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This edition features a total of 9,772 words. ~5,900 of those are in the fourth article, which has a treasure trove of thought-provoking information about history and today's Middle Eastern conflicts. Click on the excellent in-text links as well.

Contributions and Comments Welcome

Contributions are welcome, with careful attention to our [guidelines](#). Comments or articles for the next issue of the Michigan Libertarian may be sent to newsletter@michiganlp.org. Submissions sent later than the 20th of each month may not have time to be used. Articles are often posted to michiganlp.org/headlines ahead of our publication date.

The LPMI depends on contributions to carry out its mission Please Visit us at MichiganLP.org and scroll down to the bottom of our homepage to gain access to our contribution form.



Libertarian Party of Michigan

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The UPLP at the Trenary Outhouse Classic

March 01, 2024 / By Joshua Jongema

This article expresses the opinion of the author. Other Libertarian Party of Michigan members are welcome to send in opinion articles (In keeping with our [guidelines](#)) for consideration to the editor.



1. Trenary's race track made of trucked-in snow.

The Upper Peninsula Libertarian Party (UPLP), on February 24th, participated in the Trenary Outhouse Classic in Trenary, Michigan. The weather was highly unusual for this annual race, because this year there was no snow on the ground. Meteorologists claim this unusually warm winter is caused by an El Niño event and is the result of warmer-than-usual temperatures in Pacific Ocean water. While El Niño can sometimes cause increased snow, this year has been far too warm for that, with some days in February being higher in temperature than many days last fall! To compensate for this, Trenary had to truck in snow from somewhere else, to set up its 100+ foot track down the middle of main street.

This appears to be the biggest event that occurs all year, in the small town in the middle of farm country. The crowd was in high spirits and dressed colorfully. Small town rules applied, as people up and down the street carried alcohol, and smoked various things, openly. This was a town where freedom reigned supreme, and so it was a great place to spread the message of liberty.

The UPLP outhouse was built by an expert carpenter, which resulted in it being built according to the specs, and with strength. On the way to the race, it flew off the back of a truck, but only ended up with a few bumps and bruises- now that is



2. Colorfully-dressed Trenary race crowd.



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3. The UPLP's outhouse, in all its glory.

craftsmanship! The design for the ski attachment were drawn up by someone who admitted openly that he is not an engineer, which resulted in increased resistance on the racetrack. The UPLP outhouse may not have been built for racing, but it certainly did end up representing the reality of how difficult it is to push for liberty in this modern world.

The race was a long and arduous process. The two racers, Ryan Roberts and Joshua Jongema, began the day as proud warriors for liberty. After standing in line for over an hour and pushing the outhouse from the finish to the starting line, only to stand for another hour, they began to show weariness. Still, they showed great courage by pushing it down the track anyways, yelling "freedom" and "liberty" as they went, like a couple of William Wallaces. They admitted later that three quarters of the way down the track their

legs turned to jelly, and they almost came to a dead stop, but just in time a third UPLP member, Jordan, ran in to rescue them. The three made it across the finish line with what seems to have been the longest time ever recorded in the history of the Trenary Outhouse Classic.



4. Ryan Roberts, left, and Joshua Jongema, right, before the race.

So, the race itself perfectly illustrated the plight of libertarians in every way. The outhouse was designed without racing in mind. There was no real preparation for the race at all. The race itself was the biggest loss ever recorded. Yet still, these passionate libertarians plan to go back next year better prepared, and with a lighter outhouse, and they will do so every year until they get it right.



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5. Video of Ryan and Josh pushing their outhouse for liberty.

BUDS 'N REALITY

POLITICALLY CHARGED PODCAST FROM THE
ANARCHIST/LIBERTARIAN POINT OF VIEW

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Explore the [Buds 'N Reality Podcast](#) with LPMI's Shaun Collins!



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Protecting What You Own

March 01, 2024 / By Leah Dailey

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I helped my daughter move recently and I rented a U-Haul truck. When the truck was not full of her belongings I proceeded to “rag on it”. I was driving in a way as to test the speed of acceleration and accuracy of the automatic shifting. The thought occurred to me that I would *not* be driving my own truck like this. In fact, if I borrowed this truck from a friend, I would *not* drive it like this. But because I was renting this truck for a day, short term, I wouldn't have to suffer the consequences of the long-term engine abuse that I was contributing to. Now, I know I paid money in exchange for the use of the truck, and the future costs of repair is factored into that price, so I don't feel that bad. But it got me thinking about ownership. The theory is that a person will care better for an item that they own rather than an item that belongs to someone else. If we're honest I think we can all agree. This is, partly, why there are security deposits for rented items. Incentivized care.

As a kid, in a hotel room, what's the first thing you did upon arrival? You jumped on the bed. You were even allowed to, because you were not allowed to jump on the bed at home, with reason. That mattress had to last till you were 18. Certainly, this theory also pertains to our regard for our own children over another person's child. I'm picturing the age-old thought experiment: if my child and some other child, were both drowning in a swimming pool, of course I'm going to save my child over the other. It's a terrible thought, I know. But it's human nature to protect what belongs to us.

What about the city I live in? I own property in my city, which in fact entitles me to a sense of ownership. I certainly refer to it as *my* city. (Maybe some day I will run for Mayor).

I live in a small city in Southeast MI, in the SW corner of Big Bad Oakland County. I love where I live. In my city we have two main grocery stores, Busch's and Kroger, and outside of town there is a Walmart. I was involved in an incident at my Kroger in May 2021. It was a Tuesday night, around 7pm. Not peak shopping hours but the store was not empty either. I was in the produce section when I heard a woman speaking loudly to the gal behind the meat counter. All the nearby shoppers turned in her direction. She was not only speaking loudly, but also using rude language. She was saying something about having to ask for help 4 times and she was demanding to speak to a manager. My daughter had worked at this Kroger the year before and right then I pictured this woman talking to my daughter in this manner. I felt my face flush as my Mama-Bear instincts rose and I decided to lean into it. My stomach dropped into my vagina as I steered my cart toward the altercation at the meat counter.



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I kept my cart to the left of her, putting a display of imitation crab between us, in case she got physical. I matched her volume and said, "Can you *not* talk to her that way?" She escalated further while trying to justify her grievances. I told her she was *rude*, and she should take her business elsewhere. She proceeded to tell me that she was a nurse and she had been working all day. By now my stomach had migrated to my throat and I meant to say that this meat counter gal was also an essential worker, but it came out, "**This is my local Kroger girl,**" and something about how she doesn't deserve to be talked to like this. She eventually called me a "cunt," and we went our separate ways, the manager had shown up by then. I left the meat section with a bunch of meat I did not intend on buying, it turns out I was trying to play it cool while my adrenaline was spiked and had loaded up my cart with a plethora of sausages during our exchange.

