



# *our developing world's voices winter '16*

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*odw calendar:*

**February 27, 6 pm**  
**Potluck, Soft Vengeance for a New South Africa, inspiring film about Albie Sachs writer of South African constitution.**

**odw Vacation/Reality Tour Hotel Toliman on Lake Atitlan**



**August 22-28.**

**Coming next month!**  
**Check our website**

**Sing Along with Mark Wallace with Pete Seeger songs.**

**Potluck and film showing of This Changes Everything!**

**2 programs with Cubans**

## ***Learning about Islam from Conversations on Peace with Muslims***

### **Arabic proverbs:**

“Wisdom consists of ten parts: nine parts silence, and one part a few words.”  
“Examine what is said, not who is speaking.”

A BIG tip for deepening the conversation:  
Listen. Then, listen longer. This is the only way you will  
a) find out what the other person is thinking and feeling about the topic and  
b) motivate those threatened by your ideas to reciprocate by listening to you.

Barby was privileged to share this experience outlined by Code Pink, with a couple of dozen people including some Muslims to talk with each other about feelings, to learn more about Islam and how individual Muslims have been treated here in the US: always being separated for special treatment at airports (supposedly at random, though Samina in 3 airports for one trip was “randomly” singled out in each!) Right after 9/11 all mothers withdrew their children from her daycare after many years!

Alice, a Japanese American told what it was like to be given orders to evacuate to an incarceration (concentration) camp after the Pearl Harbor attack in '41 returning many years later to a loss of everything the family had.

Japanese American organizations led by Nihomachi host the annual Day of Remembrance. This year it was at San Jose State's Morris Daly Auditorium and YOH men's gym where many locals had to gather with the one suitcase allowed.

Japanese American organizations were first to say what happened to them should NEVER happen again to any group of people!

Eugene Robinson - Washington Post Columnist:  
“What I want is that African-Americans, Latino Americans, Muslim Americans and other “outsiders” be seen as the Americans we are.

What I want is acknowledgment that we, too, have a stake in our democracy and its future course. What I want is the recognition that no one can “take back” the country, it belongs to me as country....because it belongs to me as much as to you.”

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## **Americans' views on Islam, Muslims divide by party lines** [Cathy Lynn Grossman](#)

[Cathy Lynn Grossman](#) specializes in stories drawn from research and statistics on religion, spirituality and ethics, biomedical ethics and end-of-life-issues in the US.

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(RNS) Republicans and Democrats divide sharply over views on Islam, Muslims and how a U.S. president should label violent extremists.

But Americans overall agree there's "a lot" of discrimination against Muslims living in the United States — and it's rising [a new Pew Research survey finds](#):

Republicans more likely than Democrats to say some religions' teachings promote violence. (The survey of 2,009 U.S. adults, conducted in January, a month after 14 people were killed in a San Bernardino, Calif., terrorism attack and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump called for banning Muslims' entry to the United States.)

25 % of the public thinks at least half the Muslims in the U.S. are anti-American," said Besheer Mohamed, a senior researcher at Pew and a co-author of the [survey](#)

[analysis](#), released Feb. 3.

The overall finding was the same for this question when it was asked in 2002, a year after the 9/11 terrorist attack. What's new, said Mohamed, is the partisan split in 2016 that was not evident in 2002.

Among Democrats and those leaning Democratic, 54 % say "just a few or no" Muslims here are anti-American. 34 % say this is so for about half or some Muslims in the U.S., and 7 % say it's true for almost all Muslims living here.

But for Republicans and those who lean toward the GOP, 29 % say few or no Muslims are anti-American. 47% say this is so for half or some, and 16 % say almost all of them harbor anti-American views.

It's hard to know the reason behind the partisan realignment since 2002. Mohamed said, there are clues in responses to the survey question on how the public wants the next president to talk about "Islamic extremists" (the phrase Pew used in its questionnaire)

"We see a sharp partisan split on this," he said. Overall, 50 percent of U.S. adults say the next president should "be careful not to criticize

Islam as a whole when speaking about Islamic extremists," while 40 %t say the next president should "speak bluntly about Islamic extremists even if the statements are critical of Islam as a whole." Republicans, 65%. Democrats 70 % say the next president should be careful not to criticize Islam as a whole.

## [Muslim Americans fear demonization of Islam after mass shooting](#)

Muslim community groups condemned the San Bernardino massacre hours after the shooting, and urged the public not to blame Islam or Muslims.

