

PART ONE

THE REVOLUTION THAT ARISES FROM THE EARTH

By Willam H. Kötke

The planetary elite are compelled to continue on their path of growth leading toward planetary domination. The international bankers through their control of the industrial world's privately owned central banks maintain a tether on the money system through their control of the U.S. dollar as the currency of international trade. One important mechanism that allows this is that the largest item in international trade, oil, is sold in dollars. In order to insure the continuance of the dollar economy, they must be able to choose which currency oil is sold for, or control the oil, or control both. The center of the empire, the U.S., is maintained by debt as the petrodollars and other dollars come into the U.S. at the rate of at least 2.5 billion per day (foreign countries purchasing U.S. government bonds) in order to continue the cycle, which keeps the empire and its military power expanding. As the elite carry out their strategies of domination, they are racing against time. The monster trends of Peak Oil and energy exhaustion, climate change, which will severely disrupt the seasons of growth in the food supply system, the weakness of the dollar, and ecological collapse are pursuing them. An exponentially growing world population with growing material consumption based on dwindling resources and a dying planet won't work, but they have no other option to maintain their power and profit.

Seeds of Change:

As the industrial system spins toward exhaustion, seeds of change are sprouting at the base. The people at the base are not revolting in order to take the power that the elite have but are revolting to take power over their own lives. In Argentina, after the neo-liberal apparatchiks collapsed the economy and devastated the middle class leaving massive unemployment, the workers began to take over the factories and run them themselves, with all employees receiving the same wage. The great documentary, “The Take,” details the story of one factory take-over by the employees against a background of over two hundred factory take-overs. Earlier, the people at the base had begun to move when the courageous Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo began to organize and demonstrate. These were women who had family members disappear and were demonstrating in the face of a vicious fascist military dictatorship, which is estimated to have murdered at least thirty thousand people. The courage of the mothers was an important factor in bringing down the fascists and spreading courage and inspiration to the working people.

The economy had crashed under the military dictatorship and then after electoral politics was reorganized, the economy revived to some extent and then it crashed again under the auspices of the neo-libs in the IMF and World Bank. President Carlos Menem who had acquiesced to them was tagged as the culprit.

In the final scenes of the documentary, “The Take,” Menem had gone down in disgrace, and a new election was being prepared. Suddenly, the new factory worker/owners saw that the political class had gone down to central casting and thrown up a slate of the same tired old political characters. Even Menem ran again, though Nestor Kirchner won.

When the film makers questioned the worker/owners about this they symbolically shrugged their shoulders. The machinations of electoral politics performed by the political/financial class had become only marginally relevant to them. They had taken power in their neighborhoods, on the factory floor, and in the head office.

The Mondragon Cooperatives:

The Basque people exist in Northern Spain, centered in the Pyrenees Mountains. Their culture and population exist partly in France and partly in Spain. They are an ancient people and one of only several peoples of Europe who have a language that is not Indo-European, the grain-eating patriarchal herders who invaded Europe from Central Asia thousands of years ago. The

Basque culture, centered in the mountains, is land-based in small, fertile, productive farms and hamlets. Though cities and towns have grown up in some areas, the cultural roots exist in a system in which each small farm was inherited within the family, and the surname of each member of the family was the same as the ancient name of the farm. This and the manner of farming and interaction were inherited from the ancient past.

In addition to the land-based culture, the Basques in the Twentieth Century had become significant industrialists with their iron mines, industries, and international trade. This was mixed in with the chaos of the Spanish Civil War and the establishment of Francisco Franco as the head of the Spanish fascist state. The economic environment was not welcoming to innovation during the Franco regime as the fascist state was led by financiers and politicians who had a foot in both realms much like in the present United States. Nonetheless, the Mondragon cooperative movement grew out of this soil. As described in the classic study, *We Build The Road As We Travel*, by Roy Morrison, eleven young people purchased a small bankrupt factory that produced paraffin cooking stoves. The year was 1954. Since that time the Mondragon cooperative movement has grown to tens of thousands of workers and dozens of enterprises networked together and anchored by their own bank the Caja Lboral Popular, owned by the enterprises.

Growing out of this context, the individuals are not simply farm cooperative workers, industrial workers or even bank workers, but the movement has a wider and deeper reach. One of the guiding principles of the movement is *equilibrio*. Morrison says:

“The Mondragon cooperative system is informed by an essentially ecological consciousness. Ecology, conventionally defined as the relationship of living things to their environment, is understood here to encompass social as well as biological reality and their interaction. Today, Mondragon’s ecological consciousness is manifested not primarily through environmentalism, but through the practice of a social ecology: the pursuit of *equilibrio* is fundamentally connected to the basic ecological principle of diversity and unity, or, in social terms, freedom and community. Its promise is basic change that will harmonize both social life and the relationship between the social and natural worlds.”

