What’s at stake on Independence Day:

“. . . it is practically impossible for us to have any empathy for revolutionary movements. Yet we pay ritual homage in our Fourth of July speeches, declaring that ours was indeed the ‘true’ revolution. . . .” J. W. Fulbright, *The Price of Empire* (161).

We celebrate our revolutionary independence from the British imperial yoke. But a remembrance should teach us something about the present. Today other oppressors are more complicated and dangerous than were our British kinsmen. British uniforms and arrests without warrant aroused our common indignation. Right and wrong seemed clear (though not to those colonists who fled to Canada, loyal to their King and homeland).

But what about our own nation’s oppression of others? What does July 4 today say to our country’s invasion of or intervention in other countries over 50 times since 1945 with today over a thousand military bases all over the world? What does it tell us, how does it help us examine, our long delay and failure to respond constructively as a nation and a people to the consequences of global warming now multiplying every day? And how does our celebration help us resist the extraordinary power of money now concentrated in a few hands? Particularly, what does the ritual of fireworks say, what is its message for our future?

We need to study these questions today, July 4, 2014. For Independence Day we need not fireworks patriotism and the Marine Band, but reflection.

The US needs a new Declaration of Independence from the Corporate-Pentagon-Congressional-Executive-Mainstream Media-Surveillance-Imperial/Wars-National Security—C02/Warming- Complex. OMNI is part of the movement to free the *culture* from this domination by corporations, war, and warming. The populace is dazzled by the constant blandishments of consuming and dazed by economic struggle, wars, and denial of climate
change. We would reverse that bondage by a reaffirmation of the Declaration of Independence and Roosevelt's New Deal.

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At Least, Get Informed and Vote: League of Women Voters and Electoral Democracy

4TH OF JULY PARADES IN HAWAII AND VERMONT AGAINST PLUTOCRACY

Letters from an unknown person 5-7-14:
In Hawaii we are batting around the idea of an entry in Kailua's 4th of July parade. Two or three people would dress as founding fathers, and battle the evil forces of Big Money, Monsanto, and the local utility, which is hindering PV installations. Battle would be done with, let's say, light sabers, with an accompanying banner: May the Fourth Be With You! We will play music like 10cc's Wall Street Shuffle, Squirrel Nut Zippers' Bad Businessman, and Pink
Floyd's Money, perhaps interspersed with The Times They Are A-Changin' and so on. Someone will pass out real $1 bills stamped with Ben & Jerry's slogans from stampstampede.org. We may also try a four-line rhyming slogan on four separate banners, like the old Burma-Shave highway billboards that were spaced 1/4 mile apart. Since the local CofC runs the parade, we'll have to couch this as a Get Out The Vote entry or something else dutiful.

Brodie, this is great. In our Montpelier July 3 Parade we have reserved last place in the formation. The idea is to encourage the onlookers to join us- we'll have people & signs all along the route. At the end of the parade we will hold formation & march to the Capitol steps, which we have reserved for a rally. Some well-known, iconic VT folks are marching w/ us & speaking at the rally. Then we go down on the Statehouse lawn to organize, eat ice cream & stamp money.

**Don't forget to have an American flag in your group.**

Love your slogan.

Bill Butler- Jericho

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**Citizens United event nearby**

Jonah, Public Citizen amendment@citizen.org via mail.salsalabs.net  

Jun 27 (3 days ago)

You have recently been active in the campaign for a constitutional amendment to overturn *Citizens United* and related cases.

**Next week, senators are home for the Independence Day congressional recess. I wanted to send you a special invitation to participate in some important events to support the U.S. Senate vote on a constitutional amendment.**

Find an event near you and sign up to participate.

Read my earlier email (copied below in case you missed it) to learn more.

Jonah
Dick,

Independence Day is almost here.

And as we enjoy corn on the cob, a frosty beverage and watching fireworks with our families, we must not forget why we celebrate this day.

