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DON'T GIVE UP HOPE

Chanukah and Christmas both celebrate the return of hope and light at the very moment when the days are shortest and the darkness most overpowering.

For many progressives, broken promises from Democratic Party politicians have given hope a bad name. Many of us feel disillusioned by how President Obama's "change you can believe in" transformed into six years of capitulation to the agenda of the super rich and their corporations, with only minor side steps to help those who suffer most from the capitalist order. We're disheartened by the Wall Street bailout, which saved big banks from a financial crisis they created while leaving millions of Americans unemployed and homeless. We're frustrated that the Affordable Care Act forces people to buy coverage from private health insurance companies but fails to impose serious constraints on how much these companies can charge. We're outraged by U.S. drone attacks against innocent civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan and by U.S. threats to wage war against Iran over its attempt to develop nuclear weapons that the United States and its allies have. We're disheartened by recent trade agreements that enable global corporations to evade social and environmental constraints domestically. And we're horrified that the Obama administration has deported more immigrants than all previous administrations combined. No wonder so many Americans don't bother to vote at all, expressing cynicism about visionary ideas.

These problems are real, but there is still reason to hope. We urge you to let the spirit of Chanukah and Christmas remind you of the fact that most people on this planet yearn for something totally different. Let these holidays speak to you so that you can reconnect to your most hopeful part—and then join with us at *Tikkun*, become part of our campaign for the Environmental and Social Responsibility Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (ESRA), our push for a Global Marshall Plan, our call for an openhearted transformation of consciousness in Israel and Palestine, and our creation of professional task forces to envision what a world based on a new bottom line of love and generosity would actually look like. Don't let the light go out—in you or others. Keep the faith and let the spirit of hope return, whether in the form of a holy baby in a manger in Bethlehem, a struggle by the Maccabean guerrilla army against the mightiest colonial power of its time, or whatever other spiritual figures you draw upon to keep hope alive.

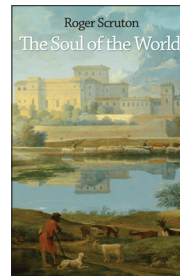
And help us keep *Tikkun* alive by joining the Network of Spiritual Progressives at spiritualprogressives.org and buying gift subscriptions to *Tikkun* for friends, co-workers, and people in your civic, religious, and political communities!

Festival of Lights by Barbara Berney (Barbara-berney.artistwebsites.com) and Creative Commons/Alan Cleaver

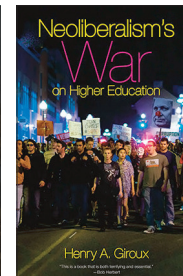
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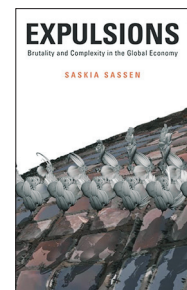
Empires of Vision
Edited by Martin Jay and Sumathi Ramaswamy
Duke University Press, 2014



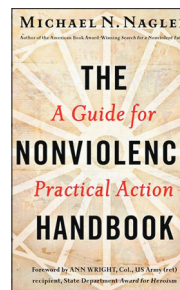
The Soul of the World
Roger Scruton
Princeton University Press, 2014



Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education
Henry A. Giroux
Haymarket Books, 2014



Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy
Saskia Sassen
Harvard University Press, 2014



The Nonviolence Handbook
Michael N. Nagler
Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2014

It is not only new action that the world needs, but also new thinking. These five books yield a deep understanding of the multi-dimensional crisis that ties humanity to an inhumane, unjust, and environmentally calamitous social order while keeping us passive in a variety of ways.

Duke University Press has done social visionaries a real service by printing Martin Jay and Sumathi Ramaswamy's massive collection of insightful articles unveiling how the very way we see the world is daily shaped by "pictorial practices, image-making technologies, and vision-oriented subjectivities" that have been "entangled in empire-building, nationalist reactions, postcolonial contestations, and transnational globalization." It is not just economic or military power that shapes the way we see the world, but also photographs, paintings, maps, and the whole range of visual arts and media that are scrutinized in this collection.

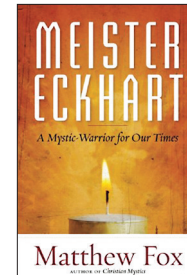
Roger Scruton gets at the depravity of the current world from a very different angle, capturing the way that most humans cannot be at home in market-based societies because we experience transcendent obligations and sacred attachments that cannot be subject to the logic of the marketplace or to the ultra-individualism fostered by the notion that "choice" is the ultimate value.