What's the point of my story? The point is, that this is *my* Kroger, and this "lady" was talking to my girl all wrong. If I had witnessed this interaction at a Kroger elsewhere, would I have been so bold to speak up? Maybe. What about at my local Walmart? Probably not.

This is also how I feel about the city I live in. It is mine. I love it and I want to care for it. But this could be said for my neighbors as well. They own it too in this regard. I see this as an example of shared ownership. Shared ownership can be tricky. Standards of care can vary from person to person. For example, I have shared ownership of my house and property with my spouse. If it were up to me I would just throw my used cigarette butts in our yard, it's my yard. I can do as I please, but my spouse does not prefer it, so I make sure to use a receptacle for the butts. I find that most people would not appreciate it if I threw my used cigarette butt in their yard or driveway. (I've actually been scolded for spitting in someone's driveway). But what if I threw out my cigarette butt on your street, or the nearest intersection to your house, would you be upset? It is littering after all.

What if I do not care about the length of my grass or leaving my garbage can at the end of the driveway for days at a time? It turns out my neighbors do care, so I abide. (No HOA either).

My libertarian mind asks, "where do I draw the line?" I think the answer is here, "how well do I want to get along with my community?"

When Libertarians get together and talk about the subject of shared ownership or urban living, the conversation goes down a rabbit hole which typically leads to the prospect of homesteading, self-reliance and even prepping for disaster. All good things, I too want this for myself. But for the time being I will choose to go along to get along. I will continue to test my limits to be a good neighbor, citizen, and Kroger shopper.



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Explore the [State 180 Podcast](#) with LPMI's Ben DeJong!



Liberty & Justice for the LPMI

March 01, 2024 / By Joshua Jongema

This article expresses the opinion of the author. Other Libertarian Party of Michigan members are welcome to send in opinion articles (In keeping with our [guidelines](#)) for consideration to the editor.

Introduction

The Libertarian Party of Michigan (LPMI) is experiencing a problematic cycle, and various members have a different idea of the cause and the solution. The problem is one of corruption and control, and the elements are truth, liberty, and justice. Individual and systemic problems each require different kinds of justice, and radical solutions are required where common solutions haven't worked. The most just solution is one which recognizes the greatest truth, and which grants liberty to the greatest number of people.

Liberty & Justice

Liberty and justice are two sides to the coin of human cooperation. Many people know how to define liberty, but few know how to define justice, and fewer agree on how to implement it. Everyone has a different idea of what is just, what is expected of them, and what to expect from others. This is why it is so important to have open communication, a clear and simple set of rules, and for people to agree to keep those rules from the start. For LP members, the Non-Aggression Principle (NAP) and the Bylaws are those rules.

The American Heritage Dictionary defines liberty as "the condition of being free from oppressive restriction." Correcting violations of mutually accepted law is perhaps the only time when an imposed restriction is not an oppressive act. Until a violation is



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corrected, groups cannot continue to function effectively. If the law is not enforced, there is no law. So, justice is necessary for groups to continue to exist and function.

Some think liberty should only occur when justice is finished, but they are wrong. Justice is never finished, so by their logic liberty would never be allowed to occur. Liberty is always necessary to ensure people are acting of their own volition. Otherwise, they cannot logically be held responsible for their actions. So, liberty is the foundation of justice, and you cannot have one without the other.

Justice can only be granted when the aggressive party relents, admits fault, and gives something to make up for what they did. If they don't choose these three acts of reconciliation voluntarily, they can be forced to relent, their wrongs can be revealed, and what they owe can be taken from them. It is natural for people who break rules to disagree that such a process is needed or just. They can resort to tricks such as whataboutisms, flipping the script, and muddying the water. Thus, it is in everyone's interest to ensure that wrong is corrected swiftly through a standardized process, so that everyone can get back to what they were doing quickly. While people don't always agree on what amount of recompense is appropriate, something is definitely better than nothing.

The Problem

Great truths are hard to see but can be recognized where clear patterns are set. In the LPMI there are numerous grievances between various individuals, and small groups have formed which seek control out of fear that failure to do so would result in the other group gaining or keeping that control. One group has bent the rules, and the other has outright broken them. The majority of members have no time to learn the truth of what has happened and are easily manipulated into choosing sides based on logical fallacies. More still have chosen to sit on the sidelines and wait until the conflict ends, but the cycle hasn't ended. This destructive cycle sets a pattern which demonstrates that a deeper problem of a systemic nature exists.

Libertarians made a mistake when they took for themselves the practice of the parliamentary system. It is implemented from the top down and is easy to influence from the outside. Unfortunately, there is no truly neutral party in the LPMI, because of the way the system itself is designed. There is a way the system could be redesigned to be implemented from the bottom up.



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The Solution

The solution to individual violations should be resolved through appeals to the Judicial Committee because the resulting action will be well-documented, open for all to see, and may lead to a further process of appeals. Political solutions tend to be hasty, unwritten, and obscured by the vast number of perspectives. The solution to the systemic injustice requires an embracing of the way groups tend to splinter. Rather than seeking to eliminate factionalism by ensuring a preferred faction wins and remains in power, the way the system operates could be reformed to ensure more factions exist- not less- and that one faction can't have control over the entire state. The ideal solution would be for affiliates to have more of the power, and for the state party to have less.

The design of the system could be simple. Every chair of an affiliate could have one seat on a statewide council. State-level decisions should be confined to matters all affiliates share and cannot do alone and should be ratified by a majority of individual affiliates. Through a Double Majority voting system, the decisions at the state level would assuredly be in the interest of members at the affiliate level. Each faction would only ever get at most one vote and would no longer be able to stack the state level with their own members. Furthermore, the state party would be more secure from outside influence because external actors would have to take over the majority of affiliates to gain any serious sway.

Unless a radical solution to the problem of division is enacted, resentment, corruption, and control will continue. Cycles of violations will continuously remain unresolved. The state party will continue to be stopped from functioning while continuing matters of justice are sorted out endlessly. Odd-year conventions are the perfect time to make such radical changes.

Conclusion

Liberty for all means agreeing to disagree. Being part of a functional group means justly adhering to its Bylaws and focusing on the common goal. Individual violations should be swiftly resolved, but also the LPMI has a problem that is above and beyond the acts of individuals. A more judicial remodel for the system itself would secure increased liberty and justice for all members. The truth of the matter is, while liberty separates people, justice (re)unites them.



