

ERIK WRIGHT: Welcome, everyone, to the second plenary of this year's American Sociological Association. The three plenaries are all anchored on different core values bound up with the idea of real utopias: equality, connected to questions of social justice last night, democracy today, and sustainability on Sunday. Of the three, democracy is the focus that's most directly concerned with the question of institutions and how they're designed, which is, of course, an absolutely central part of the whole real utopian discussion. The point of thinking about real utopias is to think about alternatives to the world as it is: a sociology of the possible, not just the actual.

But to make a sociology of the possible have institutional reality means talking about institutions, their structures, and particularly their power relations. And that's where democracy looms so large. Democracy understood of course with respect to the state, but also democracy understood in other spheres and institutional sites. And that will be the concern of today's discussion.

Two of the three panelists today are also doing complementary sessions. The structure of the theme for the meetings as a whole includes these plenaries, but also a series of sessions built around specific proposals. They're labeled in your program Real Utopia Proposal Sessions. Bruce Ackerman and Bob McChesney are both involved in real utopia proposal sessions that complement their presentations today. So if you find what they have to say provocative and interesting, or if you find it disagreeable and you want to argue with them, I guess that falls under the provocative label, I encourage you to come to these complementary sessions.

The idea there is for this to be a site for discussion and dialogue rather than a full panel. So at the proposal sessions, there will generally be only around 30 to 40 minutes worth of presentation and prepared discussion, and the rest of the time will be available for comments from the floor. We have three speakers today. They will speak in the following order. Bob McChesney will go first, then Bruce Ackerman, and Hilary Wainwright. Let me briefly introduce each of those.

Bob McChesney is the Gutsell endowed professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Illinois. He is among the most widely read and influential critical scholars of the media, especially around issues of journalism, focusing on the role the media play in democratic and capitalist societies. He is the co-founder of the Free Press, a national media -- Free Press, a national media reform organization. In 2001, Ad Busters magazine named him one of the nine pioneers of mental environmentalism. The Utne Reader in 2008 listed him as one of their 50 visionaries who are changing the world. And most crucially, in 2006, David Horowitz included McChesney on his list of the 101 most dangerous professors in America.

There are few honors and rewards that I feel genuine jealousy for because I understand the game and how it's played. I don't know what it takes to become a dangerous professor. Real utopias doesn't quite seem to do it. Among his many books, some written with John Nichols, are Rich Media, Poor Democracy; Tragedy and Farce: How the American Media Sells War, Spin Elections, and Destroy Democracy. I guess media must be plural in that sentence, yeah, okay. I think of media as singular, but there must be some linguistic debate about this. Okay.

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: You're on the wrong side of it.

PRESENTER: I'm on the wrong side of the debate. And *The Death and Life of American Journalism: The Media Revolution that will Begin the World Again*. Hilary Wainwright is a leading researcher and writer on the emergence of new forms of democratic accountability within parties, movement, and the state. She is the driving force and editor behind *Red Pepper*, a popular British new-left magazine. And I want to inform everyone that she has brought with her a pile, that's a technical term for a quantity, of *Red Pepper* magazines, which she will sell after the session at half price. She has them in front of her, and so come up when the session is done.

And she has in her work documented countless examples of resurgent democratic movements from Brazil to Britain, and the lessons they provide for progressive politics. Wainwright founded the Popular Planning Unit of the Greater London Council during the Thatcher years, and was convener of the New Economics Working Group of the Helsinki Citizen's Assembly from 1989 to 1994. She is currently the research director of the Transnational Institute's New Politics program, and a senior research associate at the International Center for Participation Studies at the Department for Peace Studies, University of Bradford. Her books include *Reclaim the State*, *Experiments in Popular Democracy*, and *Arguments for a New Left: Answering the Free Market Right*. Her early, very influential work, *Beyond the Fragments: Feminism and the Making of Socialism*, will be reissued with new papers by Hilary, Lynne Segal, and Sheila Rowbotham by Merlin Press later this year.

Bruce Ackerman is Sterling professor of law and political science at Yale, and the author of 15 books that have had a very broad influence in political philosophy, constitutional law, and public policy. His major works include *Social Justice in the Liberal State*, and the multi-volume constitutional history *We The People*. He is currently in the process of completing the third volume of that work.

His work that bears most directly on the themes of real utopia include *The Stakeholder Society* with Anne Alstott, *Voting with Dollars*, and *Deliberation Day*. He is one of the authors, along with Alstott

and Philippe van Parijs, of one of the books in the Real Utopias project, one of the books connected to my long-term project on real utopias, Redesigning Distribution.

Professor Ackerman is a member of the American Law Institute and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He is a commander of the French Order of Merit. I think he may be the first commander of the French Order of Merit who I have ever met, although maybe there are more commanders lurking. And the recipient of the American Philosophical Society's Henry Phillips prize for lifetime achievement in jurisprudence.

So let us begin with Bob McChesney. Each speaker will speak for 20 to 25 minutes, and then we will have time for questions and answers. You should know that this is being live streamed, webcast, so anyone who ventures forth to ask a question will be part of a global webcast of this event. Bob.

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Well, thank you all very much for coming, and thank you Erik for asking me to do this. It's very generous of you. It's flattering to be here. And I'm also delighted that the subject of journalism and media and communication is returning to a role at the ASA that it once had five decades ago in a different era, and its importance is recognized so widely today.

I'm going to talk generally in this talk about the importance of reforming and resuscitating journalism, and how to do it and how we can do it effectively, and the principles, and why it's important that we go in a very different direction than we currently are going. But I'll leave the details for the next session, which follows up immediately after this. And I'll leave a lot of the nuance. I'm going to speak in broad generalizations, assuming that many of you are unfamiliar with this whatsoever, so we should start at the beginning. Well, not quite at the beginning, but start early on.

In 1919, in probably his best essay, Walter Lippmann, and I'm paraphrasing, wrote that the great problem of democracy today is the problem of journalism. The great problem of democracy is the problem of journalism. And the reason he wrote that was that democracy was in deep crisis across the world, and in his view, journalism was awash in corruption, sensationalism, and idiocy, and was completely unsuitable for a self-governing people.

Well, I think if we look today 90 years later, we can see that the crisis of democracy has returned or remained with a vengeance. It is probably in more jeopardy in the United States, if not worldwide, than at any other time in our lifetimes. Bogus election system, unchecked, unaccountable militarism, surveillance. The list goes on and on: the corruption of our governing system, the decline of the rule of law. All of these things are extraordinarily troubling. And all of these are then underlined by the fact that

we're an economy that is entering a period of what appears to be endless stagnation, with all that that means for the institutions of a free society, and the challenge and threat they are going to face in the coming years.

Now I would also argue that much like Lippmann, much of this, certainly not all of it, this crisis of democracy, is a crisis of journalism, that the decline and collapse of journalism as we know it in the United States over the past generation, if not longer, and I'll talk about that in a second, is a crucial part of our inability to solve collectively, peaceably, coherently the great problems before us. And anyone who wants to solve the whole myriad of utopias we want to create in other areas thinks they can do so without some semblance of journalism as I'm about to describe it is hoping for something that never has been, as Jefferson said, and never will be.

What you need from journalism in a self-governing society is not actually a debated issue. The political left, liberals, and even conservatives who endorse democracy are in pretty much agreement. There's a great consensus. A credible democratic journalism system must be a watchdog of those in power and those who want to be in power. It must provide a range of viewpoints, well-informed viewpoints, to draw people into debate and let them participate. It must have accurate information so liars can be exposed and they can't get away with it indefinitely. And a credible journalism system has to be the advance scout on crucial problems coming down the road so people can address them early on before they grow completely out of control and become major crises.

