



For this 50th-anniversary issue, we asked five Dollars & Sense supporters to imagine what the U.S. and global economies could look like 50 years from now. Here is what they came up with, with illustrations by Philadelphia-based artist Michelle Sayles.

Looking Forward by Looking Back

BY NANCY FOLBRE

Members of the *Dollars & Sense* community, we gather here today, November 15, 2074, to celebrate the gains we have made over the past 50 years and to reflect on our successes and our shortcomings. We have improved both our physical and our social climate, and, in the process, come to deeply appreciate the synergies between the two. Of course, many problems still escape both our understanding and our resolve. Now, more than ever, we appreciate the threat of both actual and metaphorical hurricanes.

However, we are now much better positioned to weather them, due to many important successes:

- We have reduced inequalities based on race, class, gender, and citizenship by increasing public investments in human capabilities (health, education, and social services), developing and enforcing new commitments to economic rights and obligations, and providing both a guaranteed part-time job and a universal basic income for all.

- We have strengthened families and communities by reducing economic stress and making it easier for people to combine paid and unpaid work. We have adjusted to significant changes in family and household structure and developed a more equitable distribution of the costs of care provision and social reproduction.
- We have expanded the scope of political and economic democracy with new incentives and safeguards and seen the “solidarity economy” grow and flourish.

These actions have strengthened our potential to cooperate more effectively in the management of global public goods:

- We have largely transitioned away from fossil fuels and have successfully expanded the scope of safe, renewable energy technologies, important steps toward the long-term goal of ecological sustainability.
- We have addressed issues of demographic sustainability that once threatened our system of public finance. Instead of taxing the working-age population as a whole to pay for social investments in



children, the elderly, and health care, we began to rely on more progressive taxes on accumulated wealth to support our system of social reproduction. We explained the need to adapt to below-replacement fertility levels by increasing investments in human capabilities, and developed a plan to encourage a transition to replacement-level fertility once the global population has declined to manageable levels.

- While we have not attained our ultimate goal of open borders, we have developed a more equitable and efficient system of managing international migration, respecting the human rights of political refugees and economic migrants. We have also successfully increased the pace of sustainable economic development in low-income countries, particularly those adversely affected by climate change.



How have we been able to make advances that, 50 years ago, seemed impossibly out of reach?

First and foremost, we should credit the combination of foresight and grit that kept hope alive. It's impossible here to detail the many activist commitments that gradually achieved collective efficacy. The *Dollars & Sense* collective, the Center for Popular Economics, the Political Economy Research Institute, and the Solidarity Economy Network provided particularly important

steppingstones on a path that would otherwise have been impossible to discern, much less follow.

I will also call out two particular books that, in retrospect, helped move us forward.

Jay Winter's *Dreams of Peace and Freedom* describes many "minor utopias" that emerged in the 20th century, despite its economic and military turmoil. He lauded "glimpses of the visionary temperament, not to celebrate its achievements, which are few and full of incompatible and incongruent elements." He wrote that we should instead "see these visions as spaces in which the contradictions of a period are embodied and performed, and new possibilities are imagined."

Erik Olin Wright's *Envisioning Real Utopias*, described by its publisher, Verso, as a "comprehensive assault on the quietism of contemporary social theory," provides a stellar example of policy-relevant brainstorming that helped bridge gaps between activists and academics. Wright consistently pushed the boundaries of thinking on the academic left, insisting that it embrace moral imperatives as well as theoretical insights.

I also salute the evolution of political economy from a largely class-based account of collective conflict to a broader theory of interactions and overlaps among many dimensions of group identity. Feminist theories of intersectionality, like pioneering approaches to stratification economics that developed a better understanding of racial inequality, provided new insights into the social divisions that often impede cooperative solutions to coordination problems.

Traditional neoclassical economic theory, focused largely on individual choices, was gradually undermined by more holistic models that were attentive to the complex forms of collective conflict that shape social institutions.

The once-sharp distinction between "economic interests" and "cultural identities" was challenged by greater attention to the ways in which group loyalties influence collective commitments.

This attention helped explain uneven and unpredictable patterns of class consciousness and provided a stronger conceptual basis for the development of progressive coalitions, a necessary foundation for pragmatic organizing efforts.

The traditional Marxian theory of capitalist crisis described an economic system based on control over a specific type of surplus that would eventually fall prey to its own internal dynamics—a falling rate of profit. This theory gradually morphed

into a more general theory of systemic crisis, based on the impact of social divisions on capabilities for the management of public goods. Capitalist competition intensifies incentives to pursue short-run gains at the expense of long-run sustainability.

While many U.S. voters seemed oblivious to this issue during the presidential campaign of 2024, awareness reached a tipping point in the years that followed. The visible degradation of the physical environment, already conspicuous in the last decades of the 20th century, was dramatized by the acceleration of changes in the global climate that were disastrous, widespread, and eventually impossible to ignore.

