Fooled by Hope, Where Do We Go From Here?

Contributed by Jan Lundberg
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Perfectly intelligent people were fooled, or they fooled themselves, by the Barack Obama phenomenon. The good-cop bad-cop game of the Republicrat/Demopublican Establishment was effective, after progressive people suffered eight years of "W." So after enough months of Obama at the helm of the good ship Status Quo, we found he might be the New Boss that The Who warned us about in Won't Get Fooled Again. Great to have a Black family in the White House, but it's turning out to be as meaningful as having a White family in the Black House (whatever that means).

Let me go a step further than the old refrain "throw the rascals out." New rascals just take their place; such is the nature and purpose of our social system. So in this age of terminal ecological drama, it is time for a new approach. Great faith in elections as The Answer is the lazy, timid way out. For we find that we're still sheep inside the pen awaiting the slaughterhouse. If the pen is our economy and consumerism, then leaving the pen and heading for the hills would be the sane course of action. The idea of arming and organizing the sheep to take over the slaughterhouse -- to seize or heal the system for more equitable distribution and other reforms -- is fatuous. Better to disarm the butchers by boycotting their slaughterhouse. Veganism isn't enough.

Now, many will say they cannot boycott the slaughterhouse because they are busy. Or because there might be an Iranian or Al Qaeda slaughterhouse somewhere else. Or because we have too many good chits to cash in at the slaughterhouse and we don't know if yonder green hills are really our modern style. For those wedded to business as usual, whether you be sheep or butcher, the abrupt failure of a system depending on cheap oil may make any alternatives to starving suddenly quite desirable. With expensive, dwindling oil and the related climate disruption already hitting -- 14 states with unusually bad heat waves today -- the sudden inconvenience of not being able to drive to work or find food that was always trucked in to the supermarket will make the sheep and butchers run amok. When perhaps only a few are left standing, a new appreciation of our renewable resources and the need to cooperate peacefully will be painfully obvious. Enter the sustainable culture. It is tragic that it has always been in reach, but with a harder and harder up front cost to bear the longer it is postponed.

This harsh analysis does not mean to say all politicians are worthless, or that voting should be boycotted. But one should combine realistic expectations with most energy devoted to lifestyle change and community resilience.

Getting through increasingly "interesting" times

The U.S. consists of victims and predators -- take your pick, you probably have to be one or the other. A third way is available but is for the eccentric, rebellious tiny minority. Thinking independently in opposition to or outside of The System is hardly known to the masses due to conditioning. But when one does break free of the false security of the treadmill existence -- and I hesitate to suggest something hard to prove -- there is a cosmic dance to join in that seems to take care of you even when money is lacking. I know it sounds crazy, but I have so often felt like someone or something is looking out for me that I am no longer surprised that I am somehow able to keep going, despite adversity, and contribute to a better world. I'm not the only one to feel and experience this unexplainable positive influence in the universe. Serendipity happens, but also there is an unseen, sensed support that is time and again timely. But will this get someone through an unprecedented collapse of the economy? That depends:

The dilemma a working person faces when collapse is bearing down, and a major move or preparation-process would be in order, is that he or she must keep slaving away to buy food and pay rent. The solution is community. Together we can overcome adversity. Pairing up, having a partner, is critical. Then one of you can work to pay bills while the other follows up on community-building and accumulating skills for post-petroleum living. Some of this has begun to happen -- easy when unemployment is high anyway, and worsening. The slightly common domestic arrangement for balancing financial and social duties is that one member of the couple is a full time activist and the other is a full time worker.

The difficulty in forming such arrangements is that in the U.S. each person typically feels insecure, and wants "more." Both people believe they must work so they can live well even when one income could possibly suffice. This turns out to be short sighted, when both are specialists earning cash and both remain separated from the land.

John Lennon implored us in the Beatles' last album, when the allure of the "60s revolution was still strong, to "Come Together" -- this song's message may be even more meaningful than his well known songs "Give Peace a Chance" and "All You Need Is Love." Coming together ought not to be a challenge, when it is so natural and basic, but the economy is all about separateness as consumers. When the economy collapses, say hello to togetherness and solidarity.

Meanwhile, as Obama acts a lot more like a Bush III than a Martin Luther King, Jr., the Hope that Obama generated seems by now to have been mostly calculated by the elite to suppress revolt. Although some die-hard grassroots Democrats have infinite patience and a kind of sympathy for their leader Obama, his actions and inaction have not moved the country in a positive direction. Thus the national Katrina we warned about, regarding petrocollapse and climate-change impacts, are only assured.

So where do we go from here, besides Come Together? A thoughtful song by Chicago from 1969, on their second album that they "dedicated to the people of the revolution," is "Where Do We Go from Here?":

Every day just gets a little shorter don't you think

Take a look around you, and you'll see just what I mean

People got to come together, not just out of fear

Where do we go

Where do we go

Where do we go from here?

Try to find a better place, but soon it's all the same

What once you thought was a paradise is not just what it seems

The more I look around I find, the more I have to fear

Where do we go

Where do we go

Where do we go from here?

I know it's hard for you to

Change your way of life

I know it's hard for you to do

The world is full of people

Dying to be free

So if you don't my friend

There's no life for you, no world for me

Let's all get together soon, before it is too late

Forget about the past and let your feelings fade away

If you do I'm sure you'll see the end is not yet near

Where do we go

Where do we go

Where do we go from here?

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Where Do We Go from Here? by Chicago listen to mp3 for free

Come Together by The Beatles Watch John perform it