The End of Nuclear and its Timing

Contributed by Jan Lundberg
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Three days before the Fukushima nuclear power explosion, I made this comment on a peace activist's Facebook page: "I believe a successful, final anti-nuke campaign will only take place in one of two ways: (1) collapse puts the entire infrastructure of industry and consumption out of business, forcing the survivors to minimally babysit the nukes forever, or, there's an accident or deliberate blast or meltdown that motivates people all over the world to shut down the mechanical beast once and for all."

I didn't think it would come so soon. But that has been the pattern for our planet in peril in recent years: acceleration of disasters, climate destabilization, peak oil, strife such as wars and revolutions, extremes of elitist wealth and overwhelming poverty, fresh water depletion -- all prelude to complete collapse. However, to use the equivalent of jiu-jitsu or aikido to rapidly channel the onslaught of negative energy toward something positive is our duty and opportunity. It takes not only a mass awakening to the insane futility of nuclear power, but a realization that the present system; a.k.a. Western Civilization, is hitting bottom. As glorifying as our civilization is in some respects, the extinction of species and the sprawling, cancerous waste known as development (for profit of the few) are impossible to ignore and excuse.

Almost everyone in the world has been propagandized to believe we need energy in such quantities and forms that nuclear and coal must be tolerated and pursued. Yes, we're strung out on dirty energy and many people feel hopeless to do without it. Many want to feel comfortably ready to let go of deadly energy only when substitutes are in place. But questioning the purported need for massive quantities of energy leads one to notice overpopulation as well as the lifestyle of accumulating more and more material things. We need to go further by resisting the techno-topian dream of a "clean energy economy" -- for this fantasy for a huge-scale replacement of fossil fuels serves to obscure the imperative to slash per capita energy use now in industrialized countries. Only speedy curtailment, along with unprecedented global tree planting, allows us to realistically imagine turning around human-caused global warming.

We're culturally damaged

For the Earth's population to be more and more individually and globally f***ed is something we are expected to keep tolerating. As the planet fries, the corporate mass media and governments don't urge us to change anything whatsoever. They expect us to accept no end of harm and short-sighted policies, while soothing our feelings about economic failure. The dominant paradigm is more clearly bankrupt and irreparable by the day. So our only hope is to live the future we need now. One can do that individually to a degree, but in concert the effect is exponential. Together we can start to reject extinction by never forgetting that nuclear energy and nuclear weapons are joined at the hip, and radioactive waste and fallout can last thousands of years.

I, for one, cannot take this separateness. That's the mood that across-the-board separateness, failure and desperation put me in. How can I, or anyone, make myself feel better? With an 8.9 earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster, I've exhausted my avenues for the moment. But we must carry on and stop wasting time. Certain things are past anyone's control, namely general collapse of industrial society through economic meltdown, and what I've termed climate extinction. Yet:

Maybe the challenges of our industrial culture let-down, and modern society's lack of solidarity between people, are felt by enough of us by now to show us we really need love. David Brower, the anti-nuclear dean of the environmental movement (1912-2000), said love is the only resource that grows the more you use it. One can describe our materialist, ecocidal culture today as lacking love. When we gravitate toward loving and mutual support, realizing that shopping and consuming gave rise to disaster and don't satisfy anymore, a new day can dawn. En fin!

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Further Reading:

Japan's Quake Could Have Irradiated the Entire US,
Mar 11, 2011 by Harvey Wasserman

Nuclear articles on Culture Change:

Can the world run on renewables, nuclear energy and geo-sequestration? The negative case, by Ted Trainer, 23 June 2010

Obama Has Fanned the Flames of Nuclear Development,
by Roger Herried,
19 September 2009

Why nuclear energy is not the answer to Climate Change,
July 26, 2009, by Ben Williams

Everything Nuclear,
Jun 8, 2009: "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Nuclear Power* but were afraid to ask"

Nuclear Power - One of Humankind's Biggest Mistakes,
Feb 1, 2009, by Jim Bell

Three Mile Island Killed People / Nuclear Industry's Despicable Regulatory Record,
Mar 24, 2009, by Harvey Wasserman / Peter A. Bradford

Why a Nuclear Free World is Important,
Jan. 31, 2009, by Roger Herried

More Accidents Await with President Obama's Errant Energy Policies,
June 21, 2010, by Dr. Brent Blackwelder

Radiation Dangers Allowed to Proliferate for the Consumer,
Mar. 11, 2009, by Roger Herried

Nuclear Power Cannot Solve Climate Change,
Mar. 31, 2009, by Katherine Ling

Uranium Mining Poisons Native Americans,
Feb 25, 2009, by Jeff Gerritsen

Goodbye to the War Party (Republicrats et al) and the nuclear threat, Jan Lundberg, Culture Change Letter #29, August 10, 2003.