Faced with growing environmental and social costs, people became more acutely aware of the limits of a “market-centric” approach to economics, and more concerned about “negative externalities,” “public goods,” and “coordination problems.” They gradually lost confidence in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as an indicator of economic success, and turned their attention to other measures, including the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) that estimates the cost of environmental disruption and depletion as well as the value of unpaid work.

Gradually, agreement was forged around an even broader economic “scorecard,” that now provides indicators of both social benefits (such as increased life expectancy and improved mental health) as well as social costs (such as those imposed by poverty, crime, and drug addiction), along with attention to the total value of goods and services bought and sold (conventional GDP).

This new accounting system helped build support for many of the policy advances described above, which are aimed to improve capabilities and well-being rather than GDP per se. Even more important than the new “scorecard,” however, were the causal linkages rendered visible by it—evidence that investments in human capabilities, the

provision of social services, and reductions in economic stress could make everyone better off, by improving capabilities for cooperation and effective democratic management of public goods.

This paradigmatic change did not discount the value of competition or dismiss the role of markets but proposed ways of structuring both in ways that balance individual rights and social interests, considering both short-run and long-run outcomes.

Let us raise a glass to the next 50 years.

**As Oscar Wilde put it in the late 19th century,
“A map of the world that does not include
Utopia is not worth even glancing at ...”**

Once people began to recognize that “the economy” is much bigger than “the market,” they began to realize the importance of institutional design, taking this lesson beyond national government policies and toward the gradual redesign of households, businesses, and communities. We are now even exploring possibilities for democratic governance of the global economy as a whole.

So, let us raise a glass to the next 50 years.

As Oscar Wilde put it in the late 19th century, “A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing. And when Humanity lands there, it looks out, and seeing a better country, sets sail. Progress is the realization of Utopias.” **D&S**

NANCY FOLBRE is professor emerita of economics and director of the Program on Gender and Care Work at Political Economy Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts–Amherst.

Where Will the Climate Crisis Take Us by 2074? Two Pictures

BY ROBERT POLLIN

When I gaze into my crystal ball, two starkly different pictures of what the world will look like in 2074 keep popping up. One is catastrophically bad. The other is, at least, reasonably good, and maybe even very good. When my

imagination floats off from this second picture, I maybe even see a world in which social justice and ecological sanity are flourishing. Which picture will come closer to reality circa 2074? This will depend most fundamentally on one thing: what we do now and every year from now about the deepening global climate crisis.

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If we are to take the research of roughly 97% of all climate scientists seriously, we cannot avoid the conclusion that we are courting ecological disaster by not advancing a viable global climate stabilization project. How bad could things get as of 2074? There are no certainties about what will happen if we allow the average global temperature to continue rising. But here are a few headlines from just over the past year from the mainstream press: “Deadly Flooding Wipes Out Entire Neighborhoods in Libya,” “Catastrophic Flooding Swamps Vermont,” “Hundreds of Millions Across the U.S., Europe and Asia Hit by Severe Heat,” and “Climate Change is Forcing Families into a New Kind of Indefinite Hell.”



Still more: None of these current event headlines factor in any longer-term forecasts. Let's consider one by the late outstanding economist and climate researcher Martin Weitzman. In his book *Climate Shock* with Gernot Wagner, Weitzman projected that, based on our current trajectory, there is a roughly 10% chance that, by 2100, the average global temperature will rise by 6 degrees Celsius over the pre-industrial level, i.e., the average global temperature prior to about 1850. An average global temperature increase of 6 degrees Celsius will render most of the planet uninhabitable.

What then needs to be done to stop this march toward calamity? In fact, we need to succeed with hundreds of specific actions. But one thing that must be done is the single most significant action

by far. That is, we have to stop burning oil, coal, and natural gas to produce energy. The reason for this is also simple: because burning fossil fuels to produce energy releases carbon dioxide (CO₂) into the atmosphere. The accumulated stock of CO₂ in the atmosphere is in turn, by far, the most important factor driving up the average global temperature.

Here, therefore, is where our alternative rosy scenario for 2074 needs to kick in. That is, by 2050, the entire global economy will need to have completely phased out burning fossil fuels as an energy source. Of course, there is no getting around the reality that shutting down the global fossil fuel industry will require winning a massive, uphill political war. Fossil fuel companies make huge profits and these flow into the pockets of their super-rich shareholders. For example, in 2022, the six largest western oil companies—Exxon Mobil, Chevron, Shell, BP, Equinor, and TotalEnergies—made \$200 billion in profits, more than any previous year in the history of the industry. The oil companies and their shareholders, in other words, are feasting as the world burns. Too many politicians, in all regions of the globe, are only too eager to join the feast.