All media need not do all these things. That's preposterous. But in combination, a healthy democratic media system will provide all those things, make it accessible to a person living in a society, and let them participate in the governance of their society. Much of the critical work in media studies over the past 30 or 40 years has looked at the limitations of commercial journalism in the United States, and how it's failed dramatically on each of those counts that I've just listed. And I think that that literature, many of you are probably familiar with it. But probably what you're less familiar with is this notion of professional journalism. The idea of professional journalism, that the content of the news is going to be non-partisan, unattached to political viewpoints, quote-unquote objective, just the facts sort of journalism, is a very recent phenomenon in American history. Only in the last century has it emerged, and is antithetical to what anyone in the first 120 years of American history understood journalism or what healthy journalism should be.

Professional journalism, ironically enough, emerged really at the time of Lippmann. The solution to the great crisis of monopolistic press barons, highly partisan, corrupt journalism, was creating

professional journalism, letting the editors and reporters seem independent from the owners and the advertisers. That's when all the professional journalism schools were founded. And much of the research that has been done in critical media studies has been examining the limitations of professional journalism even at its peak, even when newsrooms have their most independencies of the owners. Even when newsrooms had flush budgets as they did in the 1960s and 1970s, it had severe limitations. And the reason for this is there's no natural, inherent way to do professional journalism.

There's not one textbook and once you'd agreed to have it, you're going to have it. And in fact, in the first half of the 20th century, there was an enormous battle in newsrooms trying to define what professional journalism would be. One side, led by the News Reporters Union, the newspaper guild in the 1930s under Heywood Broun and George Seldes and the young Ira Stone, argued that journalism in the newsroom should be completely independent of owners and advertisers, under the complete control of the workers, and that their job would be to be critical of everyone in power, no matter who they were, and represent everyone outside of power. That's what they thought professional journalism should be: the same yardstick is held to everyone in power or who wants to be in power.

That vision of professional journalism didn't win. The owners of the press magnates did not like giving up their power over the news and the newsroom. And we got instead a far more tepid professional journalism, the great weakness of which I suspect many of you are familiar with. It allowed official sources to set the range of legitimate debate and the terms of legitimate debate. So when all the great issues were official sources, people in power, the commanding heights of the Democratic and Republican party were in agreement, there was precious little debate in our news media. Their positions were accepted as the legitimate range of debate, and they weren't challenged.

This is especially pernicious in matters of the economy and matters of foreign policy, where elites tend to have the same worldview. And people who criticized it were then cast outside. The journalists who dared question on their own the right of the United States to invade a country would be characterized as an ideologue, as someone trying to inject their own politics, being unprofessional. And it had a strong disciplinary effect on journalists to stay away from that unless there were someone in power raising a criticism they could stand behind and use that as a battering ram to raise the issue.

Professional journalism, even at its best, had a profound ability to promote depoliticization, a decontextualized news, to sort of remove what was really important there and strip down citizen participation. But now, oftentimes as we look at journalism today, that looks like a golden age, the

1960s and 1970s, because the crisis of journalism has grown far, far deeper in the last 40 years, and is now in free fall, disintegration, and collapse.

To some extent, this is because of extraordinary commercial pressure that has taken place starting in the 1970s upon professional journalism, where fewer and fewer companies gobbled up what remained of America's newsrooms and news media at large prices, because they were very profitable, and subjected them to sort of a hard rationalization and profit-making. So fewer and fewer resources began to go to newsroom, more pressure to use the resources for easier to cover stories and sensationalism, trivial matters like that. This process began in earnest in the late 1980s, which was when we had the peak amount of resources per capita going to news in this country, roughly between 1985 and 1989. Since then, it's been declining sharply.

And when the Internet came along, this process was already well in play. The commercialization and deterioration of professional journalism. What the Internet did was accelerate the process and make it permanent. It took away almost 90% of classified or 80% of classified advertising revenues, \$15 billion. It took away much of the other advertising revenue gradually over time and has sharply reduced the resources gone to journalism. As a result, today in most major American cities, and I'm willing to bet Denver is one of them, there are probably maybe 25% of the full-time paid journalists in any capacity in any medium today that there were 20 years ago or 25 years ago at this time, at most 30 or 35%. And the way things are going, it will be 25% soon if it isn't already, and then it will be 15%. We're seeing a complete disintegration of coverage of news.

And this has stunning effects on our ability to monitor people in power in government, and particularly their relationship with private corporations, private interests, commercial interests, and that welding of the two, which is so much the story of our times. The three great political scandals of the last decade in Washington D.C.: Duke Cunningham, Jack Abramoff, Tom DeLay, were all broken by newspaper reporters who no longer have jobs. Those positions no longer exist. There simply isn't a watchdog function left in news media. The degree of difficulty to be crooked, to be corrupt, not just in a personal way but in a broader sense of the term, is very low.

That doesn't mean there's still not a lot of journalism. In fact, we're inundated by it. But the striking change is much of what passes for journalism today is little more than public relations spin. Even at the high point of professional journalism, say the early 1970s, probably 40 or 50% of the news whole, the news stories, came out of press releases surreptitiously placed by press agents to support whoever paid them to put them there, even in the best news media of that time. Today, roughly 85 to 90% by

studies of news stories come directly out of official report -- official sources or press releases with no journalism treatment on them whatsoever, printed almost verbatim to how they're handed to news media. This is a dramatic change.

In 1960, for every working journalist covering the news, there was less than one public relations person trying to surreptitiously influence it. By 1980, it was a two to one ratio, two public relations people for every working journalist. Today, the ratio is four to one, four public relations people to every working journalist. And it's growing dramatically. In short, much of what we think we're being inundated in that's journalism is little short of simply propaganda. There's no other word for it. The hope was, and has been, in communication circles and journalism circles is that the same Internet that has apparently killed commercial journalism will save it, will create a new model that will solve the problem for us. And I think it's fair to say at this stage of the game, there's absolutely no evidence to buy that. There's no credible evidence of the sort of resources that gave us 120 or 150,000 well paid journalists, whatever you think of the work, but had the resources and commitment and institutions to cover this country, that the Internet is going to magically produce that. There's simply no evidence at all. At best, we're getting a couple thousand people, and that's being a very generous and loose interpretation of what a journalist is.

My argument, and I think the general argument in all my recent work, is that we have to understand journalism first and foremost as a public good. It's something the market cannot provide in sufficient quantity or quality. It never has been able to and it never will be able to. Now this is a hard pill for many Americans to swallow because they say, well, my god, these companies were making a fortune during journalism's last 100 years. What on earth are you talking about? And that's because for the last 100 years, advertising has been the primary means of support for journalism, providing, depending on the medium, between 60 and 100% of the revenues. Advertising had no interest in journalism per se. It only used it opportunistically to accomplish commercial aims. And now that it has better places to go to accomplish its commercial aims, journalism is in the rearview mirror. And in no time anywhere have final users, readers or customers, been able to provide sufficient funds for a popular-based journalism in the United States, and I suspect anywhere in the world.

What we need and need desperately is going to be public subsidies, like we have for education, if we want to have credible journalism. It's the only way it'll happen, in my view. And it's a public good. It's a matter that you can't really vote for in the market to have a public good, like education you can't vote for in the market, buy something to get public education. It's something citizens have to politically

demand, work for, and get. And as I'll talk about in the next session, I think this logically leads to the next point. If we're going to have credible journalism, it's going to have to be an independent, non-profit, non-commercial system primarily, with competing institutions that are run for non-profit -- non-profit [inaudible] and they do not support themselves with advertising.

Now the great irony in my work, and I think probably the major contribution I've made recently, besides having some water, the major contribution is that most Americans think that the idea of public subsidies of journalism is antithetical to the American political tradition, that it's somehow heretical, that this is something they might do in crazy countries like Norway, but no god-fearing country would ever dare to have public subsidies of journalism.

