

Manipulation and Technology Sadden, Revolutionary Changes Gladden

Contributed by Jan Lundberg
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Culture Change Letter #212, Nov. 11, 2008 - Sorry to spoil the Democrat victory-party's afterglow, but U.S. society is still subject to the masquerade of objective news coverage and editorializing that cover up the deepest problems. We the people did not usher in a non-corporate state on November 4th. The question was not even allowed to be posed: how could an election possibly change the socioeconomic power-structure?

The pitiful consumer of news is still bombarded with propaganda, much of it appearing to be reasonable. To be tolerant here of a mistaken worldview, we can say the "news" and prevailing views of the media may just reflect myopic ignorance of history, or, the slick jabber is cynical mind-control to try to steer the "herd" away from the open gate of the pen. We are being manipulated by those who (1) have an agenda for status-quo continuation and (2) who surface as harbingers of change that suits their preconceived notions acceptable to those controlling mass media. Example:

Clintonite commentator Robert Reich wrote on Nov. 9, "This is not the Great Depression of the 1930s, but nor is it turning out to be merely a bad recession of the kind we've experienced periodically over the last half century. Call it a Mini Depression." This analysis is arbitrary and smacks of wishful thinking. It contains no awareness of collapse as an inevitable consequence of the squandering of non-renewable resources and environmental degradation. Robert, we are at the approximate peak in the world's oil extraction.

He also wrote in his syndicated article, "The real problem is on the demand side of the economy." This is old hat; he and his ilk want to see higher consumption in order to see more investment. This is an idiotic, outrageous wish that reveals no concept of ecological reality or geophysical limits, if he does not turn around and support local economics to replace corporatism and "growth." The wealthy elite class benefits most from endless consumption, but we are told there are (trickle-down) benefits for the (disappearing) middle class. Meanwhile, the ballooning poor class is up Schidt Creek, and there's nothing new being offered by the powers that be. Reich and his Democratic Party fellow travelers, such as the liberal Truthout.org site, apparently cannot see beyond capitalist BS. On the other hand, well-meaning liberals also want to see simple living (low-consumption lifestyle) adopted -- someday, and it could be right quick.

Out with the new, in with the old: Techno-domination falls

Rather than just complain about the blind and the greedy, Culture Change readers can take heart in accelerated change that will turn a failed society constructively upside down and jettison the corporate global economy. Sometimes the only way we can see this trend is to meditate, to reflect on our surroundings and on the effects of technological society assaulting our minds and physical health.

We can surround ourselves with pleasures and comforts, but this does not substitute for beautiful nature and natural living. When we let down our egos we can feel the sadness of our altered world around us. We hear the din of engines welcomed for drowning out the tinnitus in our damaged eardrums. In such a state of mind we are not cheered by the idea of diversions such as a shopping expedition, a meal, or even a hot date. We feel trapped in a world of our own unmaking and we don't know if it is leading possibly to extinction.

Technology's output and legacy consists of a lot of lifeless crap -- ecologically speaking (please don't get mad!). This is because the technology's not mainly of wood, leather and other natural, truly biodegradable sources. A new CD (made of polycarbonate plastic/bisphenol-A) may offer fun, but it's an escape and does not even represent a real sound wave. All the enjoyment of chocolate, home-made wine, movies, cash, etc. are just ways of coping with the emptiness of true love present in nature and between human beings without technology. Many of us feeling the emptiness of industrial society and false wealth turn to art or activism (or both) to improve our world, work out some frustration, express our truth, and honor the natural world and the universe.

Technology and civilization's "progress" are unraveling quickly, yet we cling to our habits even as a tsunami comes into view. No amount of evidence and warnings is enough to change our ways, so one must conclude we have to fall on our faces to look at the world differently. By this time millions of people are hearing that plastics are polluting the oceans and our bodies. But the pace of social change is too slow for the challenge we face. At some point, another news story should tip the average reader over to taking action without government initiatives. A great example is the finding on the widespread tainting by plastics of countless laboratory tests ["Researchers raise alarm after chemical leak found in common plastic" - link below].

