



GREEN HORIZON

Magazine

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL PUBLISHED BY THE GREEN HORIZON FOUNDATION

DISARMING *the* OLIGARCHS

Shedding their World View

Forging a Better
Paradigm for Survival
and Sustainability



Plan G: Putting Paradigm-Shift **THINKING** to Work
In Matters of Food, Religion, Economics, Human
Self-Understanding, Capitalism/Socialism and
Green Party Policy

Examples of **ACTION** to Disarm the Oligarchs:
Irish Green Party, Canadian Green Party,
A Race for Congress in Pittsburgh, and FairVote's
Momentum for Democracy

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THOUGHT *and* ACTION

Experimenting with a Different Structure for This Issue

WE DEPART FROM our previous breakdown of categories. The papers we received for this issue seemed to demand a different structural approach. We have dropped the division into separate Columns, each with its Column Chief. Instead, we present the content in two parts, those articles dealing with Thought and those articles dealing with Action. There is an implicit, if not explicit, link between the two as the reader will see when he or she examines each part and then views them together. Both address the ongoing struggle with the dominant oligarchic order. The first part is devoted to new thinking to replace the ideology of the oligarchs, the second part to political action of resistance and transformation. Thought and action.

We may return to our previous structure of Columns and listing of Column Chiefs in later issues.

The reader will also find an additional structural change. It's on page 31. Up until now, we have used page 31 to provide information about subscribing. We are no longer going the subscription-route. We have decided to rely instead on donations. Henceforth the journal will be sent to all who wish to receive it and who may thus periodically expect a request for a donation. We present our donors on page 31. The list of donors is composed of those who have told us they are willing to have their name listed. A number of our donors prefer to remain anonymous.

Page 31 also contains information on how to get in contact with the journal, whether by landmail or by email (www.green-horizon.org) and whether those making contact with us wish to be added to our data base of people who receive the journal.

THE TEAM

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PLAN G: *The Time is Now*

WE SEEM TO BE HEARING a lot lately about Plans A, B, and C. Pat Murphy, executive director of Community Solutions, came out with an interesting book last year titled *Plan C: Community Survival Strategies for Peak Oil and Climate Change* (New Society Publishers, May 2008). He makes the case that, while Plan A (continuing to use fossil fuels) is untenable, Plan B (simply switching to renewable energy sources) is not enough to move in the direction of a sustainable, equitable world. Only by changing our policies and behaviors in the interrelated areas of commerce, food, health, transportation, and the built environment — in addition to energy — can we achieve the needed localization, conservation, and reduced impact on the planet (Plan C) necessary to survive.

In February newly-elected President Barack Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. This legislation is a second effort on the part of the government — Plan B — to ameliorate the economic crisis, following the implementation last October of the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008. Already there is speculation that even the combination of the two won't be enough to turn the tide and so Washington's economic brain trust is busy concocting another, probably expanded, initiative ... "Plan C of 2010"?

The election of Barack Obama might be viewed as something of a Plan B itself. Americans finally seemed to have recognized that the jingoist neoconservatism of the Reagan/Bush regimes

had little substance outside of tax cuts for the wealthy and militarism. Obama's message struck voters, especially the young, as fresh and hopeful. But his neo-liberalism is equivocal. On the one hand it seeks change but on the other hand it hangs on to many of the policies and people of the Clinton and Bush years.

The hope Obama kindled will be unrequited because this Plan B, while somewhat of an improvement, is nonetheless still regrettably short on substance. Our politics have swung back and forth between conservatism and liberalism for a whole era. Yet (amid strident debates about details) the *fundamental* problems of our society — corporate dominance, environmental degradation, deficient healthcare coverage, disparities of wealth and income, a regressive tax structure, misguided energy and transportation priorities, an ever-expanding military budget, an exclusionary electoral system — remain unaddressed or unresolved.

It's during times of crisis that political consciousness can change rapidly: break out of old ruts, consider new alternatives, leap forward beyond all expectations. A case can be made that we've now entered such a period. If so, Greens may very well — finally! — get a hearing when we advocate in favor of a fundamental re-direction of social priorities and a wholly new politics guided by ecological wisdom. Have a close look at the following six articles. They seek and shape solid ground for a new era.

