

Human Rights Day

By: Jon S. Randal

Ed. Note: This October 11, 2015 article reminds us how one person can influence events. Human Rights Day is marked annually on December 10.

Anna wore frumpy clothes. Her teeth needed straightening, they would say. People would continue to attack her looks and her self-esteem to the point that she was very insecure, she believed what everyone said about her, admitting she was an "ugly duckling."

When she first met him, she could not believe that a man was interested in her. She wanted him to see her world, so instead of going to a fancy, social event, she instead took him to the slums of the Lower East Side, where she did volunteer work, helping young immigrants.

The young man, who had held a rich, sheltered life, saw things he would never forget -- sweat shops where women labored long hours for low wages and squalid tenements where children worked for hours until they dropped with exhaustion.

This walking tour profoundly changed the young man, moving him to say, that he "could not believe human beings lived that way."

The young man's name was Franklin D. Roosevelt, and the young woman, who changed his life forever, who would change the world forever, her name, was Anna Eleanor Roosevelt.

They would eventually marry. On March 4, 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt would be inaugurated as the 32nd President of the United States and Anna Eleanor Roosevelt would become the First Lady. At first, Anna Eleanor Roosevelt remained shy. She would also continue to be ridiculed by the press, making fun of her stout figure, toothy smile, and way of dress. Even her own mother-in-law, still over-protective of her son, would tell Eleanor's own children that their mother was boring.

But, being First Lady allowed Eleanor Roosevelt to see more of the world, to see how the rest of the nation lived, outside of her privileged surroundings. She started speaking up for women, African-Americans, and children. And, she started influencing her husband, telling him what she saw.

(Continued next column)

(From last column) Human Rights Day

She would continue to receive hate mail for her views, but it just made her stronger, more determined.

When the Daughters of the American Revolution boycotted the 1936 concert of African-American singer Marian Anderson, she would resign her membership and helped organize a new concert in front of the Lincoln Memorial that made history.

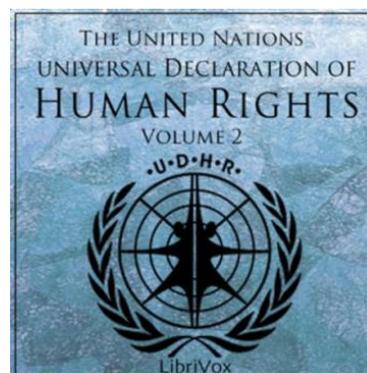
She flew with black (male) pilots and helped the Tuskegee Airmen in their successful effort to become the first black combat pilots.

She would be nominated three times, during her lifetime, for a Nobel Peace Prize. She became a renowned social and political activist, journalist, educator, and diplomat. Throughout her time as First Lady, and for the remainder of her life, she was a high profile supporter of the Civil Rights Movement, of equal rights for women, and of social reforms to uplift the poor.

Even after her husband's passing, she remained active in politics for the rest of her life. President Truman would appoint her as a U.S. Delegate to the United Nations, where she would receive a standing ovation when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted on December 10, 1948.

She would chair President Kennedy's ground-breaking committee which helped start second-wave feminism, the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women. And, she continued supporting women, even personally assisting in the careers of many women, providing them with guidance, giving them hope.

She would still remember when they called her an ugly duckling when she was growing up, but to the world, she was and continues to be a beautiful swan whose beauty inside helped her speak the truth, making the world a little better for all.



After 'Encouraging' Results From Finnish UBI Experiment, Experts Say the Time for Such a Bold Idea Is Now

By: *Andrea Germanos, Common Dreams; May 2020*

"If there isn't a minimum income floor to fall back on when this kind of massive shock hits, people literally have no options."

As Finland's universal basic income experiment produces positive outcomes, a senior United Nations official is making the case that the global economic fallout from the coronavirus crisis is reason to include such a payment policy as a "a central part of the fiscal stimulus packages that countries are planning for."