**We celebrate July 4th because it marks the beginning of the long fight by our foremothers and forefathers for a nation ruled not by the wealthiest few, but by and for ALL of We the People.**

There is no better time to defend that basic ideal, which after two centuries is under siege by a handful of billionaires and Big Businesses.

Soon there will be a historic vote in the U.S. Senate on a measure (S.J. Res. 19) that calls for a constitutional amendment to overturn the U.S. Supreme Court’s disastrous rulings in cases like *Citizens United* and *McCutcheon*.

**There will be events supporting the amendment nationwide leading up to July 4.**

*Find out what’s happening near you next week to promote democracy and a constitutional amendment — and join in!*

These events are going to be great fun — especially if you help.

You can wear a patriotic outfit, hold up an oversized copy of the U.S. Constitution, dress up as a billionaire and bring your puppets in Congress, or cover a megaphone with money to drown out the speech of everyone else.

Or you can take a stand for democracy just by showing up.

**Celebrate our nation’s independence by helping to defend the democracy that our founders intended.**

*See the events planned near you and sign up to be part of the action.*

Those who came before us, from the founders to the freedom riders, all fought for the principle of a democracy available and responsive to all citizens. Celebrate our nation’s independence by speaking out to restore this, the beating heart of our democratic tradition.

Thank you for your courage and engagement.

Onward,

Jonah Minkoff-Zern
ROOSEVELT 1932 AND THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT CALLED FOR RADICAL CHANGES IN HIS CAMPAIGN FOR PRESIDENT IN 1932.

He would build from grassroots and upon the forgotten people at the economic bottom. Believing the nation needed urgently “more equitable distribution of the national income,” he pledged a “New Deal” of financial oversight, public-works projects, environmental defense, easing farmers’ and home-owners’ debts, and insurance for the old. Decrying how government subsidies had increased business concentration and monopoly into the hands of “financial Titans” and had decreased opportunity and freedom for the majority, Roosevelt promised a new economic declaration of rights and constitutional order, as stated in the guarantee of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” in the Declaration of Independence. Every man and woman has a right to a decent life by possessing a portion of the nation’s plenty through opportunity for work.

Roosevelt’s 1932 campaign was a “call to arms” to “restore America to its own people” through social action for social justice.

--Dick

THE STRUGGLE FOR WE THE PEOPLE CONTINUES

Minimum wage petitioning resumes

I’ve learned this morning that petitions for an increase in the Arkansas minimum wage won’t be submitted today, as had been expected, but will turned in July 7, the deadline. I’m trying to reach Steve Copley, leader of the campaign for Give Arkansas a Raise Now coalition, by my source indicates the plan changed so that more signatures could be added to the total gathered already.
Copley told me yesterday that the group had 75,000 signatures, more than the 62,507 required, but signatures are always disqualified and Copley indicated he expected the auditing process might well reduce the number of valid signatures below the number required. In such cases, groups who meet the raw number limit are given 30 days to gather more valid signatures.

The proposal, backed heavily by organized labor and the Democratic Party as a campaign tool this year, would increase the current minimum in Arkansas, $6.25 an hour, to $8.50 by 2017. Our minimum is the lowest in the country. Democratic candidates support the increase. Republican candidates either oppose it or have refused, in the case of Tom Cotton, to take a position.

One wrinkle in the process that typically has petitioners looking for a cushion is that to qualify for more time, a petitioner must submit 62,5017 "facially valid" signatures. Obvious forgeries — pages and pages of them have been discovered on occasion in other campaigns — can be disqualified from the total on the front end. Concerns exist among many supporters of the minimum wage initiative on the canvassing effort, which had shut down after the initial financing....

From the Arkansas Times (received July 3, 2014  from Bonnie Cook)

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DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE FROM US PERMANENT WAR

WAR NO MORE: The Case for Abolition

By davidswanson - Posted on 13 September 2013

This book by David Swanson, with a foreword by Kathy Kelly, presents what numerous reviewers have called the best existing argument for the abolition of war, demonstrating that war can be ended, war should be ended, war is not ending on its own, and that we must end war.

