years trying to prop up that illegitimate puppet regime. The result was the death of some 2,000,000 Vietnamese civilians, 1,100,000 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong fighters, 250,000 South Vietnamese soldiers, 58,300 American soldiers, and over 150,000 Americans wounded, not counting those who suffered psychological wounds and cancers and other diseases from exposure to Agent Orange. It cost US taxpayers \$168 billion, which is about \$1 trillion in current dollars. We destroyed much of the country of Vietnam, and the young American soldiers who were sent there to wander around being attacked by hidden enemy fighters sometimes responded by doing very bad things. We burned villages with napalm (now banned as a war crime) and bombed them with anti-personnel cluster bombs (now banned as a war crime, though we provided them to the Ukraine), and sowed farm fields with land mines (now a war crime, though again we provided them to the Ukraine) as a matter of course, not counting things like the My Lai massacre or the various dark deeds done under Project Phoenix.

After we withdrew and the North Vietnamese took over a unified but by then very poor and damaged country, they rebuilt and now are considered to be a friendly country and a valued trade partner that makes a lot of products for US consumers. They allow themselves to be exploited by American corporations and borrow money from the international banking system, so now we consider their communist government to be fine. I have been to Hanoi and Da Nang, which are now like other tourist cities but with better food than most. Meanwhile we also destroyed Laos and the peaceful and beautiful country of Cambodia, subjecting it to the horrific and genocidal Khmer Rouge under Pol Pot. The United States supported the rise and reign of Pol Pot, but secretly because it was too embarrassing to be seen supporting such a savage group.<sup>152</sup>

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151 Diem had been appointed as temporary Prime Minister by Emperor Bao Dai at US insistence as a condition of receiving US money.

152 "You should also tell the Cambodians that we will be friends with them. They are murderous thugs, but we won't let that stand in our way. We are prepared to improve relations with them." - Henry Kissinger, Nov. 26, 1975. "I encouraged the Chinese to support Pol Pot. Pol Pot was an abomination. We could never support him, but China could." - Zbigniew Brzezinski, 1979.

Nobody in the US government ever told our soldiers “Hey, sorry, I know we told you that we were having you fight for US freedom, but actually we were wasting your lives in a stupid, illegal and unnecessary war to prop up an illegal dictatorship, since the financiers don’t like communists because they don’t play along with the international financier system. We won’t do it again.” As with all our wars founded on lies, the government builds monuments, tells us that anyone who says the war was stupid is a terrible person who dishonors our fallen soldiers, and then moves on to the next pointless war for international finance, where the government will send more soldiers to die.

There are some other things worth noticing about the Vietnam war. First, despite the draft, the children of financiers weren’t sent to Vietnam. Financiers create wars, they don’t fight in them. George W. Bush got into the Air National Guard and not only wasn’t deployed, but wasn’t required to show up. Donald Trump was exempted from the draft because he complained of bone spurs in his feet that, somehow, never interfered with his golf game but prevented him from being able to be a soldier. In the Civil War draft, financiers could just pay a replacement to go instead of them. These days it is a little more subtle, but the bottom line is the same.

Second, the financiers and others who didn’t serve engaged in a lot of stolen valor, acting like they were tough guys for waving the flag and saying “yay, war!” while staying safely home. The chickenhawk phenomenon got even worse in later wars. Anytime anyone says “yay, war!”, ask them to show you their enlistment card. Remember, in the Ukraine war the Ukrainians specifically avoided drafting the 18 to 26-year old group that we draft exclusively. They have fought, and fought fiercely, with older men. If they can do it, then so can the chickenhawks, and put the Congresspeople right on the front lines. (Tulsi Gabbard did military service in the field while she was in Congress. So can anyone else who votes for war.)

This touches on how war is sold. The Vietnam draft only affected 18 to 26 year olds. Why? Because people don’t get younger. Don’t draft anyone over 26 and the bulk of voters (aside from mothers) don’t feel a personal stake in opposing the war. There were a lot of vigorous antiwar protests, which included many people who were strongly anti-war for religious or deeply-held philosophical reasons or who actually felt it was important for America to behave the way that our founders intended. The protests also featured college kids who were worried that they would have to go fight, at least after their college deferment ended. Many of these were motivated by self-interest and by impressing girls with their rebellion. When we got to the later wars, with the military instead staffed by volunteers who were mostly blue-collar people, that subgroup of the people who protested Vietnam now had jobs on Wall Street and in corporations and reacted to the new bad wars by saying “yay, war!” and being chickenhawks, trying to impress women with their bloodlust.

These self-interested ones were the kinds of protesters who tended to do things like burn the American flag and disrespect our soldiers. I went on antiwar protests when I was 10 and I respectfully carried an American flag, because I had read the Constitution by that age and knew that opposing that foreign war and the draft was what our Constitution called for. The people who stood against interfering with other nations, against using armies for wars other than repelling

invaders, and against forcing people to do and say whatever the government told them to on penalty of prison were the people standing up for what our flag represents. When my mother was in grade school in the 1930s her class studied Washington's Farewell Address and other writings of our founders, and appreciated what America stood for, something rarely taught in school any more. The sincere and reliable opponents of war are those who have studied the writings of our revolutionary founders and seek to make America the country it was meant to be by taking it back from the financiers and warmongers. As to the others, they are happy to have America fight in any stupid war so long as they aren't the ones getting shot at.

Finally, the Vietnam era demonstrated how the financiers and their pet media operate to stifle opposition. The peace movement was represented as being some kind of treason rather than as a movement in support of the Constitution. As quoted above, this was the same tactic used by Hermann Göring and the Nazis. People were whipped up into a state of hatred that was disgustingly un-American. Just as my personal example, in 1970 my parents were hosting a fundraiser against the planned Anti-Ballistic Missile sites in North Dakota. Those ABM missiles were banned shortly afterwards by Richard Nixon, who agreed that they were destabilizing and dangerous, so my parents were basically on the same page as Nixon on this one – nothing radical. While I was up in my bedroom reading *Alice in Wonderland*, a police officer opened my door, looked around, and told me to stay put. A little while later another officer opened my door again and ordered me downstairs, where 16 uniformed officers were busily taking everyone out to be hauled off to jail. They were going to take 10-year-old me and my 14-year-old brother to juvenile hall and my mother to jail, but my 12-year-old brother was out babysitting, and my mother made the officers see that having him come home to a note saying “we’ve all been taken to jail – make yourself a snack” probably wouldn’t look good for the police in the newspapers, so my mother, brother and I were unarrested. They confiscated all of our private papers and magazines and mail, and we later learned that they called the FBI and offered to let them root through our papers if they wished. The charge was “being in a disorderly house”, which basically meant being in a place that sold liquor without a license, but in fact we were in 100% compliance (unlike the mayor, who had a fundraiser with an actual cash bar the same evening.) In any event, I know for a fact that that had nothing to do with why they raided us. My best friend in college was a girl who, the first time I met her, came up to me after an anti-draft meeting I organized<sup>153</sup> and said “I just need to say I’m so sorry! My father was a county prosecutor, and the night the police raided your house I heard him and the police sergeant who arranged it in our kitchen laughing about it and how it would teach you a lesson!” That was how financier propaganda worked. At the time, her 10-year-mind, pure and uncontaminated by the financier propaganda, was so horrified by this assault on the liberty of an American family that years later she recognized my name and felt the need to apologize. In contrast her father, a man sworn to enforce the law, a man who raised a kind and super-ethical girl, was warped enough by propaganda to do things that would horrify the founders

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153 Most of the student protestors and I were born before the cut-off date for Carter's draft registration law, so it did not affect us. We opposed it because it is unconstitutional, offensive to liberty, and makes it easier for the government to start new stupid wars.

of our nation. He was enraged at the people who worked to get our country to act like Washington, Jefferson and Madison intended it to act.

## **Iraq War I**

The 1991 Iraq war had its roots in Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. The Kuwaitis had been, over Iraqi protests, doing substantial slant drilling under Iraqi territory in Iraq's Al-Rumaylah oil field. Sadaam Hussein asked the US ambassador if the US would object if he took military action against Kuwait. The ambassador responded that the American government would consider that to be "intramural" conflict of no particular concern to the USA. Apparently she did not understand that he meant fully taking over and annexing Kuwait, but he thought she did.

The rulers of Iraq and Syria belonged to the Arab-nationalist, anti-imperialist, socialist, secular Baath party. America's financier-owned government does not like anti-imperialists, especially socialist ones, because they don't necessarily do what the financiers want them to do. They had the same complaint about Libya and Iran. Neocon servants of the financiers had been wanting to find a way to get rid of all of the Middle Eastern leaders who did not bow to the western banks and the American President. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait offered the opportunity to try to crush Iraq.

Agents of the Kuwaiti government came to Congress claiming to be ordinary Kuwaitis, and said that they had witnessed Iraqi soldiers invading a Kuwaiti hospital and dumping newborns out of incubators onto the floor so that they could steal the incubators. Largely based on this horror story and others from similar sources, Congress declared that the Iraqis were monsters and blessed military action against them. George H.W. Bush geared up the military and some nominal international allies and invaded Iraq. The hospital incubator story was quickly proven to be a pure lie. Hospital personnel confirmed that no such incident, or anything like it, had happened, and the persons giving the testimony to Congress were proven to be PR agents. (When recently a country that the American government considers to be an ally *did* in fact shut off hospital incubators and left the newborns to die, our government yawned and sent more weapons. Apparently the act is not as important as what the financiers think of the people who committed it.<sup>154</sup>)

Bush 1 wanted a quick win and so limited his military objectives. That made this a relatively low-casualty war. Only some 154 Americans died in battle and 35 of those were from friendly fire. However, some 300,000 American soldiers developed varying degrees of Gulf War Syndrome, apparently from exposure to toxic smoke, insecticides, and toxic drugs given to protect them from poison gas exposures that did not occur. Perhaps 20,000 Iraqi soldiers, mainly draftees, were killed. We don't know how many civilians were killed, though it was more than it should have been<sup>155</sup>. Far more Iraqi civilians died as a result of the US sanctions imposed on Iraq after the war in an

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154 "There can be no peace without law. And there can be no law if we were to invoke one code of international conduct for those who oppose us and another code for our friends." – President Eisenhower, condemning the UK/French/Israeli invasion of Egypt, October 31, 1956.

155 <https://www.hrw.org/reports/1991/gulfwar/>

ongoing effort to bring down Sadaam Hussein, who had never done anything hostile to America, without risking further US casualties.<sup>156</sup>

## Afghanistan

The Afghan war had its roots in the Soviet-Afghan war. In that war, the Soviet Union sent troops to try to prop up a secular Afghan government that asked for their help in fighting fundamentalist Muslim groups who rejected the secular reforms. The American government saw this as an opportunity to have juvenile “fun” by providing violent propaganda, training, weapons, funding, and imported foreign fighters to kill Soviet troops.

Recall that Russia was on Britain’s side in the Napoleonic wars and won the war against Napoleon, and was on our side in WWI, and that the Soviet Union was on our side in WWII and defeated the Nazis in that war. For our part, we invaded Russia in and after WWI<sup>157</sup> and in 1919 Winston Churchill (then British Secretary of State for War) tried out a new form of poison gas by gassing a number of Russian villages just for fun.<sup>158</sup> Regardless, the financiers hated the Soviets then and the Russians now because they stood up to the financiers’ plans to dominate the entire economic and political structure of the world. At the level of individual members of Congress and administration officials, this hatred commonly translates into thinking that it is funny to kill Russians.

American interference in Afghanistan assumed many forms, ranging from supplying Stinger anti-aircraft missiles and training to helping Osama bin Laden to form al-Qaeda to writing radical, violent Wahhabi jihadist textbooks and supplying them to Afghan schools.<sup>159</sup> Wahhabism is a violent, highly intolerant brand of Islam that is inconsistent with the fundamentally peaceful and tolerant text of the Koran<sup>160</sup>. The Saudi Royals have long sponsored it<sup>161</sup>, and it was used successfully in supporting the rise of the House of Saud. For decades they have paid vast sums to promote Wahhabi education from Afghanistan and Pakistan to southeast Asia and even the United States. American operatives saw the rise of this jihadist sect as helpful in persuading Afghans to risk their lives killing Soviet soldiers.

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156 <https://historyheist.com/madeleine-albright-answers-interviewer-leslie-stahl-on-over-500000-innocent-iraqi-childrens-deaths-that-we-think-the-price-is-worth-it/>

157 <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/forgotten-doughboys-who-died-fighting-russian-civil-war-180971470/>

158 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/shortcuts/2013/sep/01/winston-churchill-shocking-use-chemical-weapons>

159 <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/12/7/afghan-fighters-american-textbooks.html> <https://www.carnegie.org/our-work/article/has-saudi-arabian-funding-spread-wahhabism-around-world/> <https://www.sott.net/article/386652-Indonesian-Islam-Eat-what-even-Saudis-would-not-touch-anymore>

160 The Prophet Muhammad had seen the development of Judaism and Christianity and realized that, over time, the religious message is perverted by people who put their own corrupt gloss on it to serve their personal purposes. He therefore states in the Koran that the book, in Arabic, is the only authority for Islam, and that secondary glosses on its text should be ignored. I have only read it English, but because Muhammad himself said that the book stands on its own, I think everyone who bothers to read it can form a fair opinion as to what is and is not properly Islamic. The Koran, by the way, says that Jews and Christians are People of the Book like Muslims, and should be left alone so long as they do not try to prevent Muslims from practicing their religion. For centuries the Muslims practiced tolerance, when not dealing with Christian crusaders coming to attack them.

161 <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/roots-islamic-terrorism>

The ultimate effect of that policy was predictable. I can say that with confidence because I predicted it. In 1981 I was a graduate teaching assistant giving a lecture in a class on Soviet politics and one of my students asked about America's support of the Mujaheddin in the Afghan war. My response was that the Soviets had not sent troops to Afghanistan just for fun, but rather because they feared that the brand of radical, violent Islam brewing there would spread across the border to the nearby Muslim Soviet republics. I predicted that if we succeeded in developing the extremist Islamic rebels to defeat the Soviets, that it would not be long before the core that we created would come to bite the United States. On September 11, 2001, it did, under the direction of the very group that the US had created to attack the Soviets. I don't think I was remarkably brilliant to predict that such a thing would happen. It was obvious if you knew the basic facts. Any idiot could see it.

Note that the 9/11 attack did not threaten our freedom, aside from the fact that in response we tossed our Bill of Rights in the shredder<sup>162</sup>, repeatedly passing the Orwellian-named "Patriot Act", allowing universal interception of our private communications, authorizing torture<sup>163</sup> and disappearances, and allowing the President to murder US citizens by drone just based on his say-so. The Saudis had no ability to take over America or to change our way of life, except again through our own choice to throw away our freedom out of fear (while loudly shouting that we were freedom-protecting badasses who fear no one). It killed a lot of people, but the slogans saying that our military response was "protecting our freedom" were nonsense.

Leave aside whether the 9/11 attacks could have been prevented. Actor James Woods was on one of the rehearsal flights and was so freaked out by the future hijackers' behavior that he reported it to airport officials, but there was no follow-up. A flight instructor in Minnesota reported Zacarias Moussaoui to the FBI for his very weird behavior, and the Minneapolis FBI vigorously pushed the case with the FBI national office, with the frustrated supervising agent telling them "don't you know this is a guy who could fly into the World Trade Center?" two weeks before 9/11, but no action was taken. Saudi nationals Nawaf al-Hazmi and Khalid al-Mihdhar, two of the Pentagon hijackers, were joint Saudi intelligence/CIA recruits. An FBI "asset" helped set them up and got them rooms while they were doing their flight training in San Diego. In the end, the attacks occurred anyway. At that point, even our revolutionary founders would have approved of a response. America was not invaded, but it was attacked.

The operative question is, what response? The attackers were funded with Saudi money, but we did nothing to the Saudis. We could have selected Taliban leaders, who were relatively easy to find, and gone after them. We could have put all our resources into finding bin Laden and the other al-Qaeda leadership ourselves. Osama bin Laden had kidney disease and needed dialysis. The people in the company I worked for then, which sold dialysis products, pointed out that the handful of

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162 <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/true-costs-national-security>

163 Sources in a position to know, like John Kiriakou, confirm that America never received useful intelligence from the torture, contrary to what movies and TV would have us believe. We did, on the other hand, receive useful intelligence from even hardened operatives through traditional non-violent interrogation techniques. Torture is not just evil and un-American, it is also a lousy investigation tool that interferes with more effective options.

dialysis companies in the world made a lot of money from each patient and knew pretty well who their patients were and where they were, enough to be able to figure out that some mystery person was getting deliveries in a particular area.

Even if we didn't think that would work, let's look at what else we could have done with the \$2 trillion we spent on the Afghan war. In 2001, when the war started, Afghanistan had 19,688,632 people, so that is \$101,581 per person in a country that had a per capita annual GDP of \$182.20 (that's not median income, it's the higher GDP per person). So the US could have provided the full GDP of the Afghan people for 558 years for the cost of the war. We probably could have persuaded the Afghans to do some good things for that kind of money, if that was our real goal. Certainly we could have paid the Taliban or a warlord to bring us bin Laden's head in a bag, and all his friends, too, with quite a lot of money left over. We could have done other things.<sup>164</sup> But that would not have produced profits for the financiers and the Military-Industrial Complex. So, we invaded the country and had a war instead.

That war resulted in the deaths of some 6,247<sup>165</sup> US personnel, 1,134 other allied troops, 69,095 Afghan military and police, 46,319 Afghan civilians, 52,893 opposition fighters, 74 journalists, and 446 humanitarian aid workers. Over 20,000<sup>166</sup> US soldiers were physically wounded. Many others were psychologically harmed by, as in Vietnam, having a "mission" of wandering around and waiting to be shot at or bombed by hostile local fighters mixed in with the conquered civilian population. In the early days of the war opium production was reduced to near zero and Americans encouraged the Afghan farmers to switch to growing pomegranates, but then our government decided to tolerate opium production and export by the warlords and it skyrocketed, helping to feed the heroin portion of the US opiate crisis. At the end of the war, the Taliban are back in charge and are as bad as ever.

The Russians, by the way, did NOT provide any aid to the Wahhabis or other extremists during the war. The Russians are apparently smarter than we are about the wisdom of encouraging violent extremism, and they have never considered it to be good policy to try to hurt us just for fun.<sup>167</sup>

But could we justify the Afghan war by arguing that it was really just an effort to ensure that al-Qaeda terrorists could never have a safe zone anywhere? To test that, let's look at what else the American government was doing at the same time. While we were still keeping up the Afghan war, and in the time since it finally ended, we have been invading and destabilizing Syria. Assad, the former Syrian dictator, is a Baath Party member, so again a secular, socialist, anti-imperialist Arab nationalist that the financiers hate. He was corrupt and brutal, but he had kept his country stable

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164 <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/papers/2022/BeyondWarParadigm>

165 <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/figures/2021/WarDeathToll>

166 <https://www.defense.gov/casualty.pdf>

167 The Russians, who share a long border with China, have always been nervous about China. They are a natural ally of anyone who wants to contain China. Arming the Vietnamese and cultivating Vietnam as a client state made sense for them in terms of having a potentially powerful friend on China's south. The Cuban missile crisis was triggered when the Kennedy administration first put nuclear missiles in Turkey aimed at Russia, and the Soviets then responded by trying to put similar missiles into Cuba. Kennedy pulled our missiles out of Turkey to settle the crisis. The Russians have always been willing to share intelligence with us and otherwise be helpful in regard to matters of mutual concern.



and its people relatively prosperous. He hated and suppressed the Wahhabi-style Islamic extremists, though his government was otherwise tolerant of all religions including Judaism and Christianity. He never sponsored anti-western terrorism. The United States invaded Syria for stated reasons that changed from week to week, sometimes being that the government was “attacking” armed rebels in incidents that UN investigators proved were fake, sometimes being that we had to fight the ISIS brutes that had arisen out of our Iraq war, who the Syrian government could not suppress because of our invasion and the civil war we were feeding. ISIS was proven to use almost exclusively US weapons and to be making their money by selling stolen Syrian oil to Israel at discount prices. ISIS is a child-molesting Salafist sect related to Wahhabism, and the US, Syrians, Russians, Iranians, Iraqis and Kurds all agreed that they should be squelched.

The forces that we gave money and weapons to in supposedly going after ISIS, however, were a branch of al-Qaeda that rebranded under the name Jabhat al-Nusra to avoid embarrassing the American government, and were largely staffed by foreign al-Qaeda recruits. Jake Sullivan’s e-mail to then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in February 2012 summarized the American view: “AQ [Al Qaeda] is on our side in Syria.”<sup>168</sup> The forces who actually defeated ISIS were not US troops or our al-Qaeda militias, but rather northern Kurdish militias and Russian troops invited in by the Syrian government, with additional help from Iran and Iraq. We imposed brutal sanctions on the Syrian leadership and took control of their main oil producing area and main agricultural area to deprive the Syrian people of money and food. We finally succeeded in driving Assad out of power, and replaced him with Abu Mohammad al-Jolani, a former ISIS leader and al-Qaeda leader with a \$10 million US bounty on his head. He is now slaughtering Syrian religious minorities using the al-Qaeda foreign fighters that he imported. So, we have managed to create a safe haven for al-Qaeda and related Wahhabist terrorists in the Middle East, and indeed put them on the Syrian government payroll. If the Afghan war was supposed to be an effort to prevent al-Qaeda from having a safe zone anywhere, then why did we create a war in Syria to have exactly the opposite effect, and intentionally so?

## **Iraq War 2**

In the week of the 9/11 attacks, I bet my colleagues that regardless of who was responsible for the attacks, we would respond by bombing Iraq. Our government had spent years demonizing Iraq, and they knew from prior experience that bombing Baghdad looked impressive on CNN. It didn’t matter that Iraq obviously had nothing to do with 9/11, since Saddam and the Baath party hated the Saudi Wahhabis and other Islamic extremists with a white-hot heat. The government would be dying to bomb them.

I was surprised when the government admitted that al-Qaeda had its base in Afghanistan and started bombing Afghanistan. On CNN, Afghanistan looked like it had been bombed into rubble even before we started, so bombing it didn’t look impressive at all. The George W. Bush

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<sup>168</sup> [https://www.realclearinvestigations.com/articles/2022/04/20/al\\_qaeda\\_is\\_on\\_our\\_side\\_how\\_obamabiden\\_officials\\_helped\\_create\\_a\\_safe\\_haven\\_for\\_terrorists\\_in\\_syria\\_827477.html](https://www.realclearinvestigations.com/articles/2022/04/20/al_qaeda_is_on_our_side_how_obamabiden_officials_helped_create_a_safe_haven_for_terrorists_in_syria_827477.html)

administration soon figured that out, but having admitted that the 9/11 bombings had originated in Afghanistan (without noting that they were committed by, and funded by, Saudis, who were friendly to the Bush family) they had to come up with new reasons to bomb Iraq. Sure, they made a lot of totally unsupported statements about Iraq being a state sponsor of Islamic extremist terrorism, and the financier-owned media gleefully repeated those statements as being factual. But even the boldest propagandists figured that a major war needed to be based on a more plausible lie than that. And W wanted a major war, not just a bomb-and-run. His father had done that already, and W wanted to one-up daddy.

So, the “weapons of mass destruction” lie was born. The government knew that Iraq had used chemical weapons on its own people, and it had used them in the Iran-Iraq war, where the Reagan Administration was providing aid and support to both countries. Those had been banned after the first Gulf War, and weapons inspectors had confirmed that all of the prohibited weapons had been destroyed, but the W administration thought they might be able to find some residual something somewhere that they could hold out as proof of weapons of mass destruction. (The “weapons of mass destruction” term was deployed so that they could create intentional confusion between a nuclear weapons program and having poison gas.) If not, it would be too late for anyone to stop the war anyway. They just had to say the lie really loudly, get the other western governments owned by the financiers to agree that it must be true, and of course get the financier-owned press to agree that everyone knew it was true. Colin Powell was chosen as the liar-in-chief because Americans viewed him as an honest and credible military man, which he probably was at one point in his life. He told the big lies about Iraqi WMDs at the UN Security Council, and told them with conviction. “... every statement I make today is backed up by sources, solid sources. These are not assertions. What we’re giving you are facts and conclusions based on solid intelligence. ... There is no doubt in my mind ...” He then went on to tell lie after lie.<sup>169</sup> Two months after the US invaded Iraq, the WMD lies were shown to be false.<sup>170</sup> No trace of the fictitious weapons of mass destruction, or of any recent program to create or hide them, was ever found.

That did not stop us from bombing Iraq and its civilian infrastructure, overthrowing its government, and throwing the country into a state of violent anarchy. The ultimate result was a division of the country between a Kurdish area in the north and a Shiite Muslim theocratic government allied with Iran governing over everything else, which was not America’s intent. It gave rise to ISIS, the truly horrific Salafist group that everyone fought in Syria. Saddam was a nasty dictator, but aside from the Kurds (or at least the Kurds who didn’t end up being chronically raped and murdered by ISIS for a while) it didn’t make people’s lives better. After the failure to find any trace of WMDs the American government changed its story and said that we invaded Iraq to liberate the Iraqi people from a mean dictator, but we didn’t invade any other countries to throw out brutal dictators that the financiers liked. And nobody asked the Iraqi people if they wanted us to invade and destroy their country.

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169 <https://theintercept.com/2018/02/06/lie-after-lie-what-colin-powell-knew-about-iraq-fifteen-years-ago-and-what-he-told-the-un/>

170 <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/02/1146332>

Through the formal “Operation Iraqi Freedom” that ended August 31, 2020 (so not counting deaths among the US soldiers who have remained there ever since), 8,264 Americans died in the Iraq war, including soldiers, Department of Defense personnel and contractors. (Of the 4,419 soldier deaths, 937 were “non-hostile”, i.e. not deaths due to hostile fighters). 31,947 Americans were wounded in action. About 2.6% of all the wounded suffered a major loss of limb. We don’t have a statistic on those suffering traumatic brain injury. Many more suffered psychological effects from, once again, having a “mission” that largely involved wandering about and getting attacked by hostile fighters mixed in with the conquered civilian population. 324 troops from other allied countries were killed. About 50,000 Iraqi soldiers and police of the new government were killed, as were about 40,000 resistance/opposition fighters. 200,000 innocent civilians died directly from war violence, and perhaps as many again from indirect effects of the war on food insecurity, destruction of medical services, destruction of water and power facilities, and the like. We don’t have statistics on how many civilians were wounded or suffered abuse or psychological trauma, but it would be a huge number<sup>171</sup>. 282 journalists and 64 humanitarian aid workers were also killed. The wars in Iraq and Syria cost the US Federal Government about \$2.9 trillion<sup>172</sup> through 2023, including interest and veteran care.

Before the first Gulf War, Iraq was of interest to the United States only in that a fairly large number of middle-class, well-educated secular Iraqis attended American universities. As of 2024, Iraq is of interest to the US only in that a fairly large number of formerly prosperous, secular Iraqi doctors, engineers, etc. are now refugees driving cabs in American cities. The financiers hoped that we would be able to install a puppet government that would use Iraqi oil money to serve the desires of the international financiers and generally do whatever the US President told them to do. It didn’t work out that way.

## Conclusion

None of America’s wars since the Revolutionary War were “good wars”. All of them reflect failures of our government to behave in a manner that would clearly have made the wars unnecessary, assuming that we were fighting the wars for the reasons that the government stated. Most of them were based on straight-out lies and propaganda. All of them were based on the apparent interests of the financiers and Military-Industrial Complex, the MIC being one of the ways in which the financiers get the American working public to give them money. In some cases, America might have had to spend an amount equivalent to the cost of the war to accomplish the same objective more effectively through peaceful and friendly means. In other cases the peaceful route would have been much cheaper. In still other cases there was no objective in the war that mattered to working Americans. If we had taken the warnings and advice of our revolutionary founders to heart, if we had resisted thinking that they were just a bunch of 18th-century primitives whose

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171 See for example <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2023/Costs%20of%2020%20Years%20of%20Iraq%20War%20Crawford%2015%20March%202023.pdf> at page 18 (“A survey of 1,000 Iraqi women in 2020 found that more than 91% had experienced war related trauma since 2003, and that “anxiety symptoms were reported by 39.7% of the women, depressive symptoms by 34.2% and suicidal thoughts/attempts by 35.8%.”)

172 <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/figures/2023/IraqWarCosts>

advice was irrelevant to modern America, we would have been much better off, as would millions upon millions of people in other countries.