The Finnish government on Wednesday released its evaluation of the two-year experiment in which 2,000 randomly selected unemployed people were paid 560 Euros per month. The researchers summed up results as "small employment effects, better perceived economic security and mental well-being."

Kela, the Social Insurance Institution of Finland, shared the findings on social media. A video summary from the agency says that in a post-experiment survey, participants in the experiment said they "had fewer health issues, fewer experiences with bureaucracy, and better financial well-being than the people in the control group. They experience fewer issues related to mental stress, depression, melancholy, and loneliness. They also estimated that their functional ability was better."

The UBI recipients also "felt that their financial situation and their ability to influence it was better. Their trust in other people and different institutions was higher, and they were more confident in their own future and their ability to influence societal issues."

Nick Hartley, a clinical psychologist in the U.K., called the results "encouraging" and "just what we would expect to see."

There were "significant benefits for mental health as people are able to find meaningful work without the threat of being left with no means to put food on the table," he tweeted.

One lawmaker outside of Finland recently pushing forth the payment scheme is Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, who pointed to its need in the face of the coronavirus crisis.

"The experience of the virus and the economic consequences of that have made me much, much more strongly of the view that it is an idea that's time has come," Sturgeon said Tuesday at a press briefing in Edinburgh.

(Continued next column)

(From last column) Finnish UBI Experiment

Kanni Wignaraja, who heads the U.N. Development Programme's (UNDP) Asia-Pacific bureau, similarly said the pandemic lays the groundwork for "bolder ideas."

"The spread of Covid-19 has fundamentally shaken economies, and people are beginning to question existing economic models: this pandemic has really thrown up the existing levels of both injustice and inequality worldwide," she told *UN News*. "So bolder ideas are needed, including some that, previously, were pushed aside."

"At the U.N.," she continued, "we're saying that, if there isn't a minimum income floor to fall back on when this kind of massive shock hits, people literally have no options. Without the means to sustain themselves, they are far more likely to succumb to hunger or other diseases, well before Covid-19 gets to them."

CNBC reported last month on how UBI appears to be gaining traction amid the global pandemic: Guy Standing, a research professor in development studies at SOAS, University of London, told *CNBC* via telephone that there was no prospect of a global economic revival without a universal basic income.

Standing, who has been an advocate for a universal basic income for more than three decades, said he believed the coronavirus crisis would be "the trigger" for a basic wage.

"It's almost a no-brainer," he said. "We are going to have some sort of basic income system sooner or later, but I think getting the establishments of many countries to do it is like pulling the proverbial tooth. There's a big institutional resistance to it because of the implications of moving in this direction."

Anthony Painter, director of the social justice advocacy group RSA Center for Action and Research, said that UBI can help workers currently facing a choice between their jobs and their lives.

(Continued page 3)

Our Mission

The Boundary Peace Initiative represents people of diverse backgrounds officially brought together in 2002 because of our mutual concern for the rise in world conflict. Our mandate is to participate in multilateral non-violent conflict resolution in support of global human rights, ecological and environmental sustainability and international law through education, sharing of information, dialogue and activism locally and globally. We encourage and seek your participation in our mutual work for true peace based on social justice, equality, accountability, integrity, honour, respect, etc in order to build a better world today and future generations.

BPI web site: www.boundarypeaceinitiative.org

For info contact Laura at (250) 444-0524 or (250) 442-0434 or email L4peace@telus.net.

(From page 2) **Finnish UBI Experiment**

"The coronavirus has revealed weaknesses in ensuring economic security across Europe," Painter told *Euronews*. "Workers face an intolerable choice between their work, their families, and their health. With universal basic income they know that they are not going to bite the dust, there will always be a network that will help lighten these conflicts."

Writer and UBI advocate Scott Santens said the policy "has never been more important than right now."