The paperback is available at all the usual online and real world book sellers. (184 pages, list price $15 US) Here it is on Powells, Amazon, Barnes & Noble. The book ships right away when ordered, even if Amazon says otherwise; it is print-on-demand. It's below at a discount when you buy 10 or more.

The PDF is here for $2:

The ePub is here for $2:
The mobi (Kindle) is here for $2:

The audio book (mp3) is here for $2:

The iTunes (m4b) is here for $2:

The Paperback: You can get 10 copies for $60 with free shipping, here:

All e and audio versions of this book are also available at eBookIt.c
I lived in Iraq during the 2003 Shock and Awe bombing. On April 1st, about two weeks into the aerial bombardment, a medical doctor who was one of my fellow peace team members urged me to go with her to the Al Kindi Hospital in Baghdad, where she knew she could be of some help. With no medical training, I tried to be unobtrusive, as families raced into the hospital carrying wounded loved ones. At one point, a woman sitting next to me began to weep uncontrollably. “How I tell him?” she asked, in broken English. “What I say?” She was Jamela Abbas, the aunt of a young man, named Ali. Early in the morning on March 31st, U.S. war planes had fired on her family home, while she alone of all her family was outside. Jamela wept as she searched for words to tell Ali that surgeons had amputated both of his badly damaged arms, close to his shoulders. What’s more, she would have to tell him that she was now his sole surviving relative.

I soon heard how that conversation had gone. It was reported to me that when Ali, aged 12, learned that he had lost both of his arms, he responded by asking “Will I always be this way?”

Returning to the Al Fanar hotel, I hid in my room. Furious tears flowed. I remember pounding my pillow and asking “Will we always be this way?”

David Swanson reminds me to look to humanity’s incredible achievements in resisting war, in choosing the alternatives which we have yet to show our full power to realize. A hundred years ago, Eugene Debs campaigned tirelessly in the U.S. to build a better society, where justice and equality would prevail and ordinary people would no longer be sent to fight wars on behalf of tyrannical elites. From 1900 to 1920 Debs ran for president in each of five elections. He waged his 1920 campaign from inside the Atlanta prison to which he’d been sentenced for sedition for having spoken vigorously against U.S. entry into World War I. Insisting that wars throughout history have always been fought for purposes of conquest and plunder, Debs had distinguished between the master class that declares wars and the subjugated who fight the battles. “The master class has had all to gain and nothing to lose,” said Debs in the speech for which he was imprisoned, “while the subject class has had nothing to gain and all to lose—especially their lives.”

Debs hoped to create a mindset throughout the American electorate that withstood propaganda and rejected war. It was no easy process. As a labor historian writes, “With no radio and television spots, and with little sympathetic coverage of progressive, third party causes, there was no alternative but to travel incessantly, one city or whistle-stop at a time, in
searing heat or numbing cold, before crowds large or small, in whatever hall, park or train station where a crowd could be assembled."

He didn’t prevent U.S. entry into World War I, but Swanson tells us in his 2011 book, When the World Outlawed War, there came a point in U.S. history, in 1928, when wealthy elites decided that it was in their enlightened self-interest to negotiate the Kellogg-Briand Pact, intended to avert future wars, and to prevent future U.S. governments from seeking war. Swanson encourages us to study and build on moments in history when war was rejected, and to refuse to tell ourselves that warfare is inevitable.