Writer Curtis Jackobs adds:

“Basque leadership styles are non-authoritarian, involve consensual processes, and are aimed at harmonizing the group's feeling for collective ends with possible suspicion and lack of trust. A neighborhood's elected representative does not simply wield power, but builds consensus for group projects. This process often encounters problems of suspicion arising from individual and class differences. These are reflected in the relative difficulty of establishing agricultural cooperatives and point to the non-utopian nature of the Basque situation.”

Ten percent of the cash flow of the network is invested in the communities and in charitable institutions, while another principle is to maintain as little spread between the bottom wage and the top as possible. In this amazing movement from the base, coming out from under a fascist political/financial class as it did, the Mondragon cooperatives show a way to build resilient community social institutions. This social health will be valuable as we head into the future of the exhaustion of industrial society and its fragmentation.

These areas are only a portion of the movement of people at the base who are acting to protect and enhance their communities even under the trampling impact of raw industrial capitalism. India especially, has a number of home-grown movements attempting to protect and strengthen their local social fabric. One would be remiss not to mention the cooperatives of the state of Kerala in India and of the many grassroots movements that the amazing eco/feminist Vandana Shiva has been associated with and has publicized.

Beyond Oil:

In 2003, Richard Heinberg published his seminal book, *The Party's Over: Oil, War and the Fate of Industrial Societies*. His study concerns the observation that the production of crude oil will peak and then begin to decline to its end. At this point most of the oil producing countries of the world have declining production. Heinberg, who is a faculty member at New College of California, Santa Rosa campus, projects that we are now at the peak of world production of crude oil. This, as he suggests, will have immeasurable impact on the exponentially exploding world

population living on oil. He also suggests that this will collapse the capitalist economies which must have growth in order to survive.

Following the publication of his book, he and others who were also following these trends have swung into action to notify the world's populations of the impending apocalypse. Many are now involved. The flagship organization of this effort is the [Post Carbon Institute](#), led by Julian Darley. Under the umbrella of this organization, a re-localization network has been organized, www.relocalize.net. The effort of these local groups is to examine and take action concerning the local community life support systems with the obvious view that soon the outside energy supports will decrease or stop.

With amazing speed this network has mushroomed. There are now 138 community groups in twelve countries. The [re-localization group in Willits, California](#), is one of the cutting edge communities. Their project teams are assessing and taking action on all points of the community's survival support areas. Their teams are focused on eight areas; business, culture/education, energy, food, health, shelter, transportation, and water.

Each of their project team's focus is quite comprehensive. For example the business project team's focus is a sustainable mix of businesses in their area, business financing, small business incubation, finding productive uses of waste streams from business (preferably as raw material for another business), employment, vocational training, local market structures, local currency, and bartering systems.

Their food project team at this point has three areas on which they focus: The Main street Community Garden, the Gleaners, and [Brookside Energy Farm, Willits, California Energy Farm](#). This year the Gleaners have collected tons of food from the local area and donated it to local charities and food banks. Their Brookside farm is in full production, and a salient point there is the installation of a micro-hydro system.

We all know the high percentage of the population in the old days who were agrarian and produced food and the small percentage now who produce the food for industrial citizens. We are members of the industrial society. We purchase our survival systems with money. We do not go out to the back forty and cut some wood for our wood cook stove and heater. We are a population whose survival systems are huge organizations that stretch to ethereal heights which we cannot see and only vaguely understand and over which we have little control. But the base is moving to protect itself and the re-localization effort offers great encouragement.

PART TWO

THE EARTH SPEAKS

By William H. Kötke

We who can read these words are civilized people who have been mentally conditioned by the culture of civilization and the industrial society from birth. We have precepts loaded into our subconscious minds which cause us to see reality in a certain way. To a native Maya person in the State of Chiapas, Mexico, the *earth* speaks through them. They live integrated with the earth in their everyday energy systems and in their mental attitudes. To them the fact that the earth-life has manifested these living things around us and in us, means that we are children of the Mother Earth and we speak as one of the voices of the earth. To the Maya this is obvious on a deep level. To us it is an interesting intellectual proposition only, because we have been conditioned by a cultural upbringing that filters out this deep understanding, and we do not mentally link our life with the life of the living earth.