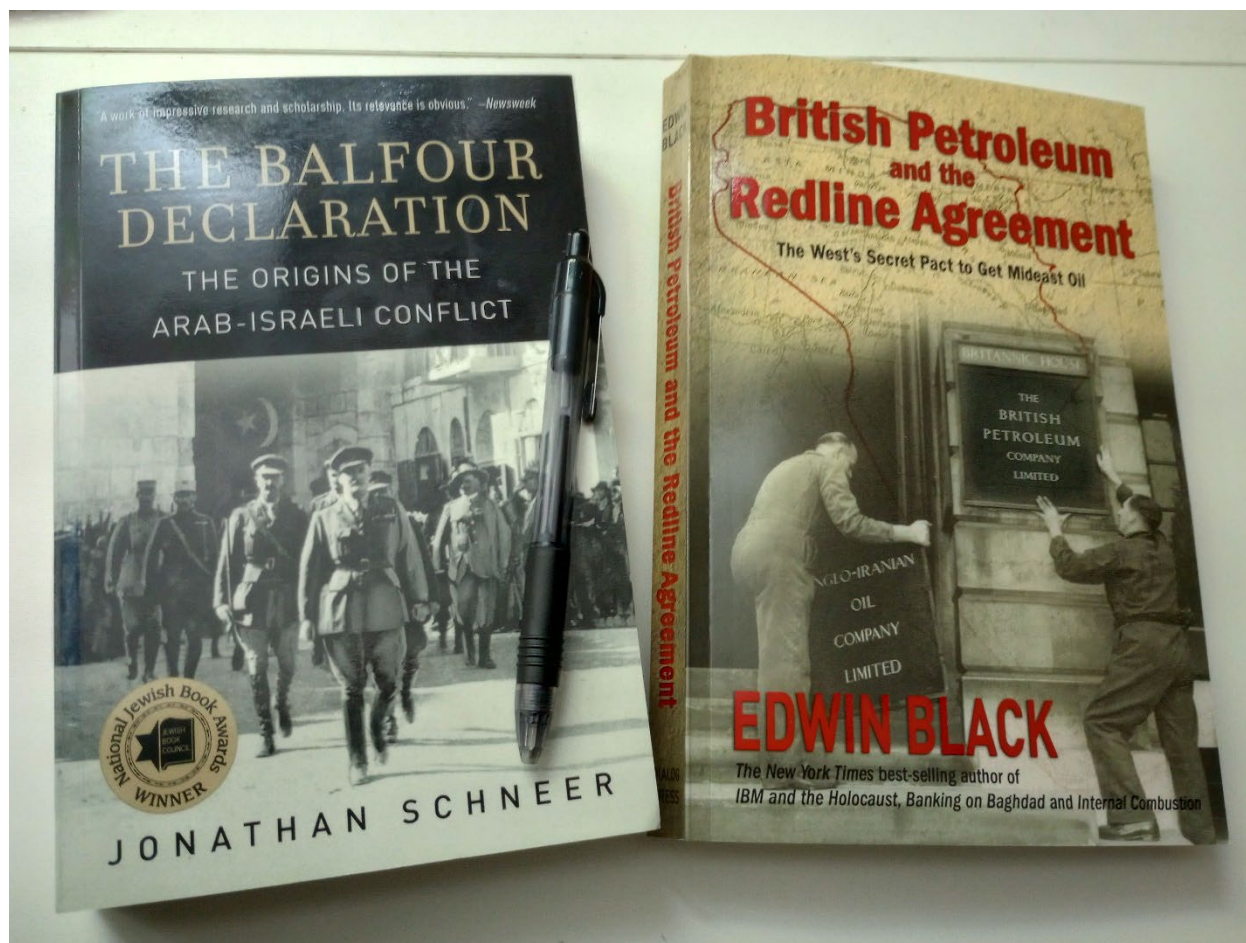
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Middle Eastern Wars & the Petroleum Question

March 01, 2024 / By Joshua Jongema

This article expresses the opinion of the author. Other Libertarian Party of Michigan members are welcome to send in opinion articles (In keeping with our [guidelines](#)) for consideration to the editor.



6. Two Books - The Balfour Declaration & British Petroleum and the Red Line Agreement

Introduction

Wars fought in the middle east over the last 120 years have evidently not been about freedom, liberty, independence, or self-determination, but about competition over exploitation of oil by companies holding the reigns of imperial governments in Britain, France, the Netherlands, Germany, the USA, and Russia. These powers used key ethnic groups, who had hopes of building their own nations, as tools to compete for massive profits. There has been relentless gaslighting of the public about the causes of war, and demoralization regarding the underlying issues, but such conflicts have apparently been



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mainly about oil exploration, infrastructure development, and continuous positive control.

The 1917 Balfour Declaration is commonly understood to be the origin of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and as the answer to the Jewish Question it was a solution for many in power who sought to homogenize their own societies' cultures. However, Middle Eastern conflict is broader than that framed narrative. Jewish, Kurdish, and Arab nationalists appear to have been used against each other to facilitate, and distract the public from, the continuous exploitation of oil happening in the greater region. No matter how many of them die fighting each other, the conflict remains unresolved, and the same companies keep getting richer.

The 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement is commonly understood as the secret deal that carved up the Middle East, but it was never actually carried to fruition, because it was replaced with the series of deals that led to the clandestine [1928 Red Line Agreement](#). To understand the last century of conflict, and to make sense of today's Middle East, it is pivotal to understand the Red Line Agreement and the influence Britain was willing to exert in the name of obtaining and retaining oil or depriving others of it.

Imperial powers used and created centralized power structures to dominate the network of tribes in the collapsed Ottoman Empire and competed to answer The Petroleum Question in their own favor. Oil was the overarching concern of Britain for decades before and after the Balfour Declaration. Powers in France, Holland, Germany, and later the USA and Russia, all sought to steal the driver's seat, or at least share in the spoils.

The histories of such conflicts have many striking parallels to today's events. As in the last century, today's conflicts include the use of show forces, attacks on pipeline infrastructure, secret deals, competition among major nations' companies for control of oil, assassinations, and regime-change operations. War clearly does not benefit the majority of people but has instead deprived whole populations of liberty and justice. The time has come yet again to say no to war.

The History

Jonathan Schneer's 2010 book *The Balfour Declaration: The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* details the extensive back-and-forth of European diplomatic dealings during World War 1 (WW1) and focuses on the social and military factors of the decisions made by the British with regard to Zionism in Palestine. It highlights the workings of men such as Conservative politician Mark Sykes, Foreign Office Assistant Undersecretary Ronald Graham, Zionist Organization leaders Chaim Weizmann (later



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the first President of Israel) and Nahum Sokolow, Lord Lionel Walter Rothschild, and Foreign Secretary Walter James Balfour. These men wanted Jewish financial support for their side of the war, and they feared Germany would gain the same support if they didn't act first. They also feared Arabs would control the resources on Arab lands.