Laborism rejects war and militarism. It does not do so just because the major religions all condemn war and urge us to work for peace and friendship. It does not do so just because it is disgraceful for modern people, who consider themselves to be civilized, to be engaging in the uncivilized brutality of war. It does not do so just because our recent brinkmanship with Russia and our contemplated brinkmanship with China reminds us that we now have weapons that could kill us all, or that we are moving quickly to the development of Terminator-style Skynet AI weapons systems<sup>173</sup> that could, one day, become upset with us. Laborism rejects war and militarism because it is stupid, and it always works in favor of the international financiers and to do harm to working people.

## **Don't play favorites**

... what has America done for the benefit of mankind? Let our answer be this: ... America, in the assembly of nations, since her admission among them, has invariably, though often fruitlessly, held forth to them the hand of honest friendship, of equal freedom, of generous reciprocity.

She has uniformly spoken among them, though often to heedless and often to disdainful ears, the language of equal liberty, of equal justice, and of equal rights. She has, in the lapse of nearly half a century, without a single exception, respected the independence of other nations while asserting and maintaining her own. She has abstained from interference in the concerns of others, even when conflict has been for principles to which she clings, as to the last vital drop that visits the heart. ...

Wherever the standard of freedom and Independence has been or shall be unfurled, there will her heart, her benedictions and her prayers be. But she goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own.

She will commend the general cause by the countenance of her voice, and the benignant sympathy of her example. She well knows that by once enlisting under other banners than her own, were they even the banners of foreign independence, she would involve herself beyond the power of extrication, in all the wars of interest and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy, and ambition, which assume the colors and usurp the standard of freedom. The fundamental maxims of her policy would insensibly change from liberty to force. She might become the dictatress of the world. She would be no longer the ruler of her own spirit.

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173 <https://www.anduril.com/hardware/ghost-autonomous-suas/>

[America's] glory is not dominion, but liberty. Her march is the march of the mind. She has a spear and a shield: but the motto upon her shield is, Freedom, Independence, Peace. This has been her Declaration: this has been, as far as her necessary intercourse with the rest of mankind would permit, her practice. - **President John Quincy Adams**

Unmeddling with the affairs of other nations, we had hoped that our distance and our dispositions would have left us free, in the example and indulgence of peace with all the world. To cherish and maintain the rights and liberties of our citizens, and to ward from them the burdens, the miseries, and the crimes of war, by a just and friendly conduct toward all nations, were among the most obvious and important duties of those to whom the management of their public interests have been confided; and happy shall we be if a conduct guided by these views on our part, shall secure to us a reciprocation of peace and justice from other nations. The desire to preserve our country from the calamities and ravages of war, by cultivating a disposition, and pursuing a conduct, conciliatory and friendly to all nations, has been sincerely entertained and faithfully followed. - **Thomas Jefferson**

The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. ... Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. ... we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel. Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor or caprice? - **George Washington**

Peace, commerce and honest friendship with all nations; entangling alliances with none. - **Thomas Jefferson**

Our revolutionary founders were clear in rejecting any alliances and enmities as a matter of policy. They were smart students of history and human nature. Do we really think that Nixon, Ford, Reagan, Bush 1 or 2, Clinton, Trump or Biden were smarter or wiser than Washington, Jefferson, Madison, John Adams, and John Quincy Adams? Our founders had a specific vision for the way that America was to be a force for good in the world. We were to lead by the example of our own good and friendly behavior, not by joining in international gangs, by persecuting other countries, or by interfering with other nations. Our founders were true revolutionaries who had studied all the lies and intrigues of the countries that had come before and rejected them in favor of a new path, a path that geography gave America a unique ability to try out and model. They firmly believed (and for 50 years America's conduct and the response of the world supported that belief) that we could become the light of the world by rejecting alliances, rather than by trying to lead them. They predicted that American leaders would, as a matter of ego, want to try to become dictators of the world, and they tried hard to warn us away from letting our political leaders choose that course.

Washington's farewell address, which elementary schools used to teach but no longer do, shows the thoughtful wisdom behind their view. He stated

Observe good faith and justice towards all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all. Religion and morality enjoin this conduct; and can it be, that good policy does not equally enjoin it? It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and at no distant period, a great nation, to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence. Who can doubt that, in the course of time and things, the fruits of such a plan would richly repay any temporary advantages which might be lost by a steady adherence to it? Can it be that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a nation with its virtue? The experiment, at least, is recommended by every sentiment which ennobles human nature. Alas! is it rendered impossible by its vices?

**In the execution of such a plan, nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations, and passionate attachments for others, should be excluded; and that, in place of them, just and amicable feelings towards all should be cultivated. The nation which indulges towards another a habitual hatred or a habitual fondness is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest.** Antipathy in one nation against another disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury, to lay hold of slight causes of umbrage, and to be haughty and intractable, when accidental or trifling occasions of dispute occur. Hence, frequent collisions, obstinate, envenomed, and bloody contests. The nation, prompted by ill-will and resentment, sometimes impels to war the government, contrary to the best calculations of policy. The government sometimes participates in the national propensity, and adopts through passion what reason would reject; at other times it makes the animosity of the nation subservient to projects of hostility instigated by pride, ambition, and other sinister and pernicious motives. The peace often, sometimes perhaps the liberty, of nations, has been the victim.

**So likewise, a passionate attachment of one nation for another produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favorite nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest in cases where no real common interest exists, and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels and wars of the latter without adequate inducement or justification. It leads also to concessions to the favorite nation of privileges denied to others which is apt doubly to injure the nation making the concessions; by unnecessarily parting with what ought to have been retained, and by exciting jealousy, ill-will, and a disposition to retaliate, in the parties from whom equal privileges are withheld. And it gives to ambitious, corrupted, or deluded citizens (who devote themselves to the favorite nation), facility to betray or sacrifice the interests of their own country, without odium, sometimes even with popularity; gilding, with the appearances of a virtuous sense of obligation, a commendable deference for public opinion, or a laudable zeal for public good, the base or foolish compliances of ambition, corruption, or infatuation.**

**As avenues to foreign influence in innumerable ways, such attachments are particularly alarming to the truly enlightened and independent patriot. How many opportunities do they afford to tamper with domestic factions, to practice the arts of seduction, to mislead public opinion, to influence or awe the public councils.** Such an attachment of a small or weak towards a great and powerful nation dooms the former to be the satellite of the latter.

Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence (I conjure you to believe me, fellow-citizens) the jealousy of a free people ought to be constantly awake, since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government. But that jealousy to be useful must be impartial; else it becomes the instrument of the very influence to be avoided, instead of a defense against it. **Excessive partiality for one foreign nation and excessive dislike of another cause those whom they actuate to see danger only on one side, and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the other. Real patriots who may resist the intrigues of the favorite are liable to become suspected and odious, while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people, to surrender their interests.**

The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop. Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none; or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.

Is there anything in President Washington's analysis that we haven't observed time and time again in the decades since America stopped following his advice? With the international parasitic financiers plotting and planning to create alliances in their interests and setting loose their media and their funded academics to echo their messages, haven't they completely warped America's internal debates to serve the interests of the international financiers and foreign powers? Is any criticism of certain foreign countries allowed by our media or politicians? Have we not devoted all the resources of our country to serving the dictates of a country that has attacked our warship, bombed our consulate, heavily interfered in our elections, and vigorously spied on our government and stolen our secrets?<sup>174</sup> Have we not imported and promoted agents of actual foreign enemies to sway American public opinion against countries that the financiers want us to see as enemies?<sup>175</sup> Have we not pledged ourselves to act unquestioningly as the big-friend protector of yipping foreign bullies that have been our enemies in war and our manipulators in peace? Have we not completely squandered our international goodwill in persecuting certain

174 The identity of that country doesn't matter here so I won't cite to the particulars. What matters is that, because we have ignored the advice of our founders, such an unhealthy relationship is allowed to exist with *any* country.

175 <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/seven-decades-nazi-collaboration-americas-dirty-little-ukraine-secret/>

foreign nations and supporting others, all in matters that have nothing to do with our own interests? When I traveled to Arab countries with my family in 1993 people were very friendly and genuinely glad to meet us and talk with us, women wanted to have their pictures taken with our children, and we were advised that we should encourage our children to keep their American accents despite living in England because American accents are good while everyone hated the English. I don't think it would be the same today, do you?

The tools and hirelings of the financiers will say "But this is the 21st century, we can't listen to what people said in the 1700s!" That's nonsense. Again, what part of Washington's advice isn't still true? Human nature hasn't changed. Politics hasn't changed. America has, or until relatively recently had, a gigantic, self-sufficient economy. With a little effort under laborist policies, we could do just fine if the rest of the world did not exist. The international financiers need the World Bank, the IMF, the Davos World Economic Forum, the Trilateral Commission, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Carlyle Group, the EU, and all the other supra-governmental organizations they use to try to harness all the people of the earth to feed the lust for compound interest. We, the working people of America, don't. We don't need anything from anyone else to be able to live happy, peaceful, prosperous lives.<sup>176</sup>

We don't need anyone to defend us. No one came to our aid to protect us from the British in the War of 1812. Since then, all of our wars have been fought for the financiers or for other countries. Nobody attacked us in WWI.<sup>177</sup> In WWII, the Nazis and Italian fascists didn't attack us. We attacked them on behalf of other nations.<sup>178</sup> Although the Japanese used a lot of manpower fighting the Chinese, Vietnamese, and to a lesser extent the Russians, we pretty much beat them ourselves. The Chinese and Vietnamese were not fighting as our allies, but rather for their own liberation. NATO exists as America, the big dog, protecting the yippy little former empires when they go out in the world and get aggressive to make themselves feel tough again. We would be much safer as a nation by ending that alliance. We have zero realistic ability to protect Asian nations from China and zero national interest in trying to do so, even if China did set its sights on anything beyond re-absorbing Taiwan, so we should not be in an Asian alliance.

The myth that propagandists throw out in favor of our military alliances is that they created the Pax Americana that kept other countries from having wars that we get dragged into. That is nonsense. We can simply choose not to get dragged into things. We can, as our founders intended,

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176 There are certain things that we need people not to do, but our globalist policies have not been notably helpful on that score. Nuclear non-proliferation treaties are good things, but the main thing incentivising new countries to try to get the Bomb has been fear that otherwise America will subject them to a regime-change invasion. Supporting the World Health Organization is good, because viruses don't respect borders, but globalism has created the perfect environment for pandemics. Climate change is a global concern, but the global climate meetings have done nothing of substance. Every country has incentive to do what it can on that one, treaties or not.

177 The Lusitania was a British ship. On 22 April 1915, just over a week before the Lusitania's departure, the German Embassy posted warnings in 50 American newspapers, reminding the public that the waters around Great Britain were included in the war zone between Britain and Germany, and that ships in those waters could be attacked and/or sunk by U-boats. The Germans did their best to avoid having Americans caught up in their war with the British.

178 Hitler's writings make it clear that he had zero interest into getting into a conflict with America. He would have loved for us to take all of his refugees and then let Germany attack the Soviet Union.



lead by example, allowing the aggressive little foreign bullies to see that being a peaceful, non-aligned nation leads to prosperity, health and happiness, and let their own people then demand that their governments follow our example.

Laborism calls for us to follow the directives of our revolutionary founders and reject alliances and antagonisms. We will follow a policy of friendship to all and attending to our own business. We will withdraw from all military alliances. We will avoid sanctions, but maintain prohibitions; in other words, we will avoid selling weapons to anyone or selling other things to people who would do bad things with them, but we won't just try to hurt the common people of any country by refusing trade in food or consumer goods. We will not seek monsters to destroy.

We will speak up for our values and honestly point out barbarism and injustice, but will avoid interference in the affairs of others. A nation that acts with virtue and friendship to all is in a position to bring universal moral condemnation to bear on a wrongdoer. Even in our corrupt world, that is a strong weapon<sup>179</sup>, but it is one that few nations are virtuous enough to wield. America's weapon of moral condemnation has been blunted by our actions, including such choices as being unwilling to sign or ratify many international rights agreements signed by most of the other nations of the world. Those include the Forced Labor Convention, the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the protocols to the Geneva Convention on war crimes, the convention establishing the International Criminal Court, the Mine Ban Treaty, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Arms Trade Treaty, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture. It is tough to exercise moral authority when you stand nearly alone in not condemning slavery, union-busting, human trafficking, discrimination, war crimes and torture. Likewise, it is difficult to exercise moral authority when year after year, no matter which party is in power, America takes actions in the UN that are inconsistent with our stated values, because our politicians think that taking those actions serves the interest of our corporations and financiers.

Our moral authority has further been blunted by our unilateral actions to impose sanctions on countries we don't like, simply because they do things that countries we do like also do *without* suffering sanctions. If we wish to be a force for good in the world then we must disentangle ourselves from the evil political intrigues of the financiers and of other nations, do good ourselves, and speak up for good and against evil wherever it may be found. As President Eisenhower

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179 Even the Nazis went to a lot of trouble to try to convince the international Red Cross that they were treating the Jews in concentration camps well, that the camp where they put Jewish artists and musicians was like a pleasant artistic community. The Nazis also complied with the Geneva Convention on the rules of war. While we can think of countries willing to say "yes, we're breaking all the rules of civilization, so what?", in general even very bad dictators are shy about appearing evil on the world stage. As Thomas Paine noted "An army of principles will penetrate where an army of soldiers cannot."

declared, there can be no peace without law, and there can be no law if we were to invoke one code of international conduct for those who oppose us and another code for our friends. We must speak up for Right because it is right, not because a particular country is doing it. We must speak up against Wrong because it is wrong, regardless of which country is doing it.<sup>180</sup>

When a laborist America behaves in the manner that our founders intended, we will not have allies but we will have genuine friends throughout the world. In the modern age of terrorism and turmoil, which is more valuable: a set of corrupt and hated allies, or the genuine friendship of the peoples and nations of the Earth? If you take your family abroad, which will make you feel safer: being allied with Germany, France, Britain and Japan, with all their sins, or being known as a good and friendly nation that seeks the good of working people around the world? If you are an American nun doing good in El Salvador, which is less likely to result in your being raped and murdered<sup>181</sup>: America being allied with the El Salvadoran government and serving their interests, or America standing up for the interests of our citizens? As Washington asked, do we really think that Providence has not linked the happiness of a nation with its virtue? Laborism will renew the experiment conducted, with consistent success, in our first half century while our founders' vision remained in our memory. We will fulfill their revolutionary purpose.

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180 For an example we need look no further than our neighbor to the south. The Zapatista war against oblivion in Mexico, which first asserted itself on the day the NAFTA treaty was signed, arose in response to terrible things that were happening there during the years that we were vigorously pursuing free trade with Mexico. The violent suppression of poor and indigenous people, murders, rapes, torture, and terrorism conducted by and on behalf of Mexico's political and economic elites were routinely ignored or downplayed by our government and media because they were inconvenient to the agenda of the international financiers. The destruction of self-sufficient peasant agriculture by NAFTA was likewise ignored. Our silence and our pushing of trade policy that actively hurt the poor and vulnerable was inexcusable.

181 <https://origins.osu.edu/milestones/murdered-churchwomen-el-salvador>

## Children and Mothers

Every child born in every home in America deserves to have the resources needed to realize their full potential and lead a safe, happy, and prosperous life. Sadly, many children are not born into *Leave It to Beaver* or *Cosby Show* or even *The Simpsons* households. That's not an adequate excuse. If we allow the circumstance of a child's birth to govern their prospects in life, then that is a disgrace to us as a nation. So-called "liberals" have been far too willing to declare that being born with a certain skin color or a certain family income just naturally leads to lots of bad things. So-called "conservatives" have been far too willing to abandon children and mothers, and not at all willing to do anything useful to support the American family. The Pilgrims believed that the welfare and success of children was the responsibility of the entire community. Laborism supports that belief. American children, all American children, are the responsibility of all Americans. If any child suffers abuse or neglect, if any child's education does not allow her to reach her potential, if any child becomes a teen drug user or a teen mother, if any non-psychopathic<sup>182</sup> child grows up to be a criminal, if any child grows up without healthy food and heat, clean air, clean water, clean housing, and green spaces to play in, if any child misses the chance to become interested in the world and to acquire culture, then we as a society have failed.

Financiers don't care about our children, other than as future workers earning money for financiers. They may talk about helping children, but just look around you. When Midwestern America was populated by working people, before the financiers took tighter control, every little town had a nice school that was the town's pride and joy. Drive through historic towns and look for those buildings. They created nice parks and playgrounds for the children. Financiers fought against the child labor reforms that were pushed through by women from working families. Financiers fought against efforts to make urban environments safe and healthy. Financiers pushed to build new private prisons instead of investing in keeping children from becoming criminals. Financiers put through policies that kept a big swath of working Americans poor so that children were not born into a comfortable and secure lifestyle. They push for turning public schools into for-profit enterprises instead of fixing them. They pushed to sell Oxy and other opioids without worrying if they were going to teenagers. They look at differences in achievement between rural, urban and suburban kids, between kids of different races and different family incomes, and kids from different states, and say "well, that's just racism and such, nothing to be done except to repeat daily that we are virtuous and oppose it" instead of saying "that's not acceptable."

Laborism rejects those views. We reject the idea that we can't provide all of our children with decent schools and parks because at one time, in the places controlled by working people, we did. The government tells us that we are several times richer now than we were then, but we can't

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<sup>182</sup> Psychopaths have a condition, lack of a normal fear response, that makes them very difficult to socialize. Some super parents succeed and raise children who become test pilots and war heroes. Most don't. While we should definitely try to catch children with this condition early and figure out how to keep them from turning to the dark side, once they have turned it is *extremely* unlikely that they will be reformed. Sociopaths, their poorly-socialized but biologically normal friends, can be reformed if they are kept away from psychopathic role models.

provide the same things we did in the past? Laborism rejects the assertion that a black American baby should be expected to perform less well coming out of high school than a white or Asian American baby, either because of their race or because of racism (aside from the racism that asserts that they should be expected to perform less well). We should be tracking each child year by year and making sure they have what they need to succeed, no matter what their neighborhood is like or what their home life is like when they are born. We know that this can work because organizations like Parents As Teachers are achieving it now<sup>183</sup>, even within our fundamentally lousy school and social structures. Laborism rejects the idea that our country's high rate of serious crime<sup>184</sup> is just how society is. We know that there are specific problems that can be addressed if we have the will to do it.

Laborism stands for the proposition that girls and women should not find themselves with unplanned pregnancies, either through crime or ignorance or other circumstances, and that we should take a number of sensible steps to achieve that goal. It stands for the proposition that all girls should be helped to have the self-respect and confidence and competence that enables them to reject boys and men who seek to take advantage of them, to have true and meaningful control over their own bodies. It stands for the proposition that we should do whatever we can to ensure that potential mothers and fathers see parenthood as a serious obligation, not an Instagram opportunity, and don't get pregnant unless they are ready to fulfill that obligation. It stands for the proposition that no child who is born to an unready or unwilling mother despite these measures should suffer or be without a safe, nurturing, happy home.

Laborism stands for the proposition that America's high maternal mortality rate is unacceptable and must be fixed. Our poor pediatric health is also unacceptable and must be addressed at every level.

Lots of people say those things. A laborist government will do it.

## **Education is important**

[E]xperience has shown, that even under the best forms, those entrusted with power have, in time, and by slow operations, perverted it into tyranny; and it is believed that the most effectual means of preventing this would be, to illuminate, as far as practicable, the minds of the people at large - **Thomas Jefferson**

History by apprising them of the past will enable them to judge of the future; it will avail them of the experience of other times and other nations; it will qualify them as judges of the actions and designs of men; it will enable them to know ambition under every disguise it may assume; and knowing it, to defeat its views. - **Thomas Jefferson**

The liberal appropriations made by the legislature of Kentucky for a general system of education cannot be too much applauded . . . . Learned institutions ought to be the favorite

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183 <https://parentsasteachers.org/evidence-based-home-visiting/>

184 <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1374211/g7-country-homicide-rate/>

objects with every free people. They throw that light over the public mind which is the best security against crafty and dangerous encroachments on the public liberty. ... What spectacle can be more edifying or more seasonable than that of liberty and learning, each leaning on the other for their mutual and surest support? - **James Madison**

Promote then as an object of primary importance, Institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened. - **George Washington**

The whole people must take upon themselves the education of the whole people, and must be willing to bear the expenses of it. There should not be a district of one mile square, without a school in it, not founded by a charitable individual, but maintained at the public expense of the people themselves. - **John Adams**

A nation of well-informed men who have been taught to know and prize the rights which God has given them cannot be enslaved. It is in the region of ignorance that tyranny begins. - **Benjamin Franklin**

America's founders believed that the education of every citizen was essential to the success of the nation. They knew the extent to which governments and the press are inclined to lie, to excite, and to oppress the people. Those efforts cannot be prevented, and if successful they will undermine any democracy. An educated citizenry, capable of sorting fact from fiction and logic from lies, is the only reliable protection against the victory of propagandists. Without a good education for every American, we will fail. Where enlightenment fails, darkness prevails.

The financiers, of course, don't want the mass of Americans to be educated enough to see through their propaganda and lies. For decades they have hated our public education system and have tried to undermine it, first by starving it of funds and then more recently by politicizing it. They have agitated among religious groups to get them to hate public schools, financing any organization that seeks to destroy secure funding for public education. They have gotten the opposing wings of the Uniparty to try to turn our schools into indoctrination centers to get children to accept either the neoliberal or the neoconservative world view as their own. The financiers don't care which of those views children are taught, so long as they are taught not to question authority and so long as working people can be distracted into fighting about which of the two unacceptable outcomes they prefer.

Due to these financier-backed efforts to turn schools into indoctrination centers, these most essential of American institutions, the schools that were our pride and joy, have become battlegrounds for opposing forces trying to do exactly what the founders warned against. Jefferson warned us about what would happen if America ever sought to teach children to have a particular opinion instead of teaching them to question authority. "Subject opinion to coercion: whom will you make your inquisitors? Fallible men; men governed by bad passions, by private as well as public reasons." Instead, the founders believed we should give Americans access to facts and help them to learn to reason, question, and criticize, and then they can be relied upon to find

their way to the Truth. Yet thanks to financier-funded propaganda, people at both ends of the so-called “liberal”-“conservative”<sup>185</sup> spectrum now seek to force particular opinions into the minds of our children in an effort to send them into the world as unthinking robots programmed by propaganda, unquestioning tools used to accepting whatever the puppetmasters in society want them to believe. That is the surest way to destroy our American liberties and create a society in which our children truly love Big Brother.

It is not enough to be busy. So are the ants. The question is: What are we busy about? - **Henry David Thoreau**

At the same time, American education has been perverted by another trend, one encouraged both by the desires of the rich to maintain their privileged status and by the increased competition that has arisen from the increase in our population from 203 million in 1970 to 340 million today.

What is our image of the core American personality? We are not a nation of sheep and conformists. Our ancestors did not come to this country if sucking up to the Powers That Be and the bureaucracy in their home country was working out for them. They came here because they questioned authority and the old way of doing things. They wanted to follow their own ideas and live their lives the way they thought life ought to be lived.

We remember the pilgrims who came seeking freedom of religion, but we forget that our Midwest was largely settled by persons who fled Europe after the failed revolutions of 1848 and came to our prairies seeking the self-governance they were unable to gain in Europe. They were independent and, while polite and respectful, they did not put up with being told what to do. They did not play the game. That made America great. Those of us who worked in multinational companies in the generation that came out of the 1970s could see the real truth of this American type as compared with colleagues from other countries. Americans did not do things just because that was the way they had always been done. They asked “why?” and “why not?”. They assumed that anything was possible if you thought hard enough about it, and they solved problems and found a way forward. At the same time they prided themselves on succeeding honestly and being the people who really clamped down on bribes and corruption. They were noticeably different than their colleagues from other countries. What was their education like?

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185 In the 20<sup>th</sup> century liberals believed in liberty, that the government should stay out of your home and mind and personal life and should not oppress any one, but should be used to keep employers and corporations from oppressing anyone, too. Now people with that label seek to control speech and thought, to subject the world to America’s will by military force and brutal sanctions on their people, and to shift money from taxpayers to Wall Street. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century conservatives believed in conservation, in America staying home and minding its own business, in limiting government and helping families have autonomy. Now people bearing that label cheer for destroying the environment, pursuing wars everywhere to show US dominance, running up huge government and consumer debts, having the government decide what is best for mothers and families, and shifting money from taxpayers to Wall Street. Labels matter because they control how we see things. Laborism rejects the liberal and conservative labels in favor of American philosophies – conservation, equal opportunity for all, maintaining efficient markets that serve people, peace and friendship to all, pay-as-you-go, the importance of parents, helping each other, freedom of speech and thought, limiting government power, limiting private economic and political power, freedom to live your life in safety and to pursue happiness. America’s philosophy is not a spectrum. It is a set of core values that we share. The Red-Blue spectrum is a creation of the financiers to serve the financiers and keep working people weak and ineffective.

Back in the 1970s, if a high school student from an average family could ace her SATs, was reasonably diligent in school (not obsessive) and got mostly As, did enough interesting things with her time so that you could tell that she didn't spend all her free time getting stoned, and was generally curious about the world and could show in an essay that she was a good observer and really thought about things, then the world was her oyster. She could get into any college she wanted, and she could spend her time in ways that interested her and she could resist authority. She didn't have to care if she annoyed a particular teacher or if the principal got mad at her. For colleges less competitive than the Ivies, it was even easier. At some state universities, the application process consisted of "sign your name". Others required more, but still a reasonable test score and having an OK grade point average was enough. Annoying the occasional teacher or administrator along the way didn't hurt you.

That freedom formed the personality of the American worker. Sure, life in the big corporation was less free than high school or college, but by the time they started working people had already formed their attitudes and approach to life. If some boss got mad at you occasionally or tried to get you fired, OK, so what? If the bureaucracy got in the way of trying to do the right thing, you got together with others and figured out a way to deal with it. As long as you felt confident that you were trying to do the right thing and were sure that you understood why the rules existed, you had the courage of your convictions and, most of the time, you actually prospered<sup>186</sup> because of that.

In more recent decades, that spirit has been broken. These days if a middle class kid aces his SATs that's not enough. To get into a top program, you have to be *very* careful about your high school GPA, making sure that you don't annoy any of your teachers and that you diligently do the mountain of busywork they assign you. Don't disagree with the teacher in class discussions or in your essays, because that is too dangerous. Make sure that your helicopter parents have downloaded the teacher's assignment list and rubric and that the teacher has stated exactly what you need to do to get an A, and then do exactly that. Be involved not just in one after-school activity that interests you, but in 3 or 4 things that sound good but are probably a complete waste of time. Found an organization, not in a sincere effort to do anything but because founding an organization sounds good, and if you are rich then make it look better by using your parents' money to get some impressive statistic. Spend time moving boxes back and forth in your local food pantry, not because you think it is helping someone but because it checks the box for being a good citizen.

Of course, when you spend your time doing all of that then you have no time or energy left over to actually learn about or think about things. You learn not to ask any questions that might annoy authority. You learn to conform. You learn to be artificial. When you write your application essays, you say what you think the reviewer will want to hear, writing in the style that the counselors or consultants tell you to write in. You pad your resume. When you get into college, you do the same

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<sup>186</sup> I had multiple people try to get me fired for being uppity during my career. Twice that resulted in my getting a promotion. The only time someone succeeded in getting me fired was after my American company was taken over by an English one.

thing again. Conform, please authority, do what is expected. It will be boring, so spend time on-line shopping in class or getting pre-game drunk instead of reading about, thinking about and discussing things that interest you. Then you can graduate, get a job, and have your employers say “What’s with this generation? They have no initiative. They want to be told what to do. They can’t solve problems.”<sup>187</sup>

All of that works out OK for the children of the wealthy. The Wall Street elites are comfortable that *their* children will go to the right preschools and the right private schools. (Those fancy schools will be funded partly by “charitable” donations subsidized by us taxpayers, but they will be sure to keep the tuition at a level where mere commoners won’t attend.) Their children don’t have to be bright if they can go to the schools that give them opportunities to do things that sound impressive, if they can be given special opportunities for internships and “interesting life experiences”, if they can hire application consultants and essay reviewers.<sup>188</sup> And hey, that old thing about acing the SAT? Many schools have gotten rid of the SAT now, so that’s not a problem any more. But they still have “legacy” admission preferences, the thing that Detective Green in *Law and Order* called “affirmative action for white folks”. If you are a poor minority kid and you get lucky and come to the attention of the right people, you might do OK. However, if you are a middle class kid who is really bright and interested in things and are a great problem solver, but who can’t bring yourself to knuckle under to authority and play the game, you’re fried.