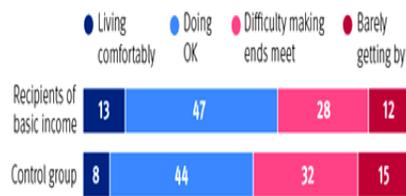
Sharing the results of the Finnish experiment on Wednesday, Santens expressed frustration that the U.S.—where over 30 million people have lost their jobs in recent weeks—hasn't adopted the policy.

"UBI will save lives AND our economy," he wrote.

Legislation put forth last month by Democratic Rep. Rashida Tlaib (Mich.) and Pramila Jayapal (Wash.) could kick start that effort. Their ABC Act would provide people in the U.S. with \$2,000 per month during the crisis, followed by \$1,000 per month for a year afterwards.

Results of the basic income experiment: small employment effects: better perceived economic security and mental wellbeing

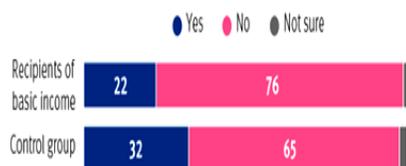
Self-perceived financial situation at current household income, % of respondents*



Average number of days of employment November 2017–October 2018



Self-perceived depression, % of respondents*



Satisfaction with life on scale 0–10, average



*The survey was carried out towards the end of 2018. The interpretation of the results of the basic income experiment is complicated by the introduction of the activation model in 2018.



Ed Note: For more info go

<https://www.commondreams.org/news/2020/05/06/after-encouraging-results-finnish-ubi-experiment-experts-say-time-such-bold-idea-now>

Don't buy new, fix the old: The repair business is booming

By: *Dianne Buckner: March 2020*

We've all heard the phrase, "They don't make things like they used to."

Now a growing number of eco-minded Canadians are deciding that just won't do. Coffee makers, lamps, toasters and kettles can often be fixed instead of tossed into the trash when they stop working.

"A lot of things these days break quite easily," says Wai Chu Cheng, the co-founder of Repair Café Toronto, a non-profit organization with 800 volunteers on call, eager to teach people how to fix household items. "People aren't sure they can repair it themselves, and we show them how."

The Repair Café holds monthly gatherings, where not only small appliances and other household goods get fixed, but also clothing that needs patches or mending.

When the Repair Café started seven years ago in Canada, there was only one chapter, in Calgary. Now Cheng says there are 47 similar Café organizations in cities across the country providing the same type of services — free. More are coming; Cheng says she's been getting calls from community groups who want help to set up their own, local repair group.

The cost of replacement has always been a motivation to have things repaired, but nowadays Cheng says climate and waste concerns are driving a surge in interest, particularly with young people.

Anita Neufeld came to a recent Repair Café with a broken tape deck. "The main reason for me to fix things is to be able to reuse stuff and keep it out of the landfill."

Make it last longer

For-profit companies are also on top of the trend. Tim McGuire is CEO of Mobile Klinik, a chain of 80 stores that repair mobile devices in malls and Walmart locations across the country.

He points out that the chain was recently ranked as the 12th fastest growing company in Canada, with plans to have 200 locations coast to coast within the next three years.

"There are a lot of people that would like to get more years out of an electronic device, rather than putting it into a landfill," he says.

(Continued page 4)

A man should use that spiritual heritage which he has received from the wise and holy people of the past, but he should test everything with his intellect, accepting certain things and rejecting others. *Leo Tolstoy*

A wise man seeks wisdom; a madman thinks that he has found it. *Persian Proverb*

It is not the place we occupy that is important, but the direction in which we move. *Oliver Wendell Holmes*

WHAT'S UP?

The BPI planned conference with knowledgeable people from far and near is on hold until we're able to gather because of Covid restrictions.

January 22, 2021 the Treaty to Ban Nuclear Weapons comes into effect but sadly, Canada is not a signatory. The BPI encourages Canadians to voice your support for making nuclear weapons illegal to your MP, enlist the support of your municipal, regional and provincial governments. Together we can eliminate the threat of annihilation from these weapons of mass destruction.