But let's say that, through struggle, we can win this war. We then still need to create, within this same time frame, an entirely new global energy infrastructure. Its centerpieces will need to be high-efficiency and clean renewable energy sources—primarily solar and wind power. People are obviously still going to need to consume energy, from any available source, to light, heat, and cool buildings; to power cars, buses, trains, and airplanes; and to operate computers and industrial machinery; among other uses. Moreover, any minimally decent global egalitarian program—one in which human well-being does truly have a chance to flourish—will certainly entail a significant increase in energy consumption for lower-income people throughout the world. This is how, for example, low-income women in developing economies can be released from spending hours every day gathering wood and water to keep their families functioning.

Further on this point: Investments to dramatically raise energy-efficiency standards and the expansion of the global supply of clean energy sources will not only reduce emissions. It will also create tens of millions of jobs, in all regions of the

world. Of course, there is no guarantee that these new jobs will be good jobs. Certainly, at present, and most likely for decades to come, we will still be operating under some variant of capitalism.

But *which* variant of capitalism will depend on the organizing achievements of progressive activists of all stripes now and into the future. In particular, climate activists need to join forces with unions and other labor organizers to fight for good wages, benefits, and safe and equitable working conditions as the new clean energy infrastructure emerges. At the same time, the phasing out of the global fossil fuel industry will mean large-scale losses for workers and communities that are presently dependent on the fossil fuel industry. Providing a just transition for these workers and communities also needs to be at the center of the egalitarian climate stabilization project.

For over a decade, labor activists, such as those associated with the Green New Deal Network, Labor Network for Sustainability, and the BlueGreen Alliance in the United States, have been organizing around these issues. Against steep odds, they have won some significant victories. It was not by happenstance, for example, that the Biden administration made clean energy investments, and the working-class jobs generated by these investments, a centerpiece of its post-Covid-19 economic program.

In addition, clean renewable energy, combined with high efficiency, will also deliver energy at lower prices than the current costs of fossil fuel energy. Thus, for 2023, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) reported that, throughout the world, 81% of newly installed renewable energy projects were producing energy at lower costs than the cheapest fossil fuel

alternative. Still more, given these low costs, developing economies will be able to build relatively small-scale clean energy infrastructures throughout their rural regions. To date, working within the conventional massive fossil fuel infrastructure scale, governments in developing economies have failed to deliver electricity to roughly half of their rural populations. Major health benefits will also result everywhere through eliminating both the indoor and outdoor pollution generated by burning fossil fuels. These are all in addition to the fundamental goal of driving emissions to zero.

One thing that must be done is the single most significant action by far. That is, we have to stop burning oil, coal, and natural gas to produce energy.

Which picture of the world circa 2074 is likely to prevail? Of course, none of us knows. We can only know which one *has to* prevail. The words of the great Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci ring powerfully here: “Pessimism of the mind; optimism of the will.” **D&S**

ROBERT POLLIN is distinguished university professor of economics and co-director of the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) at the University of Massachusetts–Amherst. His books include, with co-author Noam Chomsky, *Climate Crisis and the Global Green New Deal: The Political Economy of Saving the Planet*.

Full Immigrant Rights in 50 Years?

BY DAVID BACON

Given the descent of U.S. immigration policy from its high point in 1965 to its current disastrous low, it might seem unrealistic to describe anything other than a dystopian vision of the future 50 years from now. Today even a Democratic presidential campaign proposes draconian restrictions and has virtually abandoned any progressive proposals, in order to compete for votes with an even more racist Republican framework.

Yet in 1965 a progressive immigration bill was part of a broad set of transformative legislation, the product of a popular consensus created by the Civil Rights movement. It drew on decades of organizing and struggle to prioritize the needs of families and communities over employers’ contract labor programs. It weakened racial quotas and the racist foundations of immigration restrictions. For a time, the use of immigration policy to punish political radicalism through deportations, and banning the entry of Communists and other



dissidents, was ended by a Supreme Court that obeyed the popular will.

Keeping that history in mind, it is important to project a vision of immigrant justice, of the world as it might and should be. It must be based on what actually meets the needs and desires of working people, and to move beyond the discourse over what a conservative Congress and its compliant media hold possible. That vision has been articulated by the left before, especially in opposition to the so-called immigration reform proposals under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama. The American Friends Service Committee wrote “A New Path,” and a coalition of labor and community organizations formulated the Dignity Campaign platform. Both were efforts to define an immigration policy based on human, labor, and civil rights. Others made similar proposals.



They were all based on the idea that radical reform is still possible under capitalism, while some viewed it as a step toward even more fundamental and structural change. Achieving even reforms, however, requires a broad peoples' movement, which needs to be capable of restricting corporate power and its domination of politics, including in ways that harm migrants, and government policies that defend that power, to place peoples' needs to move, work, and unite their families at the center, and to develop economic and racial policies that find and create common ground between newcomers and longtime residents.