"The Muslim community (2.8 million in US) stands shoulder to shoulder with our fellow Americans in repudiating any twisted mindset that would claim to justify such sickening acts of violence," said Hussam Ayloush, Council on American-Islamic Relations executive director. The speed at which they went on live television underlined the depth of concerns in a community already buffeted by a rise in anti-Muslim rhetoric this year and increased public scrutiny after the Nov. 13 attacks in Paris.      P 2

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Pope's Visit to Mexico Highlights Illegal Immigration, border security and Mexico tougher than US on migrants. **Cristina Silva, *International Business Times*, Feb 18**

"Arriving at a wide field along the Rio Grande for an outdoor mass, he walked across a ramp lined with flowers and prayed before a cross erected in memory of migrants who died trying to reach the United States, before urging government officials to have compassion for people searching for a better life. But for Central Americans looking to pass through Mexico and reach the United States, making the trip north has never been more expensive or dangerous."

**[Migrant Voices: On Journey to North, 'You Can't Smile Because There Is No Reason To'](#)**

**Marisa Gerber and Laura Tillman, *Los Angeles Times*, February 15, 2016**

"Five Central American migrants attempting that journey reflect on their faith and

the pope's visit and explain why they left their homelands. They asked that their last names be withheld because they crossed into Mexico illegally and fear gangs will retaliate against their families back home."

**[Pope Francis Visits U.S.—Mexico Border](#)**

**Jim Yarley, Azam Ahmed, Manny Fernandez, and Julia Preston, *The New York Times*, Feb. 17, 2016**

**The Pope** "celebrated Mass at a fairground barely 300 feet from the Rio Grande, calling forced migration 'a human tragedy.'"

Editor's note: The symptoms are refugees, The causes are US foreign policy:

\* US deportation of Salvadoran gang members fostered in the US, creating the violence there.

\* US support of Honduran military coup ousting elected President Zelaya and monetarily supporting the corruption and violence that Hondurans are fleeing from.

Guatemalan violence still apparent stemming way back

to 1954 when an elected President Arbenz was ousted in the foreign policy of regime change.

When will we learn from history, not to keep repeating the wrongs?

**Learning from other countries: Where to Invade Next?**



Michael Moore gives us laughs, sighs, truths and hope in his latest documentary: *Where to Invade Next?* when he sets out P3 to steal good things other countries have that we need:

Who would object to 8 weeks paid vacation plus a Christmas bonus month pay? The Italian grass roots and the CEO's realize it promotes happy, healthy workers who are more productive and gives adequate profits, This didn't just happen, unions worked for it!

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Finland noted how poorly their students compared to other countries so they worked on reform: eliminate standardized testing, eliminate homework so kids could be kids, hang out, pursue hobbies, etc.

Now they're tops globally.

## Another example of Regime Change policy: Venezuela

Washington, D.C.- A [new paper](#) from the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR) finds that there may be a significant disparity between the popular vote and legislative seats claimed by parties in Venezuela's December 6 National Assembly elections. The paper, "[Projecting a Range of Possible Results in the December 2015 Elections for National Assembly in Venezuela](#)," by economist [David Rosnick](#), finds that a wide range of outcomes are still possible in the elections, based on current polling data and examines the impact of an inherent rural/small state advantage for the governing party coalition, and realigned party coalitions. The paper finds, for example, that a "unified" opposition might need as much as a 71.8 percent increase in votes over the 2010 elections — with the government losing 10.8 percent of its votes at the same time — to get a supermajor-

ity, leaving the current government with just 55 seats.

"Media reports have been based on national polling, but no explanation of the system of representation," said CEPR Co-Director [Mark Weisbrot](#). "As a result, most people following the news would think that an opposition majority is inevitable, and a super-majority (60 percent or two-thirds) is likely. These results are possible, but by no means guaranteed, and we cannot even say how likely they are."

The paper illustrates how the current government may benefit from a "rural and small-state advantage": "It is important to understand that the difference between the percentage of the vote and the percentage of seats is not the result of 'gerrymandering' or any other manipulation of districts. Like the United States and many other countries, Venezuela has a system of representation that gives disproportional representation to states with smaller populations," the paper says. Since the Venezuelan government has a single chamber legislature, the disproportional representation of sparsely-populated or rural states is not nearly as large as in the United States, which has a Senate that allocates two seats to each state. But it is still significant in Venezuela's National Assembly,

and unlike the U.S., where rural areas are more conservative, in Venezuela they are more likely to vote for the left.

The paper notes that it's the changed alignment of parties in its coalition that gives the government some advantage over 2010. But counteracting this is the government's loss of support since then in nationwide polling.

"Unfortunately, there have been a lot of international attacks on the integrity of the voting system, and this could provoke instability or even violence depending on the electoral outcome," said Weisbrot. This is especially true in light of the lack of understanding of how the system of representation works." US tax dollars have supported the opposition which is the wealthy class.