**Nuclear Weapons are Illegal!
Canada must sign, ratify and
implement the Treaty.**

Voice your opinion to the Prime Minister and all MPs. Free postage: {Name of MP}, Parliament Buildings, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6
Go to the Government of Canada website for MP contact information at <http://www.canada.gc.ca>

The BPI welcomes your input. Articles are the author's responsibility and may not be common consensus of members. To submit articles contact Laura at **250-444-0524 or 250-442-0434** or email L4peace@telus.net.

The BPI works with local and global peace, social justice and environmental groups and is an affiliate of the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

(From page 3) **Don't buy new, fix the old**

Michael Coteau, a Liberal member of the Ontario Legislature, introduced a private member's bill last year that would have required manufacturers to make DIY repairs easier. The Conservative majority promptly voted it down. (Keith Burgess/CBC) McGuire says it's not uncommon for manufacturers to advise consumers to buy a new device, instead of having an old one fixed. But it appears many people are loath to incur that expense or to contribute to Canada's waste situation.

"If you go back two years, the average phone lasted about two and a quarter years. Now customers are keeping their phones for over three years, and we see that continuing to increase every year," he says.

Planned obsolescence

At a recent Repair Café event, some of those in attendance blamed manufacturers for building devices with "planned obsolescence" in mind, in order to boost sales.

"They're made to be broken," says Paul Magder, one of the co-founders of the Toronto chapter.

"They're made to be thrown out, to make money for the manufacturers. That's their business model."

Magder, who once worked in the manufacturing sector, says it's all about cost. "They use plastic parts, cheap parts and then they break. If they have to use metal parts it'll be more expensive, but then it will last longer."

Consumers, however, are highly price-sensitive, and manufacturers focus on keeping prices as low as possible, in order to compete.

Manufacturers say repair is risky

In a statement provided to CBC News the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers cautions, "An untrained or uncertified person performing a repair may not be aware of or understand how to ensure an appliance continues to meet the various safety standards required to keep Canadians safe."

Many Canadians, tired of living in what some call a 'disposable society,' are learning how to repair their belongings, instead of tossing them in the trash. (Doug Husby/CBC) Michael Coteau is a member of the Ontario Legislature who introduced a private member's bill last year, proposing a requirement for manufacturers to make parts and repair instructions widely available. But as a Liberal-sponsored bill, it was promptly voted down by Ontario's Conservative majority government.

"My father is a washing machine repairman," says Coteau. "That's what he's done his whole life. As consumers, as Ontarians, as Canadians, we need to make sure that as we move along in this age of advancement in technology, we have control of our devices."

Coteau points out that the European Union parliament is on course to pass "right to repair" legislation, specifying the number of years a manufacturer must make reasonably priced parts available, among other measures to promote repairability in appliances. In addition, 20 American states are considering similar legislation, according to the Washington-based Public Interest Research Group.

Industry groups push back

But Coteau says that shortly after he tabled his bill, a delegation from the tech industry arrived in his Queen's Park office. "It was a whole industry group, and they came in and sat down to make a counter argument to the right to repair movement, saying that it was dangerous for people to open up their products." The group also made an argument about compromising intellectual property.

"I don't think it's reasonable," says Coteau. He's considering reintroducing his bill.

But many Canadians aren't waiting for legislation or for manufacturers to act. They're helping each other at events like the Repair Café gathering in Toronto.

"I have a pair of probably 20-year-old jeans that are being repaired," explained Brian Brenie, as a fixer showed him how to patch his favourite denim. "They're so comfortable, I just can't get rid of them and I don't want to throw them away, so I always come to the Repair Café to get these types of things done."

Charmaine Iding came to the Café to get her phone fixed, and got a necklace restrung while she was there. "The real problem is in design where they don't make things to be fixed — they make things to be obsolete, so people will keep consuming. That is the real problem."

Dianne Buckner has reported on entrepreneurs for two decades. She hosts Dragons' Den on CBC Television and is part of the business news team at CBC News Network.