In fact, quite the opposite. For the first 100 years of journalism in the United States, we had an extraordinary heavily subsidized news media. It was a very conscious policy of the framers of the Constitution, put in place by the demands of Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison. But all the framers understood that unless there were public subsidies, you could not have a sufficient journalism for the constitutional system to work. Even the conservatives understood that in their version, you needed to have subsidized journalism. That's how inappropriate the market was as the basis. No one even thought in the terms of the market being sufficient to provide a sufficient journalism for generations after the founding of this country.

And in my research, the primary subsidies were postal subsidies. The post office in American history's main job for the first century was to be the distribution arm of American newspapers. All the newspaper were distributed by the post office until the 1830s, most of them deep into the 19th century. The post office in American cities then would deliver mail seven days a week, three times a day in large cities. It wasn't like today. So you'd print your paper in the morning, put it in the mail, and it would get to the home the same day in a large city. 95% of the traffic of the post office in the 19th century was newspapers, 10% of the revenues. 95% of the weighted traffic, 10% of the revenues. It was an enormous subsidy.

And in my research with John Nichols, we went back to look at the postal subsidy of newspapers and we went though -- there were also other subsidies that the government had, printing subsidies for newspapers. And if the U.S. government today subsidized journalism the same percentage of GDP today as it did in the 1840s, for which we have very good documents because studies were done, what would the federal government pay today? And the figure is around \$35 billion, \$35 billion. That was the subsidy of journalism. By 1860, the post office, the distribution arm of American newspapers, had 80%

of federal employees working for it. That's a lot of what the federal government did was promote the press system prior to the U.S. Civil War.

There are obviously legitimate concerns about government involvement, anything to do with media journalism. It's a central concern. But it doesn't mean it's not a solvable problem. We solved it pretty well in the United States in the 19th century. There was no censorship. Both abolitionist papers, at least in the north, and non-abolitionist papers got the exact same subsidies. It was a wide-open system.

When Tocqueville came to America in the 1830s, he was astonished at the number of newspapers, how easily they came and went. And he understood it was the postal subsidy that accounted for this. He said the number of newspapers, the larger they are, the more democratic a country is. And it was one of the things that most impressed him about the United States.

Well, today I think we need to look not only at that legacy to understand that the real nature of journalism requires public involvement. We need to look at how other nations, democratic nations, have faced this problem. And what's striking about the journalism crisis in the United States, as we look at other democratic nations, is that virtually all of them have much larger subsidies of journalism today than the United States does. In fact, on a per capita basis, if you were to go look at Norway or Germany or Finland or Austria or France or Britain, Japan, they tend to spend on a per capita basis 10, 15, 20, as much as 50 or 100 times more subsidizing journalism than the United States does. If we spent the same subsidy that Norway or Denmark does on journalism in the United States on a per capita basis, we'd be spending \$35 billion a year on public media and supporting independent journalism. We currently spend well under a billion dollars by the most liberal interpretation of the term.

So we're sort of off the democratic grid. Now a lot of people say, well, if these countries have the government supporting that much news media, this must really lead to all sorts of problems with the news media sort of kowtowing to the government line. And what's interesting in the research is that if you look at the Economist magazine does an annual democracy index of the most democratic nations of the world according to the Economist magazine. And the Economist magazine uses traditional political science criteria: civil liberties, voter involvement, freedom, et cetera, et cetera. And every year, it ranks the most democratic countries. And invariably, including in 2011, the last year we have data for, the top five countries of the most democratic countries in the world according to the Economist magazine are the five of the seven countries that have the largest journalism subsidies by their government, invariably.

Invariably also, interestingly enough, a group called Freedom House, some of you might be familiar with, does an annual survey of all the nations in the world on censorship of private news media. Freedom of the Press Index they call it. And invariably there, including 2011, the most free, uncensored, private press systems in the world, and the best press systems in the world, are found in those nations with the largest press subsidies, exactly those nations that are considered the most democratic.

So we understand that having a great press system and having a great democracy go together, and you can't have one without the other. But I think now we also understand having great subsidies, public subsidies to create independent news media, is the other part of it if you're going to have great news media and then have great democracy. My point here is that these are solvable problems. This is -- we can create a real utopia. This does not require changing -- a magical change in human nature or a magic wand. The solutions are out there. They aren't perfect solutions, but they're good solutions, much better solutions. There's ways -- there's money for this. This is not an impossibly expensive problem, even in our economy today. We could just take, for example, the \$5 billion the Pentagon spends trying to spin the news every year and put it into this, and probably that'd be an awfully good place to start.

Now in my time doing this work, I've had the privilege to meet with policy makers, talking about real utopian proposals. And it's been quite striking to me in the last few years in Washington, meeting congressional leaders, people at the Federal Trade Commission, Federal Communications Commission, who all understand the problem. They know what we're talking about. This is not news to them. They no longer have reporters covering them. They're well aware of the situation. And when we talk to them, they agree with everything I've said, pretty much, many of them. Maybe not some of the stuff about professional journalism, but about the crisis today. And they'll also agree with a lot of the sort of solutions I'm talking about, that Bruce will be talking about later. They get it. But without exception in the last three years, they say, but politically we can't touch this. This would be suicide for our career because the political right will come after us. They will destroy us and they'll charge this as an effort to create a Stalinist news media.

And as a result, that is really I think -- and we'll talk maybe more in the next session about the politics of this. Even though none of the proposals that I'm going to talk about or Bruce would talk about or reveal here would favor one political viewpoint over another, it's very threatening to have an independent, credible news media not under the control of those with money and power. And there are -- while everyone in this country would like great journalism, not everybody really wants it. There are

some people who benefit greatly by having a very ignorant populace that has no idea what's going on in their dealings with government and with power. And those forces are going to oppose us.

And I'd like to close, if I can, with just one reference. In 1787, Thomas Jefferson was in Paris, Franklin's replacement while the Constitution was being hammered out here in the United States. And he wrote probably his most famous letter on freedom of the press to Edward Carrington, talking about why it was so important to have a free press system in the United States. And Jefferson in there has the one quote that I think you're probably all familiar with. Were it left to me to have a government without newspapers or newspaper without government, I'd always pick newspapers without government.

But it's actually the next two paragraphs, the next three paragraphs that follow that are the crucial ones to understand Jefferson's understanding of the democratic news media. Because he says the key thing to having -- and I'm paraphrasing, obviously. The critical factor to having a free press in a free society isn't just having people have the ability to read. That's a precondition. But rather they've got to have papers to read. They've actually got to have material they can read that draws them into public life, access to that material. So it's a real liberty.

And secondly, then he said, and there's a reason for this. And he said, in Europe, we can see what the world looks like without a press system. It's the wolves devouring the seed. And for those who aren't good at metaphors, he said, the rich dominate the poor. And the only way that people without property can participate in a democratic society is to have the information to give them the tools to be participants. Without it, the rich will always dominate. They will be the wolves because they will always get the information they need. And that's why it's a fundamental and imperative public policy issue in a democratic society to guarantee that information is spread equitably throughout the population so you have a genuine form of self-government. Thank you.

HILARY WAINWRIGHT: Hi friends and fellow real utopians. First, I want to really congratulate Erik and also Kareem and others who have been involved in this. Because when I got -- I was happy to come. And anyway, but when I got the program, it was just amazing. It really does feel like being in a real utopia. And particularly the sort of discussion of the conditions of possibility. And it reminded me of the usefulness of sociology, and it reminded me or took me back to my own first discovery of sociology. Much to my relief, I was doing a very arid, a very disappointing politics, philosophy, and economics. And I was engaged -- this was in '68 and sort of resisting the course as much as the university and the society. And discovered sociology through tutorials with Steven Lukes, which became weekly sharpening

of tools from Durkheim as well as Marx to understand the possibilities that were opening up in that year, in '68. So it's great to be here.

