OMNI DISSENT NEWSLETTER #1, April 29, 2013. Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace, Justice, and Ecology.

My blog:
War Department/Peace Department
http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/

Newsletters
http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/

Index:
http://www.omnicenter.org/omni-newsletter-general-index/

See: War Dissidents, Resistance

Many of OMNI’s newsletters express DISSENT: activism, anti-war, Gandhi, MLK Jr, nonviolence, etc. The stories and arguments cover a broad range of striving for world peace, justice, and environmental preservation against those who want wars, domination, empire, militarism, economic inequality, and the whole gamut of anti-human values and practices. One restriction is the rejection of violence.

EMILY DICKINSON #435

Much Madness is divinest Sense –

To a discerning Eye –

Much Sense – the starkest Madness –
‘Tis the Majority

In this, as All, prevail –

Assent – and you are sane –

Demur – you’re straightway dangerous –

And handled with a Chain –

Contents #1

Theory
USA
Global

THEORY

Sunnstein, *Why Societies Need Dissent*

USA

Majid, Why Resistance, Questioning, Dissent Important: USA and Islam
Why Societies Need Dissent

First Published: 2003

Terrorism and other violence frequently is a consequence of intolerance for dissenting thoughts, according to Cass R. Sunstein, a University of Chicago law professor whose analysis concludes that suppression of dissent can result in the absence of facts and other arguments—key factors in effective decision-making. Whether a dramatic debate about public policy or routine deliberations about mundane choices, dissent contributes to small groups and society at large, he writes. Groups of people do better if they cultivate diversity, openness, and even dissent. A truly free society prohibits censorship and enables free expression to occur, continues Sunstein, who studies three phenomena of group dynamics:
individuals’ desire to conform to groups, group decision-making, and the tendency for parts of groups to polarize.

*Why Societies Need Dissent* is somewhat academic, yet readable, blending legal judgments and common sense. Noting that consensus can mean conformity, it blasts “political correctness” and conformists themselves (which he dubs “free riders,” contributing far less than they benefit from society). Provocative in its own type of dissent, it is non-partisan—observing that both Democratic and Republican judges tend to drift to extremist rulings without the checks and balances of opposing opinions. Dissenters, whether federal jurists or conscientious members of PTAs, are those who resist the pressures to go along at some risk to themselves, Sunstein adds. Their insights can be useful, even vital. He concludes that it is in society’s best interest to discourage conformity and rigidity, and to promote opinions and ideas.

*Also see:*


http://www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/lpbr/index.htm


Reviewed by David E. England, Department of Political Science, Arkansas State University. Email: dee@astate.edu

. . . . The dissenter plays a beneficial role in society by resisting the urge to conform and by making information that might otherwise go unheard available for a decision. The assumption is that the dissenter has the alternative information to bring to the discussion. . . . . Copyright 2004 by the author, David E. England.

http://www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/lpbr/subpages/reviews/Sunstein104.htm

Confronting the fundamentalism that afflicts both Islam and the United States through traditions of dissent

A Call for Heresy discovers unexpected common ground in the deepening conflict between the Islamic world and the United States. Anouar Majid argues that the Islamic world and the United States are both in precipitous states of decline because, in each, religious, political, and economic orthodoxies have silenced the voices of their most creative thinkers. The solution, Majid argues, is a long-overdue revival of dissent.

A towering Islamic intellectual.

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Francis A. Boyle's "Protesting Power - War, Resistance and Law"

Francis A. Boyle's "Protesting Power - War, Resistance and Law" - by Stephen Lendman

Francis A. Boyle is a distinguished University of Illinois law professor, activist, and
internationally recognized expert on international law and human rights. From 1988 to 1992, he was a board member of Amnesty International USA. He was a consultant to the American Friends Service Committee. From 1991 to 1993, he was legal advisor to the Palestinian Liberation Organization, and currently he's a leading proponent of an effort to impeach George Bush, Dick Cheney and other key administration figures for their crimes of war, against humanity and other grievous violations of domestic and international law. Boyle also lectures widely, writes extensively and authored many books, including his latest one and subject of this review: "Protesting Power - War, Resistance and Law."