The Book Club Barby belongs to recently read Camus' *The Stranger* translated by an American and another perspective of the same story, Daoud's *Meursault Investigation*.

Daoud's statement connects several of these articles:

*"That's exactly what's absurd about the situation, because to kill is to kill,"*

*Daoud says. "According to the situation, it's called legitimate defense,"* P 4



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*or murder, or war, or conquest, or civilization, it depends. You take a man who kills another, and if you add a woman you call it an honor killing. If you add a flag, you call it war, and if you remove both you can call it a crime. The fundamental question of our time is what prevents us from killing. What is most important is how we define what is sacred about life."*

The other connection between The Meursault Investigation and what gave rise to Black Lives Matter is the lack of giving a name or sense of humanity to the person killed.



## **Black Lives Matter Makes Powerful Connection With Racist Drug War**

*A recent National Town Hall took up the question*

*of how Black Lives Matter fits in with drug reform.*  
*By Phillip Smith / AlterNet*

The Black Lives Matter movement sprung out of the unjust killings of P4 young black men (Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, Michael Brown and many more), either at the hands of self-styled vigilantes or police. But as the movement blossomed and matured, BLM began turning its attention to a broader critique of the institutional racism behind police violence against the black population. People who have been spent careers working in the drug reform movement didn't need the publication of Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow* to understand the corrosive and screamingly unfair impact of drug war racism on black communities, but the 2010 broadside helped open eyes outside the movement and deepened the visceral impact of drug war racism for those already in the trenches.

Ed note: US foreign war on drug reform is also taking many tax dollars and

is creating much violence here and in Central American countries as well as Mexico.

Recently Black Lives Matter activists released Campaign Zero, a comprehensive platform for curbing police violence and reforming the criminal justice system in the US:

- \* ending the war on drugs, but drug war policies and policing techniques are inextricably intertwined with the policing problems (and solutions)
- \* decriminalizing marijuana within the context of a broader call for moving away from "broken windows" policing,
- \* ending mass stop-and-frisk and racial profiling policies,
- \* ending "policing for profit," whether through issuing tickets for revenue-raising purposes or through the use of civil asset forfeiture to seize cash and goods from people without convicting them of a crime (sometimes without even arresting them).

According to the FBI, drug offenses were the single largest category of arrests made, P 5

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constituting 1.5 million of the 11 million arrests nationwide last year.

To its credit, the Drug Policy Alliance took a big whack at it during last month's International Drug Policy Reform Conference in suburban Washington. While race and the drug war were an issue at numerous sessions during the conference, a Live National Town Hall on "Connecting the Dots: Where the Drug Policy Reform Movement and the #BlackLivesMatter Intersect" brought a laser-like focus to the topic. And it was a hot topic—event organizers had to move the event to a larger room at the last minute when it became evident that hundreds of people were determined to be there.

They came to hear from a panel that included BLM co-founder Patrice Cullors; Break the Chains: Communities of Color and the War on Drugs P 5 founder and executive director Deborah Peterson-Small; NAACP Legal Defense Fund senior organizer Lumumba Bandele; DPA policy manager Kasandra Frederique; and

St. Louis hip-hop artist T-Dubb-O. DPA program director Asha Bandele was the moderator.

People have to open their minds to new paradigms, the panelists warned. "People are so wedded to the institution of policing they can't even imagine something different, something radical," said Cullors. "We have to transform the way our communities have been completely devastated by the war on drugs."

"We are at a historic moment right now, a moment where freedom looks different to people than how it looked before," said Peterson-Small. "Harriet Tubman famously said she could have freed more slaves if the people only knew they were slaves—that's the psychology of enslavement. What we need now is a conversation about white people who believe they're free when they're not," she said.

"We black people already know we're not free," Small continued. "I worry about the people who believe they're free, the

people who think the police are your friends, that they're here to serve and protect you. You have a lot of illusions about the role of police in your lives."



Tamir Rice 2002-2014 Cleveland

"How can I prepare kids for the world if I am not preparing the world for the kids" (above the photo)

The legacy of slavery lives on all too vividly in the modern criminal justice system, she said.

"Policing is the way white America continues to replicate the cycle of enslavement, the power dynamic on which this society is based. Every time a black man is arrested, it's a reenactment of that dynamic," Peterson-Small said.

"We believe in two incompatible things," she told the audience. "We believe that we live in a free and

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democratic country P6  
where anyone who works hard can succeed, but we also know we live in a country established by and for the benefit of white men. It's no longer possible to pretend something that's been going on for 200 years hasn't been happening."

Removing the blinders from white people's eyes is part of the struggle, she said. "Our fight for freedom is your fight for freedom. Oppressed people have to be the agent and catalyst of freedom for their oppressors," she told a rapt crowd.