My own take, my own interpretation of the idea of real utopias, it is really of institutional and relational alternatives whose potential is illustrated and exemplified in day to day experience, in practically rooted struggles and alternatives. I feel all resistance is based on some notion that there could be, there must be an alternative. So I want to point to actual examples of deepening democracy. I'd rather -- when I was talking to Erik in preparation for this, I was rather assuming that people would be familiar with many of the experiences I want to refer to. I'm assuming that most people would have read Erik's books, but he said, no, no, no, you must actually go into the detail.

So for me, these are examples that involve a discovery and a creation of new sources of democracy, and I would argue of not just democratic power, but transformative power. Then I want to acknowledge that the problems that these experiences have faced in terms of sustainability and reproducibility are not here just in terms of the power of capital, the power of hostile forces, whether capital or the state, but in terms of the forms of political agency that were sometimes responsible, or at least facilitated those initiatives, or created the conditions for them, but then in certain ways failed to live up to the hopes of those organizations. I'm thinking here of political parties could sustain those democratic initiatives.

So I want, and this last bit is very much a work in progress, I want to really ask whether the idea of real utopias can be applied to political parties, on the face of it the least pre-figurative, most almost by definition instrumental institutions that exist. You know, it's not surprising that the Indignados in Spain and Occupy here and in the UK should be refusing the banners of political parties. On the other hand, and something I want to refer to later, we have the experience in Greece of Syriza born not as a political party, but a hybrid coalition, which became, if you like, an electoral voice of the movements, causing the elites of Europe to, you know, completely shit in their pants. But we'll talk about that later.

So can political parties be servants of real utopia? And that's something I want to discuss later. And in a way, coming I suppose -- coming from a country where many emerging real utopias from the possibilities of '68 for radicalizing -- well, for the possibilities for economic democracy for the rethinking of work and many other ideas through the abolition. I mean, Erik talks about my work with the Popular Planning Units of the GLC, which we have to remember was actually abolished. I mean, it's difficult for you to think with your Constitution, but we only have a sort of gentlemen's agreement of a constitution, and so there's a whole layer of government could be abolished because it was too radical.

To then finally, as probably all of you know, the dismantling of the National Health Service, which was celebrated, as you saw, in the opening of the Olympic Games by Danny Boyle, a very astute and cheeky move. But the reality of that utopian image that he created, that real utopia, is actually an erosion, a marketization which began under a Labor government.

So theoretically, I suppose what I want to reflect on is, in addition to giving -- referring to these examples, to refer to the importance of rethinking representation as part of the -- political representation as part of the project of deepening or radicalizing democracy so that participatory democracy is neither just an add-on to existing forms of representative democracy, nor is it a substitute. I think I'm going to be constantly thirsty in this talk.

So I want to rethink political representation, build on the work of others who have done this, but in a way that is consistent, I would argue, with the original aspirations of those who fought for the franchise, the propertyless men and women involved in the suffragettes, the chartists, and so on, who saw the franchise as just the beginning of a struggle against inequality, a struggle for substantive equality and full emancipation rather than the end point of merely formal political equality.

I also want to build on the widespread, increasingly widespread, distinction between power and different understandings of power, power as transformative capacity versus power as domination. But in its -- you know, this is I suppose familiar particularly to those who have read John Holloway's very interesting book. You know, in many ways I agreed with it, *How to Change the World Without Taking Power*. But I want to, anyway, draw on some of the distinctions he makes between power two, if you like, transformative power, transformative capacity, and power, the power of domination. But I want to ask in my thinking about political parties, how far can power's domination, and particularly -- in particular in the form of the state, be turned into a resource for transformative power? And through what kind of political strategies and organization?

But first, I want to lay out my compass for real utopian thinking, which appropriately comes from an exemplar of democratic praxis, theory and practice, that we share across the ocean. That is Tom Paine, the corset maker from Thetford, but the revolutionary in the United States and in France. Tom Paine's statement of his aspiration for democracy contrasts very dramatically with the elitist rule that representative democracy has become in reality.

He said in his *Rights of Man*, it appears to general observation that revolutions create genius and talent, but these events do no more than bring them forward. So there is existing in man and woman a

mass of sense laying in a dormant state, which, unless something excites it into action, will descend with them in that condition to the grave. As it is to the advantage of society that the whole of its faculties be employed, the construction of government ought to be such as to bring forward by quiet and regular operation all that capacity which never fails to appear in revolution.

And it's that theme, that the idea of the construction of forms of government that bring forward by quiet and regular operation -- I'm not so dogmatic about that, but bring forward in whatever way is necessary all that capacity, all that knowledge, all that mass of sense, which never have failed -- never fails to appear in revolution. And I mean, in my experience in mass movements, like the movement during the miner strike in the UK, where we saw masses of women who previously had just lived -- created real utopias in their private lives, no doubt, but on that scene, on that terrain of the struggle in support of their communities, became real leaders, organizers, speakers of an incredible capacity, and carried on after the strike building organizations in their community, transformative organizations of all kinds.

Tom Paine imagined that representative democracy would diffuse such a body of knowledge throughout the nations, to explode ignorance and preclude imposition. He assumed that representative democracy would produce this possibility, would bring to the fore this dormant capacity. But he massively underestimated, as we know, those whose power is threatened by such a diffusion, who worked to maintain the secrecy and tried to preserve the sort of ignorance on which elite rule depended. Whether in the US, the UK, Brazil, or wherever the power of the people was evident in the way that the franchise was won, constitutions were created, unwritten as well as written, which created a thick protective membrane of checks and balances, including even in the UK the use of pre-modern -- the pre-modern royal prerogative.

Political parties of the left, focused entirely on winning government office, I think too easily subordinated popular power and creativity that existed in their ranks to being able to get into office and drive what they considered to be the wheel of state. And we saw this particularly, at least in my experience, in the UK, where there was a really radical industrial policy at one point, pioneered by Tony Benn and others, based on the notion of a worker's democracy, which was ultimately completely squashed by the city. But there was no understanding amongst the massive parliamentary leaders of the Labor party, no recognition of the capacity of their own members. You know, there was a reliance on management for industrial policy and industrial thinking, not a looking to their own members who had that sort of inside knowledge as workers on whom industry depends. But that's another discussion.

But still, Tom Paine lives in face of all the blockages that we've seen in the [inaudible] of state power, movements developed which applied the notion of the construction of government as to bring forward all that capacity which never fails to appear in mass movements. And this is what I want to just refer to two particular examples. The examples, one of which I studied and Erik studied and researched in great detail too, was participatory budgeting in the southern city of Porto Alegre in Brazil, which then spread to many other parts of Brazil and became the potential of a basis of national government. Basically that involved the process of, in a way, both centralization and decentralization. I think this is important in thinking about the nature of -- potential nature and importance of political power, political parties, and the use of state power, or whether or not this can be done, as a resource for popular transformative power.

But basically it involves the winning of the election by the Worker's Party in Brazil, the winning of the mayor, which was the kind of key source of power, is the key source of power in Brazilian cities. And then gaining power over the budget, but then centrally, as it were, within the municipality, but then decentralizing, sharing that power with a popular self-organized process of decision-making by the neighborhoods, by the people. A very institutional process developed by trial and error through self-organization, constant assessment, reassessment of the basis of what kind of decentralization. A decentralization that was combined with coordination, so it was about the city as a whole, the interests of the city as a whole, and particularly the interests of the poor. So it was about redistribution, but a redistribution that was not only controlled by the majority of people, the mass of people who were the poor, but also it developed a power of the poor so that it wasn't just about policies, but also about their capacity, their power to determine how that money, how that public money should be allocated.