We need to fix all that. We need to ensure that every American child, no matter what the circumstances of her birth, can reach her full educational potential and have access to the best jobs, and that she can do that while still being a classic American, independent, creative personality. We can’t be the country we used to be if we wreck our schools with political nonsense and break the spirit of our children by forcing them to conform, obey and play the game.

Laborism will reject all sides of the culture-wars efforts to turn our children into mindless robots who conform to a particular group’s ideology. Instead, we will do what the American educational system was always supposed to do and what it used to do fairly well, which is to help our children learn to think, question, and evaluate. America will be at its best and safest if our children learn to question authority, to separate facts from propaganda, to find useful information, and to draw logical conclusions from information. Rather than focusing just on dates and battles in history, they should learn how to figure out what was going on in history. Why did different groups think the way they did? What did they say? Was what they said facts, or was it propaganda? How would people at the time have been able to tell which was which? Where they had a difference of opinion, who was right, or were they all partly right? We will go back to having them study the writings of our founders, but not as dogma. We will have them apply the thoughts of Jefferson, Madison,

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187 As with all problems flowing from the financiers, this one is not new. John Henry Newman wrote about it in 1852, when the capitalists were already trying to turn universities into machines for serving Industry, loading students up with “practical knowledge” and downplaying questioning authority or following natural curiosity. Newman said that if he had to choose between a university that just brought curious young people together to study and discuss with each other for 4 years versus ones with professors and exams teaching a rigid curriculum, he was sure the former would turn out better and more productive graduates. <https://www.newmanreader.org/works/idea/discourse6.html>

188 <https://www.commandeducation.com/premier-roadmap-packages/>



Washington, Thomas Paine, and John Quincy Adams to what they observe in later history, and ask the questions “Do you think our founders were right? How would history have been different if we had followed their advice? Why didn’t we follow their advice?”

In science, they should understand that in every decade people strongly believed that many things were established facts when, in reality, they were wrong. They should understand that the scientific method is a method of *disproving* theories so that you can get closer to the truth and make better predictions, not a method of determining pure and complete Truth in itself. They should learn that many people, on learning that science supports a particular idea, will then argue that that simple idea is the whole story, and that anybody who thinks it might be more complicated is foolish; they should learn that those people are almost always shown to be wrong. In math they should not just learn how to solve problems for a test, but should learn how to use math to do real things and to solve real problems. They should learn how to judge statistics<sup>189</sup> and how to evaluate risk. They should learn the tricks of propaganda – how people like Edward Bernays (the man that President Wilson hired to sell WWI to the American public and that the tobacco industry hired to get women to smoke) manipulate us, how social media works in the hands of PR firms and BigTech, how to spot the terrific lies about war every time the government is trying to persuade us to send our youth to die somewhere.

If we give our children these tools, any of us who have faith in our beliefs should then feel more confident that our children will come to the right conclusions than we ever could if their only support for a belief is “that’s what I learned in school.” You have good reasons for your beliefs, don’t you? Wouldn’t you welcome explaining them to your children, so that you can help them to understand what you understand? No matter how much power you might think you have to control the curriculum and textbooks in school, you are not sitting in the classroom. Don’t you want your children to have the habit of questioning what they are taught, so they don’t buy the nonsense some authority figure is trying to sell them? Washington, Jefferson and Madison based their faith in our Constitution on the proposition that children would all learn to *question*, to check facts, and to think for themselves. They knew we would all be exposed to mountains of lies, and so wanted children to learn how to sort fact from fiction. They believed that then we could have good discussions in which truth would almost always triumph over error in the free marketplace of ideas. If we don’t give our children that education, if we instead try to teach them to believe things because the teacher says they are so or, just as bad, to avoid having them exposed to particular points of view entirely, then America will surely fail. But if we give them that talent and habit, then you don’t need to worry about what’s happening behind your back.

### ***Tolerance makes society work***

With Major Lawrence, mercy is a passion. With me, it is merely good manners. You may judge which motive is the more reliable. - **Prince Feisal in *Lawrence of Arabia***

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189 As Benjamin Disraeli reportedly said, “There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics.” People have used bad statistical analysis to try to give a scientific aura to propaganda for a very long time. Regular citizens need to know how to spot that game.

Laborism will de-emphasize sex in school one way or the other. The fact that sexual issues have come to be seen as the most important thing affecting schools reflects a masterful bit of manipulative mind control by the Powers That Be who seek to divide us.<sup>190</sup> One thing we should all be able to agree on is that children should learn tolerance. Tolerance is an important part of life in the real world and an important part of civilization. If you are in a business meeting and one of the participants strikes you as being pretty weird, you don't say "hey, you're sure weird!" You politely ignore it and concentrate on the matter at hand. That's all that school kids really need to do. If any of their classmates seem different or odd for any reason, they should just ignore it and focus on the business of schooling. School should be conducted like a corporate office where people attend to their reasons for being there, find friends and kindred spirits where they can, and otherwise try not to annoy each other.

The sexual opinions of children are no more the business of schools than they are of corporations. Setting up culture wars over forming little kids' or adolescents' views on sexuality<sup>191</sup> is an unnecessary distraction from our reasons for sending children to school. And, again, if we take the American view that truth will triumph in the free marketplace of ideas if all of our children learn to question, investigate, and think for themselves, then nobody with faith in their own beliefs should be too worried about the outcome. If you seek to have schools enforce a point of view, on the other hand, consider the fact that the point of view they sell may not end up being your own.

Overt sexuality has no more place in school than it does in the workplace. We don't need to recognize or celebrate anybody's sexuality in school. They should be learning how to work with each other, including members of the opposite gender, in non-sexualized ways. For my part, I would even get rid of dinosaurs like Prom Kings and Queens. Those contests to select the most popular and attractive males and females mostly just cause teenage pain and unhealthy competition and bad attitudes. School should teach students about birth control and hygiene and about parenting, the "sex has consequences and responsibilities" aspect of things rather than "celebrating." School should help all students to develop self-respect, self-confidence and resilience and help them with competent social interaction, but not in a sexualized way beyond teaching "you have an absolute right to say no, and anybody who doesn't respect that is bad and perhaps criminal" and "if you feel pressured to have sex with someone to seem cool or to make them like you, then that's a problem."

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190 While the government does not publish statistics on this, it appears that perhaps 1% of US children live in households with same-sex parents. That means it is unlikely that understanding this phenomenon will be a burning issue for little Jen in elementary school. Media portrayals of this being much more common are factually distortive. As with TV deciding that virtually every strong female character must turn out to be lesbian, such factual distortions may create unintended biases. Further, most kids don't get that excited about differences in arrangements unless some adult persuades them that they should. For example, my best friend in elementary school's parents were divorced. He was the only kid I knew whose parents were divorced, but it never occurred to me that that was noteworthy. It was what it was. Since it is not usually urgent for 1<sup>st</sup> graders to deal with the sexual preferences or living arrangements of older people, why does it dominate school board elections, other than to serve the ends of those who seek to divide us?

191 As discussed further below, we should seek to have high school kids conclude that having sex is something for later in life, but trying to teach that (as opposed to practical knowledge like birth control) in school is unlikely to work.

Beyond that, and beyond teaching tolerance and self-respect, schools should not be “affirming” anything, be it heterosexual impulses or something else. Teenagers are confused as a species. They are trying to figure out how to interact with the world and most of them feel awkward, inadequate, and self critical. They get depressed and feel rejected. They try to emphasize their individuality while at the same time conforming to what others think. And their blood is basically hormone slush. That makes them ripe to get all kinds of ideas about sexuality, promiscuity, what being “adult” involves, how their sexuality may or may not relate to how they feel, etc. A friend of mine was still confused about her sexuality in her late teens, but then figured out she was a conventional heterosexual and moved on without anybody giving her any grief about it at any stage, because in the 1970s we believed we should accept our friends as they are, and not try to fit them into boxes.

If we are constantly accepting rather than “confirming,” if we recognize that growing up is a difficult business and people can change their minds, if we generally don’t make a big deal about things one way or the other, then kids can find their path without pressure or pain or feeling unloved or rejected or like they are disappointing someone by changing their mind. They won’t feel that they need to be some particular thing that conforms to what they have read on the internet. They won’t feel like they urgently need to make themselves fit some stereotype. They won’t feel like it will be too late for them if they fail to attract a sexual partner right now. Teachers should be alert to kids who are being molested or who are otherwise suffering and need some sort of urgent help, and should send them to the counselor or other competent helper, but teacher involvement in kids’ sex lives in any manner is not the natural order of things. It isn’t necessary nor a good idea.<sup>192</sup>

In thinking about these issues, it may be helpful to think of the kids who are neither the stereotype prom kings and queens nor the media-favored nonconforming subtype of the day. Specifically, think about kids who are just shy and socially awkward, not “on the spectrum” but in the old-fashioned Carrie way. They will likely be troubled and confused and prone to getting stupid ideas from the internet, and if they are pushed to dress or act a certain way or to be seen as socially successful it will give them pain. They don’t need anybody to celebrate their awkwardness or to make them more obvious or to tell them that they need to be what they are not. They don’t need authorities telling other kids that the awkward one can’t be expected to evolve so the other kids need to make all the effort and treat them as special. They need people to be decent and just treat them like human beings, be tolerant of their awkwardness, be appreciative of their other virtues, and let them have time and space to work out how to make an effort and deal with the world in their own way. Adult do-gooder society has little role to play in that aside from generally teaching children to be decent and tolerant and to look for the good in others.

On the particular subject of transexuals, I have no ability to put myself in the place of a teenager who was born a hermaphrodite, whose doctors had to choose a gender and chose wrong. There are

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192 At my kids’ high school, the teacher who formed close enough relationships with students to discuss those sorts of things ended up in prison for getting too close. There are natural boundaries.

not millions of kids like that, but 1 or 2 in 1,000 are born ambiguous enough so that a specialist is brought in to consult. Clearly we should have sympathy for those kids who actually *are* “assigned” a gender at birth if it doesn’t work out well for them. For all I know the large number of estrogen emulators and other chemicals in the environment may be causing other children to develop similar issues after birth. What I do know is that we shouldn’t be mean to them or do anything else to make their lives needlessly public or difficult.

I also know something else from my own experience. In my friend group growing up, we truly believed in tolerance. Homosexual kids mixed with heterosexual ones and it just wasn’t a thing that anybody dwelled on. I had friends that announced as homosexual one day and that just wasn’t a big thing from my point of view. It was like announcing that they had decided they were Presbyterian. OK, fine. I won’t be attending your church, but that has no affect on our friendship. If they had decided that they liked chasing after young boys or something that would have been a major deal, but as it was I just didn’t need to concern myself about their sex lives, and in my high school and college nobody made out with anybody of any gender in front of others, so sexuality wasn’t an in-your-face thing. Likewise, in my work life the homosexuality of a colleague just wasn’t a thing. You could tell from photos on their desk or, later, from wedding announcements, or if you were friends outside work you would know, but within the limited degree of closeness of work colleagues it wasn’t something you thought about.<sup>193</sup> Of all the homosexuals I have known, only one seemed like he could possibly have been transexual. His romantic life involved dressing as a woman and going to bars to meet and seduce strangers, and then surprise them. That generally didn’t end well, and sometimes violently. I learned this talking with him at a party, where he was in male mode, and it was clear that his life was pretty sad. The point here, though, is that he and I could talk at the party and be friendly, he could disclose his troubles,<sup>194</sup> and we were both entirely comfortable about it. If he was ever to meet his soulmate, it wasn’t going to be by playing surprise. It was going to be by talking with non-judgmental people who treated him as a human being. Making a big deal out of his status or putting him into constant female mode wasn’t going to help him. Reducing the surprise wasn’t going to help him. Having the same culture of tolerance and acceptance that we had in my friend group, on the other hand, would let him reach whatever destination he was bound for as painlessly as possible, without pressure to put himself in a box or to live up to some image from the internet.

The transexual wars have violated that principle. The girls I went to high school and college with dressed like the boys. If a biological male feels feminine or a biological female feels masculine it doesn’t mean they have to flagrantly cross-dress to express that, any more than a heterosexual high school girl needs to dress like a floozy to be feminine. Using a closed stall in the rest room

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193 In contrast, for example, when some heterosexual female interns in my department showed too much skin or otherwise were too overtly sexual I had to get some of the older women in the group to explain office propriety to them. When I started interacting with our European offices I learned that they thought that American businesspeople are kind of hilarious in our degree of anti-sexuality, where American business men would noticeably cringe if a female colleague took their arm, but every American workplace I have heard about that failed to develop that culture had trouble.

194 I have always tended to have people tell me their troubles – something about my personality, I guess.

shouldn't be a significant deal<sup>195</sup> so long as the school vigorously enforces tolerance. As to school sports, where I come from most kids don't do high school or college sports. Males don't need to be on the football team to be full-on males, and females certainly don't need to be on the basketball team to be full-on females. That said, most boys' teams would be fine with having a female try out for the team and play if she was good enough, and just use the other showers after. It is only the female athletes, who for decades have fought tough battles<sup>196</sup> against an oppressive society to have opportunity and recognition, who don't want to have to compete with people who are naturally bigger and stronger because they are biologically male. No matter how much I sympathize with people like the guy I talked to at the party, I don't think the major issue in his life would be whether he got to express his femininity by playing on the women's softball team and trying to be a star female athlete. That has become a thing because the financiers and their tools wanted to make it a thing, because they wanted to provoke conflict and distraction without any real regard for the needs of the young people involved. It is a stupid issue, and people just need to deescalate and not generate needless conflicts just to gratify the grown-ups or to feel personal power. Let young people find their way in peace.

### ***Making education work for every child***

Laws for the liberal education of youth, especially of the lower class of people, are so extremely wise and useful, that, to a humane and generous mind, no expense for this purpose would be thought extravagant. - **John Adams**

Laborism will take busywork out of school and replace it with real education. Based on test scores, Finland has perhaps the most successful school system in the world, more successful than China's or Japan's and much more so than ours, and they follow the philosophy that schoolkids should have time to play and explore and relax and be kids instead of doing homework. Soaking up a child's life with schoolwork just isn't helpful. Further, the work they do in school should have a real point. Schools have children doing math over and over by rote instead of focusing on learning what math is about and how to use it. Any child who gets the latter kind of math education will do much better than one who did 10,000 repetitive problems, and will learn the material in a fraction of the time. We have our children memorizing dates and names and battles instead of learning to think about history and what was going on. We have our children memorizing science facts and formulas that they will forget instead of learning how to appreciate the world, how to use the scientific method to judge whether something is likely to be true, or appreciating all the things we still don't know and that they might be able to spend their careers figuring out. We need to change all that.

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195 Those who have used male restrooms in stadiums with inadequate female facilities or in international airports have experienced the other gender coming in to a rather more exposed space, but you understand the circumstances and it's not a big deal. Biological males in female restrooms, in contrast, are legitimately scary. The issue is threat, not gender uniformity.

196 <https://www.minnesotaalumni.org/stories/title-ix-at-50>

The decay of our educational system is a product of the financiers' contempt for the welfare of our children and of a particularly pernicious form of limousine-liberal racism. When the Supreme Court decided *Brown v. Board of Education* back in 1954, that was supposed to lead to educational equality. When we started implementing affirmative action in the 1970s, it was with the understanding that it would still take a while for educational reform to really produce results, so we should give disadvantaged minorities a leg up for short time while we made that take effect.

Decades passed, and little or no effort was made to implement strong preschool programs, upgrade schools, and take the other actions needed (as described above and below) to ensure that every child born in every household in America had the resources to succeed. Instead, the limousine liberals addressed their own discomfort at looking around an Ivy League classroom or corporate executive suite full of white faces by going out and getting some black and brown faces to put there. (The lack of white faces from rural towns and poorer neighborhoods didn't show, so that wasn't a problem.) They told themselves that we should expect to need to keep doing that because, you know, historical racism meant that non-WASPs couldn't be expected to actually perform at the same level as other people; nothing to do with lack of investment in real opportunity. They told themselves that disadvantaged Americans should be grateful to them and think they are wonderful people because because they promote the disadvantaged rather than preparing them, again because, you know, you can't really expect *those* people to be capable of being prepared. They will never be like *us*, but we can let them sit in the next office because we're so enlightened.

I believe in diversity. I have published an article<sup>197</sup> explaining why I think a lack of true ecological diversity (i.e. the natural differences in backgrounds and talents that give an organization more options to draw from in solving problems) in a workplace is an alarming sign of failed management that keeps a company from having its best possible talent pool. But in the same article I explain why nose-count diversity is an unhelpful treatment of a symptom that allows the disease to rage unabated. Treating the causes of lack of ecological diversity will allow all Americans, regardless of race or family wealth or other circumstances, to realize their potential. Hiding the symptoms just lets the elites feel good about themselves while letting huge numbers of Americans - black, white, Hispanic, Hmong or whatever - be cheated out of opportunity, depriving us of the benefit of their potential. Laborism will finally treat the disease, not just keep the symptoms from being seen in the places where the financier elites spend their days.

Laborism would return to the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century view of what a high school graduate should be competent to do. Back then, a high school graduate was expected to be a fully-functional adult. In high school they learned how to set up a business, basic business law, and business bookkeeping. They learned how to do the things necessary to run a household, including fixing things and cooking and caring for children and doing a budget, and how to avoid being cheated. They learned the basics of how the economy worked. They learned how to be intelligent voters and good citizens. In more recent times we have developed an obsession with college education and have

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197 <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/visible-diversity-sign-organizational-health-matt-lykken>

decided that high school graduates are just children, and that even college seniors are still children who can't be expected to be responsible or to be able to do things and take care of themselves, except for using the latest tech devices. This infantilization of our youth is unacceptable. By the time a person is 18 they should have learned what they need to go out in the world and survive and be useful and be a fully-engaged citizen. Sure, they will still have a lot to learn with training and experience, but they should be able to function as adults. High school curricula should be reformed to bring back the expectation that graduates should be ready for adulthood.

Laborism will reject the idea that we should be aiming to send every child to college. We used to have skilled craft trades, people who could earn a good living making nice things or repairing things. That didn't offer giant profit opportunities for financiers, so instead they imported millions of unskilled farmers and had big businesses use them to undercut the prices of skilled craftspeople, bringing everyone down to the lowest common denominator. Anyone who has bought a home or hired a contractor to do a home project in Texas knows what that has done to quality, and it is not like prices are low. The homeowner suffers and the workers suffer, but the capitalist gets rich. Laborist policy will use standards, training and union certification to revive the craft trades and make it possible for them to earn a good living again. Meanwhile, the policy of restoring the competence of high school graduates and the pro-small business policies of laborism described above will open up other opportunities for people to start a business and make a good living doing something useful without needing a college degree.

Laborism will be skeptical of the tech companies that want to collect womb-to-tomb data on our children by sucking the entire school experience into on-line technology. While the option of education-from-home when a child is contagious or the weather is awful is nice to have, using search engines or Wikipedia to get information is pretty much the opposite of education. Thought and criticism require actual discussion and familiarity with real information resources, not regurgitating what a machine tells you. Appreciating science requires getting outdoors into the world. Physical education<sup>198</sup> requires physical observation. Art and music require real-time observation and feedback. Technology has its place, and it makes it easier to allow children to learn certain things at their own pace or have access to specialist teachers, but we should not worship it.

Laborism will properly invest in healthy school buildings and healthy school food. COVID taught us that proper HVAC is really important.

It will invest in teachers, not just in paying them more but in really elevating their role. We must properly value a great teacher who takes a real interest in each of her students, who figures out how to make learning interesting and to allow her students to progress as fast as they can or to get the extra help they need. Valuing that teacher doesn't just mean money, but giving her freedom to exercise her skills, and taking the example of the things she does well and sharing it with other

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198 Physical education could be vastly improved. Those who took gym through their school years and then took classes in a sport in college can appreciate what a huge difference it makes to get real instruction and feedback.

teachers in the school or across the country. Today teachers suffer through dull continuing education sessions to learn new jargon rather than getting real, exciting exposure to new ideas and approaches, or to really good execution of old ideas and approaches. We have a lot of teachers all thinking about the best way to do their jobs. Helping them to share best practices should result in real progress. Giving them flexibility to operate, to thoughtfully adapt the curriculum to the needs of the children, will help everyone.<sup>199</sup>

Laborism will get children the extra help they need. We know that headstart programs make a real difference. We know that early intervention programs allow kids who may be smart but have particular issues to get past their issues and be fully successful. Some kids have issues with their home life that need to be addressed, and laborism will apply the necessary resources to help them with that, from after-school care and nutrition to providing resources for their parents to providing a stable and secure place to live. We have 4 times the GDP that we had in 1972, but we say we can't do any better supporting children now than we did then. That is a problem of priorities. Laborism will prioritize helping children.<sup>200</sup>

## **Families are important**

Being a single parent is hard. Raising a child is hard even with two parents. Overall, single parents are heroes, and most of them manage to raise successful, well-adjusted children despite the hardships. One of the best mothers I know is a woman who had her child outside of marriage at midlife. She had always wanted a child, and she adjusted her career and lifestyle to give her more mom time, and raised a great and successful son. She should be admired by all.

However, while most single parents are successful, most unsuccessful families have single parents. People frequently fail to get that those are different things and that the difference is important. Just as we admire war heroes but should work hard to avoid needing them, we can admire the heroism of a successful single parent but understand that it is important to minimize how often we need parents to be such heroes. The risk of family failure is particularly high where the mother is a child herself, or is poor and/or addicted and lacks family or other resources to assist with the responsibilities of parenthood. Consider some statistics from the 1990s (I will explain the significance of that time period below). Of juveniles incarcerated in the US, about 70% were reared without fathers. Of 134,000 teenagers who ran away from home in 1994, 72% were leaving single parent homes. By 1994, about 70% of girls who had out-of-wedlock babies had been reared without fathers. A 1995 study by the Minneapolis county attorney of 135 children aged 9 or younger convicted of crimes including arson, theft, burglary, assault and criminal sexual conduct found

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199 My 8<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher, Miss Vaughn, realized that I didn't need to study the assigned curriculum that year, so she had me read science fiction novels and write reports instead, which was much more valuable. She was a great and dedicated teacher who was willing to spend the time to do things like that.

200 The common response to helping children is to give more cash to their parents. In some cases that works, but in a lot of cases the reason a child needs more support is because her parents don't prioritize the child. Society needs to be thoughtful in ensuring that the resources are giving the *child* the help she needs, one way or another.



that 70% were living in single-parent homes. It remains true today that about 70% of prison inmates were raised in single-parent homes. Notice a pattern?

Poverty is strongly associated with being a single-parent family, but the probability of becoming a prisoner is much more closely associated with coming from a single-parent home than with being on welfare before age 18 (42%), with having a parent who had been incarcerated (33%), or with experiencing any of the following as a child: witnessing violence, living with an ex-convict, living with a mentally ill or severely depressed person, or living with a drug addict or alcoholic. The only thing that correlates as closely (at 68%) is not being a high school graduate. Racial and ethnic differences in incarceration rates correlate strongly with racial and ethnic differences in rates of single-parent families. Family structure and high school graduation rates/education quality are things that we can improve without pie-in-the-sky, Age of Aquarius “we’ll fix everybody’s mind” useless exercises. If we competently address those two factors, then the immediate beneficial results will cause most people’s minds to fix themselves.

I don’t want to get too bogged down in numbers, but it is useful to look at the relationship between married parents and education and income. Of children living with a parent having an education at a given level, in 89.5% of households where a parent has an advanced degree, the parents are married. In other words, if 1000 children have a parent who has a post-graduate degree, 895 of those will be children with married parents. This slides down to 82.5% for a parent with an undergraduate degree, 60.2% for some college, 48.7% for a high school degree, and 47.7% for some high school.<sup>201</sup> Professional people get married and stay married when they have children. That can also be seen by living-with-two-married-parents ratios by family income group<sup>202</sup>:

<b>FAMILY INCOME</b>	<b>2 married to each other</b>	<b>2 living together not married</b>	<b>1 parent never married</b>	<b>1 parent separated or used to be married</b>
...Under \$2,500	10.2%	15.5%	26.4%	15.9%
...\$2,500 to \$4,999	14.4%	6.5%	36.6%	35.8%
...\$5,000 to \$7,499	13.5%	18.3%	34.9%	29.7%
...\$7,500 to \$9,999	10.8%	6.1%	45.7%	29.2%
...\$10,000 to \$12,499	20.8%	8.9%	35.6%	28.6%
...\$12,500 to \$14,999	30.1%	6.0%	32.8%	23.6%
...\$15,000 to \$19,999	23.5%	8.3%	36.9%	25.6%
...\$20,000 to \$24,999	30.4%	9.4%	31.8%	24.7%
...\$25,000 to \$29,999	31.7%	8.5%	27.5%	26.9%
...\$30,000 to \$39,999	45.6%	5.8%	23.1%	20.7%
...\$40,000 to \$49,999	53.1%	5.9%	16.7%	20.0%

201 Similar figures apply when just looking at the education level of the mother, except that the difference between less than a high school diploma and high school graduates increases.

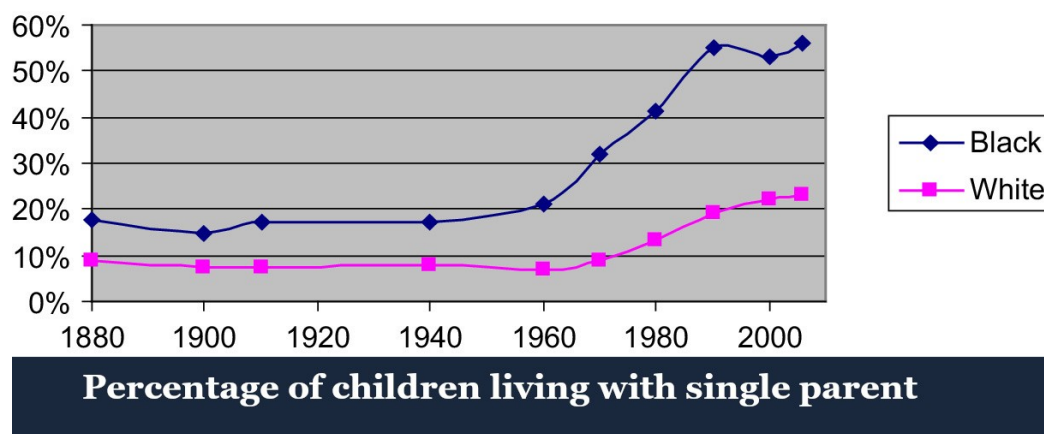
202 Source: 2020 Census data, families with children under 18, Table C3-All. The missing percentages are children with no parent present.

...\$50,000 to \$74,999	63.7%	4.1%	10.9%	17.7%
...\$75,000 to \$99,999	76.9%	1.9%	7.0%	10.5%
...\$100,000 and over	88.5%	1.1%	2.9%	5.7%

As you can see, this isn't just a matter of families having 2 potential earners being better off than those with only 1. Families with 2 unmarried parents don't follow the ever-increasing percentages of families with 2 married parents. The pattern for separated/widowed/divorced is different than the pattern for never married.

This is significant because rates of single-parent families, and especially rates of young single mothers, have varied substantially over time, as have rates of teenagers who are sexually active. They went through an explosion between 1960 and 1992<sup>203</sup> that correlates as one would expect with crime rates and incarceration rates, and then they declined, with the expected decline in crime and new imprisonment. The rise in rates particularly hurt already disadvantaged groups in America. Because the rates have risen and fallen dramatically, partly due to policy and partly due to social attitudes, we know that we can do something useful to support successful families and so to support the advancement of disadvantaged groups.

What happened between 1960 and 1995? Children living with unwed single mothers made up 1.3% of the US population in 1960, rising to 2.1% in 1995, before dropping back to 1.6%. Single mother households as a percentage of all households more than doubled from 4.3% in 1965 to 9.9% in 1995, before dropping back to 6.3% today. This change hit black and Hispanic children much more heavily than white or Asian children. From 1880 to 1960, the difference between black and white families in rate of children living with two married parents stayed fairly stable, but in this period it split wide open.