Surely we must join Swanson in acknowledging the enormous challenges we face in campaigning to avoid war, or to abolish it. He writes: “In addition to being immersed in a false world view of war’s inevitability, people in the United States are up against corrupt elections, complicit media, shoddy education, slick propaganda, insidious entertainment, and a gargantuan permanent war machine falsely presented as a necessary economic program that cannot be dismantled.” Swanson refuses to be deterred by large challenges. An ethical life is an extraordinary challenge, and encompasses lesser challenges, such as democratizing our societies. Part of the challenge is to honestly acknowledge its difficulty: to clear-sightedly witness the forces that make war more likely in our time and place, but Swanson refuses to categorize these forces as insurmountable obstacles.

A few years ago, I heard once more about Jamela Abbas’ nephew, Ali. Now he was 16 years old, living in London where a BBC reporter had interviewed him. Ali had become an accomplished artist, using his toes to hold a paint brush. He had also learned to feed himself using his feet. “Ali,” asked the interviewer, “what would you like to be when you grow up?” In perfect English, Ali had answered, “I’m not sure. But I would like to work for peace.” David Swanson reminds us that we will not always be this way. We will transcend in ways that we cannot yet properly imagine, through the determination to rise above our incapacities and achieve our purposes on earth. Obviously Ali’s story is not a feel-good story. Humanity has lost so much to war and what so often seems its incapacity for peace is like the most grievous of disfigurements. We don’t know the ways we will discover in which to work to rise above these disfigurements. We learn from the past, we keep our eyes on our goal, we fully grieve our losses, and we expect to be surprised by the fruits of diligent labor and a passion to keep humanity alive, and to help it create again.

If David is right, if humanity survives, war itself will go the route of death-duels and infanticide, child labor and institutionalized slavery. Perhaps someday, beyond being made illegal, it will even be eliminated. Our other struggles for justice, against the slow grinding war of rich against poor, against the human sacrifice of capital punishment, against the tyranny that the fear of war so emboldens, feed into this one. Our organized movements working for these and countless other causes often are themselves models of peace, of coordination, a dissolution of isolation and of conflict in creative fellowship, the end of war made, in patches, already visible.

In Chicago, where I live, an annual summer extravaganza has been held on the lakefront for as long as I can remember. Called “The Air and Water Show,” it grew in the past decade into a huge display of military force and a significant recruiting event. Prior to the big show, the Air Force would practice military maneuvers and we’d hear sonic booms throughout a week of preparation. The event would attract millions of people, and amid a picnic atmosphere the U.S. military potential to destroy and maim other people was presented as a set of heroic,
triumphant adventures.
In the summer of 2013, word reached me in Afghanistan that the air and water show had
collapsed but that the U.S. military was a “no show.”

My friend Sean had staked out a park entrance for the previous few yearly events in a solo
protest, cheerily encouraging attendees to “enjoy the show” all the more for its incredible cost
to them in tax dollars, in lives and global stability and political freedom lost to imperial
militarization. Eager to acknowledge the human impulse to marvel at the impressive spectacle
and technical achievement on display, he would insist of the planes, and in as friendly a tone
as possible, “They look a lot cooler when they’re not bombing you!” This year he was
expecting smaller crowds, having heard (although apparently too busy assembling his several
thousand fliers to closely research this year’s particular event) that several military acts had
cancelled. “Two hundred flyers later, I found out that this was because THE MILITARY HAD
BACKED OUT!” he wrote me on the day itself: “They weren’t there _at all_ save for some
desultory Air Force tents that I did find when I biked through looking for recruitment stations. I
suddenly understood why I hadn’t heard any sonic booms leading up to the weekend.” (I had
always complained to Sean of the yearly agony of listening to those planes rehearse for the
show) “Too pleased to be mortified by my own idiocy, I put away my fliers and biked happily
through the event. It was a lovely morning, and the skies of Chicago had been healed!”