A movement for immigrant justice will be able to achieve basic change if it is part of the larger

effort that unites people fighting injustice in all parts of U.S. society. This is true not just because immigrants will only have the power they need in this broad alliance, but because the issues of immigrant justice are so intimately tied to so many others. Demanding climate justice, for instance, includes addressing the forced migration produced by the disasters caused by global warming, as well as meeting the demands made by former colonies on wealthy nations, in compensation for the disasters caused by the industrialization built with the profits of exploitation.

A world in half a century could be a world of justice in which the history of capitalist development is acknowledged, and in which U.S. policy changes the way it produces inequality and displacement today. The movement of millions of people in the current world is a forced movement, caused by the legacy of colonialism, and by the continuing reasons why people have to leave home—poverty, hunger, and war.

In this just world of the future, the people's movement will have overcome the power of corporations that profit from a war-ridden, unequal world. The basis for corporate investment itself will have to change. While private investment is part of capitalism, it can be restricted. If U.S. corporations invest in factories in other countries, for instance, they must produce for the consumption of the people of those countries. They cannot create export platforms to compete with factories in the United States, using different standards of living to make profits. Trade agreements and neoliberal economic policies, which aim to create lower living standards and thereby profitable investment conditions, will be a thing of the past in a more just world. Those conditions have been a primary source of the migration of displaced communities.

In that just world, U.S. activity in other countries in general will be subject to the decisions of local communities and worker organizations. The people's movement in the United States will support democratic movements seeking to raise living standards and to guarantee political and social rights and the ability to stay on the land for rural people. The activity of the U.S. government to undermine those movements will end. We have a long history of international solidarity in this country, and it can become a majority movement more powerful than even those opposing apartheid, intervention in Central America, and the Vietnam War.

The worst of the profit-making activity by U.S. corporations abroad is the sale of arms and the fomenting of war. Millions of people are forced into migration as a result. Here the interests of people in war-torn countries and people in the United States itself are the same. The production of arms by U.S. corporations must be cut to a tiny fraction of its current level, and the export of arms ended completely. While not all conflicts are the direct product of U.S. intervention, we can reduce their number by not contributing to them. At the same time, coming to terms with history will mean the payment of reparations for the damages done, whether in Gaza, Vietnam, or Haiti. Rebuilding, under the control of the people of those countries, will create the possibility of a full life, giving communities a future where they live, rather than forcing their members into exile as refugees.

At the same time, we will finally acknowledge that the movement of people is part of the human experience. In our schools, in the media, and in our politics, we will speak of voluntary movement and migration as not only a human right, but a positive value. Success in this will produce the political base for the complete reorientation of the way we see the border. The walls will be torn down in a celebration of our common roots as Mexicans, Canadians, and U.S. people. In its place, two friendship parks will extend from ocean to ocean, in the South and in the North. The Peace Arch at the Blaine Canadian border crossing will be multiplied, and decorated with the same profusion of art and graffiti that artists have displayed on today's border wall.

The arrival of new people into our communities and worksites will be welcomed, and the purpose of immigration policy will be to facilitate their movement, making it easier for people to find families, homes, and jobs. There is enough work for all people in this country, although the current vicious economic system continuously places us into competition. Over the next 50 years a people's movement can force the acceptance of what was the basic premise of the 1978 Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Act—where the private sector cannot produce enough jobs for everyone, the public sector will do so. By ending the military budget, we will have plenty of money to employ people to meet our basic needs in providing free medical care; free education in

modern schools with highly paid and respected teachers; low-cost, well-maintained public housing; and a rebuilt infrastructure, from mass transit to internet.

More workers will be needed—and are in fact needed now. The contract labor programs that have been the source of enormous abuse, however, will be ended. If employers need workers, they will have to raise wages and provide decent, secure jobs in order to attract them. At the same time, unions will grow as workers gain more political and economic power, and job rights will be expanded for all workers, including especially the enforceable right to organize. To get hired, all workers will simply show the same Social Security number. The Social Security and benefit system (which will include a national health system) will enroll everyone, and everyone will be equally entitled to benefits. Discrimination because of national origin will be illegal in all aspects of life.

A world in half a century could be a world of justice in which the history of capitalist development is acknowledged, and in which U.S. policy changes the way it produces inequality and displacement today.

Addiction to drugs will be treated as a medical and social problem and will no longer be criminalized. Treatment centers will help people deal with addiction. With better housing and jobs, and a future in livable communities, the market for drugs will shrink. Since the cartels that supply drugs are a product of that market, it will become much easier to deal with them.

Legalization instead of punishment is part of a broader movement to end the carceral system. Immigrants will benefit from that, as well as people of color and working people in general. With no need for immigration enforcement, the detention centers, private and public, can be torn down like the border walls. No need for sweeps, or an immigration enforcement system of thousands of agents, cops, judges, and special courts.

It is easy to imagine a better world, and hard to win.