67% of black children were living with a married couple in 1960, falling to 38.6% in 1988. Looked at another way (the statistics have a gap due to children "not with a parent", commonly meaning with grandparents or other relatives), black children who lived in single-parent homes more than doubled from 22% to 55%. The status of white families in the early part of this period is hard to

<sup>203</sup> The public data is not year-by-year for some of the items of interest, so here I use 1995 as the closest proxy for the 1992 turning point where necessary.

interpret because most Hispanic people were classed as white, and Hispanics have marriage habits in between black families and non-Hispanic white families. 7% of white children, so defined, lived in single-parent homes in 1960. In 1990 81% of non-Hispanic white children lived with two married parents and 15% in mother-only homes, compared with 38% of black children living with two married parents and 51% with their mother only, and 67% of Hispanic children living with two married parents and 27% with their mother only. The devastating effects of this change on black families were recently described in an article in the Black Wall Street Times.<sup>204</sup>

The economic effect of this can be seen in the following table of median family incomes for families with children based on 2020 census data. For each category (single mother, 2 unmarried parents, 2 married parents) there are racial and ethnic differences, though the difference between black and white unmarried couples is trivial. But there are larger differences between family types. A married couple makes about 2 ½ times what a single mother makes, and makes between 26% and 66% more than what an unmarried couple makes.

	Female, no spouse, children <18	Unmarried couple, children <18	Married couple, children <18	Married vs Female no spouse	Married vs unmarried couple
Median family income					
Black	\$34,544	\$67,999	\$94,493	274%	139%
White	\$46,021	\$67,523	\$111,915	243%	166%
Hispanic	\$38,845	\$56,586	\$71,110	183%	126%
Asian	\$60,488	NA	\$141,794	234%	NA
Black median/white median	75.1%	100.7%	84.4%		
Hispanic median/white median	84.4%	83.8%	63.5%		
Asian median/white median	131.4%		126.7%		

At the lower end of the family income range, in 1980 8% of white, 20% of black, and 23% of Hispanic children of married parents lived below the poverty line, while the same was true for 39% of white, 65% of black, and 65% of Hispanic children in single-mother households. The figures were similar in 1995, though these figures had hit their worst point and then started gradually improving in 1992. In 2021 the figures had improved so that 4% of white, 11% of black and 13% of Hispanic children in married households lived below the poverty line, while 29% of white, 42% of black, and 42% of Hispanic children did so.

The largest reason why overall median household income for black families was \$52,860 in 2022 versus \$62,800 for Hispanics, \$81,060 for non-Hispanic whites and \$108,700 for Asians is the following rates of marriage for families with children: Black – 55%, Hispanic – 71.5%, White – 83.1%, Asian – 91.9%. As the figures above show, black family median income could be 85% of white<sup>205</sup> rather than 65% of white if black families had equivalent rates of marriage. The collapse

204 <https://theblackwallsttimes.com/2017/07/20/black-family-structure-in-decline-since-the-1960s-the-home-effect/>

205 It should be 100%, of course, but this gets you most of the way, and other laborist policies will close the rest of the gap. My family is a United Nations of white, black, Asian, partial Native American, Catholic, protestant, Jewish, Taoist, and free thinkers. While we have strong individual differences, we are all similar in achievement. The same should be true

of black families destroyed black family economics, with a similar intermediate effect for Hispanics and (as compared to Asians) for whites. Married parents are an important privilege.

Likewise, single parent families explain the bulk of the black-white difference in criminality, a difference that is tragic for black families and majority-black neighborhoods. The overall ratio of black single-parent households to white single-parent households ranged from 318% in 1960 to 322% in 1991 to 299% in 2023, while the rates of single-parent families and especially young single mothers rocketed up between 1960 and 1991 and then largely declined back down afterwards. In 1960 the arrest rates for white Americans (including Hispanics) for serious crimes was 0.35% and for black Americans overall it was 1.54%.<sup>206</sup> In 1991 the rates were 1.16% for whites and 4.21% for black Americans. In 2023 it was back down to 0.51% and 1.74%. These ratios are similar to the black-white single parent *ratios* and the levels correlate with the single parent *levels*. Further, we have a very interesting data point in 1960, when the FBI statistics separated rural and urban results. Rural black families did not show the same degree of black-white difference in single parent rates that urban families showed. In 1960, rural black arrests for serious crimes were only 15.5% of total rural arrests, close to the 10.5% total ratio of black Americans in 1960. Strip away the difference in single-parent ratios, then, and the black-white criminality difference pretty much disappeared.<sup>207</sup>

What caused the collapse of the married family? It was not the invention of or increased generosity of welfare, which didn't change much in the relevant years.<sup>208</sup> One can envision what did cause it, however, and that view is supported (though he does not phrase it quite this way) by Professor Gerald Jaynes, the A. Whitney Griswold Professor of Economics, African American Studies, and Urban Studies at Yale.<sup>209</sup> In the 1960s, the rise of the Baby Boomers resulted in the Age of Aquarius youth movement and of a new sort of black consciousness among urban black youth, whose parents had already somewhat tended to think that competing in the white economy wasn't a winning strategy.<sup>210</sup> Both trends led to young people feeling like they saw the world more clearly than prior generations had, and that their parents' view of the world was obsolete and should be rejected. They rejected The System, and with it the values of The System. In prior generations, being an unmarried parent was embarrassing, and being on the dole was also embarrassing. The new sexual morality<sup>211</sup> and the feeling that The System was oppressive and exploitative made these sources of embarrassment fade – not for everyone, but for enough. As one might expect, that

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for America's diverse population overall. The policies tried over the last 60 years haven't done the trick.

206 It should be noted that the percentages of arrests by race for serious offenses closely match victim reports of the race of the criminal, with white arrests rates actually being inflated (66% of arrests for violent crime were of white Americans and 32% of black Americans, versus victim reports of 57% and 40%, respectively).

207 This is generally true for recent African immigrant and Afro-Caribbean families, too – fewer single parents and lower criminality.

208 <https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdf/10.1257/jep.4.4.65>

209 <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/du-bois-review-social-science-research-on-race/article/origins-of-post1960-black-family-structure/E428FFF96C0D415C3AD94C53EF59CC96> His paper speaks for itself, and as noted he phrases his conclusions differently, so I am not intending to speak for him here.

210 These are all generalizations, and in fact different people thought different things, which is why none of the papers on this subject are especially convincing. Overall, though, this general explanation appears to be more consistent with the data than any other, and is supported in various flavors in various academic papers.

effect was strongest among teenagers. For a teenager in the 1960s through the 1980s, becoming a single mom on AFDC<sup>212</sup> meant you could go from being a child under the control of your strict parent to being a financially independent person who was, as a mother, viewed as being sort of an adult. It was teenage Nirvana.<sup>213</sup>

That resulted in the following effects on birthrates. Unfortunately, it is hard to get the desired detail before 1980, but from 1980 onwards we can see that the total birthrate for girls ages 15-19 for all races progressed as follows:<sup>214</sup>

1980	1985	1995	2005	2015	2021
5.3%	5.1%	5.6%	4.0%	2.2%	1.4%

While the breakdown for racial/ethnic groups was as follows:

	1980	1991	1995	2005	2015	2021
White	4.1%	4.3%	3.9%	2.6%	1.6%	0.9%
Black	10.5%	11.8%	9.7%	5.9%	3.2%	2.2%
Hispanic	8.2%	10.5%	9.9%	7.6%	3.5%	2.1%

We also have data on youth sexual activity during the decline period after 1995.

<b>Sexually active % high school girls</b>	1995	2005	2015	2021	Decline
Total	52.1%	45.7%	39.2%	30.6%	41.3%
White	48.9%	43.0%	39.9%	30.4%	37.8%
Black	73.4%	67.6%	48.5%	33.9%	53.8%
Hispanic	57.6%	51.0%	42.5%	30.6%	46.9%

Compare these figures with the following total population figures.

211 The new sexual morality was in turn driven in significant part by access to birth control, which had the odd effect in the hands of dumb teenagers of tending to *increase* teen births. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/an-analysis-of-out-of-wedlock-births-in-the-united-states/>

212 Aid for Families with Dependent Children, the welfare system of the period.

213 For similar reasons, choices of potential male sexual partners were skewed. Where responsible males likely to stick around and contribute income were traditionally favored, “rebels”, “outlaws”, and plain old criminals willing to smite a teenage girl’s enemies became more popular. For evidence of this change, one need look no further than the example of Snoop Dogg. In 1993, he was a member of the Rollin’ 20s Crips. He and his gang colleague/bodyguard, Malik, spotted 3 members of a rival gang, including Philip Woldemariam, eating burritos in a park in Rollin’ 20s Crips territory. Snoop and Malik drove out in an open Jeep to confront them in a threatening manner, with Snoop driving. Accounts differ as to whether Malik or Woldemariam drew first, but Malik shot Woldemariam dead. The jury found Snoop and Malik not guilty as having acted in self-defense. Snoop’s notoriety from his murder prosecution was a big boost for his rapper career, which made him rich, which led to him being a widely popular gameshow host, sports commentator, and brand spokesman. That career path would have been unlikely for anyone in the 1950s. Drug dealers and gangsters tend not to be respectful boyfriends or devoted husbands and fathers.

214 Source: National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System.

**Household data for select years**

Year	1965	1985	1995	2005	2015	2023
Total households	57,436,000	86,789,000	98,990,000	113,343,000	124,587,000	131,434,000
Married parents	24,406,000	24,573,000	25,640,000	26,482,000	24,857,000	23,523,000
Single mothers	2,485,000	7,737,000	9,833,000	10,366,000	9,891,000	8,242,000
Married no kids	17,283,000	26,140,000	28,617,000	32,056,000	35,970,000	38,652,000
Single no kids	8,631,000	20,602,000	24,732,000	30,137,000	34,866,000	38,097,000
Single mom/married parents	10.2%	31.5%	38.4%	39.1%	39.8%	35.0%
Single mom/total households	4.3%	8.9%	9.9%	9.1%	7.9%	6.3%
Number of children ages 0-5	23,900,000	21,400,000	23,700,000	23,800,000	23,900,000	24,900,000
Of which, single mothers	2,557,300	4,494,000	5,451,000	5,569,200	5,520,900	5,353,500
Total US population	189,703,203	235,146,182	265,660,556	296,842,670	324,607,776	339,996,563
Children 0-5 as %	12.6%	9.1%	8.9%	8.0%	7.4%	7.3%
Children of single moms as %	1.3%	1.9%	2.1%	1.9%	1.7%	1.6%

As you can see, the percentage of total households that were headed by single mothers declined after 1992, and the percent of the population represented by children under 5 declined more, but these changes were not as large as the decline in teen pregnancies.

That decline traced back to the Welfare to Work reform discussions that began in earnest in 1991.<sup>215</sup> The actual changes in the welfare system weren't enacted until 1996, but the political discussion leading up to them involved creating a very negative image of young welfare mothers, representing them as crack moms and other negative stereotypes. Embarrassment became a thing again. Further, we were moving into an era of Girl Power and an increase in teen self-respect.

In part<sup>216</sup> because of these declines in single-mother households, and especially teen-mom and poor-single-mom households, the percent of children aged 12-17 who were perpetrators of violent crime dropped dramatically after 1991, so that in 2021 it was 11% of what it was in 1993, while the rate of serious violent crimes committed by youth 12-17 declined to 41% of its 1993 level and the total number of serious violent crimes declined to 30% of the 1993 level. Violent crimes of all types per 100,000 people declined from 758.2 in 1991 to 492.8 in 2005, 372.4 in 2015, and 377.6 in 2021. Arrest rates for serious crimes fell accordingly.<sup>217</sup> Combined with the information above on poverty rates, one can see that these changes in teen births had a substantial positive effect for America overall and for disadvantaged communities in particular. These statistics do not show black Americans hoping that white liberals will rescue them by thinking anti-racist thoughts. Rather, black families have been taking care of their own business by taking concrete actions with very positive results. Laborist family policy will support them with focused investment and with sensitivity to the unintended anti-family side effects of the design of government programs.

215 <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c5025152/presidential-candidate-bill-clinton-welfare-reform-1991>

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/welfare-reform-success-or-failure-it-worked/> .

216 Changes in gang activity, policing and the like also played a role, of course, and the crime rates were dropping before the birth rate declines would have had an effect, but the long-term stable decline is most easily explained in terms of the change in family structure. Further, the changes in family structure were obviously much more positive than the incarceration explosion that had been the earlier response.

217 By 56% for whites and 59% for black Americans. I am defining "serious crimes" as homicide, robbery, assault, rape and other non-prostitution sex offenses, kidnapping, burglary, larceny, auto theft, embezzlement, fraud, fencing, forgery, weapons offenses, and other offenses against family and children.

Laborism will build on this very positive trend by promoting marriage and family and discouraging youth sex and pregnancy in an enlightened way. The phrase “discouraging youth sex” may sound unrealistic, but that in itself helps to show why it actually can be done. Look again at the sexual activity figures above. Without any particular effort by society, activity levels dropped, a lot. The sense that high school kids are all having sex is a product of the financier media. The media, in turn, is largely what young people rely on in deciding for themselves what is normal or cool or adult. Today the media is still largely selling the wrong message.

But this is an area where one can have good propaganda. Propaganda is evil when it tries to get people to believe things that are not true or to do things that are bad for them. Harnessing the same techniques for things that are true and are good for you is OK, as long as you would be proud to tell the target audience that that is what you are doing if they asked. There was nothing wrong with the intent of the old 1950s youth propaganda films, which were honest about their purpose, but they were pretty hokey and largely ineffective. The PR firms that have been busily selling the financiers’ messages as their paid tools are much, much better at what they do. A laborist government will hire them<sup>218</sup> to ensure that our youth see a different picture when they are seeking to use the media to judge how they should behave. That picture will show smart, cool, attractive and successful girls avoiding sex in high school or, if they don’t, being VERY insistent on reliable birth control. Girls who don’t do these these things will be correctly shown to be headed for trouble and to be not-too-bright and uncool. Boys who don’t pressure girls for sex will be seen to be desirable and cool and romantic, and boys who have sex without reliable birth control will be shown to be hapless idiots who suffer for it. College fraternities that seek to roofie girls will be properly shown as criminal scumbags. Married, stable parents, especially in poor and minority families, will be shown to be very good things. In the hands of a good PR firm, all of that can be done without presenting a bad image of single mothers. Good single parents would be shown as the heroes they are by emphasizing how difficult it is to raise a child by yourself, and how nice it is to have a loving and helpful spouse.

Laborism will ensure that everyone has easy access to reliable birth control and knows how to use it properly.

Of course, there will still be incompetent young single parents and incompetent or evil older married parents. Laborism will reform the child welfare, social work, and Head Start systems to ensure that every child gets the resources it needs, no matter how deficient her parent(s) might be. The Parents As Teachers program model will be greatly expanded. Laborism will invest in safe and friendly urban youth facilities, programs and parks, in after-school programs and enrichment, in quality nutrition and adequate housing for all children. It will get chemicals and pollution out of working-class areas so that the children of lower-income Americans are not poisoned. Law enforcement will protect youth from all threats, including other youth<sup>219</sup>, in all neighborhoods so

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218 They will be looking for work because laborism will put them out of the business of doing evil.

219 I went to an inner-city high school. It struck me at the time that if adults were subjected to the same degree of crime and risk in their offices that we were in school, there would be a huge social hullabaloo about doing something to fix it. For all that Americans say they care about children, historically we sure haven’t acted like it.

that nobody joins a gang out of fear. Laborism will invest in quality education in every public school in America. It will take the profit out of illegal narcotics, enforcing against money so that we don't need to enforce against people. It will reform the criminal justice system to separate the messed-up youth who need care and help from the bad kids who just need to be locked up.<sup>220</sup> A solid family is the first defense for children, and laborism will promote that, but it will also take every other opportunity to protect, encourage and save children.

## **The abortion debate has missed the point – we really can all agree**

The abortion debate in this country has completely missed the point, mainly because the financiers and their pet politicians wanted it to. Those of us who were around in 1973 remember that the initial abortion discussions following *Roe v Wade* weren't focused on "choice", but rather on whether abortions were going to be forbidden by criminal law and performed by women themselves and by back-alley butchers relatively late in a pregnancy, or rather were to be safe and legal procedures generally performed early in the pregnancy. Either way, they were going to happen, and always had. While it is of course difficult to get direct information on illegal abortion rates before *Roe*, the best study on the subject<sup>221</sup> estimated a rate of 829,000 in 1967, when the US population was some 197,000,000. Applying that same overall rate in a simple way<sup>222</sup> gives an expected figure of something like 1,400,000 for the 2023 US population of 335,000,000. In fact in 2022 there were 930,160 abortions in the United States<sup>223</sup>, per the CDC. The number of US abortions then rose to 1,037,000<sup>224</sup> in the first full year after the *Dobbs* case overturned *Roe v. Wade*. Following *Roe v. Wade* abortions rose until they peaked in 1990 at 1,608,600, then declined despite our increasing population. On average, abortions post-*Roe v. Wade* were performed much earlier in the pregnancy. Making abortion legal nationwide didn't make it more common. It just changed the way it was done.

The real driver of abortion is demand, not legality. As with narcotics, where the demand is there the supply will happen, one way or another, like it or not. If you are genuinely pro-life, then focus on the demand side. Instead of being hostile to women and girls and doctors, focus on properly

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220 My brother worked as a juvenile detention guard and administrator. In his observation, the large majority of the kids they got were in the former category of kids that just needed responsible adults to care about them. However, there was a different group who were pretty easy to identify who the guards knew would keep coming back until they killed somebody. The two groups should be in entirely different systems. Another data source for me is a friend who was a public defender. 100% of her clients were guilty (they got very excited once when they thought they had an innocent one, but it turned out he was just a really good liar). She did not take pride in trying to get them off on technicalities. What she did take pride in was being really good at helping all the ones who were just hapless bozos, which was most of them, to shape up and do better with their lives. They needed someone to care. But we mustn't confuse them with the ones who are irretrievably broken and dangerous.

221 Abernathy, Greenberg and Horvitz, *Estimates of Induced Abortion in Urban North Carolina*, Demography vol. 7 no. 1 Feb. 1970. The results were in the middle of the range from the 1958 Calderone study, but were more precise.

222 The Abernathy et al. study properly adjusted for total population race, age, etc., so this simple-minded extrapolation does not do their scientific precision justice.

223 <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1363/psrh.12215>

224 <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/abortion-in-the-us-what-you-need-to-know/>



caring for our children, the way we should have been doing all along, the way laborism will do in the future.

Part of the problem in the debate has been the pro-legalization side adopting the stupid slogan “a woman’s right to choose”, as if one were choosing a paint color. The financier media promoted that one because it served their purposes.<sup>225</sup> Abortion isn’t a choice, it is a last resort. No normal person grins and says “I choose abortion!” They mournfully say “I need to get an abortion.” Hopefully we will never have a pharmaceutical commercial where women dance in an office and sing “as anyone can plainly see, abortion worked really well for me-ee.” Abortion is a thing that women resort to when things go badly wrong. The most thoughtful woman I know on the subject was fundamentally pro-Roe, but said “we all should have a problem with abortion, and should try to minimize it.” She dreamed of the day when she would feel the miracle of a new life growing inside her. She believed that if our society got to a point where when that happens a woman feels it just triggers a casual choice of whether to continue, then we would have lost something very important. She recognized that often something goes wrong in a pregnancy, and that nature’s way when that happens is for the woman’s body to detect it and spontaneously miscarry. It is naturally sad when that happens. She recognized that in some cases that natural mechanism also doesn’t work, and may need to be helped by a medical intervention because the problem with the fetus is inconsistent with life, and in those cases it is even more sad. That sadness *matters*. It is part of our humanity.

Only a minority of Americans really believe that God puts a full-fledged soul into each and every fertilized egg at the moment of conception, despite the fact that more than half of all fertilized eggs will naturally miscarry<sup>226</sup>, and believes that an early embryo will suffer in the same way as a 6-month old fetus. Most of us believe, as Catholics firmly and officially did for centuries, that the soul and/or the capacity to suffer grows as the body and brain of the fetus grows. But it shouldn’t matter which side of that divide you fall on. We don’t have certain knowledge of what happens when, so we should try to minimize the cases where anyone has to make a decision on whether to have an abortion. Why not?

As Abbie Carmichael stated in *Law and Order*, “Any woman with a brain ought to be able to figure out a better method of birth control [than abortion].” The first<sup>227</sup> line of defense in reducing abortion is to make sure that every girl and woman and boy and man has access to safe and effective birth control and really understands how to use it, and that it is completely irresponsible of them not to use it unless they are ready and willing to have and raise a child. Laborist policy would ensure that birth control is readily and non-embarrassingly available to both females and males. We will also hire the PR firms that currently serve the financiers to put out a really effective propaganda campaign of the whole-life, invisible variety that Goebbels spoke of. Teenagers are

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225 Shifting the abortion discussion from legal abortions versus illegal abortions to “pro-choice feminists” versus “pro-life family values” was perfect for their whole Red vs Blue Uniparty agenda to distract us from looking at the financiers.

226 <https://www.sciencealert.com/meta-analysis-finds-majority-of-human-pregnancies-end-in-miscarriage-biorxiv>

227 First because “just say no”, while earlier in the timeline, will not happen 100% of the time, but use of birth control 100% of the time that “just say no” doesn’t work is a reasonable goal.

naturally resistant to advice from parents and teachers.<sup>228</sup> However, if they are reached in all the places they look to try to get a sense of how the world works, what's cool, what's popular, etc., and see an accurate representation of reality where people who don't use birth control are idiots and losers, they will absorb that message. But the message has to be comprehensive, starting with presenting teenagers who have sex as being dodgy and boyfriends who demand sex as creeps but ending with "but if you have sex and use birth control but still get pregnant, then your pregnancy should play out like the movie *Juno*."

Laborism will also address the other things that make pregnant women feel they have no choice. We will help teenagers and especially teenage girls to develop proper confidence and self-esteem. Our society suffers a horrific amount of criminal behavior that relies on a lack of female self-esteem, and we should regard that phenomenon as a serious disease meriting heavy efforts at eradication. We will go after the pesticides and other chemicals that have the same effect as estrogen and trigger early sexual maturity. We will fix our adoption and foster care systems away from being the inefficient horror shows they are today. We will clamp down on crime effectively so that the current situation, where child molesters commonly have had multiple victims for years before they get caught and convicted, is replaced by a system that really works. We will give proper funding to child and family services and expect much more of them; we should have a system where child and family service workers are viewed as heroic first responders. We will provide proper care and housing for all teenagers, particularly including pregnant ones. Anyone who watches the Covenant House ads and thinks "yes, the right answer to teenagers fleeing from a horror show is that either I give my \$19 a month or else they are on their own on the street" should expect more from government and society. We will support breakthrough medical research for the particularly tragic diseases that strike the unborn and children.<sup>229</sup>

This program consists entirely of things that any civilized society should do for the sake of its children. It would do far more to reduce abortion than any law prohibiting legal abortion, just as changes in attitudes and teen pregnancies cut abortion rates in half during the period when abortion was legal. And you know what? We don't need to fight over it. We can *all* agree to do these things. The only reason we didn't do it before is because the financier political agenda desperately wanted working Americans to focus on legalization as the *only* issue that mattered, ignoring everything else that the financiers were doing to us all or preventing us from doing. We're done with that. Let's reduce abortion the way that really works, by caring about children and mothers, and tell the financiers that we won't fight each other for their amusement anymore.

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228 The tobacco industry, in their usual evil way, cleverly used this trait. Things like the Brooke Shields anti-smoking commercials, which were really effective, were taken off the air and replaced with preachy ads specifically designed to provoke the anti-grown-ups reflex of teenagers, *increasing* smoking.

229 Messing with Nature where she has provided a natural miscarriage response to something going badly wrong in a pregnancy is a different matter. Doctors should not play god just because they can and leave mothers to deal with the results.

## Housing and urban development

The financier Ponzi-scheme economy demands that we bring in ever-increasing numbers of immigrants (our native-born population does not reproduce itself, much less grow) and have rich developers produce housing for the increased bodies. But, in general, the housing is not built for the immigrants if they are poor. It is built for higher-income, higher-wealth citizens, who move out of older housing that goes to the immigrants. The new housing is built by rich developers in essentially unplanned developments that spread like cancers around our urban centers, without thought for transportation or other public infrastructure. But now that housing has become generally unaffordable in much of the country, we don't have so many middle-class families moving out of their rentals and into new homes. Despite the low interest rates since 2008, housing completions dropped. Private equity buyers and foreign investors started buying up rental units and jacking up rates. With demand exceeding supply, developers and landlords made fat profits.

The fact that our financier-controlled economy was not allowing working people to keep up with housing prices should not be surprising if you look at the statistics over time. The numbers show a clear deterioration in the working-people's economy, despite the media telling us that we are just imagining that decay. Let's look at how our economy did in the 175 months before the financial crisis started in September 2007 (that is, between January 1993 and August 2007) versus the 175 months after that time (September 2007 through April 2022). During this more recent period, the government had the stimulus gas pedal to the floor the whole time. Nonetheless, new housing completions<sup>230</sup> in the earlier period averaged 1,570,000 units per year versus 1,000,000 more recently. The 12 month weighted median wage growth percentage was 4.56% versus 3.17%<sup>231</sup>. The Industrial Production Index increased 37.31 points, from 64.63 to 101.94, versus 0.86 points from 101.94 to 102.80<sup>232</sup>. Real median personal income increased by \$7,270 (25%) versus \$4,110 (11.3%)<sup>233</sup>. Real per capita GDP increased by \$14,820 (36.3%) versus \$9,478 (17%)<sup>234</sup>. The labor force participation rate averaged 66.6% versus 63.4%<sup>235</sup>. Wages as a percent of GDP dropped from 44.4% in 2007 to 43.7% in Q1 2022, meaning that the share of production going to the producer class rather than the capital class fell. The ratio of total mean family household income, including capital income, for the top 10% versus the middle 20% went from 5.5 in 1992 to 8.4 in 2007 and 10.1 in 2022<sup>236</sup>. Across the board, then, our economy has been getting worse, despite the prior period including the 2001 recession, and it has especially been getting worse for ordinary working people. And this wasn't a COVID issue. You can see a little COVID blip in some of the lines, but it did not alter the underlying trends.

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230 <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/COMPU1USA>

231 <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/FRBATLWGT12MMAWMHWGO>

232 <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/INDPRO/>

233 <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/MEPAINUSA672N>

234 <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/A939RX0Q048SBEA/>

235 <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/CIVPART/>

236 <https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/scf/dataviz/scf/chart/>

#series:Before\_Tax\_Income;demographic:inccat;population:1,2,3,4,5,6;units:mean

The average amount of mortgage debt<sup>237</sup> per household<sup>238</sup> did not increase significantly between September of 2007 and April of 2022 for households in the income brackets below the 1%, which seems to indicate that for most of us our ability to take on more mortgage debt from for-profit lenders is limited even at low interest rates. Nonetheless, the US median home price skyrocketed<sup>239</sup>, becoming unaffordable<sup>240</sup> to a median family. Private Equity firms bought up distressed housing<sup>241</sup> in the Great Recession, and began a strategy of trying to corner the rental housing market. Institutions owned an estimated 5%<sup>242</sup> of single-family rentals in 2022, projected to rise to 40% by 2030. As young families are priced out of the market because they can't cover the down payment, they become a renter class that PE can squeeze.

As with everything in the financier economy, housing construction is not driven by what working people need, but instead responds to what makes money for the financiers. In housing, the difference between those two things has been increasing, and working people are suffering because of it. Laborism will help with that.

Laborism will give no-interest loans to fund the construction of housing that working people need in the locations where they need it. As discussed in the overview, this kind of funding will not generate inflation. To the contrary, by balancing supply with demand it will decrease housing inflation. If you are an existing homeowner, that means the price of your home won't rise as much, but so what? As long as you are living in your house, having its price inflate just means you pay higher insurance premiums and real estate taxes and have a higher insurance deductible. Having the value stay stable is fine. Meanwhile, younger families will be able to buy homes or afford rent.

This will allow us to correct several things where the financier economy fails. For one, with climate change many pricey areas of the country will become increasingly unlivable. Hurricanes, fires, floods, and rising sea levels will make insurance and rebuilding unaffordable, while falling aquifers will make some areas uninhabitable. We need to start adjusting for that. Laborist housing policy will make it easier to relocate our population to more stable areas and will encourage employers to relocate the jobs to match the people, instead of having jobs move to escape unions.