Boyle's book is powerful, noble and compelling, and he states its purpose upfront: Today, a "monumental struggle (is being waged) for the heart and soul of (America) and the future of the world...." It matches peacemakers on one side, war makers on the other, and all humanity hanging in the balance. The book provides hope and ammunition. It's an urgent call to action and demonstrates that "civil resistance (is) solidly grounded in international law, human rights (efforts), and the US Constitution." It "can be used to fight back and defeat the legal, constitutional, and humanitarian nihilism of the Bush administration" neocons and their chilling Hobbesian vision - imperial dominance, homeland police state, and permanent "war that won't end in our lifetimes," according to Dick Cheney.

Boyle has the antidote: "civil resistance, international law, human rights, and the US Constitution - four quintessential principles to counter....militarism run amok." Our choice is "stark and compelling." We must act in our own self-defense "immediately, before humankind exterminates itself in an act of nuclear omnicide." The threat today is dire and real, it demands action, and civil resistance no longer is an option. With survival at stake, it's an obligation.

The Right to Engage in Civil Resistance to Prevent State Crimes

. . . . MORE:

http://sjlendman.blogspot.com/2008/02/francis-boyles-protesting-power-war.html
Author Jonathan Hutto, At Large member of VFP in Norfolk VA is an able seaman who banded together with a small group of fellow service men and women to build one of the first active duty antiwar groups since the Vietnam era. Antiwar Soldier offers military personnel and their families a practical toolkit to make their voices heard, drawing on Hutto's own experience as an activist and on the wealth of experience that the GI resistance movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

1. Let Fury Have The Hour
www.letfuryhavethehour.com/
Theaters · About the Film · Synopsis · About the Filmmaker · About the Cast · About Creative Response · A Personal Journey · Q&A with Writer/Director Antonino ...  
2. TribecaFilm.com | 2012 Film Guide | Let Fury Have The Hour
www.tribecafilm.com/filmguide/let_fury_have_the_hour-film40404....
In his feature directorial debut, author and visual artist Antonino D'Ambrosio spins a lively social history that chronicles how a generation of artists, thinkers, and ...  
3. Let Fury Have the Hour (2012) - IMDb
www.imdb.com/title/tt1943747/
Rating: 5/10 - 56 votes
Let Fury Have the Hour -- A documentary that chronicles how a generation of ... and spoken word, the film spans three decades of change--from the cynical ... Directed by Antonino D'Ambrosio. Starring Chuck D., Ian MacKaye.  
4. 'Let Fury Have the Hour' review: Passionate - SFGate
www.sfgate.com/movies/.../Let-Fury-Have-the-Hour-review-Passiona...
Jan 18, 2013 – If passion were all that mattered, "Let Fury Have the Hour" might be the film of the year. The documentary offers several dozen artists, whose ...  
5. News for Let Fury Have the Hour, film
1. Review: 'Let Fury Have the Hour' doc features artistic...
and uniquely whole —documentary that is "Let Fury Have the Hour." ... what's termed here "creative reaction," the film hears from a stirring ...

6. Exclusive preview clip of 'Let Fury Have The Hour' movie out Friday ...
www.la.com/ci_22432527/check-out-let-fury-have-four-movie-out

6 days ago – LOS ANGELES: The exclusive Los Angeles engagement LET FURY HAVE THE HOUR movie looks at the last 40 years of social history to ...

7. Let Fury Have the Hour | Facebook
8.
9.

10. 99% // The Occupy Wall Street Collaborative Film
www.99percentfilm.com/


11. 99% - The Occupy Wall Street Collaborative Film by Audrey Ewell ...
www.kickstarter.com/.../99-the-occupy-wall-street-coll...

Oct 3, 2011
99% - The Occupy Wall Street Collaborative Film is a documentary film spearheaded by over 60 award ...

12. More videos for 99% documentary film. Occupy Wall Street »

13. 99% – The Occupy Wall Street Collaborative Film – Documentary ...
www.uniondocs.org/november-15-2011-occupy-wall-street-collabor...

99% – The Occupy Wall Street Collaborative Film. Tuesday, November 15 at 7:30pm, free admission. Open to the public on a first come basis. Filmmakers ...

14. Melissa Webster: 99% -- The Occupy Wall Street Collaborative Film
www.huffingtonpost.com/.../99-the-occupy-wall-street_b_1180066.h...