So it was a transparent, rule-governed process of horizontal decision-making and negotiation, finalized through a committee composed of delegates from all the different regions of the city and various thematic assemblies, as well as representatives of the mayor. And then the progress of implementation of the priorities agreed through this sharing of power, this co-government if you like, was then backed up by a popular process of discussion, criticism, challenge. I mean, I went to several of the plenaries, where people would complain, harang, and eventually get some action from officials if their priorities were not being implemented.

The other example is the case of the Greater London Council that I was involved in, where we had this similar combination of centralized action exerted by the party that won the election, and decentralization of power to popular organizations in the neighborhoods. So that, for example, you

know, one major threat to a whole number of campaigns that had developed in inner city London to develop community needs was the speculators from the city. And the GLC under a left Labor government, leadership, local government, used its powers of compulsory purchase to take over that land to, if you like, nationalize or localize, make public, socialize that land. But instead of then managing it, the old sort of Fabian assumption that they knew best, they delegated that management to popular movements that had grown up and developed alternative plans, developed real utopias.

So this was -- both of these experiences are classic examples of parties that had been based on movements, and in both cases the leadership of these local parties came from the movements, had become part of the parties in order to pursue the ideas and demands of the movements using state power, but using it as a resource to support transformative power. And I think here, just to reflect on this for a minute in terms of political parties, we saw parties of a particular kind and a particular moment. And in some ways, historically and particularly in the case of the GLC, not exactly accidental, but the exception to the nature, in that case, of the Labor party.

But in the case of the Worker's Party, just to describe these parties in a little bit more detail, just to bring out what was distinctive, in the case of the Worker's Party, the party in Brazil, this was created out of the struggle against dictatorship. So it was an interesting combination of, on the one hand, the party that was fighting for basic democratic rights, the rule of law, pluralism, political pluralism, the free press, all the basic what's considered liberal rights, but on the other hand liberal democratic or bourgeois democratic rights. But actually, they were saying, you know, liberal democracy has failed. I mean, it's allowed the dictatorship. It was too weak. We need far stronger forms of democracy and actually look then to the movements that they created to end the dictatorship, a trade union movement that was both highly political, but also highly democratic, participatory in the way that it allocated its income, its budgets, the money of the members. A landless movement that, again, was based on a very democratic, very participatory form or organization.

The Labor party in London was the result, in a way, of the movements in the 70s particularly. This was the -- Labor party left came into office in London in 1980, and then controlled -- won the election for the GLC in 1982. And most of the leading counsels were people who had been part of community movements fighting for control over inner city land, part of the women's movement, part of black movements, gay and lesbian movements, and sought office in order to realize the demands and the needs of those struggles.

In a certain sense, both -- and the other thing about the GLC which is perhaps interesting is that it had come out of -- that left had come out of learning the lessons of the defeat of the left, of the compromises made by national government in the 70s, and in a sense was determined that this should not happen again. And so -- okay. And so developed a very radical manifesto through the participation of the movements. And that became a sort of guide. But the other key thing is as the GLC is local government, it didn't have the full means to implement that manifesto. Its powers was significant, but limited. So in a certain sense, you saw this double nature, which I think is key to any idea of a party that's a servant of a real utopia, which is like a kind of cockiness towards power, towards dominant power, towards capital, towards the government, a kind of arrogance of power. But then a modesty vis-a-vis the actual processes of transformation, a recognition that the party actually had serious limits.

In a sense, trying to be a little briefer, pragmatically they'd arrived -- those two parties in Porto Alegre, the Worker's Party, and in GLC the labor left, had arrived in practice at a different form of representation. So they were recognizing in practice citizen voters not as abstract, atomistic individuals with formal political equality, but as citizens situated in unequal relationships, like the propertyless men and women that fought for the vote who were struggling in their own ways, in their own forms of democratic, transformative power against those inequalities, but needed some kind of support from the state. So the forms of representation that those parties were trying to develop were forms that tried to make present, in Raymond Williams' concept of representation as making present, not just symbolizing, but making present. And in this case not just the needs, not just their needs, the needs of working people, but actually the struggles of forms of power and creative capacity.

Now I think I'm going to have to hurry even more. But in fact, then what happens is in both cases in ways that are too complicated to expand now, but those parties lost their radical momentum. In the case of London, it was very -- it was very much, you know, the exception to the norm of the Labor party, which was dominated by a very conservative notion of the state. In the case of Porto Alegre and many of the cities in Brazil, the party got increasingly drawn into government and lost its roots, or at least, you know, its powerful roots in social movements. And this was exacerbated by the ways in which the party nationally in Brazil became drawn into the incredibly undemocratic nature of the political institutions of Brazil and became dominated by an electoral understanding of politics to the cost of a transformative politics.

I think also there was a defensiveness, particularly in the British left and the European left, less so in Brazil, in the face of the Soviet collapse, a kind of presumption that the failure of the command

economy meant the only alternative was the market. But we can discuss that later. I just want to end by this glimpse of another kind of party, if you'll allow me, Erik, just two minutes. Because in a way, it's what sort of revived my interest in political parties, thinking that probably, you know, I couldn't really think through what a political party could be that was a genuine servant of the real utopias that are growing everywhere.

But I spent a week in Greece once, you know -- once after that moment, which I don't know how the press here reported Syriza, but in Europe, you know, they reported Syriza absolutely as the devil. I mean, completely -- there's no description of it, no serious -- it very much reinforces the kind of things that Bob was talking about. No serious information about what it was. You know, there was a constant mantra about it being anti the Euro, anti-Europe. It was actually -- it was very explicitly about rejecting the totally undemocratic, totally ruthless, heartless memorandum, austerity memorandum, but on the insistence that there was another way of running the Euro, another Europe. So it was part of their policy. But more important, you know, basically it was a party, just to quickly catch you up, that rose from 4% of the electorate in 2009 to I think 17% in May, May this year, May 2012. And then when the leadership of that party said, we actually are going to claim government and refuse the memorandum and so on, it went up to 27% and became the largest party, almost defeating the main party. In the meantime, PASOK, the social democratic party, completely collapsed.

But what kind of party is this? When I went to interview its leadership, it wasn't a party saying, right, you know, we're ready for government. You know, we know what we're going to do. You know, we're going to get power, we're going to steer the state towards the people. You know, all this. No, on the contrary, they were already stressing the importance of actually -- and already based in the movements -- this is where they came from. They were movement actualists. And their emphasis is on changing people's idea of what they can do, developing with them a sense of their capacity for power. They added that although state power was necessary, what is decisive, says one of their leaders, is what you're doing in the movements and society before seizing power. 80% of social change cannot come through government.

And later in the discussion, I'm going to say a bit more about what they're doing, learning from the failures of many other radical parties in Europe, including the Greens in Germany, Reconduzione in Italy, the failure of those parties to really resist the power of the state and parliament to sort of drag those parties, like it dragged the PT, away from social movements.

So I want to just very quickly end by saying that if we take seriously this notion of transformative power, we can see that political organization is now incredibly multiple. There's no single form. Many of the functions that were carried out by political party are now carried out by all sorts of different organizations. The whole idea of a program based on, you know, an elite sort of drawing up policies has completely fallen away in practice. You know, that alternatives, a program, is not about words and documents. It's about practice and alternatives, real utopias in practice, as much as written documents and demands.

And that we've got to think of politics in terms of multiple levels, multiple forms, and link forms to purpose. And I think within this political party that's got the function of representation, it's just one level, one purpose, and has got to be one that's seen as part of a constellation of forms of organization, not a framework for everything. And that within that context, it's got to be accountable, transparent, accountable to those movements, and seen not as a distinct political group or profession, but very much as fellow activists with those movements.