Our incapacities are never the whole story; our victories come in small cumulative ways that
surprise us. A movement of millions arises to protest a war, whose onset is delayed, its impact
lessened, by how many months or years, by how many lives never lost, by how many limbs
never torn from the bodies of children? How completely are the cruel imaginations of the war-
makers distracted by having to defend their current lethal plans, how many new outrages,
thanks to our resistance, will they never so much as conceive? By how many factors as the
years proceed will our demonstrations against war continue, with setbacks, to grow? How
acutely will the humanity of our neighbors be aroused, to what level will their awareness be
raised, how much more tightly knit in community will they learn to be in our shared efforts to
challenge and resist war? Of course we can’t know.

What we know is that we won’t always be this way. War may exterminate us utterly, and if
unchecked, unchallenged, it shows every potential for doing so. But David Swanson’s War No
More imagines a time where the Ali Abbases of the world exhibit their tremendous courage in
a world that has abolished warfare, where no-one has to relive their tragedies at the hands of
ramping nations, where we celebrate the demise of war. Beyond this it envisions a time
when humanity has found the true purpose, meaning, and community of its calling to end
warfare together, to live the challenge that is replacing war with peace, discovering lives of
resistance, and of truly human activity. Rather than glorify armed soldiers as heroes, let us
appreciate a child rendered armless by a U.S. bomb who must know that few incapacities are
an excuse for inaction, that what is or isn’t possible changes, and who, despite all we’ve done
to him, still resolutely intends to work for peace.

—Kathy Kelly

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE FROM TWO DECADES OF
Can We Finally Have a Serious Talk About Population?


— By Chris Mooney

| Fri Sep. 27, 2013 2:16 PM EDT |

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Climate Desk has launched a new science podcast, Inquiring Minds, cohosted by contributing writer Chris Mooney and neuroscientist and musician Indre Viskontas. To subscribe via iTunes, click here. You can also follow the show on Twitter at @inquiringshow, and like us on Facebook.

Today, as the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change releases its latest megareport, averring a 95 percent certainty that humans are heating up the planet, there's an unavoidable subtext: The growing number of humans on the planet in the first place.

The figures, after all, are staggering: In 1900, there were just 1.65 billion of us; now, there are 7.2 billion. That's more than two doublings, and the next billion-human increase is expected to occur over the short space of just 12 years. According to projections, meanwhile, by 2050 the Earth will be home to some 9.6 billion people, all living on the same rock, all at once.

So why not talk more about population, and treat it as a serious issue? It's a topic that Mother Jones has tackled directly in the past, because taboos notwithstanding, it's a topic that just won't go away.

The bestselling environmental journalist Alan Weisman agrees. In this episode of Inquiring Minds (click above to stream audio), he explains why, following on his 2007 smash hit The World Without Us, he too decided to centrally take on the issue of human population in his just-published new book Countdown: Our Last, Best Hope for a Future on Earth?

"Population is a loaded topic, and people who otherwise know better, great environmentalists, often times are very, very timid about going there," Weisman explains on the podcast. "And I decided as a journalist, I should go there, and find out, is it really a problem, and if so, is there anything acceptable that we can do about it?"

*The World Without Us* imagined a planet rapidly returning to a natural state in the absence of humans. Where that book represented an ambitious thought experiment, Weisman's new book is an experience. He traveled to 21 countries—from Israel to Mexico, Pakistan to Niger—to report on how different cultures are responding to booming populations and the strain this is putting on their governments and resources.

Strikingly, he found that countries are coping (or not coping) with this problem in vastly different ways. For instance:

- **Pakistan:** Current population: 193 million. "By the year 2030, they're going to have about 395
million people," Weisman says. "And they're the size of Texas." (Texas' population? Twenty-six million.)

• **The Philippines**: Current population: nearly 105 million. "As the rest of the planet's population quadrupled in a century, the head count here *quintupled* in half that time," Weisman writes in *Countdown*.