"We must control the state machinery in Palestine. If we don't, the Arabs will. Give the Arabs all the guarantees they like for cultural autonomy; but the state must be Jewish." -Zionist Leader Harry Sacher, 1917

Unfortunately, this book sidesteps the issue of competition for Middle Eastern oil as a motivation for the British to war there. Rather, Schnee paints a rosy picture about Britain's ambition to obtain Jewish finances in trade for what he claims was a motive to see a peaceful end to conflict. He does mention "economic" and "financial interest" in passing, but without naming them. He had every chance to use the word oil even once, especially where he notes the British "coveted parts of Mesopotamia," but he did not. Perhaps he doesn't get into material about oil, because of the sheer volume of his book, and because the focus of his book is on Zionism in Palestine. However, it does seem like a glaring omission that comes off as whiggish history.

"With proper management Palestine eventually could accept a population five times its present size. No one need be dispossessed."
-Sir Mark Sykes, 1917

Maybe this is being unfair to a book the size of the Bible, that compiles what is praised for being a most accurate portrayal of the history of the inner workings behind the Balfour Declaration. It is certainly an important book for understanding the nuances of political interests, and that colonial powers carved up the Middle East to the detriment of its inhabitants, setting the stage for over 100 years of conflict that is still erupting in our current times.



7. Red line the oil cartel members drew around Middle Eastern oil they coveted.

Edwin Black's 2011 book *British Petroleum and the Redline Agreement: The West's Secret Pact to Get Mideast Oil* explains the ups and downs of secret oil deals that led to the Red Line Agreement, which was signed between the Anglo-Persian Company (later renamed British Petroleum), Royal Dutch Shell, Compagnie Française des Pétroles (later renamed Total), the Near East Development Corporation (later renamed ExxonMobil) and Calouste Gulbenkian (Mr. Five Percent). It was an agreement to create "nations that never existed before, for the sole



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purpose of becoming fuel states” wrote Black. His book reveals the decades-long history before the agreement- a time when the British needed oil to feed their new war machine and worried about becoming dependent on Germany if it were allowed to take the oil for itself. To deprive Germany and ensure self-reliance and billions of dollars in continual profit, the British government partnered with those mentioned above, to create a company that would control all of the oil in the middle east after the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Britain then worked hard to control the majority of that company, and to deprive Germany of its stake. This syndicate of oil tycoons would eventually manage to secure the world’s largest monopoly on oil.

There are some very interesting details in this book that help to make sense of the Middle East today. The following timeline is mostly from Black’s book, with my own research filling a couple of gaps, and continuing where he left off after 1967:

1876 – Midhat Pasha was a european-educated leader of Baghdad who liberalized society in his time in many ways. He wrote a constitution which declared all individuals to have liberty and to have full rights of citizenship regardless of their religion. He created land rights laws which allowed common people to claim their own land. His best policies were later nullified by the corrupt Turkish government, and he was removed from power.

1892 – Oil tycoon Calouste Gulbenkian sent western Europeans a report detailing the immense oil deposits in three provinces of Ottoman Mesopotamia (later Iraq), Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra.

1890s – Ottoman Sultain Abdulhamid II used Pasha’s land laws to purchase all of the land he thought might contain oil, so that he could later sell it.

1904 – Germany’s Anatolia Railway was built through Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra. Abdulhamid sold oil rights to the railway (20km on each side of the tracks), which were promptly handed up to its owner, Deutsche Bank of Germany.

1906 – Germany failed to meet the time requirements of their deal, and technically lost their rights to the oil, although they legally tried to continue claiming them.

1908 – Britain’s William D’Arcy created the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and used it to get into the oil business in Persia.

1908 – The bloodless coup of the Young Turks forced Turkish leaders to reinstate Pasha’s 1876 Constitution for all Turks. This change in power also meant increased tendency to ally with Germany.



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1908 – The British-owned National Bank of Turkey was created to acquire Turkish oil.

1909 – Britain was on the verge of being granted all of the oil, but the Ottoman Empire collapsed into chaotic violence, and the deal that was prepared was not signed.

1912 – Shell (60% Dutch; 40% British) and Gulbenkian (Armenian) began to compete with the British, French, and Germans for control over Mesopotamian oil.

1912 – Gulbenkian, whose money bankrolled the original project, facilitated the name change of the National Bank of Turkey to the Turkish Petroleum Company, of which Deutsche Bank owned a modest stake.

1912 – The British feared a nearly-bankrupt Anglo-Persian would be bought out by Royal Dutch Shell and considered using government funding to bankroll the company.

1914 – Turkish Petroleum was restructured in a deal, such that 47.5% went to Anglo-Persian, 23.5% to Shell, 25% to Deutsche Bank, and 5% to Gulbenkian. In the weeks before WW1, the British government did purchase a 51% share in Anglo-Persian, after Winston Churchill directed Admiral Slade to investigate the possibility.

1914 – Weeks before Britain declared war on Turkey, secret letters ordered over 10,000 men to sail from India to the Persian Gulf to secure Anglo-Persian oil infrastructure. They were positioned in Basra a full 24 hours before war was declared. Admiral Slade was made a board member of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and used his rank to direct the Navy to do what the company needed.

1914 – Trading with the enemy laws made it illegal to conduct business with Germany, which eventually led to Britain obtaining the shares of Deutsche Bank in the Turkish Petroleum Company.

1915-16 – Many Arab opposition groups sprang from resistance to Turkification in Mesopotamia. Britain anointed Hussein ibn Ali, his sons, and his Hashemite clan as leaders. Through the famous McMahon-Hussein letters, Britain convinced Hussein to let the British have mandate over Mesopotamia. Hussein's Damascus Protocol gave "economic preference to Great Britain" and although they could not have Mesopotamia, they "could rent it."

1916 – The Sykes-Picot Agreement was established wherein France and Britain would carve up the Middle East for themselves after their war against the Ottoman Empire.

1916 – Turkey declared jihad against Britain, and Britain used T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) as a "show force" to keep Arab sentiments in their favor. The British would do



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all the work, and then Lawrence would ride in on his white horse for the cameras afterward. Britain was seen by those Arabs as their way to attain a nation for themselves.

1914-18 – Britain still did not have oil rights in Mesopotamia but used its occupation of the area to possess the oil.