I think, you know, that all this might seem a long way off, but as Philippe said yesterday, things are in a mess in terms of the ruling order. And in that context, there's both a rethinking of all the institutions of the traditional left, both the unions and parties. And there's also an incredible confidence. I mean, I just read yesterday in the Wall Street Journal, of all places, about this interesting strike in Japan, where the unions in Hyundai are insisting on ending the night shift, on reducing the working week, on making all the part-time workers permanent, a sort of confidence in a way, an insistence that we're not going to accept that all our capacity lies dormant until we go to the grave. So long live Tom Paine and all that he's done.

BRUCE ACKERMAN: Hi. I'll begin with where Professor Wainwright ended. The -- my argument in *We the People*, the series of volumes on the American constitutional tradition, emphasize that there is really only one fundamental logic for political transformation in the United States. It begins with a movement and a party that controls the presidency, which elaborates a program. And this pattern begins with Thomas Jefferson and his second revolution, second American revolution. It then, of course, in the Weberian way, these movement parties disintegrate into normal -- for the standard Weberian reasons, they disintegrate into normal politics

To be challenged by the next generation of Jacksonians, to be challenged by the next generation of abolitionist Republicans, to be challenged by the next generation of populists. They lose. The first time since 1776, the sort of mobilized country fails to win in its struggle to transform the center.

Stuttering goes on, Teddy Roosevelt. Then we have, once again, the labor movements, the Democratic Party, and Franklin Roosevelt, another movement party transformation. An exception, partial exception, is Civil Rights Movement in 50s and 60s for obvious reasons. No suffrage for the blacks.

But really the moment of success of the Civil Rights Movement, I'm talking about political legal success, is not Brown against Board of Education in 1964. 2% of blacks were going to white schools in the south, 2%, ten years afterwards. It was the assassination of President Kennedy, who was never going to do anything. He won in 1960 on the basis of white southern votes in a very close election against Richard Nixon. The assassin's bullet and Lyndon Johnson, who kicked in the movement, party, presidency pattern.

Then we have Ronald Reagan and we have a movement of the right. Same thing. Movement of the right and a presidency of Ronald Reagan, who tries to transform, not quite so successfully yet, the fundamental principles of American government. And then we have this movement, the disappointment with Obama is, of course, that he could have understood himself as a leader of a movement party, and he has refused to do so. He's done normal politics. He is just like Bill Clinton.

And we have a movement from the right, a movement from the left. Right now, we don't know what's going to happen. But the movement party, presidency, marching through the other institutions, that's our pattern of transformation in the United States from 1800. And we should recognize this as a tradition of revolutionary reform.

Now the problem with progressives right now is they have no ideas. It isn't only that -- so what does Obama do? He selects, I'm all for it, a principle that Teddy Roosevelt and Harry Truman fought for and lost: universal healthcare. And he's struggling to do it. But this is not a new idea. We have been on the progressive side, I am happy to say that I am one, been involved in a struggle to save the creations of the New Deal, Civil Rights Movement, and to elaborate them to some degree. And we don't have a program. And that's, of course, a necessary condition for a realistic utopia.

So let's begin with realistic -- so I'll just give you a few ideas here, each of which I want to say has been developed in a book, with one exception, a friend and collaborator of mine. The -- so let's talk on the real side. First, the real threat is plutocracy in America. That's the threat. And we have Citizens United. We haven't seen anything yet. You have to consider that the Democratic Party is in control of the presidency, and that's why Obama will only be marginally outspent by the center-right, because he controls the presidency. In 2016, the Democratic Party will not control the presidency in the same way.

And of course, at some point or another, the Democratic Party will lose control of the presidency and they will be overwhelmingly, overwhelmingly outspent.

Second, we have to look at the next congressional election. You see, this is going to be a disaster. Congressmen today spend three hours a day raising money, three hours a day, every day. It's really -- I mean, this is not what was -- this was not true 30 or 40 years ago. Now, so we're going to have these Super PAC with a large chunk of money, and then someone who's running in the fifth congressional district, right, who is -- knows that if the Super PAC labels him or her, she is going to be destroyed in the propaganda campaign. So she -- by the law of anticipated reaction, she's not going to be wanting to do that, right? So when there are these Super PACs, which will be balanced to the center-right -- there will be some on the center-left, to be sure. The law of anticipatory reaction means that they're not going to have to spend all their money. It's the threat which will be enough.

Okay, so this is -- we are actually struggling for this very primitive sense of democracy, as opposed to plutocracy, that is, control of the process by the very rich. And here is our idea, our because I wrote this book with Ian Ayres, and at the time I wrote it with Ian Ayres, it's called Voting with Dollars, it was one of a number of ideas. Unfortunately for the Constitution, but for this proposal not so unfortunately, it's the only one that's constitutional at the present time. Each registered voter, when he registers, gets an addition to his credit card account. Or if he doesn't have a credit card, if he has a food stamp -- everybody has an electronic thing, 50 patriot dollars, which he can spend for any candidate, party, or interest group which could -- it's a broker which then spends it for a party or a candidate of his or her choice.

So there are 140 million voters in the last election. If all of them vote with their patriot dollars or democracy dollars or whatever you'd like to call it, that's \$7 billion. This election cycle, it's going to be \$6 billion, a little less. Moreover, it's constitutional to have -- in order to fix in the pool of patriot dollars, it's constitutional. There's nothing unconstitutional about this under Citizens United.

There's also nothing unconstitutional under the Supreme Court decisions to say, okay, Mayor Bloomberg, if you say no, you're not going to -- you have to restrict your own expenditures and other people have to restrict their expenditures from the private donors. That's a condition for fishing in the \$7 billion pool, you see. So maybe Mayor Bloomberg will say, okay, okay, I'll just finance my own campaign. Or Mitt Romney for that matter. But if he does that, he suffers the cost that his closest opponent, who is going to fish in the patriot pool, is going to get his money, you see.

Okay, the great thing about patriot dollars is, of course, everybody has a sense of agency because all these political interest groups and parties are going to try to pick these people's pockets. They're going to have block parties. People are actually going to talk. Who should I give my \$50 to? Nobody has to give it, of course.

So it's not only that we're going to actually have this principle closer to one person, one vote, equal dollars for the campaign. It would be unconstitutional to say, no, you can't give private money at all. But it moves -- it's more in the direction of equal citizenship. But it also generates hundreds of millions of conversations about what should we be doing? Which leads to the second. This is not the -- this is the real side of the utopia. If we can't get something like this through -- this is a very absolutely critical issue because de facto, in ten years, it will be big, big money that will control things. Forget about whether it already does and all this. I mean, we're talking about a fundamental change in the nature of politics, with politician upon politician calling up, you know, reassuring the people in charge of the Super PACs that they're not going to do anything that will let generate a cash bomb against them next time. So this is the real of real utopia.

Second move is a book that I wrote with Jim Fishkin on -- it's called Deliberation Day. Fishkin is great. He's an old friend of mine. He teaches at Stanford. He is a wonderful intellectual entrepreneur. I should give him all the credit. I mean, I kibitz with him, et cetera and so forth. He has a wonderful thing called deliberative polls. I'll say we, but really it's him. What we do is this. Let's take Australia. It's going to decide on whether it should have a new constitution, finally declare independence of Britain, change the form of government, blah blah blah blah. Big deal in Australia, as you can well imagine. They're going to have a special referendum on that.

What Fishkin did was -- we've done this 75 times around the world, in the United States and around the world. We take a random sample of 300, 400 voters stratified by region, gender, income, you name it. And we hire -- we don't interview them on the telephone. We hire people, it's an expensive deal, to go to their homes. And we expose them to a questionnaire, standardized questionnaire. What do they know about the constitution? What's their positions, et cetera and so forth? Then we bring them to Canberra in this case, where there's the pros and the antis have -- actually, they send them a movie now, an hour movie beforehand. Then they come and the leading politicians of the pro and anti variety debate for an hour. Then these groups go into 15-member groups. What did these people not mention? What kind of questions should we ask? They talk about that for an hour, they come back. Answers, lunch, do it again.