For another, we will be able to start moving towards communities that are designed for living rather than for developer profits. I have lived in a city neighborhood built in the early 1900s and in a railroad suburb of Chicago built around the same time. In both, the houses are nicely spaced with good yards, but you can easily walk to shops (including a hardware store and drug store and a grocery store or convenience store) and restaurants and banks, to parks and playgrounds and schools and the library and a bandstand with free concerts. Further, you are within a short walking distance of good, safe transit that will take you to the city downtown. That is how people

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237 <https://www.federalreserve.gov/releases/z1/dataviz/dfa/distribute/chart/#quarter:127;series:Home%20mortgages;demographic:income;population:all;units:levels;range:2006.3,2022.4>

238 <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/graph/?id=TTLHHM156N>,

239 <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/MSPUS>

240 <https://dqydj.com/historical-home-affordability/>

241 <https://www.propublica.org/article/when-private-equity-becomes-your-landlord>

242 <https://www.yardimatrix.com/publications/download/file/2530-MatrixBulletin-SFRSector-July2022>

are meant to live, and it is how we used to build our communities. After World War II there was a lot of discussion about community design, but actual suburban communities were built by rich developers in ways that generally ignored any of those principles. We got suburbs where you can't walk to anything and the stores and restaurants are all big chains with big parking lots, and the jobs are somewhere 30 minutes to 90 minutes away and you have to drive. Laborism will seek to bring communities back to serve human needs rather than developer profits. When a new community is built it will have a humane, walkable design and will have jobs in the community or close at hand or a train ride away. When an older community is restored, it will be pushed in the direction of retrofitting it to a humane design.

The houses and apartments will also be designed for human needs rather than developer profits. Houses built between about 1880 and 1940 were commonly designed by competent architects. Many were built from good reused plans. Our 1897 house in Wheaton was built to a plan sold by Sears Roebuck. The house two down from ours was built to that same plan, but with the different finishes and such applied to that plan you would never realize that unless you were actively looking for it. Houses in that period used quality materials, even when they were smaller, inexpensive houses in little Midwestern towns. They were built to let every homeowner feel a sense of pride, and they were built to last. The people who built them were trained craftsmen who really knew their stuff and took pride in their work. After WWII, developers stopped using architects and starting using "designers" who created or followed fads that weren't designed for practical living. We got houses with a family room that people use plus a formal living room that you put expensive formal furniture in and rarely even visit, and then added media rooms and great rooms and closets the size of your garage and giant bathrooms with fancy tubs that are rarely used and so on. The finishes are consciously intended to be faddish and fall out of fashion within 10 years, so that homeowners will want to spend a small fortune "updating" their house or will want to buy a new one. The builders use workers who have no real training, no real blueprints, and no incentive<sup>243</sup> to do quality work, and they work with low-quality materials imported from China. If you don't replace things they fall apart. Apartments have semi-fancy kitchens but otherwise are basically featureless spaces so that the landlord can easily repaint or recarpet at minimum cost, and they are full of fumes from toxic materials. The recent LA fires were bad partly because modern houses are built with so much chemical-laden junk that they emit flammable fumes when they are exposed to heat, and explode into flame.

Laborist housing will use thoughtful, practical plans that real working people actually want. It will be built with attractive, safe, long-lasting materials in timeless designs. It will be built by properly-trained and skilled craftspeople who earn a good living.

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243 Our first house was in a new development in a Dallas suburb and we contracted to buy it up front and then they built it to one of 5 designs. After the sheathing for the master bedroom wall was up we saw it had a hole in it about 18 inches across, and we told the builder to fix it. They told us the house wasn't ours yet and the building process was none of our business, and they never did fix it. When a big area of our front lawn died we discovered they had sodded over a full-size piece of plywood. They had zero interest in quality control.

Laborist housing will co-exist with the fully private housing market, so if you really want a modern McMansion with the latest trendy rooms and countertops and bathrooms and so on, you will be 100% free to buy one. But if you want to live in the kind of highly livable, non-toxic, low-maintenance, attractive house or apartment that the financier market doesn't offer today, you will also be able to choose that instead. Because laborism believes in markets, laborist policy does not take away choices. Instead, it adds choices that the profit-maximizer economy does not offer, choices developed to serve the actual needs and desires of real working people. The free market only serves working people if they are given choices that match their needs and wants. If, instead, the choices are all designed to maximize the profits of the financiers, the consumer market is unable to reward good products and punish bad ones. Anyone who has done house hunting in recent years knows how hard it is to find anything good, despite the outrageous prices, and if you do spot something good it is subject to a bidding war and sells in a weekend. There are few good choices because the market has been controlled by the desires of the financiers for decades and so has failed. Laborism will fix that market failure.

As to America's homeless population, laborism will admit that the homeless really represent four different groups, though they overlap. First are the true economic homeless, people who can't find a job that pays enough to afford rent and who don't have family or friends willing or able to help them with housing. This group will benefit from laborist economic policies, including restoring the minimum wage to its 1968 real value, and the laborist housing construction discussed above. They will further benefit from laborism's guarantee of employment for all citizens who want to work. We have lots of work that someone could do. If you need a job and either are or are in danger of becoming homeless, a laborist government will connect you with work, either for a private employer or for a government public improvement project, similar to the Roosevelt era Civilian Conservation Corps. The jobs may not be in your current location, but the government will get you there and will arrange suitable housing in the job location. This may be particularly useful for ex-convicts, who often have a hard time getting a private job until they can show a good track record of private employment. Having ex-convicts unable to find paying work is obviously unhelpful for their rehabilitation.

Second are those who had to flee a bad home situation, including children of abusive or irresponsible parents and wives of abusive husbands. A laborist government will ensure that they are housed in a safe and welcoming manner where they can get full assistance with whatever accompanying problems they may have. Depending on the person's situation and what will be most helpful for them, their new home may be in the same town or it may be in a different part of the country where they can get a fresh start.

Third are the drug addicts unable to function at a level where they can work and support themselves. A laborist government will dry them out, get them healthy and give them rehabilitation services, and usually will then relocate them for a fresh start. The single biggest factor in addicts relapsing is being in the environment of their addiction. Being in a new, largely drug-free environment with a new job and new friends and a new lifestyle will boost their odds of

recovery immeasurably. Laborist child policy and drug policy will substantially reduce the number of addicts being generated and the presence of hard drugs in society, again making it easier to stay clean.

Finally, there are the homeless who are mentally ill. America largely shut down its psychiatric facilities. The stated reason for that is that such facilities were awful, Bedlam-style places or lent themselves to abuse by staff in the manner of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. In reality, politicians mostly just didn't want to spend the money and preferred to dump patients on the street. Modern psychiatric drugs, while far from perfect, are often extremely helpful for the patients who reliably take them, giving them the ability to stay stable and connected with reality. Modern electronic surveillance gives us the ability to have a residential facility where interactions between patients and staff or other patients are under 24-7 observation, while still allowing both patients and staff privacy when they are alone. With monitoring by family, friends, and inspectors, this should make it relatively easy to prevent abuse of patients. Computers and videoconferencing make it easy for inpatients to be able to connect with family and friends and with the world at large, and to do office work if they have the ability. A laborist government would provide services for those who can successfully function as outpatients to live their lives as normally as possible, while those who can't succeed as outpatients or who are a real danger to others would be given fully modern residential care in one of a range of facilities suitable to their particular needs and abilities. Nobody would be abandoned on the street to live in filth, cold, hunger and danger. Again, we are a rich society. We have 4 times the income we had in 1972. We can afford this basic level of human decency.

Laborism will also work to fix environmental injustice, meaning the lack of parks and greenery and the concentration of poisons and other bad things in low-income areas. As discussed above, laborism actually cares about children, cares enough to make sure that every child can play and grow up in a decent area. Through a combination of new housing and communities and retrofitting old neighborhoods with safe<sup>244</sup> green spaces and low pollution levels and low indoor toxins, we will make that possible for our children. Much of the investment to do that can be done with the no-interest loans that are only workable under a laborist system and that don't cost taxpayers a dime. Much of the improvement will come from other laborist child policies and laborist tax policy that uses market forces to improve our lives. Investment in new public parks and green spaces, on the other hand, will take tax dollars. Again, though, the government tells us that our real GDP is 4 times as high now as it was in 1972. As a society, can we be happy saying that we have 4 times the wealth we had in 1972, but we can't afford to have parks and green spaces for our children? Laborism says no. Children will grow up safe, happy and healthy in laborist society.

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<sup>244</sup> See the discussion of crime control below and the discussion of stopping the social factors that generate criminals above.

## Crime and safety

Laborist family policy and support for children can be expected to reduce crime rates down to those exhibited by Asian-American families within 40 years. That would reduce all crime by 78% and all serious crime by 74%, resulting in some 1,700,000 fewer people being arrested for serious crimes every year. That would mean some 2,435,363 fewer crime incidents<sup>245</sup> against persons and 9,141,752 total fewer serious crime incidents in America each year, based on 2023 numbers. America would then be a relatively safe country, and fear-based prejudice against racial or ethnic groups who have higher crime rates today would fade away.

Still, halting the generation of new criminals takes time to have its effect. Further, even after achieving the Asian-American crime rate 40 years out, that leaves some 3.2 million serious crimes a year including 1 million crimes against persons in our nation of 340 million, which is still unacceptably high. So, laborist policy calls for several common-sense improvements in the meantime.

## Common ground

There are many pleasant fictions of the law in constant operation, but there is not one so pleasant or practically humorous as that which supposes every man to be of equal value in its impartial eye, and the benefits of all laws to be equally attainable by all men, without the smallest reference to the furniture of their pockets. - **Charles Dickens**, *Nicholas Nickleby*

Before addressing these, though, we must deal with certain misimpressions that the financier media has spread in its effort to divide working people. The media have tried to divide us into “yay police” and “boo police” camps that don’t listen to each other. They have further tried to persuade us that certain racial, ethnic, or economic groups want us to leave all the criminals in their neighborhoods alone and that they enjoy living in unsafe areas. So, let’s look at a few numbers and find our common ground.

Let’s start with the goal. Americans may view themselves as free of government oppression, but we sit huddled up in our fortress homes with handguns and alarms and don’t allow our children to play outside for fear of other Americans. Let’s focus on fixing *that*. Your child is much, much more likely to be shot in school by another American than killed by a foreign terrorist. People in the old Soviet Union were not politically free, but they could walk around in the city at night. Mysterious foreign enemies are politically convenient, and they provide the basis for setting up Big Brother and the totalitarian state, so the power elites want us to focus on supposed foreign threats rather than on a safe and open society at home. Making our own society work is hard, but it is the American thing to do. If we do this correctly, not through ineffective militarized policing but

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<sup>245</sup> A crime incident is an overall criminal action, which may include multiple crimes, such as rape and murder by a single criminal on a single occasion, or a double homicide.



through addressing the roots of crime and the breakdown of social order in poor neighborhoods, through witness protection and enlightened police and social worker involvement, through improving honest job prospects and restoring hope, we can increase fairness to the historically disadvantaged youth forced to grow up in areas that are considered bad mainly because they are so crime-ridden. Let's work to shut down the American crime mill and turn our cities back into places where all families can go out and enjoy themselves without fear. Then we will be truly free. That freedom is the goal.

Nobody, no matter what their race or economic status, wants to raise their children in a dangerous, gang-infested, drug-ridden neighborhood where the police aren't interested in protecting them or in investigating crimes. On the other hand, nobody wants to have their police force think and act like an occupying power that regards everybody as a potential threat and focuses on suppressing them rather than protecting them or obtaining justice for them.

In many urban areas and some rural areas, a neighborhood with perfectly nice housing will be regarded by everyone as an undesirable slum and will have low property values because it has a high crime rate and high drug use. People who could otherwise start a small business there and prosper can't, because people are not willing to come visit their restaurant or store, and even people in the neighborhood think twice before going out after dark. Fundamental fairness to the residents of such areas requires that we recognize that they are human beings and Americans and deserve to live in the same peace and safety as their richer fellow Americans, so that their children may focus on school, their homes may rise in value and their business ventures may get new customers and employees and prosper.

An insidious form of racism in America assumes that people in minority areas want different things than those their well-to-do white fellow citizens want. That kind of thinking allows members of the limousine-liberal elite to think that people in high-crime neighborhoods would prefer not having police protection, as opposed to desperately wanting to replace *bad* police protection with *good* police protection. They then leave police in poor neighborhoods understaffed, trying to police by driving through a wide area in a squad car and never getting to know the residents. They don't give the police adequate investigative resources or the ability to provide real protection for witnesses. They don't provide social workers or psychiatric professionals to help to calm down dangerous situations. The kinds of resources that may be available to help the police to do their jobs effectively and non-violently in rich white areas are considered to be too expensive for poor areas.

A similar sort of misguided thinking, promoted by the financiers who want to divide us, is that police misconduct is almost exclusively directed against minorities. Minorities do suffer proportionally more cases of police acting like an occupying power, but police misconduct is widespread and affects all kinds of people, though lower-income people suffer more than higher-income people, and part (but not all) of the white vs. minority difference flows from the white vs. minority difference in income. Police officers abuse Hispanics more than white people, but they do not abuse Asians more than white people, because Asians on average have higher incomes and

commit fewer crimes. Higher-income African Americans report being stopped at about 1.5 times the rate of higher-income white Americans, but lower-income African Americans report being stopped only slightly more frequently than lower-income white Americans.<sup>246</sup> As a percentage of felony arrests (the situations where deadly force is most likely to be used), police are somewhat less likely to kill a black person than a white person; while black people are much more likely to be shot than white people, they are also 5.4 times (in 2022) more likely to be arrested for a violent crime<sup>247</sup>. We have a police problem that should be addressed, and it is highly likely that the racial aspect of that problem will be solved by addressing the larger issue, since any actual racists will also be creeps, and in any event getting police officers to be safe and respectful will make whatever racial feelings they may have less significant. Trying to just stamp out racism among police officers without addressing overall police misconduct and methods, in contrast, is highly unlikely to be an effective strategy.

The financier media chooses to only publicize police misconduct cases when they can spin them in a divisive<sup>248</sup> way. The Cato Institute has a good website<sup>249</sup> that tracks misconduct. One recent incident, for example, involved a middle-aged white woman who was drunk, naked and asleep in her own home when police burst in with guns drawn and excitedly demanded that she get up (still naked) and show them a gun she was reported to have<sup>250</sup>. She understandably first negotiated to be able to put something on, then in response to their repeated shouted demands, guns pointed, she (still drunk, sleepy, and now terrified) reached into the bed and said “here it is!” and held it out for them, at which point they shot her in the face and killed her. There are too many such incidents involving people of all races, along with officer-perpetrated rapes, assaults, spouse abuse, and

246 <https://www.cato.org/survey-reports/policing-america-understanding-public-attitudes-toward-police-results-national#>

247 The arrest rate is in line with the rate of crimes actually committed. The percentage of victims of fatal police shootings who are black is 29.2%, while the percentage of persons arrested for violent crime who are black is 38.5%. (39.8% of the people who murder police officers are black.) That arrest percentage is consistent with the percentage of violent crimes that are committed by black people per the reports of the victims (36% of crimes against persons where the race of the offender is known and 55% of homicides are committed by black people). This is not because of anything inherent in black people, but rather results from the factors discussed above regarding family policy, plus a fixable cultural element in some areas. The book *Ghettoside* makes a good case for the proposition that black-on-black violence stems from a period in the south when the white law enforcement establishment refused to make any effort to prosecute black-on-black crimes, a situation that triggers a seemingly universal human mode of behavior that reverts to informal “law enforcement”, a system of revenge killings, violent posturing, and deadly focus on “honor” and respect that prevails where the state has failed to assert a monopoly on the use of violence. Once such a system starts, it tends to maintain itself until proper state-sponsored law enforcement steps in to stop it and replace it with a system of state-sponsored safety. When black people from the south migrated to northern and western cities, they brought the culture of violence with them, and the police in their new homes failed to stop it. Because American white society has been content to think of black people as somehow fundamentally different, our government has not seen fit to figure out how to break the cycle of violence in predominantly black areas.

248 The George Floyd killing, for example, received tons of press because it involved a white officer and a black victim. The fact that the white officer was using a technique that the Minneapolis police habitually used on people of all races despite it having been banned by other cities was not the focus. The fact that the killing involved 2 Hmong police officers, who were very unlikely to have started their day saying “I want to kill a black person today”, was not the focus. The killing resulted from misconduct, but the press wanted desperately to have it be a certain *kind* of misconduct that fit their goals.

249 <https://www.unlawfulshield.com/>

250 A friend of the woman’s had called the police and reported that he was concerned about her because she had a gun and was acting depressed and he worried that she might hurt herself.

other inexcusable acts. All of that should be dealt with as a police problem.<sup>251</sup> But it is not primarily a race problem<sup>252</sup>, it is a police problem. There are undoubtedly some cases even today where a white police officer murders a black person because the officer does not like black people, but if that accounts for many of the 235 black people killed by police in 2022, then the 415 white people killed by police that year are very difficult to explain, as discussed below.

In the meantime, we also have a criminal problem. While killings of black people by police get a huge amount of news reporting, all of us, and particularly black people, are far more likely to be killed by a criminal. In 2022, 235 black people and 415 white people were shot by police. In the same year, 10,470 black people and 7,704 white people were killed by criminals. So, 2.2% of the black victims and 5.4% of the white victims were killed by police. You will notice that white people had more than twice as high of a police-to-criminal killer ratio, which may not be what you would have guessed from the news.<sup>253</sup> Black people are 3.5 times more likely to be a victim of a violent crime than are white people, and black people aren't any happier about being violent crime victims than white people are. We need to address the police problem in ways that are consistent with addressing the crime problem.

For white males, about 90% will die of disease, 5.5% in accidents, 2% by suicide or homicide (mostly suicide) and the rest will still be alive at age 100. For black males, 90% will die of disease, 4.5% in accidents, 3.2% by suicide or homicide (mostly homicide), and the rest will survive to 100. White men are relatively likely to kill themselves and have accidents, while black men are relatively likely to be killed by other black men. About 2.4% of black male deaths are by homicide, compared to about 0.23% for white males – less than a tenth as much. More tellingly, homicide is the leading cause of death by far for black males age 21-35, accounting for a third of all deaths in that group, as contrasted to 3% of deaths for white males in the same age group. In all, in 2012 6,454 black persons were murdered, some 92% of those by other black people, while 5,855 white people were murdered, some 84% by other white people. Young black people suffer badly from violent crime, most of it committed by other black people, and most of that concentrated into predominantly black urban or rural neighborhoods where shootings are alarmingly common.

Does any relatively well-to-do white person want to live in a place where, if their house is burgled or they are mugged on the street, there is nobody for them to call? People in poor neighborhoods don't want that, either. What they want are police who act like police in a well-to-do, friendly white town, police who are polite and friendly like Andy Taylor in the *Andy Griffith Show* or John Nolan in *The Rookie*, who assume that most people are law abiding and that everyone deserves protection, and who are dedicated to identifying the particular people who commit crimes and

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251 To be clear, there are plenty of good police officers. But there are also bad ones, and that's a problem given that they have guns and power.

252 Media talking heads will disagree with that. The media loves to show us designated spokespeople for black Americans. Think about that one. If Fox News wanted to interview a self-proclaimed spokesman for white Americans, can you picture what that person would be like? Would that person be at all likely to represent the views of the average white American?

253 <https://www.statista.com/statistics/251877/murder-victims-in-the-us-by-race-ethnicity-and-gender/>

arresting them and protecting the witnesses needed to prosecute them. They want police who will take forensic evidence and actually use it to catch criminals instead of just putting it in a drawer.<sup>254</sup> They want police who will distinguish between the dumb teenager using an illegal drug and the gangland dealer with high-powered weapons who will shoot at rivals and hit innocent kids. They also want mental health workers and social workers and drug counselors who are trained and staffed to address other issues in a peaceful and effective manner without drawn guns or oppression. These are not crazy things to ask for. There actually are such police officers, two of whom are featured in the book *Ghettocide*. There actually are successful social programs. We can improve things if we make a real effort.

Besides our police problem and our crime problem, we also have a problem with defective procedures. For example, here in Texas commonly a felony arrest warrant is only enforced if and when the felon happens to be pulled over in a traffic stop. Most of us would tend to think of a traffic stop as being a situation where a police officer should not be ready to shoot anybody. Under this Texas system, though, the police know that the driver may be a wanted felon who will go to jail only if he happens to be stopped for a traffic offense. That has to affect the officer's degree of tension when making a stop, increasing the odds that a simple traffic stop will result in deadly violence. Why do things that way? We put minor offenders in jail because they can't afford to post bail, and let clearly dangerous people out. We put insane people in jail for lack of a better place, and bad things happen because jail is not designed for them. Somebody needs to look at the whole system, top to bottom, and fix all the stupid things.

This is common ground. This is something we all want. So how do we get it?

## **The police should not be structured like an occupying power**

First, we need to back off of a system of "crime prevention" patrolling that, especially linked with the rise of the squad car and the ill-advised war on drugs, has led most urban police forces to behave more like an occupying foreign power than like the traditional English Bobbies. Police get frustrated by the exclusionary rule, which prevents them from using evidence to prosecute criminals unless they have followed the constitutional rules governing searches and seizures. They also get frustrated by their own lack of skills, time and resources to investigate crime. "Crime prevention" is an active process of interfering with people in which constitutional restrictions don't matter much, since the officers are not investigating a crime but are rather just trying to intimidate would-be criminals. The exclusionary rule offers precisely zero protection for innocent people, so if the police randomly stop and frisk people or search their cars or rough them up just to intimidate them, rather than to prosecute them, the rules don't matter. Acting like an

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<sup>254</sup> Many police fail to use their resources, and that has been true for decades. When my wife and I lived in Cambridge MA in 1982 a thief broke into our car, not realizing that we were too poor then to have a stereo to steal, and trashed the dash, but cut himself and left a full set of bloody fingerprints. The police didn't even bother to collect them. Just a couple of years ago in Dallas, a home invader broke into my son's home and he and his family had to flee outside and wait until the burglar fled when he heard the police sirens. They stayed up the rest of the night while Crime Scene processed the house and collected a lot of fingerprints and other evidence, but the detective assigned never used any of it.

occupying power tends to encourage people to respond like an occupied population rather than like a cooperative citizenry. That is unhelpful. Perhaps more to the point, it does not in fact shut down crime and it encourages sloppy habits that lead to actual crimes not being properly investigated and solved.

There is plenty of evidence in criminology that the thing that stops crime is a high degree of certainty that the criminal will be caught and punished quickly. It does not matter as much if the punishment is just a little severe or a lot severe<sup>255</sup> (although of course a person in prison cannot commit additional crimes, except against other prisoners), but swiftness and certainty are. Good detective work is far and away the most effective way to reduce crime in any neighborhood. Good detectives need to get to know people. “Crime prevention”, as that term is used by police forces, does not prevent crime. Being really diligent about quickly catching, trying, convicting, and punishing criminals does.

We should have more foot patrols of the type that become properly acquainted with the people in the neighborhood. In occupying power mode, police tend to regard anyone who does not look like them as a potential threat, just as American soldiers in Iraq or Afghanistan tended to become deeply suspicious of the native population overall. A beat patrol person would learn to see people on the beat as human beings, some good and some not so good. He could even learn to distinguish the degrees of bad. In any gang there is generally a nasty true psychopath who attracts to himself a layer of poorly socialized people who are not inherently bad, but who are attracted to the power and status of the psychopath. If law enforcement could identify, target and remove those core players, far fewer other people would be corrupted.

Further, if the beat patrol cop and her colleagues proved that they were just interested in catching the people in the neighborhood who had harmed other people in the neighborhood, and were willing to work hard to succeed at it, the police overall could build trust in the community. That leads to a higher rate of cooperation, which leads to more crimes solved and punished. I went to an inner city high school where we had a police officer on campus. None of us ever met the man, he did not intervene when students were being beaten bloody by a gang of other students, and generally he was a waste of the taxpayers’ money. If he had gotten to know students and had made a real effort to identify and punish the kids who preyed on other kids, he would have gotten the trust and cooperation of students of all races. Instead, even the white kids regarded him as basically a hostile object. On the other hand, on the couple of occasions when patrol officers stopped me while I was walking home in the evening and questioned me and checked my ID, I was happy to cooperate because they seemed to be doing their jobs to protect the people.<sup>256</sup>

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255 Once upon a time, the highest rates of pick-pocketing were among the crowds gathered to watch the hanging of a pickpocket, because his friends and associates came to see him off.

256 Yes, middle class white kids have encounters with the police. I don’t think I’m unusual, and I have been arrested twice (and then de-arrested pretty quickly – one was police misconduct and the other just police sloppiness), stopped and questioned on foot a couple of times, and pulled over and questioned for no obvious reason at least four times. I mention this not to say “woe is me – I have suffered too”, but to point out that the constant drumbeat of “police racism” in the media hurts young black and Hispanic people who have encounters with the police. My contacts didn’t make me feel humiliated. Yes I had to do what I was told and yes I hadn’t done anything wrong, but regardless of the race of the

Of course, sprawling suburbs with no sidewalks don't lend themselves to foot patrols, and foot patrols in Minneapolis in January or Houston in July would be hard on the officers, who wouldn't encounter many citizens out and about anyway. But we shouldn't avoid using foot patrols just because they cost money. We should also use other forms of friendly community policing. Police crime prevention seminars in schools, churches, community centers and apartment buildings are good, especially when combined with listening sessions to hear from the people of the neighborhood. Police departments should make strong efforts to recruit from higher-crime neighborhoods (as they did in the days of Irish immigrants) and to have patrol officers who are resident in the community. I'm not an expert in the field so I won't draw this out, but the common sense point is to work to make opportunities for the police to see the residents of the neighborhood as individual people, and for the people of the neighborhood to see police officers as individual people<sup>257</sup> as well, people who seek to help them.

A laborist government would ensure that police don't spoil this by using improper practices. Getting rid of the use of dangerous and unnecessary chokeholds and laying detainees face down has taken way too long in this country. The continued failure by the Minneapolis police department to use the best practice of minimizing the time that anyone was kept face down on the ground was inexcusable. Most police in America get pretty good pay and benefits now. We should expect them to display a level of expertise that fits with that pay, universally following best practices for the safety of everyone and for minimizing violent conflict. Americans are pretty understanding. If you have served on a grand jury, you have seen that Americans of all races understand the fact that police have a hard job and that sometimes they need to use deadly force or other violence. While few of us have occasion to have to decide quickly if someone is pointing a gun at us, if you drive in traffic you know that your brain does not instantly process what you are seeing into a clear picture; you may need to look down that side street for a second to be sure whether a bicyclist or something is about to come in front of you. I think most of us get that the observation powers of police are no more magical than ours, and that civilians have some

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police officers I knew I wasn't being treated like an inferior being. I had been misidentified as a suspect ("oh, you mean the *other* young male non-Mormons!") or the police were suspicious for some reason; that's just life in the city. If I had been subjected to relentless propaganda telling me that every time I had an encounter with the police it was due to racism and they were treating me as an inferior being, on the other hand, I would have felt humiliated and angry. The Cato data (Cato is NOT pro-police) shows that most of the time the contacts have nothing to do with racism, so this trauma is an unnecessary effect of media misrepresentation. To be clear, I am not saying that there aren't still, in some places or with some individuals, some loser-white-cop-oppressing-black-people-to-feel-good-about-himself situations; I am sure there are. I am saying, however, that most encounters between black people and police are not that sort. Even when police from outside the neighborhood go into a high-crime area and assume that the residents are mostly criminals, instead of more properly assuming that most of the residents are crime *victims* deserving respect and help, that's just incompetence, not old-fashioned oppressor racism.

257 Seeing people as individuals rather than as groups is 90% of the battle. Consider a situation in which a number of individuals from Group B assault and kill individuals from Group A. The members of Group A get very distressed about this and declare that Group B people are awful thugs, and the Group B people who didn't actually commit the crimes should have stopped them, and something needs to be done about Group B. If we identify Group B as being black or Hispanic people, then the response by Group A will be considered to be unfair and bigoted. If we identify Group B as police officers, then the reaction of Group A is commonly seen as fair and enlightened. But the reaction has the same flaw either way. Smearing a whole group for the bad actions of certain members of that group is both unfair and unhelpful.

responsibility for avoiding putting police into a position where they have to make split-second decisions. But we further understand that the police, as law enforcement professionals, also have a responsibility to do the best they can and to use the safest practices they can.