1918 – US President Woodrow Wilson, at the Paris Peace Conference, proposed that Mesopotamian oil should be equally available to all countries, so that the US could reap the spoils of a war against Turkey, which it did not engage in.

1918 – The British put Civil Commissioner Arnold Wilson in charge of Mesopotamia, now a British Protectorate region. He claimed that the Arabs were “no more capable of administering severally or collectively than the Red Indians [of America].” He began ruling by decree, bringing workers into Mosul from India, and he made Indians into officials there. Local tribes who cooperated were fed, and those who did not cooperate were starved. Tribal hierarchies, developed over thousands of years, were rewritten by his policies. He refeudalized Mesopotamia, bringing back the conditions of the corrupt Sultans that existed before, negating the reforms of the Young Turks.

1919 – The Paris Peace Conference rewrote lines on the map in the Middle East, creating countries where there were none before, defining their people as children needing masters, and giving leadership to “advanced nations.” The leaders of commerce were behind every move, and one attendee stated, “The petroleum question seems to be one of the most important economic questions at the Peace Conference.”

1919 – The American Petroleum Institute met in Colorado Springs, and the organization’s Committee on Foreign Relations launched its campaign for American access to Mesopotamian oil.

1919-20 – The 1919 Long-Berenger Agreement ended the Sykes-Picot Agreement and rolled into the 1920 San Remo Oil Agreement, officially carving up the fallen Ottoman Empire between French and British, with the British gaining major control of Mesopotamian oil.

1922 – Following a bloody 1920 Jihad against the British, a treaty with the new monarchy of Iraq was signed with the British. Rather than protecting Iraqi people, who were still being bombed regularly by the Royal Air Force, the treaty worked to protect British commercial interests.



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1923 – At a meeting in Lausanne Switzerland between oil cartel leaders, with America observing, Lord Curzon of Britain proclaimed that Britain had no interest in Iraqi oil. Britain and Turkey finalized their peace agreement, but left one matter unresolved, the control over Mosul.

1928 – The Red Line Agreement was signed by the companies that became BP, Shell, Total, ExxonMobil, and Chevron, along with Gulbenkian (Mr. 5 Percent).

1930s – King ibn Saud made a deal with Standard Oil of California, and later Texaco, to form the Saudi Aramco oil company in Saudi Arabia. The Iraqi Petroleum Company signed oil concessions from other British protectorates and client states including Oman, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine. The red line's detour around Kuwait opened the door for Gulf Oil, in cooperation with Anglo-Persian, to make deals for oil in Kuwait and Bahrain.

1934 – Kuwait Petroleum Corporation [began](#) as joint venture between Anglo-Persian (BP) and Gulf Oil (Chevron).

1934-35 – Two pipelines were built across the Middle East, one from Mosul through Syria to Tripoli, Lebanon, and the other from Kirkuk through Jordan to the Palestinian coast at Haifa. Many Jews worked in the oil industry, and Haifa quickly became a Jewish metropolis. By that time the redline partners had formed hundreds of subsidiary companies under the banner of the Iraqi Petroleum Company.

1938 – Hitler needed more oil than he could get from Romania, which he invaded to “guard” the oil fields there. During his Third Reich, BP, Shell, and Standard Oil together operated German subsidiaries which ran ~41k of the ~64k gas stations in Germany. Hitler had seized the companies as enemy assets, but merely held their money in bank accounts they could access later, just as he did with IBM, General Motors, and Ford.

1938 – Hitler used Palestinian Mufti Husseini the same way the British used Lawrence. Like with the Ukrainian nationalists against the Russians, Hitler promised the Arabs their national aspirations and led them in a revolt against the British as a means to securing the oil fields in the Middle East. Arabs traveled from Germany to the Middle East to volunteer with the new Arab Legion. Arab nationalists became swastika-wearing Nazis overnight, and propaganda pledging allegiance to Hitler lined the streets throughout the Middle East.

1940 – Iraqi Prime Minister Rashid Ali al-Gaylani rebuked the reasoning of western Allies and proclaimed that the violence across the Arab world was being driven by events in Palestine, specifically British preference for the Zionists over the Palestinians.



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The Iraqis would let Germany walk in and take Iraqi oil unless the Zionists were stopped in Palestine. The British developed a plan to either kidnap the new Palestinian Mufti Husseini or to assassinate him. They also planned to destroy all of the region's oil infrastructure if they couldn't beat Germany.

1941 – After the German defeat in Iraq to the British, Iran declared neutrality which opened the door to Germany there. So, the British and the Russians invaded Iran, whose military promptly collapsed. The British installed Reza the second to the throne since he promised to give preference to Britain in oil concessions.

1947 – The construction of the Trans-Arabian Pipeline began from Basra, through Syria, to Lebanon. An American company, Bechtel, managed the process.

1948 – After the London-Baghdad Portsmouth Treaty created a military alliance, riots broke out in Baghdad. Demands were made to reclaim the military base from the British in Habbaniya, and to kick their military out of the country. Upon the state of Israel's creation, the Kirkuk-Haifa pipeline was destroyed. It hasn't reopened since.

1950 – News broke out that America had signed a fifty-fifty split in oil profits with Saudi Arabia, leaving other Mideast leaders to grow resentful.

1951 – Iranian strongman Mossadegh used his military to take over Iranian oil from foreign companies, bringing assets under the National Iranian Oil Company.

1951-52 – Iraqi parliament became united in nationalizing Iraqi oil, but a 50/50 deal for profit was made instead, since Iraq was rather dependent on its foreign partners.

1953 – The CIA and MI6 orchestrated an Iranian coup in Operation Ajax, overthrowing Mossadegh and reinstalling the Shah of Iran. The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's name changed to British Petroleum, and a 50/50 deal for oil profits was formalized.

1955 – Baghdad Pact alliance formed between Britain, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan.

1956 – During the Suez Crisis, the Kirkuk-Baniyas (Iraqi-Syrian) Pipeline and 3 pumping stations were sabotaged.

1958 – Egypt and Syria formed the United Arab Republic (UAR) and courted Moscow as its foreign ally. In February King Faisal II of Iraq joined with his cousin King Hussein of Jordan to form the Arab Union, as a way of competing for supremacy in the Arab world. On July 14 '58 Faisal was shot, and the new strongman leader Kassem formally recognized the UAR. The next day, US President Eisenhower dispatched the 6th Fleet,



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landing 1,700 Marines in Beirut, Lebanon. 2 days after the British landed 2,000 commandoes in Amman, Jordan. This safeguarded the oil infrastructure there.