Before the Cold War, the defense of the rights of immigrants in the United States was mounted mostly by immigrant working-class communities, and the alliances they built with the left wing of the U.S. labor movement. In the 1950s, at the height of the Cold War, U.S. immigration policy became more overtly a labor-supply scheme than at any other time in its history. Radical immigrant rights leaders were targeted for deportation, and the combination of enforcement and contract labor reached a peak. In 1954, over a million Mexicans were deported from the United States. And from 1956 to 1959, over 400,000 Mexicans were brought into the United States each year as *braceros*.

In less than a decade, the Chicano Civil Rights movement ended the *bracero* program, and created an alternative to the deportation regime. Chicano activists of the 1960s—Ernesto Galarza, Cesar Chávez, Bert Corona, Larry Itliong, Dolores Huerta, and others—convinced Congress in 1964 to repeal the law authorizing the *bracero* program

and in 1965 to pass immigration legislation that established new pathways for legal immigration. Essentially, a family- and community-oriented system replaced the old labor-supply/deportation program.

A new era of rights and equality for migrants won't begin in Washington, D.C., any more than the Civil Rights movement did. Human rights will be a product of the social movements of this country. That's what made possible advances in 1965 that were called unrealistic and politically impossible 10 years earlier. Just as it took a civil rights movement to pass the Voting Rights Act, any basic change to establish the rights of immigrants will also require a social upheaval and a fundamental realignment of power. **D&S**

DAVID BACON is a writer and photographer, and former factory worker and union organizer. His latest book is *More Than a Wall/Mas que un Muro* (Colegio de la Frontera Norte, 2021).

The Promise of the Solidarity Economy—If We Survive That Long

BY EMILY KAWANO

Call me a “pessoptimist.” To my eye, these are extraordinarily scary times—climate change; the anthropocene (human-created era of mass extinction); the slide toward fascism here and abroad; the vitriolic and increasing violent backlash against people of color, immigrants, women, and LGBTQ people; and looming global pandemics, to name a few. From a young age, I've been highly cynical about the prospects of our species, so this all fuels that big-picture pessimism.

People are usually surprised to hear me describe myself as a pessimist. That's because for decades, I have been deep into building the solidarity economy, a global movement that seeks to create *another world*, one that serves the welfare of people and the planet rather than private greed and blind growth. The solidarity economy as a framework is relatively recent, emerging independently and contemporaneously in Europe and Latin America. Prior to the launch of the U.S. Solidarity Economy Network in 2007, the term was virtually unknown in the United States.

The Center for Popular Economics, where I was the executive director at the time, was a lead

organizer of the solidarity economy track at the 2007 U.S. Social Forum in Atlanta. We also co-organized a couple of side meetings for folks interested in the solidarity economy and the participants enthusiastically supported the launch of the U.S. Solidarity Economy Network (USSEN). The Center for Popular Economics played a critical role in agreeing to allot some of my staff time to anchor this newborn network.

Fast forward 17 years and “solidarity economy” is now a widely recognized term in progressive to radical circles. In the United States there's been huge growth in most sectors of the solidarity economy. What is even more interesting is that the framework, which is values grounded, seems to be exerting a degree of ethical gravitational pull. Foundations and investment and loan funds are asking what would solidarity economy grant making, investments, or loans look like? Community groups are grappling with what sort of changes might they consider to be more aligned with the solidarity economy, and there's a growing field of solidarity economy lawyering. These are just a few examples of the explosion of interest in and adoption of the solidarity economy framework that is happening across the globe.

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(Facing page):
Banaue Rice
Terraces in
the
Philippines,
January 30,
2019.

Credit:
Wikimedia
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So, What Is It?

The solidarity economy is a framework that connects solidarity economy practices. These practices are aligned with solidarity economy values (USSEN uses these five: solidarity, participatory democracy, equity in all dimensions, sustainability, and pluralism—not a one-size-fits-all approach, or in the words of the Zapatistas, “A world in which many worlds fit”). The solidarity economy’s framework, practices, and values all articulate a post-capitalist system—the solidarity economy movement is very clear that we cannot get to that “better world” by reforming capitalism.

The solidarity economy exists all around us and in every sector of the economy. It builds on and interconnects in a coherent framework, utilizing existing practices that align with its values. Some examples are in the table above.

These practices are alternative (time-banking); mainstream (such as public schools and environmental regulations); new (resident-owned communities) and old, even ancient. Throughout our history, this is how human beings have survived—through cooperation and the collective management of resources.

Consider the Banaue Rice Terraces in the Philippines, sometimes referred to as the eighth wonder of the world. An estimated 2,000 years ago the Ifugao people hand-built rice terraces into 4,000 square miles of mountainous terrain. They are considered an engineering marvel, especially given that they were built two millennia ago. The UNESCO World Heritage Convention offers this description:

Reaching a higher altitude and being built on steeper slopes than many other terraces, the Ifugao complex of stone or mud walls and the careful carving of the natural contours of hills and mountains to make terraced pond fields, coupled with the development of intricate irrigation systems, harvesting water from the forests of the mountain tops, and an elaborate farming system, reflect a mastery of engineering that is appreciated to the present.