• **Iran**: Current population: nearly 80 million. Yet unlike Pakistan and the Philippines, Weisman says, Iran managed its population growth with "probably the most humane program ever in the history of the planet. They got down to *replacement rate* a year faster than China, and it was a totally voluntary program. No coercion at all." (Note, though, that as Weisman explains in his book, there was one Iranian government "disincentive" to having a large number of children: "elimination of the individual subsidy for food, electricity, telephone, and appliances for any child after the first three."
Weisman is well aware of the controversy his book invites. In particular, political libertarians are very fond of refuting the concerns of population crusaders, from the Reverend Thomas Malthus to the ecologist and Population Bomb author Paul Ehrlich, with the claim that human ingenuity has a history of proving them wrong. The key episode: the Green Revolution of the late 1960s, led by plant geneticist Norman Borlaug, in which dramatic new agricultural technologies and crop strains were credited with averting what might otherwise have been mass famines.

But Weisman has his response ready (he chronicles Borlaug's life and triumphs in the book). "Everybody says that Norman Borlaug, the great plant geneticist, he disproved Malthus and Ehrlich forever," he explains. "It's kind of cherry-picked, because the part that they neglect to add, Norman Borlaug's Nobel acceptance speech, he didn't sit there congratulating himself—as he was congratulated by others—for saving more lives than any other human in history. He said, 'We
have bought the world some time, but unless population control and increased food production go hand in hand, we are going to lose this."

So what's Weisman's solution? Importantly, he is no supporter of coercive population control measures such as China's infamous one-child policy. Rather, Weisman makes a powerful case that the best way to manage the global population is by empowering women, through both education and access to contraception—so that they can make more informed choices about family size and the kind of lives they want for themselves and their children.

"The libertarians are going to like the solution that ultimately comes up," Weisman says. "And that is, letting everybody decide how many children they want, which means giving every woman on Earth—and then every man, because male contraceptives are coming—giving them universal access to contraception, and letting them decide for themselves."

You can listen to the full show here:

This episode of Inquiring Minds also features a discussion of the latest myths circulating on global warming, and the brave new world of gene therapy that we're entering—where being rich might be your key ticket to the finest health care.

ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY and CITIZENS' MINIMAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mark Independence Day by Making Democracy Work

Dick,

Election Day 2014 is fast approaching and the direction of our country hangs in the balance of the many elections happening on and before November 4.

It is never too early to start getting ready for Election Day – and a key step is registering to vote. This Independence Day join the League of Women Voters in Making Democracy Work®
encourage your fellow citizens to visit VOTE411.org and register to vote or update their registration if they are among the millions of Americans who have moved in the last year.

On Election Day, millions of voters will head to the polls to stand up for what matters most – you can help make sure no one is left out. These elections are about our jobs, our health, our communities and our future. They’re about us; we all need to weigh in – share VOTE411.org with your networks and remind the people in your life to update their voter registration or register for the first time.

The League of Women Voters is committed to making sure all eligible citizens are registered to vote, and that voters have the information they need to participate in elections and have their vote counted. Since 2006, VOTE411.org has provided tens of millions of voters with information about the election process and information directly from tens of thousands of candidates regarding their vision for their community and America’s future. Every election, whether local, state or federal, is important to ensuring our laws and policies reflect the values and beliefs of our communities.

The first step to having a say on the issues that matter most to you is making sure everyone you know is registered to vote.

Election Day is the one day when all Americans are equal. Thank you for Making Democracy Work® during this important election year. Happy Independence Day!

Sincerely,

Jeanette Senecal
Senior Director of Elections
League of Women Voters

P.S. To help us continue this vital work, please make a donation today. Your support helps the League keep VOTE411.org online and available in communities across the country.
Nathanson, Analysis of Patriotism
Parenti, Superpatriotism
Blum, US “Exceptionalism” the Great Myth of Patriotism
Pfaff, “Manifest Destiny” More Fuel for Patriotism
Woehrle, Patriotism and the Peace Movement
Recent OMNI Newsletters Related to Patriotism
Independence Day, the Movie

OMNI NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL DAYS PROJECT

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END 4TH OF JULY NEWSLETTER 2014

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