1959 – The Kurds in Iraq stepped up insurrection against the Baghdad government, which thought they showed signs of oil company sponsorship. Baghdad's Kassem then survived several assassination attempts- one by the Ba'ath party's Saddam Hussein, an as-yet obscure street enforcer, who was wounded and fled to Syria.

1959 – Although it had been bribed with 20 million dollars, Iraq passed Law 80 which nationalized the oil in Iraq. The red line companies protested, and in 1962 sought arbitration, but this was ignored.

1960 – The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries was formed, ensuring the countries with the oil would control production and pricing.

1963 – Iraqi army officers revolted and killed Kassem, displaying his bullet-ridden corpse on TV. Iraq's new oil minister, a University of Texas graduate, promptly rescinded Law 80 and formed a partnership between western companies and the new Iraqi National Oil Company. INOC would enjoy just 30% of the profits from its own oil.

1967 – Following the Six Day War, OPEC nations attempted an oil embargo against countries that supported Israel. It failed. Iraqi leadership passed Law 97 and Law 123, which once again revoked western oil rights and nationalized Iraqi oil. The pipeline running through the Golan Heights was attacked.

1968 – Another coup brought the Iraqi Ba'ath Party into power.

1972 – On June 1st Iraq nationalized the British-owned Iraqi Petroleum Company, and Syria promptly seized the oil pipelines that pumped crude to Mediterranean terminals. In July Syria and Iraq [made a deal](#) to share power over that oil.

1973 – Two Kirkuk-Yumurtalik pipelines [were built](#) under an agreement between Iraq and Turkey.

1982 – After Syria accused Iraq of sending saboteurs and weapons, it closed its border and shut down its section of the Trans-Arabian Pipeline.

1990 – The Persian Gulf War began when Iraq invaded and occupied Kuwait. The USA, several months later, succeeded in ripping Kuwait away from Iraq. In their retreat, the Iraqi military burned all of the Kuwaiti oil fields. It took ~5 years to rebuild them. The Trans-Arabian Pipeline was shut down by Saudi Arabia over Jordan siding with Iraq.



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2000 – Syria [reopened](#) the Kirkuk-Baniyas Pipeline and began importing Iraqi oil for domestic use, despite the UN charging this activity was illegal as per a UN resolution. Iraq claimed this activity was no different than that undertaken by Jordan and Turkey.

2000 – Big oil companies Exxon, Chevron, BP, and Shell [spent](#) big money to get Bush and Cheney elected. Over a decade, they, France's Total and Cheney's Halliburton, ended up with the deals to explore, process, and export Iraqi oil once again.

2001 – A later interview with then-retired NATO Secretary General Wesley Clark [revealed](#) that a memo from the Office of the US Secretary of Defense just a few weeks after 9/11 planned to "attack and destroy the governments in 7 countries in five years", starting with Iraq and moving on to "Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Iran." In a subsequent interview, Clark said "this strategy is fundamentally about control of the region's vast oil and gas resources."

2003 – The US coalition declared war against Iraq on false pretenses and took Saddam Hussein out of power. An American-written constitution was promptly signed into law. A US airstrike destroyed the Kirkuk-Baniyas Pipeline.

2003 – Israel [proposed](#) a revival of the Kirkuk-Haifa pipeline. One former CIA member proclaimed that the Iraq War turned the project from a "dream" into a "viable" project.

2007 – A presidential finding [revealed](#) that Bush had authorized CIA operations against Iran and Syria which supported Sunni extremist groups.

2008 – A 2008 US Army-funded RAND report, *Unfolding the Future of the Long War* [noted that](#) the US depends on Mideastern oil and may turn to financing terrorists.

2009 – Qatar proposed an oil pipeline to transit gas through Jordan, Syria, and Turkey, and on to Europe. Assad [refused](#) to sign onto the proposed project, to protect Russian commercial interests. A Saudi Prince failed at bribing Russia to switch sides.

2012 – Syria's Assad [signed off](#) on Iran's pipeline plan as Qatar and the Saudis were alleged to have financed Syrian opposition forces.

2013 – Iran and Iraq [signed a deal](#) for a natural gas pipeline from Iran's South Pars Field, which it splits with Qatar, to Syria through Iraq- just as the Syrian civil war began.

2013 – The Iraqi-Turkish pipeline [was blown up](#) 54 times.

2013 – The semi-autonomous Kurdish administration in northern Iraq [strongarmed](#) the Baghdad government and bypassed their authority by exporting oil from Mosul to the international market through Turkey, citing the need to fight ISIS as reasoning.



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2014 – Obama [sought](#) funding to vet and train “moderate rebels” in Syria.

2014 – US [set up a base](#) at al-Omar oil field in NE Syria, controlled by the Kurds and their Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

2014 – Turkey [began importing](#) oil at a discounted price from the Kurdish administration against the wishes of the Iraqi government, and lied to Iraq claiming no oil was being pumped.

2015 – Jordan’s King admitted in a television interview that he did not watch the ISIS videos, but nonetheless [enjoined](#) with 16 other nations to invade Syria with air forces.

2016 – Julian Assange [released documents](#) through WikiLeaks which claimed that the same Saudi and Qatari officials giving money to the Clinton Foundation were also funding ISIS.

2018 – Turkey [launched](#) operations against the Kurds. The Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria was declared.

2018 – Israel and Egypt [agreed](#) to a ten-year oil deal worth \$15 billion.

2019 – Despite promising a withdrawal of US troops from Syria, President Trump [said](#) “We’re keeping the oil.”

2019 – Trump’s Justice Department announced 18 Espionage Act charges against Julian Assange, who was arrested in London.

2020 – Delta Crescent, a US-based oil company with ties to the Republican Party [was granted](#) a one-year sanctions waiver in order to “advise and assist” oil production in northeast Syria.

2021 – Biden [allowed](#) Delta Crescent to “wind down” operations, and an associated company, Gulfsands, enacted the “humanitarian” oil operation “Project Hope.”

Jan 2022 – USA’s Amos Hochstein [helped](#) Israel secure a deal to pump natural gas through Jordan and Syria to Lebanon, competing with an Iranian proposal.

Mar 2022 – Israel [proposed](#) an Israeli-Turkish natural gas pipeline.

Nov 2022 – US diplomat Hochstein [helped secure](#) a Israeli-Lebanese deal to demarcate their maritime boundaries, enacting a dispute resolution mechanism related to the vast off-shore natural gas deposits.



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Jul 2023 – Saudis and Kuwait [made a deal](#) to exclusive rights over the Durra oil field. France's Total [signed](#) a new profit-sharing deal with the Iraqi government.

Sept 2023 – Iraq [proposed](#) a railway project to Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and the EU through Turkey, as well as a pipeline to the EU through Turkey.

