



Finally Hope On Climate: Green New Deal!



By Jere Locke, Texas Drought Project

Last September the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued a report which concluded that we have just 12 years to turn down emissions enough to avoid calamity. However, the IPCC operates by consensus, which means all the scientists and their governments must agree on the findings. The IPCC also doesn't consider the science on tipping points. Both of these factors lead to the IPCC compromising on the best science, so, instead of having 12 years, we have perhaps half that number. Thus if we spend the next 3 years on writing and voting on the Green New Deal (GND) and fail to get it passed, we might not have enough time to offer and then pass another bill which can meet the challenges of climate change.

There are also additional warnings from nature. **Two researchers entering a tropical forest in Puerto Rico where they had done research 35 years before found the bird population greatly reduced.** Their subsequent research found the reason—98% of the ground insects were no longer there, nor were 80% of the insects in the tree canopy. The mostly likely culprit, they reasoned, is climate change. One said *“We are essentially destroying the very life support systems that allow us to sustain our existence on the planet...it is just horrifying to watch us decimate the natural world like this.”* Scientists are seeing this happening in tropical forests and elsewhere in the natural world, evidence of what some believe to be the beginning of the Sixth Extinction.

EL SALVADOR & AFRICA

In the US we've had considerable problems with climate-caused wildfires and hurricanes. Hurricane Maria caused 3,000 deaths in Puerto Rico alone.

Other more vulnerable parts of the world are also being ravaged. Several years ago, the UN, concerned about the noticeable increase in the migrants coming north from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, conducted a study to identify the reason for the increase in migration. They went to the districts in the three countries with the greatest number of migrants and asked why people were leaving. The number one answer was DROUGHT, the severe form of which is caused by climate change. This prolonged drought has greatly worsened food insecurity and impact-

ed jobs, as 2/3 of the latter are agriculture-related.

In October the Texas Drought Project (TDP) hosted a small meeting with Bernardo Belloso of CRIPDES, a coalition of around 350 communities in El Salvador. When one person talked about the complete disappearance of a spring which had once been a “waterfall” in a community of 2500 people in NW El Salvador, Bernardo said that springs are disappearing all over the country. **Last year the corn and bean crops in El Salvador were 80% below normal levels and have been reduced by a lesser but very significant extent in the previous years.** The UN study indicated that this is happening in all three countries (El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras).

In 2017, 3,000 Africans died crossing to Europe from Libya in vulnerable boats, often without life-jackets. In 2018, the number was less, but still an eye-opening 2262. The reason for their flight to Europe isn't completely understood, but they are coming largely from countries with severe drought problems. Several years ago very conservative research indicated that 182 million Africans would die in this century as a result of climate change.

SOME NEEDED GOOD NEWS

The very GOOD NEWS is that the Green New Deal is by far the best national climate effort ever put forward. Although not yet a bill, the GND sets the guidelines for a committee to work for one year writing a bill. There won't be a vote on the GND until 2021 when, hopefully, we'll have a new President and Senate. The GND includes some extremely good guiding principles. It requires that the GND be written to conform to the ideas of our top scientists, and very significantly, it requires that the bill's authors not be recipients of fossil-fuel donations.

Also, the GND has very strong equity provisions. The research of the International Labor Organization predicted the US would lose 6M jobs under the GND, but gain 24M for a net increase of 18M. Equity is addressed through the following provisions:

- (i) provide all members of our society, across all regions and all communities, the opportunity, training and education to be a full and equal participant in the transition, including through a job guarantee program **to assure every person who wants one, a living wage job;**

Continued on Page 6

Anti-Hate Resolution

Continued from Previous Page

Puerto Ricans, for example, are a racial blend of indigenous Taíno Indians, various African nations and tribes, and Spanish settlers who also have Celtic, Arab and Jewish roots. Among Boricuas, there are those that look quite European like Carmen Yulín Cruz, Mayor of San Juan, and others that look very African like the late great baseball player and humanitarian, Roberto Clemente. Some of us even display distinct Amerindian features, yet the majority of us reveal a wide variety of aesthetic blending of our many racial roots.