To the Maya, security is the earth and its care. The Maya live with the earth and feed from its natural bounty. Historically for a million years our species has been very successful. We have been adapted to the earth-life. We lived within the ecological web and energy flows of the earth. Our traditional migratory patterns carried us over our gathering areas. In the season when the game were fat in one place we went there, and when the berries were ripe in another we went there. Our success was adaptation to the life of the earth. We also had a culture that respected the earth and living things. The proposition is simple: We are alive, we live because of the other living things which feed us, we are obligated to respect and encourage those other living things so that we too can live.

Though this simple logic escapes civilization, it is obvious that we must begin to fashion a culture that has these values at the center, if our species is to survive. Our culture teaches us that wealth is the central value of human life and that wealth is our security. When we left our forager/hunter life and began agriculture, civilization and empire, we began a way of life that was not integrated with the life around us but ran a net ecological deficit of the earth's fertility. The earth's flesh; the topsoils, the forests, the fish stocks, and the other species began to decline

and recede. Thousands of years ago the effects of this culture were displayed in the early empires of Sumeria and Babylon in the Tigris-Euphrates valley. With irrigated agriculture they managed to exhaust and salinize the soils to the extent that today one third of the possible arable land in Iraq still cannot be used because of salinization caused by the early empires. With agriculture, overgrazing and deforestation, they so destroyed the land that river-borne erosion material has filled in the gulf for one hundred and eighty five miles! Now the mouth of the river enters the ocean that far from where it did before the culture of civilization began.

Chiapas is one of the richest states in Mexico in terms of industrial resources and has the poorest people. The Maya know well the effects of a civilization—empire, war, colonization, and exploitation by the elites. Against this backdrop they have begun to change some of the forms of governance of their own communities such as the role of women and the position of the elders. Women are now occupying positions of authority, and the elders' authority is being relegated to the sphere of traditions and culture rather than clan power in all their aspects of life.

They are creating a new kind of culture out from under the burden of colonialism. They have a culture of sharing, cooperation and care of the earth. This is being made the cultural basis of governance. They scorn the political class along with the electoral politics which is its control mechanism. The Zapatistas control from the base through community meetings. Theirs is a culture of human community rather than a collection of social isolates in a mass industrial society who vote periodically for a list of names. They have power over their way of life through community rather than voting on someone in a far off parliament.

In their areas they have created parallel governments quite unlike the colonial government they are shouldering aside. One of the strong moves has been to take back the power to educate their youth. In mass industrial society the education of the youth is conducted by educational institutions governed by the elites who make sure that this is tailored to the needs of those elites and the industrial society that they control. By having control of the minds of the youth they are able to inculcate the reality view of industrial society with all its purposes, values, and meanings. Nearly all of the artifacts of industrial culture are purchased from industry. Transportation, housing, food, water, and finally the cultural worldview provided electronically creates a near seamless reality that has little to do with life and living things but with power, profit, and violence. The violence of three killings per hour on television is reflected in the

violence to the earth and the violence of imperial wars of conquest to feed the maw of the machine that runs a net deficit of the earth's fertility in order to insure its survival.

To the Zapatistas, transferring to the young the tremendously valuable fund of information that the species has amassed is certainly possible without also placing it in the context of the values of industrial civilization. They even have plans for a Zapatista university. But the manner of teaching is different. In their view the teacher comes to class to learn just like the students. It is a combined inquiry, and the contribution of each participant is valuable. An important ingredient in their culture is respect; respect for the elders, respect for the earth, and respect for each other. Life is valuable. They do not perpetuate a hierarchal command system.

Eco Villages and the New Aborigines:

The immediate world problem is the net deficit of the earth's fertility. This is solved by self-sufficient communities. The eco villages which are being formed around the world are pointed toward self-sufficiency. Eco villages grew, in part, out of the intentional community movement that began to swell in the late nineteen sixties. As the global recognition of the plight of the earth's life grew, so did the eco village movement.

The "alive in balance with nature" phrase does not necessarily mean adopting a loin cloth and eating roots and berries. The fact is that there are far too few roots and berries left. We can though, create ways of living that are self-sufficient and that do pay obeisance to the successful million-year history of our species.

Of course, there are many eco villages in various cultures around the world that are still near self-sufficiency, but the new eco village movement within the machine of industrial society is significant. We in industrial civilization are culturally conditioned to associate power with wealth. In reality, from top to bottom, our daily lives are governed by huge mass institutions over which we have little or no control. All our survival systems are controlled by mass institutions. We have little fundamental control of our lives. Our picture of freedom is to have enough money to do whatever we want. But this is not real power on the planet earth. Being able to create one's habitation, feed oneself through one's own efforts, and live in a real human community that serves the developmental needs of each individual and the community is real power.