Prepare to bid adieu the world as we know it

Despite the sincere talk of change from Barack Obama and his followers, we are all being cautioned in a top-down fashion that change is a gradual process; we will passively watch or endure it, and are invited to contribute to it -- but not told we must change our lifestyle or do without. The government-policy approach to change is less and less appropriate for today's world. It is an outmoded, non-viable concept of incremental, reformist change to be presented for the people's contemplation and approval. What's not being said publicly is that historic change and upheaval are barely getting started and will accelerate relentlessly until we can't even recognize today's world. This is happening out of the control of the political process that the elections and government represent. We must take a leap and stop thinking in terms of "an America of tomorrow," if we recognize that much of our world today will disintegrate, depart and become Balkanized or Ecotopianized.

I see the world as we know it wiped away. I see people coming together as tribes. Today's hullabaloo and hoopla of Obama (as a decent choice being a novelty) is a giant distraction from getting down to creating our own local community. Even the issues some of us are grappling with, such as peak oil and climate change, are a giant distraction if we're not getting down to revolutionary change in lifestyle. An election is no substitute for a revolution (of consciousness and nonviolent change). We will soon be handed a free ticket and will go through a turnstile. We have to start living right, no matter what the climate is going to do, and no matter what collapse from our energy gluttony will cause. "Rejoice rejoice, we have not choice but to carry on... Witness the quickness with which we carry on." - Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young

Fabulous news lately: an environmentalist's dream

The following commentary is optimistic, yet is an unparalleled example of how a truthful viewpoint for our whole world is taboo. It is presented in extremely limited forums, due to the repression of biocentric thinking by those wedded to industrialism and technological "progress":

To set the stage, here is conventional thinking from the latest Association for the Study of Peak Oil and Gas - USA Peak Oil Review (Nov. 10). It does not allow for a vision of a better future, and is exemplary of the worldview not ready for culture change:

Bad economic news dominated the week. With payrolls dropping, house values sinking, retail sales dropping, and car sales plunging... Deepwater and Alberta sands projects which are very costly seem to be in the most trouble. Unfortunately, these are exactly the projects that are being counted on to supply an increasing share of world oil production in coming years.

The future of the American automobile industry is hanging in the balance and is likely to be decided shortly. New reports of plunging sales and large losses make it likely that the big three automakers will be insolvent in a matter of months if not weeks. Early last week the Bush administration refused to come to the industry's aid with multi-billion dollar loans.

Unless we can interpret those concerns as mere observations that do not clash with a radical critique of the lethal nature of industrialism, the attitude or tone is disappointing for its assumptions. The major peak oil organization in this country, ASPO-USA, stands for stability and gradual change, when that ain't in the cards. Wishful thinking does not belong in objective analysis. Many a peak oilist needs to be reminded of the Hirsch Report for the U.S. Dept. of Energy, which explained how mitigation of peak oil will be impossible for the economy as we know it, if society's attempt to mitigate the effects of peak oil are done when peak is hitting and not before.

This "doom and gloom" perspective, and publicly anticipating collapse and die-off, along with any welcoming of a culture change that might involve "heading for the hills to gather nuts" (as "the petrocollapse people" were characterized by the editor of Peak Oil Review), are suppressed by many peak oilists and cornucopians alike. It is for the same reason the City of San Francisco recently rejected a most qualified candidate for a vacant position on the Peak Oil Preparedness Task Force (she is Alice Friedemann, a Culture Change and Energy Bulletin writer of great ability and sense).

The fact that Culture Change refers so often to the sobering and conservative Hirsch Report, as it's reasonable and prestigious enough to be definitive, is evidence that we are knocking on doors of people pretending not to be home. Is there "anybody home"? Or does the tornado have to take off the roof for us all to be bared and rendered equal?

Until it's no longer a marginal or fringe viewpoint to be glad about the collapse of the tar-sands monstrosity and the phony solution it is, and until we stop trying to protect the likes of General Motors, we are plummeting toward the worst kind of collapse that collapse-denialists would like to avoid.

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"The Mini Depression and the Maximum-Strength Remedy" by Robert Reich"

tpmcafe.talkingpointsmemo.com

"Researchers raise alarm after chemical leak found in common plastic":

theglobeandmail.com

"Industrial Society Destroys Mind and Environment", by Sushil Yadav, Culture Change:

"TRYING TO SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT BY RECYCLING IS LIKE SHOOTING SOMEONE 10,000 TIMES AND THEN TRYING TO SAVE HIM BY TAKING OUT ONE BULLET."

culturechange.org/industrial_mind.html

Peak Oil Review Vol. 3 No. 45, November 10, 2008:

aspo-usa.com

The Hirsch Report, 2005, for the U.S. Dept. of Energy:

netl.doe.gov