Henry Giroux focuses much more than Scruton on what has made the alienation and depravity of the current situation plausible. In particular, he examines the war that neoliberalism must fight against any form of education that does not reduce human values and experience to that which can be measured and monetized in the capitalist marketplace. Neoliberalism's assault, Giroux tells us, undermines higher education's ability to foster values like caring for the other, produces cultural illiteracy, and makes it hard for students to believe in the possibility of fundamental change.

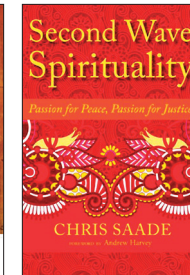
Ultimately, the values underlying academia's transformation into a "service station" to society (as former University of California president Clark Kerr put it fifty years ago, thereby inspiring the Free Speech Movement's revolt in 1964) are the values of the global economy—values detailed in Saskia Sassen's engaging and upsetting book. Sassen unveils the brutality that continues to accompany transnational struggles for land, raw materials, and markets. She also exposes companies' ruthless inattention to the destruction of the earth and the expulsion of human beings from their homelands. We in

the advanced industrial societies benefit most from the corporations that are in the vanguard of these expulsions, and yet we greet the dispossessed with arrests, humiliation, and deportation.

Striking a more optimistic note, Michael Nagler expresses hope in the growth of a global nonviolent movement that can fight back more effectively when we mobilize people around their highest values, so that anger and violence are replaced by militant and disruptive nonviolence. His useful handbook should be in the toolkit of every social change activist.



Meister Eckhart: A Mystic-Warrior for Our Times
Matthew Fox
New World Library, 2014

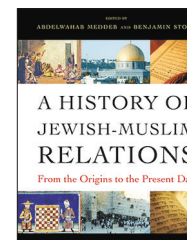


Second Wave Spirituality
Chris Saade
North Atlantic Books, 2014

Like Rumi, the great Christian mystic Meister Eckhart was—according to Matthew Fox's brilliant and inspiring account—deeply ecumenical, encompassing wisdom that one can find in Jewish, Sufi, Buddhist, and Hindu mystical traditions. Eckhart advocated for social, economic, and gender justice. He also championed an earth-based spirituality and taught that we are artists whose vocation is to birth the Cosmic Christ (or Buddha Nature). All these elements have inspired Fox and influenced his Creation

Spirituality. In this book, Fox imagines dialogues between Eckhart and Carl Jung, Thich Nhat Hanh, Rabbi Heschel, and many others. This book on Eckhart stands as testament to Fox's own creative spiritual genius.

Chris Saade, meanwhile, explores how "the dream of a world of peace, justice, and solidarity is at the core of our spiritual beliefs." He acknowledges that many of us who have served religious or spiritual communities have been distraught at the ease with which these universal values are often interpreted in the most narrow way, providing emotional and spiritual comfort to those "inside" while confining their care for those "outside" to acts of charity rather than acts of transformation. In this beautiful and hope-affirming book, Saade describes how the first wave of spirituality, which has spanned the past few thousand years and has been suffused by these more narrow interpretations, is now being transformed by "a seismic shift of consciousness" into a second wave of spiritually engaged social action for peace, social justice, and environmental sanity. Saade is a prophet of spiritual progressive consciousness, helping readers see that we are beginning to see "the adventure of love-in-action being enacted daily all over the world." Get your friends to read this inspiring book!



A History of Jewish-Muslim Relations
Edited by Abdelwahab Meddeb and Benjamin Stora
Princeton University Press, 2014

This collection of scholarly yet accessible articles by dozens of Jewish and Muslim experts is the definitive source for understanding a complex relationship between Muslims and Jews from the seventh century to the present day. Its 1,146 pages cover pressing political issues like whether Jews are demeaned in Islam and whether Jews faced real (as opposed to just remembered) anti-Semitism in Islamic societies. It also explores the ways in which contemporary Islamophobia and anti-Semitism are both products and causes of the political struggle between Israelis and Palestinians. Yet the richness of this fantastic and exciting book lies also in its descriptions of how Jews and Muslims have learned from each other in the arenas of philosophy, science, art, literature, and mysticism.