Oct 2023 – Iraq and Syria [made plans](#) to reopen the Kirkuk-Baniyas pipeline.

The way the British, and later the Americans, gained and retained dominance over Mideast oil demonstrates that powerful men will stop at nothing to retain power, to the detriment of everyone else, including their own countrymen. They lied, cheated, and stole, and when leaders tried to stop them, they facilitated the murder of those leaders and replaced them with willing puppets. They influenced government agencies to benefit the oil company, and the company benefited those in government. They used their nations' militaries as pawns in their quest for oil, such that the aims of the military were the same as the aims of the oil companies. For decades they reaped the spoils of war, and after a couple decades being denied access, regained it again. Today the same companies are competing in the Middle East, turning a profit, as they did from the start.

Today's Mideast Situation Report

Using what has been learned from the above books, a new perspective can be gained regarding today's Middle Eastern situation. Officials from many nations that have a stake in the outcome of military operations have made competing claims, and western media generally does not report enough information for the public to form a confident opinion. Using a basic intel method of collecting and assessing a range of news on an area, the truth can begin to seep through the cracks of the illusion. Using this method, the timeline above has been completed, and this situation report has been compiled.

Similar to what Iraqi President Rashid Ali al-Gaylani declared in 1940 several years before riots demanded the removal of British forces from Habbaniya, Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein has [said recently](#) that preference for Zionism in Palestine is causing regional instability which may breach its tipping point. However, as before, evidence suggests the conflict is broader than that, and has more to do with control of resources by competing powers who play various groups against each other for profit.

Last year, figures show that China and India were the [largest importers](#) of Iraqi oil. It was recently [reported](#) that China will complete its Halfaya gas project soon, and that Russia's Gazprom was awarded a development contract for the Nasiriyah oil field near Basra. Today there are several pipelines set to be run through the Middle East including proposals made by [Iran and Russia](#), [Turkey and Qatar](#), and [Israel](#). Each of them depends



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on the outcome of continuous military operations. A recent article [depicts](#) the USA's Cold War "oil denial" strategy as important for protecting American commercial interests against Russia and China, and calls for its return. This is the same strategy Britain used against Germany in the early 1900s.

Last month, Turkey [attacked](#) a Syrian oil pipeline, causing a massive oil spill that has devastated the region. *Human Rights Watch* has continued to report on the matter, [accusing](#) Turkey of war crimes affecting the lives of millions of people, but western media appears silent on this catastrophic event. It is unclear if the pipeline attacked was the Kirkuk-Baniyas pipeline, Turkey's competitor. Also last month, multiple pipelines in Iran were "[sabotaged](#)." The New York Times cited western officials as blaming Israel.

Turkey and Iraq have been in court recently due to an oil dispute between them. The Kirkuk-Yumurtalik pipelines have been turned off for a year and are [not projected](#) to be turned back on any time soon. Last year Turkey refused to pay compensation to Iraq that was ordered by the International Chamber of Commerce, so Iraq filed in a US District Court. After a year in court Turkey has [been ordered](#) to pay Iraq restitution totaling 1.5 billion dollars for its theft of Iraq's oil over the last decade- a deal which personally enriched the Turkish strongman Erdogan's family. The cost has now been passed on to Turkish taxpayers.

Recent events in Yemen [have resulted in](#) Iraq and Saudi Arabia lowering their price of oil, causing companies like BP, Shell, and Aramco to lose millions of dollars. The USA's House and Senate foreign affairs committee [complained](#) recently that billions in US profits have been lost, and billions more are at risk due to the impasse between Iraq and the Kurds over restarting oil exports from Kirkuk. Iraq is following Iran in [a move](#) to ditch the US Dollar in its oil trading, which further threatens US dominance globally.

Just as Lord Curzon did in 1919 by claiming Britain had no interest in Iraqi oil, today's western media carries water for the military industrial complex and gaslights the public about the gas-war hypothesis. In 2018 Paul Cochrane in *The Middle East Eye* [claimed](#) the war on Syria "has never" been about oil, citing the reason that the conflict predates the Qatari-proposed pipeline by several years. This framed narrative by so-called experts is shameful because history shows that many Syrian pipelines have been built and blown up over the last century, most notably in 2003 during the US invasion of Iraq.

On February 15th the US House [voted](#) overwhelmingly to pass the Assad Anti-Normalization Act which sanctions businesses having relations with Syria. This act was passed one year after the Arab League voted to reinstate Syria as a member, and just before the [Caesar Act sanctions](#) were set to expire, extending those until 2032. These



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pressures put the Syrian government into a hard position that is inevitably passed down to the weakest and smallest people in its society.

Americans today have been traumatized into accepting continued US operations in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, as well as Israeli airstrikes in Lebanon and Syria, due to the 3 deaths of American servicemembers in [The Jordan Bombing](#), even if they [indiscriminately murder](#) women and children. Recently, Israel blew up a warehouse in Lebanon claiming it was a weapons depot, but the owner has [reportedly](#) denied his energy equipment company was a depot for weapons.

It is ironic that the Jordan event occurred within days of the *Foreign Policy* [article](#) announcing a potential withdrawal of US forces from Syria, and just weeks after Iraq [declared](#) its intent to begin talks to negotiate the removal of US forces from Iraq, again. The US contends it cannot leave Syria, if only because the many ISIS members held in jail in the Syrian Kurdish region would escape. Though the Kurds [claimed](#) they would hold a trial for those prisoners in 2020, and [again](#) last June, it has for some reason or another not happened yet. This begs the question of whether such prisoners even exist, or if such facilities are being used instead to recruit, train, and equip mercenaries, as [has been alleged](#) against Deradicalization Centers such as Gitmo in the past.

ISIS is often described as a grassroots group kept going by homegrown, radicalized individuals. At the same time, it has been alleged that the Syrian state enabled if not directed it. Besides [Assange's](#) Wikileaks claims, [evidence indicates](#) ISIS is backed by nations opposed to Syria's Assad like the US, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE. Iran has also recently [accused](#) the US of training and assisting ISIS, citing 212 attacks by ISIS on the Syrian military in 2023 as some of its evidence. It seems plausible that ISIS has been used as show forces by the US, just as Britain used show forces in the early 20th century. After all, the group has been used as the sole excuse to invade Syria, and to remain in Syria and Iraq for almost a decade now.