Jan 6, 2012 – ... well, everything, inspired the documentary 99%, the collaborative film about Occupy Wall Street as unique and diverse as the movement itself.

15. Occupy: The Movie | A Documentary film about the 99%
www.occupythemovie.com/

OCCUPY. THE MOVIE. a film about the 99% ... About the Film ... Gideon Oliver, George
Martinez, and more key figures from the **Occupy Wall Street** movement.

16. Collaborative Film 99% Documents **Occupy Protests | Underwire ...**
www.wired.com/underwire/.../99-occupy-wall-street-documentary/

Dec 28, 2011 – Most **documentaries** involve months of planning before the first frame of film is shot, but the creators of an in-the-works **Occupy Wall Street** ...

17. **AMY GOODMAN, **DEMOCRACY ON YOUR COMPUTER

All you need do any time of the day is use one of the following urls to watch Democracy Now on your computer...if you have high speed connection.

http://www.democracynow.org/
then click on "real video"
or:  http://www.linktv.org/programs/demo

**GLOBAL**

**Voices of Protest Documents of Courage and Dissent**

Lowenstein, Frank; Lechner, Sheryl; Bruun, Erik A.; Lechner, Sheryl; Bruun, Erik A.
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3 used from $3.48

Description
Table of Contents
Author Bios

This eye-opening collection of documents ranging from the pre-Christian era to the present explores the undeniable power of social, political, and religious dissent throughout history and around the world. Voices of Protest is an inspiring and comprehensive look at the meaning of protest throughout history, in democratic and nondemocratic societies.

It is also a rousing confirmation that individual and community action matters and has great influence. Collected here are more than 300 documents--essays, letters, newspaper articles, court decisions, song lyrics, poetry, cartoons, and more--that represent seven main categories of protest: Civil Rights; National Self-Determination; Economic Justice; Environmental Conservation; Religious Freedom and Morality; Peace and War; and International Political Freedoms. A small sampling of the entries includes Seneca Falls Declaration of Women's Rights; Fidel Castro's anti-American writings protesting cultural domination; John Muir's essay "The American Forests"; and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s letter from a Birmingham jail. The editors have framed the documents with concise original commentary that places each selection in a political, historical, and social context. Collected here are more than 500 documents-essays, letters, newspaper articles, court decisions, song lyrics, poetry, bumper stickers, cartoons, and more-that represent six main categories of protest: Civil and Equal Rights; National Self-Determination; Economic Justice; Environmental Conservation and Protection; Religious Freedom and Morality; and Peace and War. A small sampling of the entries includes works by Aristophanes, the Zealots, and the Jewish Prophets; Mikhail Gorbachev on Glasnost; Seneca Falls Declaration of Women's Rights; Fidel Castro's anti-American writings protesting cultural domination; John Muir's essay "The American Forests"; and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s letter from a Birmingham jail. The editors have framed the documents with concise original commentary that places them in a political, historical, and social context. Erik Bruun is a journalist, author, and expert in American history. His previous books include Kids' Book of Giant Machines, Our Nation's Archive, The Civil War Archive, The Book of American Values and Virtues, Heavy Equipment, and Test Your History IQ. He lives with his family in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. Frank Lowenstein is a conservation biologist and the Geoffrey Hughes Berkshire Program Director for The Nature Conservancy. He and his wife, Sheryl Lechner, live with their three sons in western Massachusetts. Sheryl Lechner is a newspaper reporter and environmental writer whose work has appeared in Audubon, Sierra and many other publications. She and her husband, Frank Lowenstein, live with their three sons in western Massachusetts.

UK'S EDF SUES PROTESTERS, and OTHER CORPORATE SLAPPs

Dick,

Another gem from Monbiot. Robert McAfee
Monbiot.com

Corporate Blowback

Posted: 25 Feb 2013 12:30 PM PST

Companies like EDF, seeking to terrify protesters with lawsuits, are likely to become victims of their own aggression.

By George Monbiot, published in the Guardian 26th February 2013

Without public protest, democracy is dead. Every successful challenge to excessive power begins outside the political chamber. When protest stops, democracy sclerotises: it becomes a conversation between different factions of the elite.