Production/Reproduction	Distribution/Exchange	Consumption	Finance	Governance
Worker co-ops	Fair trade	Community land trusts	Credit union	Shared governance in co-ops, commons
DIY and Community DIT (do it together)	Toy libraries and tool libraries	Resident-owned communities	Peer lending	Participatory budgeting
Care work	Social currencies	Food co-ops	Community loan funds	Community governance
Community gardens	Free swaps	Consumer co-ops	Direct public offerings	Public sector and policies
Mutual aid	Gifting	Commons	Public banks	
	Time-banking			

The solidarity economy exists all around us and in every sector of the economy. It builds on and interconnects in a coherent framework, utilizing existing practices that align with its values.

Passed down from generation to generation, these terraces are still owned and farmed using traditional methods by the Ifugao people. This is but one of countless examples of how solidarity economy practices have existed throughout human history.

Imaginal Cells—A Metaphor for the Solidarity Economy

When a caterpillar spins its chrysalis, its body begins to break down into a nutrient rich goop. In that goop are *imaginal* cells that have a different vision of what it could be—so different in fact, that what’s left of the caterpillar’s immune system attacks and kills the imaginal cells. Some of them survive and, recognizing their common vision, they begin to find each other and so are able to survive the immune system’s attacks. As they continue to come together, they start to specialize—some become an eye, some a wing, some a leg—until it emerges as an entirely new creature, the butterfly!



IMAGINING 50 YEARS FROM NOW

The examples in the table above are like the imaginal cells of the solidarity economy—still isolated from each other, not yet recognizing their common vision. The solidarity economy provides a framework to pull together these imaginal cells so that they begin to act together as a whole new system—grounded in a logic fundamentally different from capitalism's.

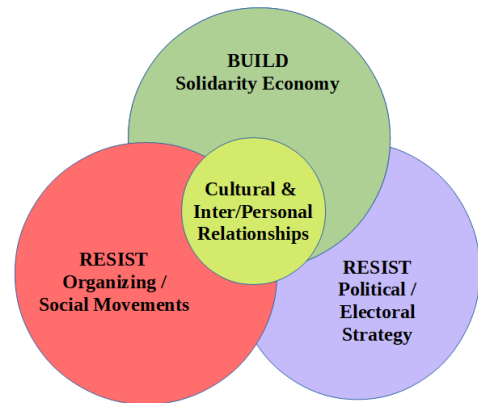
How, then, do we get to where the solidarity economy starts operating and manifesting as a system instead of lovely but isolated good works?



Here are three examples of efforts to scale and connect up the solidarity economy:

- Massachusetts launched the first statewide solidarity economy network (Massachusetts Solidarity Economy Network, or MASEN) in the country in 2019. Virginia Solidarity Economy (VASEN) launched a few years later, and a California solidarity economy network is in the exploratory stage of formation. These networks serve to connect various solidarity economy sectors and practices across the state, a first step toward integrating as a system.
- The People's Network for Land and Liberation (PNLL) is a new network of six organizational nodes: Cooperation Jackson, Cooperation Vermont, Community Movement Builders (Atlanta), Incite

Focus (Idlewild, Mich.), Native Roots Network (Norther California), and Wellspring Cooperative (Springfield, Mass.). Our common project is to leverage a Community Land Trust model to build a local solidarity-economy ecosystem with five components: affordable housing; regenerative agriculture; production—both through worker co-ops and community DIT (do-it-together); digital fabrication to support all of the above; and spaces for community connection, culture, and learning. While each node may talk about these components in slightly different ways, we share the same fundamental vision and are all engaged in actively growing a solidarity economy ecosystem in our localities. PNLL is also responding to the urgency of this historic moment of convergent crises by strengthening the local capacity of communities to meet their own needs.



- In 2020, given the urgency of this historic moment of crises, USSEN initiated a process called Resist & Build (R&B) that has continued through the present day. Our goals are:

- 1) To build relationships among organizations working on *system change*, including groups whose agenda include a focus on capitalist reforms.
- 2) To build clarity about the meaning of capitalism, post-capitalism, and the solidarity economy.
- 3) To co-develop a shared analysis and strategy around Resist & Build—the solidarity economy is focused on the *build* end of things while the *resist* work includes both grassroots organizing and social movements and electoral/policy work.
- 4) To learn to work together by working together in a co-owned and co-governed process.

Four-and-a-half years later, we are still going strong and have made huge headway on all these fronts. Resist & Build is a framework that needs to infuse all of the local solidarity economy ecosystem projects.