Since neither of these categories of “immigrant” nor “people of color” refers specifically to us, it is quite discouraging and appalling that this resolution should fail to even mention Latinos or Hispanics by name. What this demonstrates again is what many enlightened Latinx thinkers have long recognized: that we are always considered the eternal foreigner, despite having been among the earliest European settlers of this vast land.

Nevertheless, we have contributed with our courage and lives

to every military conflict from the Civil War when we fought on both sides, right up to the most recent imperial forays in the Middle East. We have contributed our language, culture, cuisine, labor and brains to the growth and development of this nation. Yet, we have also suffered and continue to withstand the slings and arrows of racial and ethnic discrimination. Like all the other groups mentioned in the resolution, we also deserve our place in any document that purports to be a statement against the evils of racism and bigotry. As a nation, we should do no less for a people who have given so much and yet been recognized for so little.

Bio: Julio Noboa Polanco is a writer, columnist, and social justice activist who served as Chair of the Esperanza Board in the 90s. He was also a columnist at the *San Antonio Express-News* for nearly a decade. His writings continue to appear in Texas (*Houston Chronicle*) and in Costa Rica (*Semanario Universidad*) where he and his wife now live. Recently retired as Assistant Professor of Social Studies from UTEP, his focus is on Latino History, Mexican American Studies, critical pedagogy and multicultural education.



Green New Deal

Continued from Page 3

(ii) take into account and be responsive to the historical and present-day experiences of low-income communities, communities of color, indigenous communities, rural and urban communities and the front-line communities most affected by climate change, pollution and other environmental harm;

(iii) mitigate deeply entrenched racial, regional and gender-based inequalities in income and wealth (including, without limitation, ensuring that federal and other investment will be equitably distributed to historically impoverished, low income, deindustrialized or other marginalized communities);

(iv) include additional measures such as **basic income programs, universal health care programs and any others as the select committee may deem appropriate to promote economic security**, labor market flexibility and entrepreneurship; and

(v) deeply involve national and local labor unions to take a leadership role in the process of job training and worker deployment.

Then, there is the wonderful “rising up” of youth on climate change. For many months the children of Europe have been leading the way with huge marches of children (one of 35,000 children and others over 10,000) and the remarkable leadership of Greta Thunberg – (access her exceptional UN speech here: bit.ly/thunberg_un). They have established a rapidly growing movement in Europe. The children take Fridays off from school for climate action. And now, this movement is spreading in the U.S.—on

March 15th there were children’s rallies all over the US during school hours.

The Sunrise Movement, founded and directed by young adults in the U.S., is largely responsible for the Green New Deal. They’re now joined by our children demanding that we support them and help protect their futures. We hope that many of you join with them in Houston, Austin, San Antonio and Dallas for upcoming events.



Greta Thunberg: UN Climate Change Conference

WHAT YOU CAN DO

The Texas Drought Project is organizing in nine Texas congressional districts bringing together strong and diverse coalitions to meet with their Congress members in hopes of gaining more Texas Congressional sponsors of the Green New Deal. As of now, the GND has been endorsed by 11 Senators, 6 Presidential candidates and 89 House members as we continue to work with local groups and individuals in four Houston congressional districts, three Metroplex districts and two districts in the Valley. We’ll also work to bring the GND to the attention of all presidential candidates that come to Texas.

Over 650 organizations are organizing to support the GND including 350.org, Earthworks, Food & Water Watch, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, Indigenous Environmental Network, National Family Farm Coalition, National Nurses United, Our Revolution, SEIU, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Progressive Democrats of America, Rainforest Action Network, Roots-Action.org, and Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.

To learn more about the Green New Deal and how to get involved contact: Jere Locke at jerelocke@yahoo.com or Alyssa Burgin at Alyssa@texasdroughtproject.org.