At the end, we expose them to the same questionnaire as the first time. What did they learn? What -- how much did they change their minds? Well, you know, there's a Pareto's law kind of thing. I mean, the top 10% of almost every country except Denmark knows a lot. The Danes, everybody -- all the Danes, we did one on the Euro in Denmark. Everybody knew everything. It was like a real waste of our time. But the other 74 applications, 10% know things, 40% know nothing. You know, you ask 40% of the population of the United States how many senators does a state have in the Senate, they do not know. 10% do, and then we have a curve from the top 10 to -- in one way or another.

At the end of this deliberation day -- now in fact, who talks during deliberation day? It's the rich white males who talk. Not only. But they learn something, but actually everybody learns a ton. And unsurprisingly, this changes their opinions as to the bottom line of whether, let's say, Australia should or should not have a new constitution. Not because their deep values change as a result of a day of deliberation, but because they actually know what the problem is. Ten percentage points, not 10%, we have an index of one -- you know, we have positions from one to five and all this kind of stuff. But a 10% shift on the bottom line of preferences is very common, Denmark being the exception.

It's an interesting social science thing on what sort of issues they shift left, on what sort of issues they shift right. Capital punishment, for example, they shift right, not left. International things, they shift pro-international. Because, you know, like the average American thinks we spend 10% on foreign aid, of our budget on foreign aid. When they find out what we really do spend, they think, oh, it's much too low. That kind of thing.

Okay, so the proposal here is a new national holiday, two weeks before the election called deliberation day, and where everybody does this, or everybody can if they want to. We offer them, on the analogy of the jury, a payment of \$150. That increase gives an incentive to the centrists to show up, not only the extremists. And the point is we would do this, and how would that change elections in conjunction with patriot dollars? So in patriot dollars, people are -- you know, people -- politicians can be independent of the special interests and the super-rich because they can generate a pool of \$50 contributions.

As the election comes close, there are going to be not only the kind of hot button, 30-second ads, but infomercials in preparation for deliberation day. Then at deliberation day, you know, as soon as you leave, there are going to be exit pollster saying, presidential candidate X just lost 14 points or two points or something because he was inadequate on Medicare one way or the other. I don't know if

that's what would happen. So what we're having here is a realistic reconstruction of the idea that citizenship is more than a legal category, that citizenship is a sociological reality.

Now as professor McChesney suggests, another of my proposals, and this one I developed somewhat in several articles and in a little book which has a terrible title of *The Decline and Fall of the American Republic*, which came out in 2010. We developed professor -- I developed Professor McChesney's idea into the Internet age. So there's a national endowment for journalism. There's a grant of X dollars, let's say a billion, two billion, not 35 billion. That would more than -- but a billion or two billion, okay. Then any news provider can register with the national endowment. The only thing that that news provider has to have is a libel insurance policy that requires, therefore, an editorial function inside the news provider. Could be 25 investigative reporters, 100. We don't -- doesn't have to be like a mega New York Times kind of thing.

Then the news provider provides articles. At the end of each article, regardless of where you read it on the Internet, there is a line. Does this article contribute to your understanding as a citizen? Then you have to waste 30 seconds of your time to convince the computer that you're not a computer, but that you're a human being. So that's 30 seconds in which you are going to waste to be a citizen. And you click. People -- the newspaper entities -- or I mean the journalistic entities get money on the basis of an algorithm based on clicks. The more clicks, the more you get. That's it. So there's no possibility of censorship.

But what we have is -- as in voting with dollars with patriot dollars, we have special purpose money, you see, for citizenship. We have all sorts of very interesting stuff on marked money in sociology, you know. But this stuff isn't for citizenship. What we're trying to mark is currencies for citizenship, patriot dollars, the clicks. Now finally, and as I suggested, these ideas will be explored later on in this session. Where is it? I think it's 4:30.

But the final element -- you see, so far I've been politically focused. The final element of my proposals, but these are just to provoke you to make some similar ones, is written up in a book called *The Stakeholder Society* that Erik was mentioning to you before, which argues for the idea -- Thomas Paine has recurred very many times in this conversation. That was first pioneered by Thomas Paine, but fell out of favor for quite a while. It's the stakeholder society. We argue that each American citizen should get a stake, a citizenship inheritance of \$80,000, to be funded by a 2% annual wealth tax on family assets over one and a half million dollars. And Anne and I wrote this book. We've updated it with

the most recent numbers. We could, assuming 30% tax evasion, which is a realistic number, fund a citizen inheritance for three and a half Americans each year who are coming to maturity.

All Americans, not only the 30% that go to college. We pour money at the 30% that go to college. All Americans. And people who are perfectly competent in living their lives, but aren't that good at symbols, they too should have an economic basis for opportunity as they go into adult life. So to summarize, all these features, first of all -- I mean, you know, the object of this exercise is to get you to think modularly. Each of these proposals stand on their own merits. You know, let's not get the great five-year plan. We could, you know -- one of them might be much more politically attractive than others at one or another time.

So each is modular. Each is focused on the sociological thought. You see, if we had all of these schemes up, American citizenship will be meaningful. Not as a -- right now, it's meaningful -- you know, it's a legal thing. The most meaningful act of citizenship all of you engage in is to show your passport at the airport or the border. That's what it is to be an American citizen today. Voting, okay, maybe. The traditional institutions of citizenship, of the Tocquevillian kind disintegrating, the draft gone, PTAs weakening in the assault of public schools.

The aim here is to, through artifice -- can we do it? I don't know. To reconstruct American citizenship as a living reality. Under these things put together, people actually confront each other in dialogue as American citizens. They fund campaigns as American citizens. The meaning of the vote is different. They actually fund a critical press. And they, you know, have economic citizenship. You know, if your parent is a school teacher or a bus driver, they contributed to America too, not only the top 5% of the population. Thank you very much.

PRESENTER: So we have time now for 15 minutes of questions. There are microphones in the two aisles. As is the custom in these events, I urge you to keep your questions short and to the point. So anyone who would like to raise an issue, please come to a microphone. Yes?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Seems to me that the thing that's common to these presentations, certainly Mr. McChesney and the last one, is that they're based or they're premised on the strengthening of the public sector, some increase in political support for a more expansive government role. And I'm wondering, how do you achieve that? You've had the decline of these associations, the civic, [inaudible], PTAs, or what have you. Are we left only with the Democratic Party in its currently reduced state? And if so, how do we get them to move?

PRESENTER: Let me get a couple and then we'll -- yes?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: On education, you remark about college education and how to fund it, but even if we get newspapers up and going, get colleges accessible to everyone, we have a fundamental problem at education at lower levels. So it seems to be grounded, in part, in a fundamentally undemocratic funding formula for education in America. I don't know whether the UK offers some other examples that we might look to, or there might be examples in other places, but what might be another way of funding this fundamentally unequal and inadequate system of elementary through high school education in America?

PRESENTER: And one more question, and then we'll get around to responses.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi, my name is Jeff Broadben. In the talk, I noticed a kind of equation of the right-wing in America with their wealthy as being their representative, their sort of unwitting ideological representative. But I think a lot of the Tea Party stuff goes a lot deeper into American ideas about freedom and independence and doing things, you know, through your own initiative without any kind of government interference. And so I'm wondering if, you know, you would talk about that part of American culture, and whether we think of it as progressive or reactionary or what.