Without being firmly connected up with social, economic, and environmental justice movements, solidarity economy practices run the risk of becoming self-absorbed in their own survival, disconnected from those working at the forefront of the struggle. Conversely, social movements without a sense of what the *alternative* is—what they are *for*—run the risk of lurching from one good fight to the next, but not building toward systemic change beyond capitalism.

These are three examples that work at different levels to scale up the solidarity economy: from hyperlocal solidarity economy ecosystems, to local statewide solidarity economy networks, to the Resist & Build framing that pushes for a stronger

connection between the solidarity economy and social movements. These are grim and scary times, says the pessimist in me, but I find fuel for optimism in the powerful upsurge in the solidarity economy movement. **D&S**

EMILY KAWANO is the co-coordinator and co-founder of the U.S. Solidarity Economy Network and served on the Board of RIPESS (the Intercontinental Network for the Social Solidarity Economy). She is also the co-director of Well-spring Cooperative, based in Springfield, Mass., which is building a local solidarity economy ecosystem, including a network of worker co-ops.

Intercommunalism Mixtape

How a 50-year-old Idea from Huey P. Newton Helps Us Build a New World 50 Years Hence

BY YVONNE YEN LIU

Across North America, our movements continue to wrestle with the concept of *intercommunalism*, whether explicitly named or not, in how we think about building popular power in the twilight of empire. The concept refers to how communities are interconnected across the globe, through either internationalism from above or from below. Although political philosopher and Black Panther Party founder Huey P. Newton formulated the idea over 50 years ago, it continues to hold relevance for how we understand the historical moment and our role in fomenting revolution. This essay is a mixtape, sampling personal conversations I've had, to think through questions we've been puzzling over in our Los Angeles experiment in intercommunalism. I dedicate this mixtape to my mentor, Muntu Matsimela, who was the first to teach me about the idea.

Muntu and I met through listener activism with a local radio station affiliated with the Pacifica Network in New York City in the early 2000s. There was a quarter of a century difference in age between us. He was a veteran of the Third World revolutionary movements of the 1960s and 1970s, and a former member of the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army. My generation was politicized by the Battle of Seattle in 1999, the first

upsurge in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. His movements were organized hierarchically, led by a sometimes clandestine, central committee. Mine were decentralized and horizontal; individuals were organized into affinity clusters and deliberated in public assemblies.

I think Muntu tried to find common political ground between us by sharing the concept of intercommunalism with me. In addition to teaching me about it, he also instructed me on the difference between a friend and a comrade. A friend, he said, was someone who has your back. That's not always the case with comrades. He was a heavyset middle-aged Black man, his shoulders drooped with a lifetime of disappointments. He had large black eyes that always seemed to me to be on the verge of filling with tears.

Track 1: "The Harder They Come" **by Jimmy Cliff (1972)**

The theory of intercommunalism was developed by Newton in 1970, and first published in 1974, soon after he was released from solitary confinement. He offered to send Black Panthers to Vietnam to help fight against the United States and was disappointed by the critical response from comrades in the Black liberation movement.

In his defense, he wrote in an open letter to a critic, "America is World Enemy #1 and the



military is its strong arm. We feel that it is imperative upon us to defend people of color when they are attacked by troops in this land, and it's also imperative to defend people of color when they are attacked by American troops in other lands."

He proposed two formulations of intercommunalism that dominated the world system: one was *reactionary*, the other *revolutionary*. We are familiar with the forms of reactionary intercommunalism from the past 50 years: transnational corporations and finance capital rule the world, while nation-states skulk around in their shadow. We also know this as neoliberalism. The long 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century was the age of empire, one in its death throes but still breathing fire while gasping its death rattle.



The other form of intercommunalism was revolutionary. In this vision, one we can aspire to in the next 50 years, we liberate our local communities by establishing alternative polities and economies based on the logic of cooperation and mutual aid. We seize the means of production, material and immaterial, and create new regimes of knowledge and understanding. Over time, according to Newton, a new form of subjectivity emerges—about ourselves and about each other—when “people will not only control the productive and institutional units of society, but they will also have seized possession of their own subconscious attitudes toward these things.”

This qualitative change, for Newton, marks the beginning of the transition from revolutionary

intercommunalism into communism. “For the first time in history, [the people] will have a more rather than less conscious relationship to the material world,” he wrote, “They will have power, that is, they will control the phenomena around them and make it act in some desired manner, and they will know their own real desires.”

Track 2: “Guerilla Radio” by Rage Against the Machine (1999)

On a street corner in my neighborhood of El Sereno, a working-class community in Northeast Los Angeles, sits a refrigerator. The outside is brightly painted with a mural of monarch butterflies fluttering between stalks of corn. For Roberto Flores, the founder of the Zapatista-inspired community center Eastside Café that the fridge sits in front of, it is a symbol of the material infrastructure and values of the new world we are trying to build.