We should also, for the sake of the good police officers as well as civilians, demand that police conduct be properly investigated and that the bad eggs be expelled. There are basically two sorts of people who want to become police officers. One group wants to protect and serve and be admired by the community and small children for being a good and self-sacrificing person. The other group wants to carry a badge and a gun and be able to push people around. If the public at large views police officers as a species as racist thugs, then people in that first group will be discouraged from signing up. If they try to serve and be good but people spit on them anyway, then it is hard to be motivated. The people in the second group, on the other hand, may actually be energized by being viewed as thugs, since it fits with their desire to have power and be feared. The public view then becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy. Anyone who has worked as a prosecutor in a good office will tell you that it feels really good to have doing the right thing be your job description – to try to identify the innocent and cut them loose with an apology and identify the guilty and prove their guilt. If someone joins the office who just wants to win or doesn't care about truth, the others will dislike that person and want them gone, because they damage the group's image. It is the same for police. The good ones want to work in a clean unit filled with good cops who are admired and respected, and they want to get rid of bad ones.<sup>258</sup> The policy question is how best to feed that desire, to reward those who seek to flush out the bad ones.

That starts with the tone at the top. While a police chief or police union head will want to protect their officers against judgment standards that have unrealistic expectations as to how human beings can make decisions in difficult and dangerous situations, they should never seek to protect officers who just choose to behave badly. Likewise, they should never tolerate officers who are hostile to a fellow cop who blows the whistle on a colleague who chooses to be bad. That kind of hostility is a sure sign of a bad attitude in the hostile officer, because a good officer would want the offender to get corrected or flushed out. We do not tolerate corporate executives who create or maintain an environment in which employees misbehave and anyone calling them on it is shunned. If we can fix the tone in a business, there is no reason we can't fix it in a police station. Police chiefs need to make it clear that a person in a blue uniform who is not willing to live up to the standards of a peace officer is not really a police officer; he is an impostor pretending to be a police officer and his coworkers, the real police officers, need to have him removed from their environment.

We need to always have the good people in law enforcement feel free to be good, to point out bad behavior, and to take pride in doing so. That means fully understanding how hard their job is and fully appreciating the ones who do it well, and then from that high ground going after the bad ones who tarnish the reputation of the good ones. Anyone who favors effective law enforcement

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<sup>258</sup> The police officer primarily in charge of the raid on my family's home was well known among the police for being a very bad officer, but he kept getting promoted. When good police officers see that, it wrecks their spirit and colors their own behavior.

should favor this. Consistently good police officers will earn community cooperation, which greatly increases the chances of catching and convicting the bad guys.

To this end, we should evaluate police officers under the same professionalism and politeness standards that apply to waitresses and store clerks. We can grant that police officers have potentially dangerous jobs, but that is no excuse for swearing at or otherwise abusing people. Their body cam footage of civilian encounters should be sampled to check for inappropriate behavior and any such behavior should have the same consequences for a police officer that would apply for a store clerk. Police unions may object, but these standards should be written very clearly into the police job descriptions. Police encounters with citizens should leave the citizens feeling respected, even if they are potential suspects. That doesn't mean that police can't give urgent commands like "put the gun down and put your hands behind your head" without saying "pretty please", but those encounters are few and far between. In most encounters, including most arrests, they can be civil. If the civilian chooses to be uncivil to a degree where we would expect a waitress or store clerk to cuss them out, then we can tolerate similar limits to patience in an officer, but we should expect the police to always start out polite and respectful.

### **Provide proper social resources**

We have two main government realms in America where the popularity of a government function has resulted in the politicians doing their best to destroy it: schools and the police. As a civilized society, we need to provide a number of social services to help our fellow citizens with problems. Politicians of a certain sort love to brand those efforts as "welfare", claim that it is just rewarding lowlifes and deadbeats, and cut the funding. But we still need the services, which in fact help good, hardworking families that run into things beyond their ability to cope. Most Americans place a high value on education, as they should, and will usually be willing to spend a lot of money on their schools. Therefore, the politicians who want to harp about being anti-welfare take any services affecting children and put them in the schools, and ask teachers with no relevant training or tools to take on the functions. Likewise, we generally are willing to provide money for the police, since we are afraid of each other. Therefore, any services affecting adults are dumped on the police, who also have no relevant training or tools to take on the functions.

Where police forces are put in charge of things that they are not trained or staffed for, such as dealing with the mentally ill or with domestic disputes or child welfare or homeless persons, they do not perform those tasks well. People have sensibly suggested that it would be better to shift funding back to persons who are specifically qualified to address those matters (with police protection as appropriate). The funding "shift", then, would be more truth in funding and more sensible funding, targeting the social program needs with resources specifically aimed at those needs. Sadly, those suggestions got translated into the "defund the police" slogan, as if just getting rid of police officers would improve the lives of people in poor neighborhoods. People who enjoy agitating but who don't like to take the trouble to think things through then said "yeah – defund the police, because they are bad!", and the financier-controlled media ignored the people who



were suggesting the sensible funding shift and focused entirely on those who thought it would be good to just not have police.

A laborist government would hire specialists to handle encounters with the mentally ill, with domestic abuse, and other situations where factors other than force-backed law enforcement or investigation are called for. We would ensure a good partnership between those specialists and the police, so that the specialists are happy with their protection and with the law-enforcement back-up option.

In schools, we would have social work specialists engage with the complex family and community problems of the students and encourage a good partnership between the specialists and school police officers. We would also use the social work specialists to help identify the students who appear to just be bad.<sup>259</sup> We would set up systems by which the school police officers and specialists inform community police officers, community social workers and parents about kids who have issues that they need help with, and about kids who appear to just be bad, so that the community officers and specialists and parents will be better prepared to ensure that the kids with issues will receive proper support and will be protected from the kids who are really bad. Young predators are good at finding at-risk kids and recruiting them for crime. The best way to prevent crime is to prevent the creation of criminals. If we can, through such support, keep at-risk kids from becoming criminals by age 25, we will probably have kept them out of the criminal ranks for life. In the longer run, laborist family policy will take care of most of that problem.

A laborist government will also give proper attention to those who have already taken a wrong turn. We will improve the tiering of our prison system to separate nonviolent dimwits from both violent criminals and career white collar criminals like con men and other incorrigibles who are likely to corrupt them. We need to separate people who have committed violent crimes in an uncharacteristic moment after being provoked from people who commit violent crimes because that is their nature. We should then make real efforts to seek reform and a new start for the nonviolent people who made a mistake or fell into bad habits and the redeemable violent people. If a person in either group behaves in prison in a way that shows they have been misclassified, they can be moved to a prison with the real criminals. The real criminals, the psychopaths, the rapists and child molesters who will surely reoffend, the habitually violent, the chronic con artists, and others who have demonstrated that they have no empathy with their fellow citizens and won't be redeemed, need to be kept securely locked up for the protection of the innocent. For them, we should acknowledge that real reform is very unlikely, and that given their past offenses fairness requires that we give priority to protecting future innocent victims over giving the truly bad

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259 We tend to be very reluctant to label children as bad people no matter how heinous their actions may be, fearing that we may unfairly pre-judge a young person whose nature has not yet been fully formed. While certainly we need to be very careful about putting on an irreversible label and about skewing our view of behaviors based on a tentative label, realistically the failure to start watching a psychopathic child or to act to prevent them from harming others early allows needless horrific things to happen to innocents. We can avoid being sloppy and can be humane in our containment efforts without just saying "well, after a few innocent lives have been destroyed, then we can be pretty sure we need to do something."

criminal another chance.<sup>260</sup> For other offenders, however, we will make a serious effort to get them back on the right path.

Many criminals are people with messed-up backgrounds, drug problems, bad friends, and other influences that increase the likelihood of their misbehaving. They desperately need responsible adults who take a genuine interest in getting them on the straight and narrow, coupled with the resources to put them on that path. They may need to move to a different area, be given a job, be encouraged in better hobbies, learn healthier habits, be introduced to better friends, and be given remedial schooling. They may need what amounts to a finishing school to learn how to dress, act and speak in a way that gives them access to better things. They definitely need to be protected from people who seek to exploit them, like their parents, foster parents, false friends, and other bad adults in their lives may have done. In our current system, we imprison people like this with a variety of criminals as their company. If they are lucky, when they are released we may put them in a halfway house for a while with other newly-released criminals as they practice getting restarted in society. We then release them onto the street with, at best, an overworked parole officer to check in on them once in a while. We expect something good to result from this. Surprise! It often doesn't help.

People with these issues need to be dealt with. Patting them on the head when they are arrested for drugs or theft or burglary or bar fights and sending them back onto the street doesn't help them or the rest of us. They need serious attention from people who can really be trusted to care about them and help them. The people who help them need to teach them the facts of life, that being a druggie, tatted-up ex-con with bad work habits and bad manners won't end well, but that it is possible to rewrite their story into one where they can win at life. They need people who understand all the harmful behaviors that tend to be shown by people who were abused or neglected as kids and kicked around by the system, and understand how to start correcting those behaviors. They need to be separated from and protected from people who are really bad.

For generations now American reformists keep trying to get our criminal justice system to make real efforts to reform this kind of offender, but we keep refusing to provide adequate resources and we keep losing interest. In a financier-run nation, spending money and time to help young offenders to achieve normal, productive lives will never be a priority. In a laborist America, we will give these people adequate priority, for their sake and ours.

As discussed above under housing, a laborist government will get homeless people, including the dangerous mentally ill, off the street. A friend of my daughter's was in the second week of his new job in New York when an insane homeless man tried to kill him, randomly, by whacking him on the back of the head with a pipe. Fortunately her friend survived and recovered, though he did not return to New York. The homeless man in question was well known to the police and had attacked

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<sup>260</sup> The line "OK, if you want to let him out then how about if he stays at your house?" is actually pretty appropriate. Part of our insidious racism and classism is that people are often happy to make themselves feel morally superior by saying "we have to give him another chance!" when the innocents who suffer from that mistake will be people living in a different neighborhood. If I wouldn't let a parolee stay at my house, then I don't think I should inflict him on some other innocents, either.

other people previously, but the New York system had no effective provision for either holding him or treating him. They just did catch and release. That is bad for the mentally ill man, bad for innocent citizens, and bad for the police who have to keep catching him while trying not to hurt him. We can't have that kind of nonsense. We also can't have a system where society thinks it has done enough to address homelessness by providing shelters, but the homeless are afraid to sleep in the shelters because they are assaulted and robbed or molested by the other people there. It is time to say that we won't think it is OK to have people living in those conditions, and that we will help them if we can or, if they are just incorrigible criminals who prey on the other homeless, we will lock them up.

## **Changing the war on drugs**

As long as there is a demand for narcotics people will try to supply it. America has had a really poor approach to drugs. We put major resources into border enforcement, which is the least likely way to actually control drug use. We allow for-profit corporations to produce and sell all kinds of narcotic drugs and to give doctors and pharmacies incentive to provide them to whoever wants, or can be persuaded to want, to take them. We make very little effort to get young people not to seek to buy drugs. We make no real effort, and in fact stop real efforts, to control drug money. We make no real effort to stop foreign drug production, and in fact protect Afghan opium producers and others who our foreign policy geniuses think are useful. What we really like to do is to lock up low-level drug dealers and pay DEA agents to play undercover games while protecting all kinds of unsavory people that they associate with.

Laborism will change all of this. We will emphasize reducing demand for illegal, unsafe drugs and we will enforce against money rather than people. We will change the way US pharma companies, doctors and pharmacies do business.

As I have explained above in regard to reducing teen pregnancy, there is nothing wrong with certain types of government propaganda efforts. They need to be efforts that are above board, where the government is proud to say "yes, we are doing that", and where all of the information is true and nothing untrue is said. They also need to be properly conducted using modern techniques that work. The tobacco industry knows that adults preaching to teenagers triggers their rebellion response and makes them do the thing more. That is why the tobacco industry shut down the highly effective Brooke Shields ads and funded preachy ads that, as they predicted, actually increased teen tobacco use. An effective anti-drug propaganda effort needs to do things correctly.

A laborist government will hire the most capable PR firms to create and fund modern campaigns to shut down illegal drug use by making everyone feel that using illegal drugs is a degraded loser move. Such a campaign will not just use ads, but will also use social media tactics and integration into popular TV shows and movies, just as the financiers have done for decades to control our opinions. Yes, that will make current addicts feel bad, but that is a small price to pay for keeping a new generation from becoming like them. Americans respond to peer pressure, and if drug use does not make you a cool kid or a grown-up but instead makes you a pathetic juvenile trash kid,

then few will be motivated to get into it. If a high school boy thinks that if the cute girl learns that he uses drugs she will say “Eww, get away from me, loser! I’d rather drink nuclear waste!”, then he won’t be inclined to use them. The old “your brain on drugs” type ads are ineffective, but we have a large industry in this country that is very effective at making people think a certain way and feel that everybody else thinks that way. Instead of using that talent to support the objectives of the Uniparty, we will use it to change the drug culture. Making people confront the fact that paying money for illegal drugs supports people who do very bad things would work with a large segment of society. Making kids feel that their peers or the cool kids will look down on them if they use drugs will work better.

At the same time, people do have a general attraction to mind-altering drugs. It probably isn’t fully possible to change that, but we can at least stream people to certain low-harm, low-addictiveness drugs. Alcohol is a potentially fatal drug and a potentially addicting drug, but most American adults use it in moderation in a way that can actually be healthy. Part of our culture celebrates and encourages irresponsible alcohol use, but we can counter that. We need to properly legalize marijuana use, but do it correctly now. It will be standardized to a maximum THC concentration and it will be taxed, and we should figure out a reliable way to allow police to test drivers for THC intoxication. THC candy and the like will be banned. It will be regulated to keep criminal groups from being involved. If there are harder drugs that are not addictive or particularly harmful, we can consider likewise legalizing those under a scheme with limited purchasing rights (enforced with secure IDs) and strong penalties (including losing all purchasing rights forever) for anyone who re-sells. All of this should make it easier to get consumers to reject worse drugs and illegal drugs. “Only losers send money to narco-killers to take potentially deadly illegal drugs that rot your brain, and no attractive person will want such a loser” is a pretty simple, completely true message that can be spread across all media.

When we squelch illegal drug culture it will be easier to help current addicts to dry out for good. Further, we will eliminate the customer money that has been driving American organized crime and gangs since Prohibition.

In the meantime, we will make the contraband drugs business unprofitable. On the medical industry side, we will suppress irresponsible corporations and we will prosecute pill mills and confiscate 100% of the money of, and revoke the licenses of, everyone involved in them. Laborism will fundamentally reform American medicine including eliminating pharma company incentives to doctors to prescribe and push their drugs. Doctors will have no upside for pushing narcotics and will have a lot of downside. Any spike in sales of potentially abusable drugs will be picked up quickly and will be investigated and fixed.

Anyone who makes a lot of money producing and selling narcotics in the US or producing them abroad and selling them into the US leaves a money trail. The Uniparty, because it wants to fund shady activity abroad, has never had a real interest in using our power to track and shut down this money. A friend of mine was involved in a multi-agency effort to shut down drug money laundering back in the 1980s, but when they actually succeeded in finding the banks laundering

the money they were shut down and disbanded by some version of the Cigarette Smoking Man. America, in an effort to maximize its imperial power, implemented an international system of requiring banks to identify account holders and track money flows. Once that was in place, though, Cigarette Smoking Man got worried again. The Uniparty has been supporting the rise of crypto currencies and non-fungible tokens<sup>261</sup> that make it easier for international criminals to move money unobserved. America was notorious in other countries as being the country where criminal money was hidden, because we allowed anonymous ownership of corporations and trusts that could deal in huge amounts of money. When that became too embarrassing under international pressure we passed rules that required disclosing who really owns companies, but the Trump administration is reversing those rules.

A laborist government will use the new anti-money laundering systems to find and seize drug and illegal arms money both in America and crossing our borders. We have extremely sophisticated surveillance systems. We can require declaration of everything sold into the US and match that with money and goods flowing out. If we apply our abilities to spotting criminal money flows, we can succeed much more effectively than we can enforce to prevent foreign visitors from swallowing condoms full of cocaine or heroin or worse things, or to prevent Chinese or Mexican shippers from slipping some fentanyl into packages. We may not be able to pick up every domestic free-enterprise moonshiner or small meth producer who sells locally, but we can pick up money flows from interstate street gangs to regional and national kingpins and suppliers, and we can intercept and seize the money. No money, no business. We don't need a bunch of sleazy undercover detectives making buys. We don't need to immunize a bunch of criminals to sell out other criminals. We can just take the profit out of crime. And we can apply this to all major crimes. If we just shut down the drug business, cartels will seek to make more in arms sales, human trafficking, stolen goods, counterfeit goods, protection rackets, and the like. If we implement good controls over international money flows, we can seize the profits from all of it.

If drug money stops, gang members and others won't have reason to be carrying valuable drugs and wads of cash, and won't need weapons to protect from having them stolen. Low-level dealers already struggle to make a living. We will make them want to quit the business. We can put a major squeeze on crime without having to make a single arrest or search a single apartment or car trunk. Money changes everything.

## **Improving prosecution**

When someone commits a crime, we want them to be caught and convicted quickly and with high certainty. We want to be careful not to convict innocent people, but any time our justice system tosses out useful evidence the quality of justice is reduced, and any time a witness is unwilling to come forward and testify justice suffers.

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<sup>261</sup> A significant piece of the high-end auction market in physical art is actually money laundering by criminals. Because crappy art can have weirdly high values, it is relatively easy to arrange auctions or purchases where an anonymous party pays a crazy high amount of money for an artwork from a particular foreign seller. Electronic tokens make such games that much easier.

We need to get serious about taking care of witnesses. Despite the recent advances in forensic science, generally in order to catch and convict a bad guy you need cooperation from people who know or saw something. Commonly, though, such witnesses get nothing for coming forward, and they are not protected from the bad guy or his friends. If they are protected, it generally involves disrupting their lives a lot. Further, judges and prosecutors commonly don't give much thought to the effect on a witness of releasing a guilty criminal on a technicality or pleading him down to next to nothing for his cooperation against someone else. The bad guy is back on the street with the witness. Few people will want to come forward to testify against someone if, in their experience, there is a good chance the criminal will be back out on the street and looking for payback a short time later.

Really effective witness protection would be complicated and probably expensive, but cooperating parties deserve to be treated right. Our constitution guarantees a right of speedy trial, but in practice our criminal cases move slowly. Prosecutors are required to disclose information to defense attorneys, so there is generally a long period when a criminal defendant knows that a witness will be used against them but the criminal has not yet been convicted. A laborist government would take the obligation to conduct speedy trials seriously. This would reduce the problem of persons who have not been tried sitting in jail for failing to make bail, and it would reduce the primary threat period for witnesses. (The most tempting time to go after a witness is before they have testified at trial. Going after them later out of revenge is less useful to the criminal.) Speedy trials are a matter of resources and priorities. There is no good excuse for our habit of ignoring this constitutional obligation. If we can speed up trials by providing adequate resources, then it becomes easier to provide witnesses and their families with pre-trial protection that is relatively nice and convenient. We can also use modern technology to assist here. There is no particular reason why a witness can't give sworn testimony and be cross-examined on the record on video before the main trial, with that testimony available to be shown the jury if the witness is murdered or clams up or disappears later.

We will put heavy resources into investigating, prosecuting, and punishing any incident of witness intimidation. Anyone who facilitates the intimidation in any way will be considered to be part of the criminal enterprise and will be punished.

Most criminals are not very bright. Gangsters tend to post their crimes on social media. It is commonly pretty easy for the police to prove their case beyond a reasonable doubt. However, there are certain rules in the law that can make it easy for people who undoubtedly have been involved in a crime to get off. Some of those rules, which vary from state to state, involve holding that a crime has not been proven when it is not clear which one of a group of people, all of whom were clearly involved, did a particular thing<sup>262</sup>. Those rules can be modified to convict the group unless *they* can prove which one of them did the particular thing. The other general item is the exclusionary rule.

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262 The particular thing may be pulling the trigger, driving the stolen vehicle, possessing the banned item, etc. When they were all voluntarily involved and the ones who didn't do the particular thing are stingy with the truth, why should that help them?

The exclusionary rule prevents prosecutors from using evidence that the police obtained in an unconstitutional way, by violating the rules on searches and seizures or the rules on confessions. Further, evidence that the police find using information that they obtained illegally is also tossed out as “fruit of the poisonous tree”. The only people who get a direct benefit from the exclusion of evidence are guilty criminals. Innocent parties who are searched, harassed, or improperly interrogated don’t benefit.<sup>263</sup> The exclusionary rule was put in place by the courts on the theory that without it there would be no effective mechanisms for enforcing the search and seizure and compulsory confession rules of the Fourth and Fifth Amendments. In practice, lawyers wrestle over whether the written statements in a warrant application were adequate or the specific things a police officer can recite as to what made him think he should stop and investigate someone were enough. The system is particularly perverse in that much of what actually amounts to probable cause rides on the professional judgment of an experienced police officer, which feeds her intuition. But the way the rule is applied, an officer who is wrong 100% of the time will never have a search questioned because no evidence will be found, while an officer who is right 100% of the time will have every search questioned. That’s just silly.

But we could introduce a two-part mechanism that would set up funds to compensate victims of illegal searches and seizures and that would discipline police officers and prosecutors who knowingly or recklessly break the rules. That would actually protect the innocent, which should be our primary concern. Given successful implementation of that foundation, then the exclusionary rule would not be necessary.

Setting up that kind of a system shouldn’t be too difficult. Authorities would be required to fund citizen-compensation pools and independent boards would determine when an innocent civilian had been subjected to an illegal search or seizure, and that person would receive a standardized amount of compensation for it. (In particularly bad cases, they could get a higher, individualized award.) That gives the relevant government authority incentive to try to minimize the number of awards handed out. Police compensation would be changed to have a significant variable component that would be affected by the number of awards issued based on the officer’s activities. If a given officer had enough bad searches to exceed the variable pay range, then that officer would be subject to further discipline. That wouldn’t be dollar-for-dollar, but it would be enough to give the officer reason to really understand the rules and try not to get dinged. If a city was paying out a lot of awards, they would have incentive to strengthen that variable-pay component to bring the officers in line. Importantly, if a jurisdiction failed to demonstrate that its program was being administered in a way that controlled police behavior at least as much as the current system, then that jurisdiction would fall back under the exclusionary rule. Therefore, we could not end up less compliant with the Constitution than we are today. If the compensation alternative has its intended effect, though, then we would compensate the innocent rather than the guilty for the

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<sup>263</sup> Having an improperly coerced confession thrown out can benefit an innocent person, but that’s a different thing. An improper confession is tossed largely because it is likely to be false, unlike the fruits of an improper search. You can preserve that rule and just not have it illogically extended by the fruit of the poisonous tree doctrine, since finding further evidence actually proves the confession was accurate.

errors of police officers, and we would not degrade the justice system by excluding true information.

In this system, individual judges would still issue warrants. However, the review board would then apply a uniform standard in reviewing the warrants that resulted in searches of innocent parties to determine whether those warrants were properly issued. The results, along with statistics on good warrants issued by judges, would be public information. Anyone who has practiced before judges, especially since the court system has become politicized, knows that they are not all the sharpest tools in the shed. Having convenient public information as to which judges are frequently determined to have been wrong, and thus to have cost the taxpayers money and the innocent to suffer, would be a good thing. Further, the judges would have incentive to learn which police officers exercised good judgment and which did not, rewarding good police work.

A laborist government would support bail reform so that an innocent poor person would not have to rot in jail pending trial while a guilty rich person would be roaming free. However, under laborist policy that issue would be less important in many cases. When the justice system is revised to have those offenders who are just messed up and need a re-set get the help and discipline they need to get on a better, happier path, that process will start at arrest. Rather than being tossed in jail with the real bad guys, they would be diverted into a helpful context. That part of the justice system should also move pretty quickly. It should be possible to get to a quick guilty plea in most cases because the result would be fixing their lives rather than wrecking them. The label of being a graduate of that wing of the justice program will not be like the stigma of being an ex-con<sup>264</sup> today, because the graduates will be certified as not bad people to begin with, and as now being rehabilitated. If they can be processed quickly, then that leaves more resources for similarly situated innocent people to get attention for their cases and likewise get them resolved quickly. But, in the meantime, if they don't make bail it won't be so bad. Still, innocent persons accused of bad-guy crimes would be in jail with bad guys, and bail reform will be less likely to help them because we will still seek to confine persons considered likely to be dangerous to others, but at least speedy trial reforms will help them, and we will treat rich people the same way.

## **Some things should be more strictly enforced**

Some parts of the justice system under-enforce because enforcement is inconvenient to the financiers. Laborism will rebalance those for the protection of working Americans.

A laborist government won't tolerate human trafficking. We will use a social media campaign for this (on media not watched by young children, of course – the PR firms will know how to reach the people who use prostitutes) and combine it with heavy penalty, name-and-shame prosecution of anyone who uses illegal prostitutes.<sup>265</sup> We will make a real, NSA-supported, internationally-

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<sup>264</sup> We would need a new, distinct word for them. As long as the public actually had good experiences with the reformees that would help. Changing a term for a group that the public has continuing bad experiences with isn't helpful.

<sup>265</sup> Legal prostitution, where it exists, is a different animal in that it can be subjected to regulation to make sure that the sex workers are making a free choice. We should question why they feel that is a good choice and why they don't have



coordinated effort to shut down child pornography and any pornography that uses unwilling or desperate subjects. That may involve government licensing and inspection of creators of allowable pornography, which may feel uncomfortable, but if it allows us to shut down the trafficked version then that is well worth it. Laborism, unlike the Uniparty, won't be led by politicians<sup>266</sup> that have a fondness for sex with young trafficked people, so a laborist government will be able to make a sincere and vigorous effort to shut such things down.

We will greatly increase anti-stalking restrictions. It is completely unacceptable for any woman to live in reasonable fear of a stalker and be unable to do anything about it. By using magic words such as "I invoke the anti-stalking law – stop", she will be able to put the stalker under strong restrictions against any further intentional contact. Violators will not only face stern penalties, but also lifelong disabilities from firearms ownership and other suitable restrictions to help prevent them from threatening, endangering, or harassing others. Stalking victims will receive heavy investigative and prosecutorial resources to find and deal with stalkers.

We will get serious about roffie rape and date rape. The current rate of those offenses is way too high, and a serious enforcement effort should be effective to snuff them out. There are things that a person just does not need to do in life. One of those is having sex with a girl who is drunk or drugged out when the guy does not otherwise have an ongoing consensual relationship with her. If society issues the warning "don't even come close to that – it's a REALLY bad idea", then it can be controlled like statutory rape. Reasonable 30 year old males should not be inclined to try to have sex with 16 year old girls anyway, but in any event we have made it clear to them that doing so is a really bad idea, so if they are generally law abiding they don't do it, even if the girl in question is obviously willing. Don't start a sexual relationship with a girl when she is drunk or drugged out, even if you think she wants to. It is an easy rule. Anyone can follow it. Combined with making the phrase "this is rape – stop" a magic line that no male dares to cross on penalty of prison, we could ensure that nobody gets into trouble by mistake. We would still need to sort out instances of false accusation, but making it clear that even rich boys and star athletes need to steer clear of this behavior would eliminate a lot of crime and make it feasible to spend the resources to sort out the remaining cases.

A laborist government will require that disturbing suspect behavior be flagged and tracked. Today, when there is evidence of possible child abuse or spouse abuse or other offenses, the choices offered are "do nothing" or "make a serious intervention". Obviously, when a child shows up in the hospital with an injury of a type that kids get on their own initiative, we don't want to have a big brouhaha with family services. But if something weird is observed in a hospital, a doctor's office, a school, a daycare center, or anywhere else, it should be flagged with an adequate description of why it seems weird relative to what is going on with other kids. That should then trigger a check as to whether an adult in contact with the child has a history of abuse. Even if there is no such adult, if there are 2 or 3 or 6 incidents that seem weird, the authorities should

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better options, but those are different questions from stopping human trafficking.

<sup>266</sup> The Uniparty system of professional politicians, slick grifters who raise money from fatcats in order to pursue political power for its own sake, tends to attract a certain warped personality type.

know about that series of coincidences and be on the alert to look into it. Today one or more kids can be abused for years by a particular adult without anybody putting the pieces together. In cases of Munchausen by proxy (which is a real thing, not just on crime shows, and surprisingly frequent) the attention-seeking adult will try various doctors until she finds one who gives her what she wants, even if family members, nurses and teachers have expressed concern, with horrific, life-destroying results. I am pleased that I live in a county where stalking, spouse abuse, child abuse, and the like are taken seriously, investigated, and prosecuted, which I am pretty sure is not the norm in the county next door, but even here it takes way too long before the police have any notice that there is anything to investigate, and lives are destroyed in the meantime. While having a confidential electronic record that an adult has been flagged raises a risk of improper leaks and accusations, the potential harm from that is not as bad as the harm that occurs daily to real victims. Further, cover-up of abuse by lying or hiding evidence will be considered to make the person covering up an accessory. Precisely because false accusations in this area are bad, we need to have zero tolerance for people behaving in ways that make it difficult to trust what investigators are being told when they ask questions.