PRESENTER: Okay, I'll let the panelists -- you don't have to all respond to all three questions, but --

BRUCE ACKERMAN: Well, I'm very much a pro-market guy. That is to say, I am saying each person -- I love private property, and everybody should begin adult life with private property so they can shape their lives in their own ways. This is -- this is a pro-private property aspect of American citizenship. Similarly, the two other proposals I made today are trying to take the advantages of markets. That is, the clicking, the decentralized preference oriented feature of markets. And similarly, a special currency of democracy dollars, those are decentralizing, market-oriented, requiring people to actually get out there and appeal to people.

These are not left and right, the proposals. I myself happen to be a liberal, but these are not left and right proposals. The National Rifle Association would undoubtedly be one of the citizen groups that would gain a good deal from patriot dollars, as well as the Sierra Club. It's just that the well-organized interests would be less -- of the corporate kind would be less predominate. So I myself don't understand this as big government. It's government discharging fundamental equal opportunity and citizenship empowerment functions, which has been my emphasis.

The education thing is a great question, and we need three or four proposals in the spirit in which I'm offering these up to respond to this foundational problem. I very much agree with that. I can't do that right now.

PRESENTER: Hilary, do you want to respond to some of the issues raised?

HILARY WAINWRIGHT: Yeah. I mean, I think since the issue of the market has come up, I think it's really important to distinguish between the capitalist market and market forms. And you talk about plutocracy. Well, that's a product of the capitalist market. And I think that to deal with the capitalist market, we need a strong state, a strong state that's accountable and democratic, but accountable to forms of democracy that are also creative, are transformative. I mean, you talked about the difference between citizenship as a legal form and citizenship as a sociological category. And you know, that's -- I agree with you about that, but if we think about citizenship as a sociological category, we're recognizing or we should be recognizing, it's a bit unclear in your argument, that it means citizenship that's actually embedded in our present society, in our present incredibly unequal society, in unequal social relations.

And so in some ways, forms of decentralization have got to be aware of this. I mean, they've got to be forms of decentralization that challenge and support challenges to those inequalities. And I think here, the public sphere needs to be expanded in all kinds of ways. I mean, I think that the whole issue of public services is crucial. I don't know enough about the situation in the US, but in Britain, the whole nature of public services was a crucial part of democracy and an underpinning of democracy, which has now been eroded by the market.

I think to have any kind of equality in the market requires a socialized framework, requires a democratic framework that resists the powers of the capitalist market. It does require, for me, a transformation of society if we're to see any kind of market form that has to exist within a socialized framework. So I think it's really important to be thinking about public services. And I gather that in many of your localities, there's been a strong resistance to both privatization and marketization, and even a degree to remunicipalization. And I think that whole area is really important.

Education, well, the -- you know, a reasonable form of funding of education in Britain was, you know, pretty impressive after '45. There was public funding of, you know, all -- I mean, everybody had free schooling and free university education, depending a bit on their parent's means. I mean, now all that is being eroded.

What was the final question? The Tea Party. Well, you know, I'm not -- this is one reason I'm interested to be here, to talk to people more about this. But I mean, I think that maybe its growth is a bit of, I don't know, an indictment of -- well, some would say an indictment of the whole Obama project and the fact that it didn't produce the kind of transformation that people were hoping for, and there wasn't the sort of challenge to big capital that we hoped for from Obama. And so, I mean, the Tea Party is obviously a highly reactionary movement, but it's also expressing a kind of anger and disaffection with the power of the banks, and that's something that we on the left should have been far more in the lead of expressing.

PRESENTER: Bob, do you have some?

BOB MCCHESENEY: I think real quickly on the how to do this, the first question, which is the question I think about the most, and I suspect many of us do. How do you win these battles? How do you actually go from utopian proposal stage to changing society? I think the lesson I've learned, and I was getting at it sort of at the end of my talk, is that to win, the sort of reforms I was talking about, the electoral system reforms I think Bruce is talking about, we can't win those in isolation. And I say this after ten years of working at Free Press on several dozen media policy issues. We've actually won some victories that I'm very proud of, like getting low power community radio stations in 1,000 cities in this country, which was an activist campaign.

But to be blunt, we're getting clobbered on almost everything. The degree to which AT&T, Verizon, Comcast, Google, Microsoft own the federal government on every issue of importance cannot be exaggerated. And you know, so when I look at the way we worked on those issues and sort of what we're doing now, I think the only way we're going to win across the board on these issues we've been talking about, on K-12 education, is with a campaign that's really broad-based. It's about bringing in all these generational, sweeping reforms. Everything else is just not -- I don't see it possibly happening. We're spinning our wheels. Which is why, of course, popular uprisings like we've seen in the last year in Wisconsin and elsewhere are so exciting, because those were movements by definition where everything's on the table. They're not single issue movements. They're about changing fundamentally the nature of our society and the quality of our lives.

Now I think probably where I'd slightly disagree with Bruce is on the matter of capitalism or markets or private property. You know, it's ironic now. I came of age and I see Mike out there, he's a little older than I am. I came of age in the late 60s and early 70s. And I came of age at a time in which people were really questioning how effective capitalism was, and whether it was the appropriate system

for a democratic society, and whether it would produce corruption and inequality and environmental degradation and militarism.

And you know, today, probably most people I know would cut off a finger to get the capitalism of 1973 back. I mean, 4% unemployment, flush public sector budgets, newsroom staffed with reporters, much less corruption, the whole works. But we were willing to talk honestly then about capitalism, and today, suddenly we have to swear fealty to this system that's in free fall, disintegration, and collapse.

It seems to me the unifying form of any successful popular movement is going to honestly say this economic system is a fiasco, it's a disaster. We've got to -- you know, now it might be at the end of it, we end up with a private property system. But I mean, I would say even to people who think you can reform capitalism, unless you scare the people who run the system into thinking they might lose everything, they won't reform anything.

So I think we've got to really alter our thinking going forward and be a lot more honest about the fact that current really existing capitalism, not the one of Tea Party theory, but the one we live with, is disintegrating and it's taking us all with it. And we've got to address it honestly and change it, or these meetings are going to get more and more depressing every year.

Now one last thing with the Tea Party. On the Tea Party, the only point I'll say about this. The Tea Party, like all sort of right-wing populist movements, has certain progressive elements at times, like it has criticism of bankers and inequality and corruption. My concern with the Tea Party, among others, is that like all right-wing populist movements, as soon as it gets near power, it always throws overboard all the progressive stuff and emphasizes all the reactionary stuff, always. It includes the Nazis to, you know, any right-wing populist group you can think of. And the Tea Party is the same. All that crap about, oh yeah, we care about corruption and bailouts. You know, they'd throw that overboard as soon as it comes -- you know, when the Koch brother start writing checks, I don't hear them complaining then. So I mean, I just think they're a fraud.

PRESENTER: Bruce wanted one last word, and then we're out of time, I'm afraid.

BRUCE ACKERMAN: I'm pleased to say that I am a defender of free markets in this crowd, but I do believe of course that every system has abuses. And plutocracy is our central abuse right now. And I do believe that that's why this idea of citizenship inheritance could be a rallying cry that moves beyond the political to the economic, which will resonate. It is because the economic crisis is bringing to the fore the struggle between generations as a foundational element of justice.

And what citizenship inheritance for young adults stands for is that the old are going to get everything, and that we are going to economize on permitting the next oncoming generation a solid economic basis for figuring out the meaning of life. And it's that feature which I think will resonate and is directed to, in the American accent, but we can -- to the problem of plutocracy, as well as the political reforms. But it's not incompatible with a robust public sector as well. I don't want to -- it's not a either/or thing. Your distinction between markets and big business and capitalism is well taken.

ERIK WRIGHT: Well, I think with that, we need to conclude this session. Just to remind everyone, there are two sessions that are complements to this that will follow this afternoon. Bob McChesney is first, I guess, at the next slot, and then Bruce Ackerman's. And the next plenary in the trilogy will be on Sunday on sustainability. I hope to see many of you there. Thank you very much.