DPA's Frederique talked about the imperative she felt to make the connection between her work as a drug reformer and the broader issue of racism in America in the wake of Trayvon Martin killing. "Now, I locate the work I do as racial justice. If we're going to continue to say that the war on drugs is war on people of color, if we continue to get nontraditional allies and say marijuana legalization is a civil rights issue and how we are winning."

"Drug policy reform needs to systematically disrupt and destroy institutional racism," she said.

But as moderator Asha Bandede noted, it's not just white racism that's holding down black people.

It's wrongheaded, said Peterson-Small. "We've always been in a war for our survival in this country. The only reason we are here is to be a source of economic profit for other people."

Alluding to Poland's WWII-era Lodz Ghetto, Peterson-Small warned that meekly complying with harsh and arbitrary authority to ensure the survival of the community can end up with the elimination of the community.

"Just look at me," said hip-hop attired T-Dubb-O. "I have a dream, too. I don't want to be a hashtag, I don't want to sell drugs, to kill somebody who looks like me. It's the system of white supremacy that puts me in that mind state. When you talk about the war on drugs, that school-to-prison pipeline, that's what gives them that mind-state," he said.

"We don't own no poppy farms, but now we have a heroin epidemic," he said. T-Dubb-O took drug war solidarity to the next level, mentioning the case of the 43 missing Mexican stu-

dent teachers presumably killed by drug gangs working in cahoots with corrupt local politicians.

"We have to have an international vision of the people who are repressed," he said.

In response to an audience question, Peterson-Small got down to nuts and bolts. If we want to dismantle racism, drug policy provides a space to apply harm reduction to the problem.

"The work that really needs to be done is for people to understand that we're not the ones who need fixing," she said. "All of us have been infected by this thing. If we apply harm-reduction principles, we would focus on what is the intervention, not who is the racist. It's a course of treatment, not a weekend of racial sensitivity training."

The National Town Hall is just a beginning. We still have a long way to go.

*Phillip Smith is editor of the AlterNet Drug Reporter and author of the Drug War Chronicle.*

**Why I Choose Optimism Over Despair:** *an Interview with Noam Chomsky by C.J. Polychroniou*

"We can be pessimistic, P7

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give up and help ensure that the the worst will happen," says Noam Chomsky. "Or we can be optimistic, grasp the opportunities that surely exist and maybe help make the world a better place."

[Noam Chomsky explores the possibilities for a better human society in What Kind of Creatures Are We?.](#)

One of philosophy's central and most perplexing questions is, "Who are we?" Indeed, virtually all essential questions about human civilization, power, authority and governance follow from the question of what kind of creatures we are. Is there such a thing as human nature?

Behavioral methods (though not exactly Skinner's) may work reasonably well in shaping and controlling thought and attitudes, hence some behavior, at least at the superficial level of marketing and inducing consumerism. The need to control thought is a leading doctrine of the huge PR industry, which developed in the freest countries in the world, Britain and the US, motivated by the recognition that people had won too many rights to be controlled by force, so it was necessary to turn to other means: what

one of the founders of the industry, Edward Bernays, called "the engineering of consent."

In his book *Propaganda*, a founding document of the industry, Bernays explained that engineering consent and "regimentation" were necessary in democratic societies so as to ensure that the "intelligent minority" will be able to act (of course, for the benefit of all) without the interference of the annoying public, who must be kept passive, obedient and diverted; passionate consumerism is the obvious device, based on "creating wants" by various means.

As explained by his contemporary and fellow liberal intellectual Walter Lippmann, the leading public intellectual of the day, the "ignorant meddlesome outsiders" - the general public - must be "put in their place" as "spectators," not "participants," while "the responsible men" must be protected from "the trampling and the roar of a bewildered herd." This is an essential principle of prevailing democratic theory. Marketing to engineer consent by control of thought, attitudes and behavior is a crucial lever to achieve these

ends - and (incidentally) to keep profits flowing.

Since oppression and repression exist, they are reflections of human nature. The same is true of sympathy, solidarity, kindness and concern for others - and for some great figures, like Adam Smith, these were the essential properties of humans. The task for social policy is to design the ways we live and the institutional and cultural structure of our lives so as to favor the benign and to suppress the harsh and destructive aspects of our fundamental nature.

Please tell us what you liked and what you'd like in future voices!

**Many Thanks to you who join us in our optimism, who join in solidarity with all humans. To all who have donated, volunteered, come to programs and other events and reality tours. Thank you so much: Gracias and Mange Tak. Peace to all!**

**We lend dvds and have many resources for teachers here & on the web.**