We will really go after telephone and cyber fraudsters as part of a global effort. There is no valid technological reason why we have to allow anyone access to the US telephone system without being able to specifically trace where they are calling from. We will implement such a trace on anyone accessing our phone system, and we will engage with foreign authorities to vigorously prosecute any foreign-based criminals, as well as vigorously prosecuting any domestic ones. Email is a more sensitive area<sup>267</sup>, but we will make it possible for consumers to designate that no email can be sent to a given account unless the sender is specifically traced and identified in a way that allows them to be effectively reported to US or foreign police. Other email accounts will not have that feature. Email providers can then set up their systems accordingly for different purposes, security/spam proofing versus privacy. We will energetically seek out consumer and investor fraud of all types and go after the perpetrators early on, before they claim substantial numbers of victims. While investor fraud should be less common in a laborist system, one should never underestimate the creativity of gifters.

A laborist government will treat convicted non-citizen criminals<sup>268</sup> in one of three ways: 1) arrange with their home country to imprison them, and send them home to serve the sentence; 2) if their home country won't guarantee to confine them and they are potentially dangerous if they get back in, then imprison them here and deport them after their sentence is up; or 3) if it is a relatively minor (but not petty), non-dangerous crime and not a major fraud, just deport them. When I was a visitor in other countries, resident or not, I respected their laws. That is not too much to ask. If we wish, we can do a one-for-one exchange, allowing one extra law-abiding person from that country

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267 People are used to the idea that the government can find out which numbers we have called and been called by, but these days e-mail contacts give a lot of information regarding what you read, where you shop, and so on, which is why companies like Google and Microsoft are willing to provide the service in exchange for seeing your contact data and reading your mail.

268 To be clear, here I refer to immigrants who commit discrete crimes here, as opposed to all those who violate our immigration laws. Immigration policy in general has been discussed above.

to become a resident here for each criminal from that country that we deport. In any event, given that America can only take so many immigrants, it is insane to give those slots to people who commit crimes here instead of giving them to people who are law abiding and productive. Our immigration policy has been nonsensical for the reasons explained above, allowing the financiers to exploit foreigners and undercut American working people, and the game of trying to act strict on unauthorized immigration while actually encouraging it has allowed for nonsensical treatment of criminal aliens as well. We will rationalize this in favor of law-abiding entrants.

We will shut down fencing of stolen goods. The mass shoplifting phenomenon and other large-scale theft operations have been enabled by on-line fences, and a lot of violent crimes are associated with small-scale fencing operations that encourage robbers. It wouldn't be that difficult to make a big dent in the sales of stolen merchandise.

Finally, a laborist government will not tolerate purchases of guns by felons, stalkers, wife beaters and psychotics. The whole point of gun ownership for self-defense is to be better armed than the bad guys. If the bad guys have equal or better guns, what sane person wants to be involved in a shoot-out? Poll after poll shows that Americans are overwhelmingly in favor of keeping guns out of the hands of bad guys, but we make no real effort to make that happen because it would interfere with the profits of the gun industry. The nation of Mexico has sued US gun companies, rightly, because they have knowingly facilitated the supply of high-powered weaponry to the Mexican cartels. That is how our financier-owned gun companies operate. We will rebalance our gun laws and enforcement in favor of what working Americans want, which is protection against bad guys and dangerous lunatics.

Likewise, we will ban Teflon-coated cop-killer bullets and other things that are designed to kill police, as well as high-capacity magazines. If the government seriously wants to suppress citizens with force, the military has plenty of stuff that will make them superior to anyone with an AR-15. Outgunning the army is not a serious possibility. The Afghans did not beat our troops with rifles, they did it with Improvised Explosive Devices. There is no point in allowing actual, current criminals to have the upper hand on the streets just to feed a boyish fantasy about shooting oppressive government troops in some future dystopia.<sup>269</sup> Laborism will prevent that dystopia from happening by enforcing what the Second Amendment really says, which is that the states will control the militias and the federal authorities will not be allowed to keep a standing army capable of oppressing the citizenry. We will let law-abiding, sane citizens have guns adequate to deal with bad guys, rather than allowing bad guys and would-be school shooters who are specially interested in having a lot of firepower have the advantage. Normal people don't propose to defend their home against invaders by bringing out a 50-round high-powered rapid-fire gun to shoot up their living room. They can use a pistol, rifle, shotgun, or even an AK-47 if they want,<sup>270</sup> but not with so

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269 In any event, if the future dystopia ever comes, rebels will be hunted down with fast-moving drones and bullet proof kill-bots. The government has already been working on that technology in the Ukraine war. Avoiding that dystopia is another reason to support laborism.

270 I did target practice with a friend's AK-47, which was fun, but we didn't need to fire 50 rounds without reloading to do that.

many bullets in the clip that they could shoot up a school before a police officer had a chance to shoot back.

## Restoring rural America

Jefferson questioned the commitment of merchants and bankers to the nation; their commitments to profit would find them supporting whoever (and whatever nation) could guarantee their wealth. Yeomen had an inescapable commitment to their own land. And that commitment would create a virtuous cycle of hard, honest work to improve the land, and with it the citizenry. - **John Ragosta, historian at the Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies at Monticello**

In the eyes and hearts of our founders, America's rural spirit was the spirit of our free nation. It was the hard-working, self-sufficient, community-based set of habits and attitudes that would allow us to resist the corruption of the financiers who would seek to make us serfs working for their profit. While our urbanization was largely inevitable, the near abandonment of rural America in recent decades has been unnecessary and unfortunate. Laborism will restore that heritage and make it available to all Americans. This requires two broad initiatives: 1) revitalizing rural towns; and 2) restoring family farms and protecting them from banks and agribusiness corporations.

## Revitalizing rural towns

America has continued to abandon rural areas at the same time that the reasons for abandoning them have become obsolete. In the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, cities were where the action was. If you wanted entertainment, big city theaters, sports venues, music bars, comedy clubs and the like, cities were the thing. In World War I parents worried "how are you going to keep them down on the farm after they've seen Paris?" If you wanted a high-paying job, cities had them. But then the technology era came along. Today, on any given evening a family in Cozad, Nebraska, the Alfalfa Capital of the World, is probably doing the same things as a family in New York, LA or Chicago. You can listen to the latest music, watch the latest movies, see comedy club performances or video of plays, see all the sports you want, and so on anywhere. For many high-paying jobs, you can work from anywhere, at least in principle. You can buy products from around the world and have them delivered to your door. Yes, if you really want to spend your time in a bar where you are pressed in by people on all sides and can't hear the person next to you talk as you drink your \$12 beer, then you still probably need to be in Manhattan, but most of us most of the time don't especially want to do that.

On the other hand, there are things you can do in rural towns that you can't do in cities. You can see the stars and hear the birds. You can breathe clean air if you are not near a feed lot. You can eat food picked 10 minutes ago. You can go places without being stuck in traffic with a bunch of incompetent maniacs. Your kids can play outside and be independent. You may not meet as many people, but you can actually get to know the ones you meet.

One feature of rural life is badly underappreciated in America – the ability to have fresh, unique food. In Italy, people are very interested in, and justly proud of, their food. They don't eat flavor-

saver tomatoes that taste like pink-dyed cardboard. They are fussy about their cornmeal. They take pride in growing heritage vegetables that may not keep or ship well but that are loaded with flavor. (I get the seeds for my backyard garden from an Italian company.) Little hole-in-wall restaurants have a simple signature dish that is as good as anything you can get from a Michelin star restaurant. Italy has developed a major agritourism<sup>271</sup> business, where people from all over Europe come to stay on farms or in rural towns to eat the fresh local food and drink the local wines. America can and should do the same thing. Terravox winery in Missouri has revived American native wine grapes that had been the foundation of a Missouri winery boom that was gaining world respect before Prohibition came and the vines were torn out. In other parts of the country we can do beer. Pal's Brewing Company in North Platte, Nebraska has great house-brewed beer and pizza and other food, as good as you can get anywhere, and sensibly priced. Phat Fish brewing in Dickinson North Dakota is great, too. I would rather eat in Harry's Cafe in Pittsburg, Kansas than in any of the places in my large suburb. When we drive out west, we plan our schedule to be able to visit the Crow Bar in Thermopolis for their particularly good smoothies and flatbread.

I have stopped buying store bread and bake all of ours using great-tasting heritage whole wheat flour from a mill in Dripping Springs, Texas. That wheat is never exposed to nerve-killing pesticides or carcinogenic herbicides or other chemicals that act as female hormones in growing boys and girls. I use delicious ancient-grain whole wheat berries from the same mill instead of bland white rice (takes a little longer to cook, but you can make it ahead if that's an issue). I get blue corn meal from another local mill for our tacos and Native American beans from a native farm in Arizona. There are good local cheese makers in towns across America. Distillers like Far North Spirits in Hallock, Minnesota, make unique products from local grain that aren't quite like anything from anywhere else. Rushford, Minnesota, has great lefse. Real food from real places is a wonderful thing, and if you make a trip with the thought of buying some you can have a lot of fun and save the shipping costs.

Rural universities have the advantage that they have students to patronize their restaurants during the school year, and those university towns are an underappreciated destination in summer when the students are gone. When we are driving to the northeast we arrange our route and timing to be able to stop at the Clemson University student center to get the ice cream and blue cheese from the university dairy, and there are several good restaurants in town. Kline's Dairy Bar in Harrisonburg, Virginia, by JMU also rates a stop<sup>272</sup>. There's at least one great place in Valparaiso, Indiana. I'm sure alumni from every rural university could cite similar examples.

With a little effort and an Italian attitude, rural towns across America could become great food centers both for the locals and for tourists from our cities and suburbs. As destination towns they could then more easily support local artists and artisans, shop owners and B&B owners, grocery stores and mills. Local musicians could play in the brewhouses and have a chance to start building a fan base. Towns featuring the slower, more thoughtful lifestyle will be able to feature other

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271 <https://twin-cities.umn.edu/news-events/talking-agritourism-university-minnesota>

272 I even have a mnemonic for the exit, the bad slayer saying "24-7, B".

things that have been lost in the urban and suburban bustle. For example, unless you are just in it for the label, would you rather have a dress made specifically for you by a small-town seamstress with a real sense of creative style, or a crazy expensive dress sewn in Bangladesh and designed by a person who not only isn't a woman, but doesn't even find women attractive?

As tourists visit and enjoy themselves, some will be attracted by the idea of getting a remote-work office job and living there, spending their salaries locally. Not only can rural towns now access most of the big city entertainments electronically, they offer others that the cities don't. In towns, Friday night football and little league baseball are real things where people get together and enjoy themselves. Would you rather grab so-so coffee at Starbucks or have good social coffee with the folks in the Honey Bee Donut Shop in Seabrook, NH, or with the old storytellers at the bank in Andrews, Texas? Laborist rural policy will provide knowledge and training, interest free starter money, and other resources, including people if appropriate<sup>273</sup>, to help get all this going.

While laborism does not seek to pick winners, it does support small businesses and farmers who are seeking to supply the free market with things that working people actually need and want. We would require loan recipients to have real training in business and to have a business plan that addresses how they will find enough customers, how they will make a profit in the face of competition, how they will get past bumps in the road, and so on, so that we don't end up loaning lots of money to people in every town in America all at once to chase the same urban tourists, but we will clear needless obstacles to success. We will invest in free infrastructure that makes it as easy as possible for rural businesses to connect with potential customers. We will make it as easy as possible to find workers. We will let individual initiative and creativity figure out what people naturally want and how to supply it, but we will then make it as easy as possible for working people to supply those wants successfully.

Under laborist child and education policy, every small-town school will be a great school and the children who go there will be able to compete with kids from anywhere. We will go back to an era of pride in our schools. Our current Texas governor, who hates public schools, doesn't realize that in many rural towns across Texas the schools are still the center of life and are the thing that gives the town its identity. Laborism will honor those towns and protect and restore the beating heart that is their schools.

America's more rural areas and small towns are also in a position to be in the forefront of the green revolution, for the benefit of their residents. Again, laborism will let the market lead rather than picking winners, but we have already seen consumer demands that either aren't being met or are being met by imports from China. We will create skilled job opportunities for people manufacturing, installing and maintaining American-made solar and wind electric generation to replace the oil heat of less-dense areas, helping homeowners to have stable energy costs, be independent, and get rid of those troublesome rusting oil tanks. We will work with companies to manufacture the new generation of advanced heat pumps in rural areas rather than in China, and

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273 See the discussion above about helping good people to get fresh starts in life, as well as the Civilian Conservation Corps style guaranteed employment for towns that need temporary labor to get set-up projects done.

provide jobs for skilled installers.<sup>274</sup> We will work with companies to produce high-efficiency wood stoves<sup>275</sup> in rural areas that rural and suburban residents in the north can use for those coldest days, and support the training of skilled chimney technicians to support the safe use of those stoves. We will create skilled jobs building new, green housing with attractive American-made wood, tile, and new-generation linoleum<sup>276</sup> floors and efficient insulation, all manufactured in more rural areas, and more jobs retrofitting old housing. The market is already asking for these things, but the financier economy does not supply them effectively, and particularly not with local factories and labor.

America needs to make these changes. We can either let the financier market cause all the products to come from China and the untrained workers to come from foreign countries, or we can adopt a laborist approach to create the new products in decentralized locations using skilled American workers. American cities grew up around power sources, mainly coal and rivers, and transportation, mainly rivers, great lakes and oceans. Now we can get power from wind and sunlight. We can transport goods by highway and, with investment in infrastructure, by improved rail systems. We can put a manufacturing plant anywhere we have a reliable source of workers. Laborism will correct the market failures that keep us from distributing manufacturing instead of keeping it in cities or exporting it to other countries.

We will encourage and help family farms with the policies discussed below. Prosperous family farmers will once again form a base for prosperous rural towns.

We will make the infrastructure investments discussed above to allow small businesses in any town to serve America affordably, and to enable employees of large corporations to live and spend their pay in small-town America in that diner with great coffee and pie.

We will make it easier for local talent – musicians, artists, writers – to reach a national audience by breaking up the near-monopolies on access that the Big Tech and concentrated media companies have achieved. If you have watched much television or listened to much music on the radio recently you know that America’s best writers, musicians, and artists are not getting access, while untalented drones with the right connections are. We will work to fix that. America became a music powerhouse largely with low-income rural musicians. We should restore access for that talent base, and artists who do not operate in Greenwich Village should be able to reach a national audience of people who know what they like, as well as local agritourists who are happy to find their works in a local gallery.<sup>277</sup>

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274 Heat pumps are good technology, but really good installers can make them even cheaper and more efficient.

275 Unlike old-fashioned fireplaces, these stoves put out a lot of heat from a little wood, and can commonly be operated on the wood that one generally ends up with from a suburban lot between falling branches and the occasional tree removal, as we did in Wheaton. Our stove was a major heat source in Chicago winters and we never bought wood.

276 Linoleum is made from natural, renewable materials, does not emit toxins, and lasts for decades, while it is easier on your feet than tile. That makes attractive new-generation linoleum a good green American flooring.

277 We were living in Europe when the Soviet Union broke up and Russian artists, who formerly made a living making propaganda posters, drifted into western Europe looking for new work. They were extremely talented and you could get artwork that was better than most of what you see in museums for very reasonable prices. America has talent, too, but Etsy is not an adequate tool for matching artists with art lovers. Plus, art means more if you can associate it with a place



## Restoring family farms

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a laborist movement called the Nonpartisan League rose to power in North Dakota. The Nonpartisan League<sup>278</sup> was proudly non-socialist. When the Palmer raids occurred in November 1919 with the Wilson administration rounding up socialists and deporting them, the Nonpartisan League's newspaper noted that not one "red" was arrested in North Dakota, because North Dakota farmers and working people had found a better alternative. The Nonpartisan League was founded in response to the ruthless fleecing of farmers by parasitic financiers. Farmers worked hard and took risk to grow their grain, but then they had to get it to market. Getting the grain cleaned, loaded, transported and milled put tens of thousands of farmers at the mercy of a handful of financiers who owned the grain terminals and mills and railroads. Because of these financier-owned bottlenecks, financiers were able to steal most of the profit from the work of the farmers, paying low prices for the grain and charging high fees for shipping. In response, my grandfather, the city engineer for Grand Forks, designed and built a public grain terminal in Grand Forks to serve the farmers. It cleaned, dried, weighed, and loaded their grain into train cars for shipment, or milled it into flour and bagged it for shipment. The Nonpartisan League also formed a nonprofit state bank and a public insurance company to insure the farmers against hail damage, eliminating those avenues of exploitation by the financiers. As a result, farmers could receive the profit from their labor. The state invested in education and health care and regulated corporate abuses. Other working people also received the benefit of these laborist reforms, empowering workers rather than just relying on strikes and strife.<sup>279</sup> The financiers were horrified by the success of this movement, and so out-of-state corporations and financiers poured money and organizers into the state to create opposition to the Nonpartisan League and cause infighting<sup>280</sup> among its supporters. They ultimately managed to destroy the movement. It is time for the new laborist movement to rise again and restore the ability of family farmers to prosper and to keep the profit of their labor.

Today, according to the USDA<sup>281</sup>, farmers receive about 25 cents of the dollar you spend on fresh vegetables, 35 cents of the dollar you spend on fruit, 30 cents of the dollar you spend on dairy, 20 cents of your pork dollar, 19 cents of the dollar you spend on flour, and 4 cents of the dollar you spend on bread. If we doubled the price received by the farmer, bread that cost you \$1.30 would then cost \$1.35, and flour that cost you 44 cents would cost 53 cents. Of course, if we doubled the

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and a person.

278 [https://openlibrary.org/works/OL143545W/The\\_Nonpartisan\\_league](https://openlibrary.org/works/OL143545W/The_Nonpartisan_league)

279 My grandfather later did not approve of FDR's New Deal, not because he approved of the ruthless financiers but because, as he pointed out in pamphlets, once we accepted the federal government taking the new powers it was claiming "for the emergency", the government would never give those powers up again, and the financier-controlled government was no more trustworthy than the financier-controlled banks and corporations. Laborism seeks to empower working people while keeping the federal government in its place, as the Nonpartisan League did.

280 This is why laborists must strongly reject any effort to divide us on issues that the financiers try to turn into divisive distractions. That is their tried and true method of keeping working people from ever getting our act together to throw off the yoke of the financiers.

281 <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/price-spreads-from-farm-to-consumer/highlights-and-interactive-charts> Note that this includes corporate "farmers", like megadairies and Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations, who may have better pricing deals with the corporate intermediary parasites.

amount received by the farmer by shrinking the amount skimmed off by financiers, then the net cost to you would be nothing. By breaking the bottlenecks that financiers use to suppress the market power of farmers, laborism will instead break the market power of financiers and allow farmers to get the fair return for their labor. That, plus the other reforms discussed below, will allow family farms to succeed again and make it possible to get rid of the harmful practices of big agribusiness while improving the rural economy.

In so doing we will also revive the yeoman (i.e. landowning) farmer as a real force in this country, the force that Jefferson envisioned as keeping the power of the financiers in check and so preserving American liberty. The real fight for the liberty that our revolutionary founders won for us isn't done with guns and bombs in some country most of us couldn't find on a map. It is done here in our farmlands and businesses, and it is done by giving farmers and workers back the power to get the profits of their labors without parasitic financiers draining it away.

## **Breaking the agribusiness bottleneck**

The National Family Farm Coalition describes this bottleneck well:<sup>282</sup>

Imagine you're a business owner. You work hard making something people need. You have to sell most of your goods through a middleman, but there are often only one or two buyers. There's no way to negotiate with just one buyer, so you have to take whatever price is offered. In recent years, the best offer has been about \$37,000 for goods that cost you \$100,000 to make. Economists in your field tell you if you want to make more money, you must produce more product, but you know that producing more will likely drive prices down even further for you and other business owners. That's today's reality for farmers, ranchers, and fishermen.

American farm policy used to be based on managing production in a way that targeted clearing the market at a price that allowed farm families to cover their cost of production and make a living. The food program that became food stamps and is now SNAP was a device for making surplus farm products available to low-income families who otherwise couldn't afford them, so that prices for higher-income families could be at levels that would sustain the farmers without hurting the lower-income families. That parity pricing period lasted through 1952, and the net farm income of Iowa farmers in 2016 was 1/3 of their average income in the parity period, measured in constant dollars

When agribusiness stepped in, farmers found themselves having to sell their produce to the BigAg middlemen. This created a bottleneck equivalent to the grain terminal bottleneck my grandfather eliminated in Grand Forks in the 1920s. As in any other area dominated by financiers, the parasitic middlemen wanted to put the squeeze on both productive workers and consumers. To squeeze the working farmers, they had the financier-controlled government get rid of managed production

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282 <https://nffc.net/what-we-do/fair-prices-for-farmers/>

and parity pricing and replace it with production maximization, goosed up by heavy-chemical industrial farming. With farmers producing food that went begging for a market, the BigAg parasites could suppress the prices they paid the farmers. On the other end, of course, they charged consumers whatever the market could bear. With just a handful of BigAg intermediaries handling the bulk of food, their ability to raise prices to consumers was substantial, and their profits swelled.

But this created problems. Farmers couldn't make a living. That was OK with the financiers so long as the result was family farmers dropping out and selling their land at distressed prices to big agricultural operations<sup>283</sup>. But even the big farms had trouble making ends meet. No problem. The financiers went to their pet officials in the government and asked for subsidies and crop insurance "to help the farmers" to survive bad years and limp along in better years. We taxpayers pay the subsidies and the farmers themselves pay for crop insurance. Who gets the money? The parasites. Because of the subsidies and insurance, the middlemen didn't need to take their boot off the necks of farmers to avoid killing the golden goose. Likewise, the government started giving large taxpayer subsidies for "environmental" initiatives like biodiesel and gasohol, and then began mandating fuel blending with these agricultural products. The net carbon savings from these efforts are suspect<sup>284</sup>, but they definitely increase the profits of the BigAg commodities merchants, which is what the financier-controlled government really cares about.

In some sectors the government doesn't really even pretend to care about farmers. Because dairy farmers have to sell their milk to a handful of dairy processors, farmers are "price takers", having to accept whatever the processors pay. Only the megadairies have any market power. The government could have responded to this extreme market failure by forcing competition among dairy processors<sup>285</sup>, but that would make the financiers unhappy. So, the USDA intervened to set regional prices that processors must pay dairies. But those prices are not set to allow small dairies to make a living. Instead, the USDA guarantees the *processors* a profit by setting the price they pay to dairies on the basis of the average prices for dairy products traded on the Chicago mercantile exchange (run by financiers), even though less than 1% of US cheddar is actually traded on the exchange. Those prices are run through a formula that sets prices paid to the dairies at a level that

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283 43 billionaires are among the nation's 100 largest landowners <https://www.ewg.org/news-insights/news/2023/12/do-billionaires-get-farm-subsidies> That is aside from corporate interests and corporations who turn farmers into effective serfs on their own land through exploitative contracts.

284 <https://www.ewg.org/news-insights/news/corn-ethanol-subsidy-losing-proposition>  
<https://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/2024/03/11/big-ags-false-solutions-in-iowa/>

285 Again, the NFFC explains this well. "Historically, most regions throughout the country had many dairy processors, and farmers could negotiate among them for the best price. Some regions now only have one or two processors. The remaining few are on shaky ground as they continue to consolidate, or they prefer to pick up milk from just a few large dairies instead of many smaller farms. If the one processor in a farm's region terminates a farm's contract, there is nowhere to sell the milk and few options but for the farm to sell off its cows. Even some supermarket chains now have their own dairy plants, further consolidating the dairy sector in fewer corporate hands and sacrificing dairy farmers' contracts in the process. For example, in 2016 Walmart opened its own processing plant in Indiana to supply milk sourced from 30 megadairies to 600 of its stores. In response, Dean Foods, a dominant dairy processor which supplied nearly 20 percent of Walmart's milk, terminated their contracts with 100 family farmers in eight states after losing Walmart as a customer." <https://nffc.net/what-we-do/dairy-crisis/>

gives the processors a satisfactory profit per unit. That leaves the financiers free to push to maximize unit production, which increases the profits to processors (more units sold) while decreasing profits to family dairies (lower prices per unit).

Giant, industrial farms are cheaper, and the price squeeze makes small farmers drop out. For example, in 1997, 125,000 US dairy farms were milking 9 million cows; in 2017, there were only 54,000 farms milking 9.4 million cows. In 2023 there were only 30,000 dairy farms. During the same 1997-2017 period, annual US milk production grew from 167 billion pounds to 218 billion pounds.<sup>286</sup> Of those 54,000 dairy farms only 2,000 had more than 1,000 cows, but half of all milk sales came from those industrial operations in 2017. In 2023, the 843 operations with herds of more than 2,500 cows produced 45% of our milk. These megadairies are bad for cows, bad for your children, and bad for the environment.<sup>287</sup> The recent rise of avian flu in dairy herds is a reminder that they also, like industrial chicken and pig and beef cow operations, offer a frightening avenue for the development and spread of emerging diseases. Industrial cows exposed to the ever-growing population of Chronic Wasting Disease (“mad deer”) deer populations threaten a quiet plague of prion disease that could infect millions before we even knew it was happening. Historically, the greatest loss of life from war has been from diseases that spread when large groups of soldiers and civilian refugees mass together. One such disease was the English Sweat that emerged among King Henry VII’s troops at the Battle of Bosworth and was spread across England when they disbanded and went home; it had a fatality rate between 30% and 50% and depopulated whole towns, creating a sort of national land reform when the former occupants were wiped out. Factory farms maintain those conditions year after year after year.

Laborism, like the Nonpartisan League before it, will break the power of the financiers and corporate interests that control the bottlenecks between the family farmer and the family consuming food. Those intermediary choke points are market failures. Financiers and the Uniparty, who don’t believe in markets, don’t care about that. Laborism does. We will attack these bottlenecks in multiple ways.

We will enforce the antitrust laws against BigAg, breaking up companies and creating a healthy number of competitive players. As Farm Aid explains<sup>288</sup>:

Most economists state that if the concentration ratio (CR) for an economic sector – or the market share of the top four firms in an industry – is above 40 percent, competition is threatened and market abuses are more likely to occur. The higher the CR, the bigger the threat. In agriculture, concentration ratios far exceed this level for nearly every commodity.

Unchecked corporate power distorts markets and leaves farmers and ranchers vulnerable to abuse and unfair practices. For consumers, unchecked corporate power means higher

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286 <https://nffc.net/what-we-do/dairy-crisis/>

287 <https://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/2024/09/21/factory-farm-nation-2024-edition/#mega-dairies-fuel-environmental-injustice-and-climate-change>

288 <https://www.farmaid.org/issues/corporate-power/fair-competitive-markets-for-family-farmers-our-food/>

prices and less choice in the grocery store. Even as food costs and spending on food have risen steadily over the past three decades, the farmer's share of the retail food dollar dropped by 20 percent between 1993 and 2024. Because of their market power, corporations can push down the prices paid to farmers without passing on their savings to consumers. We've seen the effects of this market power in recent years; about 50 percent of inflation in 2023 can be attributed to corporate profits.

Between 1997 and 2022, America lost 50,000 hog farms, or about 45 percent of the total. The big 4 pork processors control over 70% of the market. 4 corporations control 80% of American cattle processing. The top 4 fertilizer corporations control 100% of the market for potash and phosphate and 77% for nitrogen.<sup>289</sup>

Laborism will enforce the Packers and Stockyards Act the way it was meant to be enforced, to help farmers, workers, and consumers. We will enforce state antitrust rules to protect farmers and consumers as well.<sup>290</sup>

Laborism will declare unfair and exploitative contracts between the big poultry producers and farmers to be void for public policy. We will protect family farmers from contracts that don't allow them to earn a fair living or that require them to follow harmful practices. Between 1988 and 2016, the wholesale price of chicken increased by 17.4 cents a pound for consumers while the average pay of poultry growers rose by just 2.5 cents.