“A young, unhoused man this morning made sure to thank me for the food and the refrigerator,” Flores told me. “He intuitively knows what we’re trying to do: We are taking care of each other, we are magnifying values and practices, and not teaching people.” He added, “Similar to Huey, we are talking about local autonomy everywhere and connected, because what’s left for capital if all the communities are autonomous?”

Since 2022, we’ve gathered autonomous social movement actors across the City of Angels into a decentralized network, which we named Los Angeles for All. Our hypothesis is that Los Angeles is ready for its municipalist moment: to build an alternative polity and economy that is directly democratic, and will eclipse the current regime of reactionary intercommunalism. We have been growing alternatives wherever we can and fighting to shrink the status quo so we can transition power and resources to being democratically controlled.

We have also been convening a Los Angeles People’s Movement Assembly but quickly scaled up to the level of the city without first building a base in neighborhoods. Although we have brought Angelenos together for the past three years across race, class, and neighborhoods to create a new movement culture, we have not been growing in size and scale. Subjectively, we are not shifting hearts and minds. And we haven’t changed material conditions for people on the ground. In charting our way forward, what lessons can we draw from Newton?

Track 3: "A Love Supreme" by John Coltrane (1965)

I posed this question to Richard Feldman of the James and Grace Lee Boggs Center in Detroit, who replied, "Empires dissolve, are overthrown, or replaced," Feldman told me. "We don't know what humans will become in the next 50 years and asking questions that pose answers locks us into feudalism, socialism, and communism." What made Newton and civil rights and labor activist Grace Lee Boggs prescient, according to Feldman, is that they were revolutionaries who were asking questions, not trying to prove a theory.

Perhaps our hopes for the next 50 years can be found in love. Former Black Panther Ericka Huggins said in our panel on intercommunalism on Valentine's Day earlier this year that everything in the Black Panther Party was based on the ethic of love. According to Newton, "revolutionary love" is the process by which liberated territories, separated by geography and culture, find "common cause" with one another and build solidarity and camaraderie against the global sprawl of reactionary intercommunalism.

Michael Hardt, author of *Empire* with Antonio Negri, calls this the *multitude* or a "multiplicity of people with differences who can act politically." What we can stretch toward together is a new understanding of the *common*, where private property relations are abolished. If we base ourselves as the common or the multitude on love, our struggles broaden beyond the working class. Our revolution will include, as Newton said in 1971, the struggles of the bigger *we*. Together, *we* can move forward toward a post-capitalist future.

Track 4: "The World is Yours" by Nas (1994)

What does this mean for our experiment in Los Angeles? Los Angeles for All spent the past six months in hibernation, evaluating our assumptions and how they informed our strategy to launch a citywide assembly. We are emerging from our hiatus to focus on developing the Los Angeles common, starting with liberating land. There are unprecedented opportunities right now, as publicly owned land is being made available for housing development at the city, county, and state level. Almost a quarter of the offices in Los Angeles are empty, with hybrid and remote work becoming the new normal post-pandemic.

Our city needs a better solution that recognizes that we can't banish people we can't provide housing for to jails. We also need a prefigurative solution that is reparative, trauma-informed, democratic, and affirms our humanity. I believe that our city is ready for a radical municipalist vision of collectively owned and managed, cooperative, and social housing. We have vacant housing and land, we have a lavish amount of funds allocated to policing the unhoused, and we have the political will of Angelenos to create a decent and regenerative solution. I think Newton, and my friend and comrade Muntu, would approve. **D&S**

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YVONNE YEN LIU is the co-founder and executive director of Solidarity Research Center, a worker self-directed nonprofit that builds solidarity economy ecosystems. She is based in Los Angeles.

This mixtape is a tribute to my friend and my comrade, Muntu Matsimela (1950–2017), who is interred at Hart Island in the Bronx.

SOURCES: Michael Hardt, "About Love," European Graduate School Video Lectures, 2007 (youtube.com); Huey P. Newton, "Intercommunalism," *Viewpoint Magazine*, 1974 (viewpointmag.com); Huey P. Newton, "Resolutions and Declarations: December 5, 1970," *To Die for the People: The Writings of Huey P. Newton*, edited by Toni Morrison (Vintage, 1972); Huey P. Newton, "Reply to Roy Wilkins re: Vietnam: September 26, 1970," in *To Die for the People*, edited by Toni Morrison (City Lights Books, 2020); Huey P. Newton, "The Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation Movements: August 15, 1970," *The Huey P. Newton Reader*, edited by David Hillard and Donald Weise (Seven Stories, 2002); Municipalism Learning Series, "Intercommunalism," Solidarity Research Center, February 14, 2024 (municipalism.org/intercommunalism); The Huey P. Newton Foundation, "The Heart of Huey Newton" (open.spotify.com/playlist/0zaFrYzm6lnyjXGAwAaNuN).