But protest is of no democratic value unless it is effective. It must disturb and challenge those at whom it is aimed. It must arouse and motivate those who watch. The climate change campaigners trying to prevent a new dash for gas wrote to their MPs, emailed the power companies, marched and lobbied. They were ignored. So last year 17 of them climbed the chimney of the West Burton power station and occupied it for a week(1). Theirs was a demonstration in two senses of the word: they presented an issue to the public which should be at the front of our minds. Prompted to act by altruism and empathy, one day they will be remembered as we remember suffragettes and anti-slavery campaigners.

Last week the operator of the power station – EDF, which is largely owned by the French government – announced that it is suing these people, and four others, for £5m(2). It must know that, if it wins, they have no hope of paying. It must know that they would lose everything they own, now and for the rest of their lives. For these and other reasons, EDF's action looks to me like a Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation: a SLAPP around the ear of democracy.

SLAPPs are attempts to bully people into political submission through inordinate demands(3). Their purpose is to terrify and ensure that campaigns which might otherwise have been trying to protect the environment or to defend workers' rights are instead snarled up in the courts. Often, whatever the merits of the case, people will agree to leave the company alone if it drops the suit.

Those who might have joined the campaign are frightened off. Those who might have become active in other campaigns avoid politics altogether for fear of the consequences. Their absence impoverishes democracy.

SLAPPs are used all over the world. Three people are currently being sued – each for over a million dollars – for protesting against an amusement park in Niagara Falls in Canada called Marineland(4,5). Two of them are former trainers from the park, who have alleged that the animals are being neglected and ill-treated. They claim that seals have gone blind as a result of dirty water, and dolphins' skin has been falling off in chunks(6). The company denies their allegations.

After they attended a peaceful demonstration, Marineland served them with writs containing a number of exotic claims. One former trainer, Phil Demers, was accused of plotting to steal the park's half-tonne walrus. He says he doubts his “second floor apartment would hold a walrus. M
cats.” (7) Daft as the suits appear, they have succeeded in tying the campaigners in legal knots.

Dale Askey, formerly a librarian at Kansas State University, is being sued for $4.5m (alongside his current employer) by an academic publisher called Edwin Mellen Press (8, 9). His offence was to challenge the quality and cost of the books the press produced: something librarians see as part of their job (10).

In Canto 21 of the Inferno, Dante watches lawyers who made a habit of bringing frivolous or oppressive suits being perpetually submerged in a lake of boiling tar by demons with boathooks. They get off quite lightly, in other words. But perhaps hell of a different kind awaits on earth. In 2003 Barbra Streisand’s lawyers launched an action to have an aerial photograph of her home in Malibu removed from a collection whose purpose was to document coastal erosion (11). They demanded $50m in damages. Before they became involved, the photo was downloaded four times. In the month after they launched their stupid suit, it was downloaded 420,000 times (12). The Streisand Effect, in other words, is blowback: disastrous unintended consequences of an attempt at censorship.

The best-known example is Britain’s famous McLibel case, in which McDonalds tried to sue two penniless activists (13). By 1996 British history concluded, McDonalds had suffered a devastating defeat in the court of public opinion.

In 2004, Gunns, a company turning ancient rainforests in Tasmania into pulp, sued 20 people who had been protesting against a project containing some of the tallest trees on earth. It sought $6.4m from them for attempting to disrupt its operations. The result was a lawsuit against the company. Its customers fled, its share price collapsed and its chief executive was forced out. Gunns found itself obliged to settle the case by making massive payouts to the people it had sued (14).

EDF might find itself in similar trouble. The backlash against this arm of the French state, seeking to alter the course of British politics by ruining those who participate, is building rapidly. A petition launched on Friday, asking the company to drop its suit, has already gathered 12,000 signatures (15). EDF may now find itself forever linked in the public mind with oppressive power, the stifling of dissent and climate breakdown. While eternal submersion in a lake of boiling tar invokes, for a fossil fuel company, a certain symmetry, this self-inflicted public relations disaster may turn out to be almost as excruciating.

www.monbiot.com

References:

1. http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/nov/05/no-dash-for-gas-end-occupation


10. https://docs.google.com/file/d/0BzoQkJbKcombVLBZmd3dU7DmM/edit?usp=sharing&pli=1

11. Here’s the photo she found so offensive. It’s not easy to see what the problem is. http://www.californiacoastline.org/cgi-bin/image.cgi?image=3850&mode=sequential&flags=0


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