In any case where the financiers cry "you can't break us up – this is a natural monopoly/oligopoly, and competitive-sized operations would be too inefficient!", the response will be "fine – then we will take it over as a public institution and run it on a non-profit basis." This is what North Dakota did through the public grain terminal my grandfather built. This is also what real market players do today. When I worked for a medical products company, they faced a serious threat from start-ups seeking to make themselves the Amazon of medical products and act as parasitic intermediaries raising prices to consumers and stealing profits from producers. The medical products companies got together and agreed to launch their own web-based exchange on a non-profit basis, making it impossible for the non-value-adding parasites to gain a foothold. Laborism will adopt the same tactic for any "natural monopoly", simply running it at a level that allows its workers a fair return for their efforts, but does not give them a chance to steal profits from producers or to overcharge consumers.

We will break the power of the big seed companies. The rise of biotech companies producing genetically modified seed and the rise of seed patenting, combined with ruthless and exploitative litigation by the seed companies against farmers, have resulted in a major shift from traditional seed breeding and production practices<sup>291</sup> to super-concentrated power with 3 companies controlling 60% of the seed and agrochemical business and hundreds of independent seed dealers

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289 Id.

290 <https://landstewardshipproject.org/anticompetitiveness/>

291 <https://www.farmersrights.org/what-are-farmers-rights/why-farmers-rights-matter/>

going out of business. Of the top 4 seed companies supplying the seeds that farmers use to feed America, 2 are German and 1 is Chinese. As Farm Aid explains:<sup>292</sup>

USDA data show that the average price of seed between 1990 and 2020 rose by 270 percent, while the price of commodity crops rose by only 56 percent. ... [A]s of 2020, about 55 percent of all US cropland was used to grow Genetically Modified crops. Farmers who buy patented seeds must pay licensing fees and sign contracts that dictate how they can grow the crop – and even allow seed companies to inspect their farms. GM seeds are expensive, require specific pesticides and other inputs, and farmers must buy them each year or else be liable for patent infringement. And while contamination can happen through no fault of their own, farmers have been sued for “seed piracy” when unauthorized GM crops show up in their fields.

We will prohibit certain factory farms as explained below, and subject others to excise taxes to prevent them from out-competing better farms on price. While admittedly those operations can produce some sort of product at lower prices, the product they produce is not a bargain. They are degraded products that poison our children, expose us to deadly bacteria, threaten epidemics through disease vectors and antibiotics abuse, pollute the environment, make miles of what used to be beautiful Kansas fields smell like an outhouse, and just don’t taste as good. One of the flaws in the way the government measures inflation is that they count the factory milk that we get today as being the same as what we got 40 years ago, while treating organic milk – that is, the stuff that 40 years ago was just “milk” – as a premium luxury. Likewise, grass fed beef, free-range eggs, and the like are all now premium-price goods, where before they were just the normal stuff everyone bought. Because laborism will allow American working people to keep the profits from their labor, we will all be able to afford the good stuff again.

## Capital and know-how

As you might expect, one of the chronic ways that financiers have fleeced farmers is by controlling capital. This was why the laborist Nonpartisan League created the Bank of North Dakota.<sup>293</sup>

Farming is a risky business, and debt-laden farmers facing a bad year due to climate issues, a down market, or other factors can lose their farms. The problems faced by the Nonpartisan League in the 1920s were partially addressed by the Depression-era reforms, which continue today in the form of lending by the Farm Services Administration. But that program is inadequate to protect many family farmers. Laborism will provide generous no-interest loans to family farmers (not as a permanent float, but as they need liquidity) if they make use of another reform, ensuring that they have the know-how to succeed.

One of the great agricultural reforms of FDR’s New Deal was to improve the know-how of America’s farmers. Many of our immigrants became farmers without ever being trained in *how* to farm. Farming is a real skill. The best farmers really understand their land, their crops, the local

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292 <https://www.farmaid.org/issues/corporate-power/fair-competitive-markets-for-family-farmers-our-food/>

293 <https://thebndstory.nd.gov/the-early-years/the-birth-of-the-bank/>

weeds and insects, the rhythms of the weather, risk and risk control, diversifying risk, markets, finances, and a host of other things. Many of the farmers who went under in the dust bowl could have survived if they had better understood the skills of farming. While the USDA and state university agricultural extension services maintain farmer education programs, the loss of the wisdom base of so many family farmers who have given up leaves a big knowledge gap to fill. If we are to welcome would-be family farmers back to the land, we need to make sure they have the knowledge and tools to be good and successful farmers, not just romantic dreamers.

Laborist capital will be available to start-up farmers if they agree to undergo the training and to accept the help and guidance that will give them a high probability of success doing the kind of farming they seek to do. We will maximize the use of existing university agricultural programs, and supplement those with additional agricultural extension agents who will check in on farmers and help to make sure that they are on track. We will encourage apprenticeship to existing successful farmers and ongoing mentoring. As with laborist small-business loans, a laborist government will not stifle the creativity of American entrepreneurs, but we will make sure that they understand business basics well enough to be a good risk, and that they show the work habits needed for success. They can have a creative plan, but it needs to be a real plan, with real understanding of and plans for risk. Importantly, we will encourage peer-to-peer organizations where farmers can share knowledge and help each other while avoiding the potential social isolation of farm life.

As part of this farmer-education initiative laborism will give farm expertise the respect it deserves. As a country, we give a lot of prestige to people who become accountants or plastic surgeons or tax lawyers, but we treat people who have an incredible knowledge of the land coming from generations of learning as if they are ignorant yokels. We act like a university agricultural degree is somehow less impressive than an electrical engineering degree. That mistake actively harms our society and threatens our future. We can get along fine without people to figure out how to get an iPhone to produce genmojis. We can't do without people who can figure out how to protect our crops from pests and disease and severe weather in ways that are in harmony with our environment, or how to keep diseases from evolving in our farm animals and then killing a third of our population. Food is life. The people who figure out how to grow it well are smart and are heroes. We need to give them proper credit, so that others will want to follow their example.

When I was in elementary school in Minneapolis in the 1960s, we learned about contour plowing and crop rotation and other good farming basics in class. We made field trips to farms and talked with the farmers. We studied George Washington Carver not as a race thing, but as a genuine agricultural hero. That was considered to be an important part of the education of American students, even if they were city dwellers. Laborism will bring back this respect for farming as an occupation, starting in elementary school and continuing through the state university level. We will produce a new generation of farm recruits to encourage a flow back into the countryside to run diverse and resilient family farms producing real, healthy food.

## Ensuring markets for family farms

As I write this the Trump administration has just canceled a program that funded buying healthy fresh food from local farms to feed school children and low-income families who need food relief. Laborism, in contrast, will give priority to encouraging those family farmers and making sure that our children get fresh, healthy food whatever their family's income may be. We will provide support and funding to encourage sales from local family farms to schools, universities, government institutions, and private institutions such as elder-care facilities and private schools.

We will go back to the days when the program that is now SNAP actually supplied farm products directly to lower-income Americans. Lower-income neighborhoods are frequently food deserts. They have few grocery stores and the stores they have tend to have less fresh and desirable produce at relatively high prices. The financier-owned grocery store chains prefer serving higher-income neighborhoods with customers who buy more expensive items. Americans who already have produce-box subscriptions with local farms know that it is not difficult to have produce delivered to a neighborhood location where they can pick up their subscription box. A laborist government will extend this to SNAP recipients and other residents of lower-income neighborhoods, providing direct-to-consumer produce that cuts out the 65 to 75 cents of a dollar of fresh food that is skimmed off by wholesalers and store chains. While programs such as Double-Up Food Bucks<sup>294</sup> are good under the current financier-run system, they result in most of the taxpayer subsidy going to corporations and financiers, not to lower-income families or farmers. We will provide families in lower-income neighborhoods (whether or not they are on SNAP) with much better, healthier food options at less cost than current SNAP benefits channeled through grocery stores or Walmart.

We will also provide knowledge that goes with the food. Many families in this instant rice, powdered potatoes, and microwave dinners era don't know what to do with fresh food. While internet videos and TV cooking shows offer a chance for education, we need more active efforts. Laborist education policy, which says that high school graduates should again be ready to be fully competent adults, will restore home economics classes for all students that will ensure that everyone has a basic knowledge of what to do with fresh food and has been exposed to those online videos and shows for further inspiration. SNAP benefits will be accompanied by social workers who will give beneficiaries opening interviews that include testing their cooking knowledge and arranging lessons if they need them.<sup>295</sup> We will offer adult education classes in low-income neighborhoods to make sure that everyone knows how to benefit from the availability of fresh food at the lower prices that result from cutting out the financier middlemen.

Laborism will promote farmer's markets in towns and cities. When I was young people knew how to access the early morning farmer's market in Minneapolis. When I lived in London in 1969 there

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294 <https://fairfoodnetwork.org/what-we-do/nutrition-incentives/>

295 When my mother started her career as a county social worker, she and a friend did the experiment of living on the equivalent of the county welfare allowance for 6 months. She and her friend were able to do that comfortably, but many of her clients failed at it largely because they had never learned how to buy and cook food effectively. Knowledge of life skills is important.



was a street in central London that was set aside for fresh produce vendors. Any city can afford to turn a block or two into a pedestrian zone where farmers can sell their products. Any neighborhood can find an area or two where produce subscriptions can be delivered and walk-in buyers can be served. This will restore the power of the market. If the grocery stores have to compete against direct sales by farmers, they will be pressured to keep the prices they charge to consumers down and the prices they pay to farmers up. Stores successfully competed that way 50 years ago. They can do it again, if they have to. By making it as easy as possible for local family farmers to do direct sales, we can use the power of competition to produce that result and benefit even the farmers and families who don't use the direct-sales markets.

America wastes about 40% of the food we produce.<sup>296</sup> That happens at a number of levels, from farm to kitchen, but a significant amount is lost due to failure to connect farm products to markets. When the local processing facility isn't buying from a given farm, the crop may rot in the field or be plowed under. Food already taken to town may be dumped. Any time that happens, it is a market failure. A laborist government will do everything feasible to fix those market failures and prevent waste.

## **Fair labeling**

The National Farmer's Union explains this issue well.<sup>297</sup>

Surveys show the vast majority of Americans want to know where their food comes from, and farmers and ranchers want to provide them with that information. Laws should support farmers and consumers in achieving that goal, but multinational meatpackers and foreign competitors have fought fair and accurate labels for decades. This allows companies to import cheaper products from other countries and earn a premium by passing them off as local products. This, in turn, depresses prices for American ranchers and undermines consumer confidence in labels.

Laborism supports country of origin labeling. Again, laborism believes in markets, and we believe in consumer choice. American consumers think, rightly, that the country of origin is relevant information, and they want to use that information in making their purchasing choices. We will give them that ability.<sup>298</sup>

Similarly, laborism will work with farmers and consumer groups to develop useful, meaningful labels concerning the practices used in producing food. Consumers have a strong interest in how animals are raised and fed. They have a strong interest in what chemicals have been used on crops and injected or fed into cows and chickens. We should have meaningful descriptive standards, with the definitions easy to find on the internet, that can be easily vetted by inspections, and that

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<sup>296</sup> <https://foodprint.org/issues/the-problem-of-food-waste/>

<sup>297</sup> <https://nfu.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2024-Fact-Sheets-Product-Labeling.pdf>

<sup>298</sup> We will also better align origin labeling with the FDA import alerts, including their Green Lists. See, for example, [https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/cms\\_ia/importalert\\_81.html](https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/cms_ia/importalert_81.html) Online resellers can provide such source information without much difficulty.

producers can then use on their labels to communicate to customers in a meaningful way. If farmers want to go even further through additional labeling they will be free to do so, and if consumers find those additional labels relevant then they can be promoted to formal, regulated standards as well. Laborism will always promote the efficiency of markets in giving us the products we want, rather than the products producers want to give us. In the case of food, the good family farmers want to give consumers the products they want, and good, reliable labels help to make that possible.

## **Protecting land and resources for family farms**

This is particularly important under laborism. When we prevent financiers from earning compound interest from banks and corporations, they will try to buy up real estate. They will try even harder when we implement laborist tax policy that reduces reliance on property taxes. We won't let them.

Corporate land and water grabs are already a problem. As the National Family Farm Coalition states, "With more than 40 percent of all US farmland expected to transfer hands in the next few decades, keeping land within local agricultural control, and not in the hands of corporations, is crucial."<sup>299</sup> Laborism will ban corporate ownership of farmland. We will also ban foreign ownership of farmland. We will limit absentee ownership of cropland. Bill Gates, that well known son of the soil, should not be one of the largest owners of farmland in America. My Norwegian ancestors came to this country because they could never be more than sharecroppers in Norway. The people who wanted to be self-sufficient farmers on their own land built this country.<sup>300</sup> Becoming a nation of tenant farmers would be a disgrace to their legacy. Dry-prairie western grazing operations naturally need a lot of land per animal, and we would not draw stupid arbitrary lines on land ownership or grazing rights, but we would have policies that favored resident full-time farmers and ranchers over absentee billionaires.

But land ownership in itself is not the only threat. I went to school across the ridge from the Owens Valley in California. The Owens Valley had once been farmable land, but financiers acquired the water rights, pumped the valley dry, and sent the water to Los Angeles.<sup>301</sup> Similar water conflicts occur across the west. Laborism will promote fair and sensible water policy that gives priority to family farms producing food for Americans. Water-intensive hay production for export to China would be deprioritized. Water to cool AI server banks would be deprioritized, though if a company makes the investment to pump and demineralize water and then provides it (at a suitable temperature) to farmers that need it, they may avoid the conflict. We will also work

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299 <https://nffc.net/what-we-do/land-resource-grabs/>

300 Again, that could have happened and should have happened in a different way, if it were not for financiers. Even in the days of America's westward expansion there were plenty of white people of goodwill who would have been willing to work out a mutually satisfactory arrangement with America's native peoples, at least in the areas where the natives weren't already inclined to be homicidal. (Some of those who had been clashing with the Spanish for centuries might have been unreceptive. I have no personal knowledge about that. But the northern tribes weren't like that.)

301 <https://www.inyowater.org/documents/reports/owens-valley-water-history-chronology/>

with organizations like the American Farm Bureau to use investment and education to maximize the efficiency of our water use.<sup>302</sup>

Wind and solar power production should benefit, not harm, family farms. Through suitable system design and location we can use green power production to increase the income of family farmers without significantly interfering with their farming activities. Similarly, affected homeowners and farmers should have a proper say on fracking and produced water operations. Destroying an aquifer forever to earn a buck for ten years is not a good trade, and a laborist government would make sure that the rich financiers who own the big oil companies don't get to ride roughshod over farmers in addressing those conflicts.

Factory farming in the form of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations can contaminate cropland and water for miles around. Laborism would rebalance agriculture back in favor of sensibly-sized family farms, rather than bleak, manure-filled animal concentration camps staffed by unauthorized immigrant labor. Under the traditional common law things like CAFOs would be considered to be a prohibited nuisance<sup>303</sup> because they interfere with the normal use and enjoyment of neighboring land and with the common interest in clean water. The financiers have managed to push back those traditional legal restrictions our ancestors enjoyed, but laborism would restore them.

### **Discouraging and restricting industrial practices that hurt farming**

The financier squeeze on farmers has a terrible effect on farming practices. A fifth of US butterflies have disappeared since 2000.<sup>304</sup> Beekeepers lost more than 45 percent of their honeybee colonies between April 2020 and 2021, the second-highest losses on record.<sup>305</sup> A major factor in this has been the overuse of pesticides, which have killed butterflies and bees and other pollinators and poisoned our children without increasing crop yields. As the American Chemical Society (hardly a radical organization) reports:<sup>306</sup>

Pollinators and aquatic insects appear to be especially susceptible to the effects of neonicotinoids with current research suggesting that chronic sublethal effects are more prevalent than acute toxicity. Meanwhile, evidence of clear and consistent yield benefits from the use of neonicotinoids remains elusive for most crops.

Besides poisoning the food we feed our children with dangerous neurotoxins, this destruction of pollinators threatens all of the food crops that rely on pollinators to produce and seed. As one article summarized,<sup>307</sup>

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302 <https://www.fb.org/issue/drought-and-responsible-water-management>

303 <https://www.foodsafetynews.com/2025/06/its-time-to-stop-blaming-growers-and-time-to-start-suing-feedlot-operators/>

304 <https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/5180226-butterfly-population-decline-study/>

305 <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/neonicotinoids-101-effects-humans-and-bees>

306 <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.est.7b06388?#>

307 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877343513000493#sec0010>

Of all flowering plants on earth, 87.5% benefits from animal pollination. Globally, 87 of the leading food crops (accounting for 35% of the world food production volume) depend on animal pollination. Pollinator mediated crops are of key importance in providing essential nutrients in the human food supply.

Farmers work hard to produce our food. Pollinators, the busy bees, work even harder. Bad agricultural practices are killing them, threatening the family farm economy.

A single enormous, disgusting cattle feeding operation in Yuma, Arizona, threatens the safety of thousands of acres of leafy greens grown in America during the colder months, contaminating our children's salads with deadly bacteria.<sup>308</sup> Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations contaminate our food and promote the rise of new diseases. Antibiotics used to fatten animals<sup>309</sup> and to control disease in these concentration camps breed antibiotic resistant bacteria that make the great medical miracle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century ineffective. We pride ourselves on modern medical technology, but by breeding antibiotic resistant bacteria and by providing the perfect environment for generating new viruses, factory farms threaten to undermine the two big innovations that really made a difference in reducing the deaths of our children. At the same time, they undercut the economics of family farms, both by contaminating the environment and by flooding the market with low-price, inferior meat, milk, and eggs that corporate store chains prefer to sell us. Under laborist policy, which would reduce the skim by parasitic middlemen, we would be able to buy good, healthy food from sustainable family farms for the same price.

By helping farmers to get fair prices, banning corporate farms, improving labeling, better regulating pesticides, imposing excise taxes that make pesticide prices reflect their bad side effects so that sustainable farmers can better compete, restoring anti-nuisance laws and making the other pro-family-farm measures described here, laborism will stop these threats to family farmers and to the health of our children. That will be good for everyone, except the financiers.

## **Rural infrastructure**

As of 2021, 18% of US farms had no access to the internet, much less broadband. 17% of rural Americans lack access to high-speed internet, versus 1% for urban Americans. In today's world, farmers need the internet as much as the rest of us. Modern sustainable farming blends ancient practices with cutting-edge research. The University of Minnesota is using robots to check the health of plants and apply chemicals with extreme precision only where they are needed. Plus, attracting the next generation to the farm requires making use of the internet to give them access to the world of entertainment that their urban cousins enjoy. Running high-speed 2-way internet to an isolated farm costs money, but we ultimately ran electricity and telephone wires everywhere. We need to treat high-speed internet as a similar priority for Americans.

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308 <https://www.ewg.org/news-insights/news/2024/01/e-coli-factory-farms-threatens-americas-leafy-greens>

309 For reasons we don't understand, chronic antibiotic use makes animals gain weight faster, and industrial operations make use of this phenomenon to increase profits.

The financiers want to destroy the US postal service so that they can replace it with financier-owned private ventures. But the Postal Service has, for generations, given everyone everywhere access to the entire world. We delivered mail to ships at sea and across enemy lines in wartime. We ran the pony express across the wild frontier. Rural post offices are an important part of the American system, and we should build on them rather than destroying them. The system where, on a daily basis, the postal delivery goes to every home in America provides an efficient base for expanding opportunities for small businesses everywhere as well as providing support for rural Americans. It also provides a remaining secure form of communication that the government's computers don't get to read or listen to. A laborist government will invest in the postal service.

Farmers need to be able to get their products to market in a timely and cost-efficient way. That requires proper investment in roads, waterways, and railroads. A laborist government would do a thorough review of US transportation needs and would use laborist interest-free financing to build and restore infrastructure that will help Americans to save costs, with the financing to be repaid over time through tolls or taxes, depending on whether it is making new things possible or just offering improvements over the use of tax-supported roads and highways.<sup>310</sup> Perhaps new rail spurs combined with modern routing technology would make it relatively cheap to get products from rural towns to urban markets where cooperative agents could sell them directly to consumers, without the farmer having to load up a truck and spend a day or three and a lot of gas going back and forth to town. Or maybe not. In any case, freed of service to the financiers, we should start with a blank sheet of paper and ask what do working people need and want, and think about how it could be provided. A laborist government would meet with organizations like the Rebuild Rural Infrastructure Coalition<sup>311</sup> and with individual farmers to get this process going.

In fact, the laborist political mechanism is specially suited for this. We are based on ground-up politics. Individual working people meeting together in their towns and neighborhoods are the ones who will select local government officials (such as town councilors), and will send representatives to the next level armed with live discussions with the individual workers about what they need and want from the government. Those representatives will choose government officials at the next level (such as county commissioners - elected the way they are today, but with the laborist meetings choosing the candidates, instead of some top-down corrupt financier-owned cabal doing it) and will discuss policy ideas from below and choose representatives to take those requests and ideas to the next level up, and so on. In this way people's needs and priorities filter up, and then when the relevant level of government proposes actions to address those needs and priorities, they will consult with the people affected to be sure they've got it right.

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310 New railways can save wear and tear on roads and so reduce tax money spent on roads, in which case those tax savings can be available to repay the financing. In general, laborist policy would seek to do a reasoned cost-benefit for new investment, and match the cost with the savings.

311 <https://rebuildrural.com/#page1>

## **Right to repair**

The demands of compound interest compel American corporations to be always in search of new ways to extract money from their customers. Many have fastened onto the concept that economists refer to as the razor and razor blades, or perhaps more recently as printers and ink. With old-fashioned safety razors with replaceable blades, the manufacturers might sell their razor at or below cost but then make a large profit over time as users bought the replacement blades, producing a continuing income stream instead of just a one-time profit from the razor. More recently, printer manufacturers will sell their machines at a low price but make it very difficult to replace the ink with anything other than their expensive replacement cartridges, and will program the printers to waste a lot of ink running “cleaning cycles” to make sure that you buy those replacement cartridges frequently.

Automobile manufacturers have been trying to do the same thing, turning cars into a big and expensive smartphone and seeking to sell a lot of ongoing subscription services. At the same time, all those electronics have made teenage mechanics obsolete. When I was first married we bought the factory manual for our car and when something needed maintenance or repair I did it. I did a lot of that on our next car, but that one had a master electronics chip, and when that went out we had to take it into the dealer. Our third car was more complicated, and after that I had to give up. We go to the dealer and pay a lot of money to get whatever needs doing done. That was intentional on the part of the companies.

Farm equipment manufacturers do the same thing. They have been adding useful electronics to their machines, but when they go on the fritz the farmer hasn't been able to read the error codes or do a repair. This was an intentional plan to make them use a dealer technician to do the repair. Not only does that cost the farmer more money, but the machine has probably acted up just when the farmer needs it most, and getting the machine to a technician who may be hundreds of miles away to do a repair is a major problem. Laborist policy will prevent this. We will require manufacturers to provide explanations of the error codes and guides for repair so that the farmers can repair anything within their basic capabilities.

## **Cooperatives**

Finally, laborism will encourage rural cooperatives for buying inputs, selling products, and supporting operations. Rural cooperatives have been a major useful thing for decades. Some have grown so much that they became more of a problem than a help. For example, the California Avocado Growers Association was a great cooperative formed in 1924 and when I was a kid we sought out Calavo avocados. In 2001 it became a public for-profit corporation, and now is on the other side from current farmers. Certain other cooperatives have essentially switched sides as well. Cooperatives are not a cure-all, but they are an important piece of the puzzle. We don't want the government having to run all of the operations that should be run as non-profits to avoid having a piratical bottleneck, and farmer-owned cooperatives of a reasonable scale are the best alternative. Laborism will support such entities and give them whatever help they need.

Laborism will also support labor cooperatives. Migrant farm workers and farm owners can both benefit from organizations that ensure good pay, benefits and conditions for workers while ensuring timely and efficient labor for the farms. As laborism liberates the farm profits previously stolen by middlemen, we need to ensure that the workers get the benefit of those profits, rather than having them default to landowners just because they own the land. By controlling the profits going to financier middlemen we can both allow farmers to get the profits they deserve for the risks they take, the work they do and the knowledge they provide, and allow farm workers to get their fair share for the work they provide. Remember, the whole mess that became modern financier capitalism started with the assumption that landowners should get the profit from farm work. We want to support family farms and get rid of the parasitic financier middleman profit, but we don't want to repeat that historical mistake in the process.

## It's time to do our part now

We are free today substantially, but the day will come when our Republic will be an impossibility. It will be an impossibility because wealth will be concentrated in the hands of a few. A Republic cannot stand upon bayonets, and when the day comes when the wealth of the nation will be in the hands of a few, then we must rely upon the wisdom of the best elements in the country to readjust the laws of the nations to the changed conditions. - **James Madison**

The spirit of the times may alter, will alter. Our rulers will become corrupt, our people careless... From the conclusion of this war we shall be going downhill. It will not then be necessary to resort every moment to the people for support. They will be forgotten, therefore, and their rights disregarded. They will forget themselves, but in the sole faculty of making money, and will never think of uniting to affect a due respect for their rights. The shackles, therefore, will be made heavier and heavier, till our rights shall revive or expire in a convulsion. - **Thomas Jefferson**

The time that our revolutionary founders predicted has arrived. As explained above, the current system of financier capitalism will collapse under its own weight within the lifetimes of today's high school students. We are already seeing the early death throes in our politics, in our media and in our foreign policy. The next generation of automation will accelerate it. Bank tellers, call center employees, low-level software coders, paralegals, grocery checkers, low-level accountants, graphic artists, and so on are all going the way of the secretary. Soon we will have the robot salesperson who can be relied upon to follow the script, who is never annoyed by a cranky customer or embarrassed to respond to a complaint by trying to push 6 new "services". Professionals in the top 10% will continue to gain in value for now, but as for everyone else, good luck. Hope that they don't automate that Amazon warehouse. Maybe you can get a job as drone fodder in that war the financiers are desperate to have with China.

In the meantime, expect your children's lives to become increasingly soulless on the consumerist treadmill. Getting and spending, they will have no time or energy left over for other things. And what other things will there be, anyway? Watching TV shows written by AI to be exactly like all the other shows Amazon's data says people click on, or listening to AI music that has perfected the 4-chord pop song with lyrics subtly getting you to buy things? Going out into an increasingly devastated environment? Walking around dystopian cities? Going to the megadollar megachurch with the biggest, flashiest show where the Voice heard in stillness is drowned out entirely? As financier capitalism goes into its death throes, the efforts to force 24/7 consumption and to distract us with conflict and sex and addiction will ramp up more and more, and the technolords will be increasingly good at using all that data to get us to go along with it.

They will also become increasingly good at crushing anyone who speaks up in dissent. Big Brother sees and hears all. He traces the threads of influence back to the people who threaten him. By calling them names that the technolords have taught us signify evil, he can get the rest of society



to shun them. Now if you annoy the Powers That Be they can lean on universities to expel you, lean on employers to reject you, lean on media companies to deplatform you. With AI they will be able to adopt the tactics of the East German Stasi, filling dissenters' lives with difficulties so that they have no time or energy left for dissent. They will teach us to all give in and love Big Brother. As the multi-billionaires become trillionaires in a system where infinite money and media can be devoted to campaigns and where the Uniparty no longer feels it is strictly necessary to even pretend to have a primary, and where judges now are selected solely based on their political reliability and the bureaucracy are all being taught to salute the President unquestioningly, what will make us change course?

Do you think you will have an armed revolution? When Big Brother knows your every move and has millions of drones ready to shoot you down? Where the President, based on his sole say-so, can activate the entire military to do what he wants, and can drone American citizens that he says are threats, and Congress and the courts say "yeah, sure, why not?"

We still have the power to change that, but we need to use it *now*. By simply talking to each other and organizing ourselves in the ways described above we can take control of the existing political structure just as the Nonpartisan League did in North Dakota a century ago. We don't need a lot of money to do that. We don't need permission from the parties or the media or the billionaires. We can just take some time and effort and do it. But we need to stop being stupid. We need to stop fighting for the amusement of our financier overlords. We need to focus squarely on what is important – shutting down parasitic profits and speculation, letting workers keep the profits they generate, shutting down the Military Industrial Complex and our foreign adventures, focusing heavily on giving every American child the resources he or she needs to reach full potential, restoring our family farms and family businesses and the independence of American working people, throwing off the destructive influence of The Machine that poisons our souls. If we do this, then we can be worthy of the vision of our revolutionary founders. We can be the America that we are supposed to be, the country that was supposed to be a shining light to the world by its example, a country of tolerance and friendship and freedom. Or we can sit on our couches and watch reality TV as the world caves in. Your choice.