Technofixers-Compromisers' Self-Limited Options at Dawn of Obama Eco-Era

Contributed by Jan Lundberg
25 November 2008

CRITICAL COMMENT

Culture Change Letter #217, Nov. 25, 2008 -

In letting the "conservatives" help define priorities as the Washington, D.C. policy battleground is set, funded environmentalists often feel they must play by polluters' (and government's) rules. As we see from the excited memo below from Environmental Defense Fund, the economy is right up there with "stopping" global warming.

Jobs are made the priority in a green agenda, even if this approach isn't green enough to suit ecological reality.

Preservation of the consumer economy is a given, even though the Earth has all but been suffocated by manufacturing and extraction. Profits are no problem with greener technology, so goes the assurance and hope.

Fundamental change, whether voluntary or through collapse? -- fuggetaboutit if you want corporate acceptance and major foundation funding. A place at the table, suit and tie. This strategy will quickly become an anachronism as the winds of ecological and economic change become a tornado.

Environmental Defense Fund's alert/fundraiser via email on Nov. 25th, referring to the Obama team's ascendancy, was titled "Transition Report: Ready for the Fight of Our Lives?" (first paragraphs):

> January marks a new beginning in our quest to stop global warming and jump-start America's faltering economy.
>
> But, the fight won't be easily won.
>
> Even with President-elect Barack Obama's commitment to taking action, our opponents will do everything they can to block legislation.
>
> Just yesterday, the Heritage Foundation, an influential conservative Washington think tank, called global warming "the most hyped" environmental issue of our time and warned that "any effort to substantially curtail such emissions would have extremely costly and disruptive impacts on the economy and on living standards." (see: heritage.org).

The alert goes on to recommend books, the first two by figures that Culture Change has critiqued in recent time: Van Jones and Tom Friedman. To this writer and many Culture Change readers, Jones, Friedman and the EDF are not different enough from the Heritage Foundations of this world, which is why we stand for basic cultural change now, as global crises converge.]

Indeed, the Heritage Foundation is rabidly against regulation, and believes legislators are easier to influence and control

than Executive Branch workers. The Foundation's website StopEPA.com was "created for individuals from agriculture, manufacturing, small business, transportation, nonprofit, and other industries concerned about the economy-wide effects of the potential EPA regulations on greenhouse gases."

The existence of corporate-state entities stealing our future can make greener compromisers look like heroes. I still remember hearing EDF's economist tell me in 1988 that global warming by humans was at play already -- to my shock during a sweltering dinner in DC. So I find it ironic that this organization would use the incorrect concept "stop global warming," when feedback loops are already driving climate change. At that time I was freelancing in DC as an oil-savvy environmentalist for nonprofit groups (mainly Renew America, formerly the Solar Lobby), and I was struck by the existence of a "green industry conspiracy" in place around DC. I was as uneasy about it as I was impressed.

The environmentalism I saw did not resemble the protest movement or grassroots activist movement I'd known previously in California sixteen years before. Then in 1989 somebody mentioned to me the existence of Earth First!, as he disappeared behind the closing doors of an elevator.

We are appreciative of the occasional victories obtained by the big mainstream enviro groups, e.g., EDF (environmentaldefense.org). However, if our species (and life itself) is going down for the count (a boxing term), isn't it time for do-it-yourself activism and setting a new agenda without the Establishment's rules? Consider our Pledge for Climate Protection; it happens to address petrocollapse too: culturechange.org
- JL

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