"There is Assad's Syria today, but on the other side, there is also an American Syria." - [Turkish Diplomat Uluç Özülker](#)

US forces in Syria have been [accused](#) by the Syrian government, like the British and Germans throughout the 1900s, of occupying oil fields for the sole purpose of plundering oil. Last year Iraqi officials [alleged](#) the US plans for building a new base in al-Jazira were due to the amount of oil there. On February 5th the US base at Al Omar Oil Field [was attacked](#) with swarms of drones, and 5 Kurdish fighters were reportedly killed. The Conoco Oil Field in Syria [was attacked](#) by drones on February 10th, but US base defenses defended against the attack without any casualties reported.



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In December last year the Kurdish government in NE Syria [formally ratified](#) its constitution, which has neo-liberal ideals baked into it, including gender equality, Bookchin-style anarchism, ecological awareness, and opposition to the “male power” of the modern nation-state. In a bold move, a [new Kurdish office](#) in Raqqa now seeks to guarantee that the land taken from Syrian Christians over the years will be returned to them. As wonderful as that all sounds, it is astounding that US support for Kurdish nationalism has effectively cut Syria into two different countries, just as it did to Iraq. In doing so, the US has garnered support of forces that appear to be willing to give preference to US commercial interests, as puppet leaders did for Britain before.

As [reported](#) by *Responsible Statecraft* on February 16th, thirteen years of civil war has left Syria “in tatters.” What was once a middle-income nation has been reduced to the “poorest country on Earth” and “more than 90% of Syrians live below the international poverty line of \$1.90 per day. Their paychecks are worthless, with the Syrian pound losing virtually all of its relative value since the war began.” While Assad still clings to power, the Syrian people have been murdered, starved, and displaced in a brutal attempt at gradual regime change. After looking at the entire history, it hardly seems a coincidence that control over oil consistently crops up at every turn in this saga.

Conclusion

“A racket is best described...as something that is not what it seems to the majority of people. It is conducted for the benefit of the very few, at the expense of the very many. Out of war a few people make huge fortunes.”

-General Smedley Butler

While major power competition does seem to be a big factor in what has continued to happen in the Middle East, Hybrid War and Low-Intensity Operations are apparently the other side of the double-edged sword of today's wars. The covert nature of war now means war doesn't have to end when a host-nation desires it, hiccups in the plan can be ignored in the media or might not even be noticed, and relentlessly brutal murders of innocent people can be casually passed off as strikes on potential terrorists. It seems likely open warfare is not even preferred by either side in war, because it stops the flow of trade that keeps the profits growing.

Those who direct war should be held accountable for their numerous atrocities and war crimes, their unceasing lies to those they represent and take money from, and their use of human suffering as a means to profit. Those on the sidelines should get back into the business of opposing war, to relieve the suffering of allied warriors duped into fighting,



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and that of millions of innocent men, women, and children- suffering for the “crime” of walking around on ground that just happens to have oil beneath it.

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****Please contact local affiliate officers to learn how to get involved in their meetings.*

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Upcoming Events

****Some meetings can get canceled, or locations can change with short notice. Consider checking event pages or contacting hosts for updated information before travelling to events.*

Wednesday, March 6 @ 6-8pm – South West Michigan Affiliate Meeting

Airway Lanes Taproom: 5626 Portage Rd, Portage - 269-775-1775

The Southwest Michigan affiliate meets the first Wednesday of every month to discuss local activism and party business. Confirm details by going to <https://www.facebook.com/pg/LPofSWMI/> and clicking the events tab.

www.swmlp.com

Thursday, March 7 @ 7-9pm – Livingston County Affiliate Meeting

Cleary Pub: 117 E Grand River, Howell

Join the Libertarian Party of Livingston County for our monthly meeting. We will have a short business session followed by a discussion of the Non-Aggression Principle based on this article <https://www.libertarianism.org/topics/non-aggression-principle>. We gather at 7, order drinks and food, and business starts shortly after. If you're new to the party or to Libertarianism in general, you'll find the meetings welcoming and informative! For more information, see: <http://www.LivingstonLP.org>.

Saturday, March 9 @ 10am-close – 2024 Delegate Selection Convention

Hyatt Grand Blanc: 5481 Hill 23 Drive, Flint

For more info or to register, go to: <https://michiganlp.org/event/2024-national-delegate-selection-convention-2024-03/>

Sunday, March 10 @ 7-9pm – LPMI Executive Committee Monthly Meeting (Online)

The Executive Committee will meet on the 2nd Sunday of each month at 7:00 PM on Zoom.

Meeting ID: 874 3297 2253. Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83093546405>



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Wednesday, March 13 @ 6:30-8:30pm – Wayne County Affiliate Meeting

Habib's Cuisine: 14316 Michigan Ave, Dearborn

Second Wednesday of Every Month. Call to order is promptly at 6:30pm.

Thursday, March 14 @ 6:30-8pm – Huron-Raisin Monthly Meeting

The Tap Room: 201 West Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti

More info at www.HuronRaisinLP.org

Sunday, March 17 @ 2:00-4:30pm – Capital Area Affiliate Meeting

Eagle Monk Brewery: 4906 W Mt Hope Hwy, Lansing

Join the capital area affiliate of the Libertarian Party of Michigan for discussions on politics and libertarian theory.

Tuesday, March 19 @ 8-9pm – Upper Peninsula LP Monthly Meeting

Online

Every 3rd Tuesday at 8pm EST – the UPLP holds General Meetings open to the public.

Meeting ID: 819 9262 3984. Zoom Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81992623984>.

Wednesday, March 20 @ 6:30-9pm – Oakland County Monthly Meeting

B1 Tavern: 1967 Cass Lake Rd, Keego Harbor

Join LPOC for their monthly meeting. Casual dinner at 6:30pm. Call to order at 7:30pm.

Confirm details by going to <https://www.facebook.com/lpocmi/> and clicking the events tab.

Wednesday, March 27 @ 7:00-10:00pm – Monthly New Member Welcome Zoom

Meetup + Statewide-Member Discussion & Debate

This month's discussion topic will be on the following article: "Why Schools Don't Educate" https://www.naturalchild.org/articles/guest/john_gatto.html. The article is the text of a speech by John Taylor Gatto accepting the New York City Teacher of the Year Award on January 31, 1990. If you would like to participate in the Discussion event, please email membership@michiganlp.org for the Zoom link. All current members will receive an email invitation to the discussion section, which begins at 8pm.

Are you inspired by our ideals? [Join the party today](#), and [consider running for office](#) under our banner to get these ideals enacted in your community.

If you are new to the *Michigan Libertarian*, you can find archived issues here:

<http://old.michiganlp.org/resources-2/newsletter>.



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The Libertarian Party is committed to America's heritage of freedom: individual liberty and personal responsibility, a free-market economy of abundance and prosperity, a foreign policy of non-intervention, peace, and free trade.

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