The eco village movement is a follow-up to the resources developed by the alternative community activists. These resources are many. They involve alternative medicine as an

alternative to industrial medicine. Herbalism, aromatherapy, chiropractic, body work ,which is often called energy medicine, acupuncture, nutrition and many others are resources that are popular. Gender equality is also a very strong theme. Grassroots, consensus government is seen as real democracy. In the realm of habitation, local materials such as straw bale, cob, adobe, and other alternatives to industrial construction are emphasized. This is usually combined with passive or active solar advantages in addition to water harvesting systems. Various alternative energy systems have been perfected.

The pleasure of providing one's food has gone beyond the European row crop system to the far more sophisticated [permaculture](#). The practice of permaculture has spread world-wide. In some aspects permaculture is a way of designing (or planting) one's area and watershed with a high diversity of human and ecologically useful species that all fit together into plant communities. It is based in perennial plants, does not turn the soil on the broad scale and through its diversity provides a healthy, balanced diet. Permaculture can restore soil fertility while providing more food per acre than can industrial agriculture. This comparison is somewhat unfair to the industrial system which grows monocrops on vast areas with the purpose of sucking up soil fertility by the use of annual plants for profit. Its purpose is not to feed people, but to force surpluses from the earth for profit. Permaculture on the other hand does not produce massive surpluses of monocrops; its purpose is to feed people. It can though, produce specialty crops for the local farmers markets or village barter centers.

People leaving the disintegrating human culture of industrial society have experimented with many social forms. Celibacy, monogamy, and group marriage are possibilities. Ritual and the creation of traditions are important. The content of our daily lives are important. How we relate to each other and how we relate to the youth are important. In community there are mentors for the youth, uncles, aunts, elders. In the impoverished human culture of industrial society the young are deposited in front of a television, and then when they are a little older they are stuffed into a mass educational institution preparing them to become another industrial cipher.

In traditional cultures of our species, the youth were taught how to be human. This is artfully shown in the book, *Seven Arrows*, by Hyemeyohsts Storm from the Cheyenne culture of the North American Great Plains. An African couple, both who came from a small, traditional village in Ghana, have been valuable resources for the intentional community movement.

[Sobonfu E. Some](#) and her husband [Malidoma Patrice Some](#) help us understand what life-centered, human village life is like.

People are returning to the land and community in many forms. The direction is set, and there are many paths. One unique path is a method using traditional capitalist techniques to reach that goal. [Globalecovillage](#), led by Biosphere II architect Phil Hawes, has created a stock company listed on Wall Street to reach that goal of designed eco villages.

The elephant in the room is the [Global Ecovillage Network](#) that involves tens of thousands of villages. This is a world-wide network of eco villages that shows that rather than having to adopt a loin cloth, the ancient human values of our species can be established at the next higher turn of the spiral with eco villages all over the world connected and communicating over the internet like a global mind—a small solar panel or a micro-hydro, a telephone connected to a satellite, and there you have it. The eco village is not a retreat backwards into some kind of insignificance.

The burgeoning movement is shown by a statement from the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN). Network members include large networks like Sarvodaya (11,000 sustainable villages in Sri Lanka), EcoYoff and Colufifa (350 villages in Senegal), the Ladakh project on the Tibetan plateau, ecotowns like Auroville in South India, the Federation of Damanhur in Italy and Nimbin in Australia, small rural ecovillages like Gaia Asociación in Argentina and Huehuecoyotl, Mexico, urban rejuvenation projects like Los Angeles EcoVillage and Christiania in Copenhagen, permaculture design sites such as Crystal Waters, Australia, Cochabamba, Bolivia and Barus, Brazil, and educational centers such as Findhorn in Scotland, Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales, Earthlands in Massachusetts, and many more. In the U.S. there are presently eighty-three villages affiliated with the network. One can imagine the creative ideas that flow between all of these villages.

GEN is divided into three areas: [GEN - Europe and Africa](#) , GEN - [Oceania and Asia](#), and the [Eco Village Network of the Americas](#).

The worm has turned. In former decades revolutionaries vied to grab the industrial power of the elites in order to redistribute wealth. Now we have seen what the Wealth of the industrialist/banker has done to the earth and our future. Now we in the culturally poor but wealthy societies are looking to the richness of a new kind of human culture that cannot be directed but can only grow out of the base.

The base is in motion. The earth is speaking. Those involved with infinite demands upon finite resources will not survive, but the earth will survive along with those children embedded within her.

William H. Kötke, is author of *Garden Planet* available at www.gardenplanetbook.com Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and retail bookstores. He is also the author of the out of print, underground classic, *The Final Empire: The Collapse of Civilization and the Seed of the Future*, which may be downloaded for free at www.rainbowbody.net/Finalempire/index.html .