Call it Plan G.

— Steve Welzer

KINDRED ORGANIZATIONS

To Our Readers from the Editors: We cite here several kindred national organizations in the United States. We hope and expect that you will contact them; and that, whether you have already done so or not, you will delve into their work to learn much about them and give support as you can. We offer this information in a spirit of solidarity with our sisters and brothers in the trenches for resistance and transformation.

FAIRVOTE

FairVote [www.fairvote.org] engages in innovative research and advocacy on five bold electoral reforms designed to respect every vote and every voter: universal voter registration, a constitutionally protected right to vote, a national popular vote for president, instant runoff voting, and proportional representation.

GREEN CHANGE

Green Change is a worldwide community of people with Green values: justice, grassroots democracy, sustainability, and non-violence. We work together to share Green art, politics, and culture. www.greenchange.org

GREEN INSTITUTE

We are a policy institute explicitly committed to the values of the global Green political movement. We publish articles and host events related to these values, attempting to focus on newer areas of interest, such as our support of progressive Hip Hop in recent

years. We also sponsor GreenPRO, at www.greenpolicy.us, a wiki database with thousands of entries of local progressive policies from around the world. ww.greeninstitute.net.

LIBERTY TREE

Liberty Tree is uniquely committed to building a new democracy movement for the United States. The organization provides legal, organizing, and policy support to on-the-ground campaigns for democratic reform in every area of American life. Contact Liberty Tree at www.LibertyTreeFDR.org. Phone: 608-257-1606. Email: Office@LibertyTreeFDR.org. Or write: Liberty Tree, 122 State Street, Suite 405, Madison, WI 53703.

PROGRESSIVE REVIEW

Progressive Review is an online journal of news and information of interest to Greens and other progressives. <http://prorev.com>
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Introduction *to* Plan G

Dislodging the Oligarchs

BY JOHN RENSENBRINK

“It was all very careless and confused. They were careless people – they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated into their money or their vast carelessness or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made.”

– F. Scott Fitzgerald
(from *The Great Gatsby*)

IN HIS EDITORIAL ESSAY on page three of this issue, Steve Welzer speaks of Plans A, B, and C. He points out that none are adequate to the crises that now engulf us. He directs our attention to a Plan G.

In six articles that follow we present basic features of Plan G. By way of introducing them, I write about the oligarchs and their hold on our collective consciousness, a hold they need for their now declining legitimacy, and I then introduce briefly the six articles that together shatter that hold and prepare the ground for a new consciousness to emerge.

Harry S. Truman decried the “malefactors of great wealth” during his victorious campaign for president in 1948. The word “oligarch” conveys a similar meaning. The word was first used by Aristotle to describe the dominant and dominating group in society who rule on the basis of money. Their overwhelming wealth also provides them with overwhelming power in government and society as a whole.

In the United States, the legitimacy of the oligarchs — to a greater extent than is usually recognized — is rooted in a cluster of norms and assumptions that constitute a pervasive ideology. These norms and assumptions about life are submitted to by the generality of the people. A sufficient number of the people, including a broad range of middle class intellectuals and middle class political parties – acquiesce to the ideology to assure the continued dominance of the oligarchs.

A full account of these norms and assumptions fills volumes but for our purposes here it is enough to cite the following: a belief in money as tantamount to civic virtue in those who have money; a belief in exponential growth in the production and consumption of goods and services as something that guarantees permanent happiness; a belief that nature is able to absorb the poisonous waste products produced by unfettered manufacturing and commerce.

Furthermore, a belief that though peace may be good for commerce, nevertheless commerce requires the interposition of the use of force and thus requires the continued build up of a powerful military establishment; a belief that social equilibrium and progress comes about, in the same manner as the parts of a machine in motion, through the self-interested actions of persons, including corporations as persons, operating in combative competition with one another; and a belief that all things can be valued in terms of money and that therefore all things, even including the water we drink and the air we breathe, can be/should be exchanged (bought and sold) as commodities; and a belief therefore that privatization is always preferred to public action to meet a problem.

Furthermore, a belief that God himself (sic – God is a male in their view) has ordained this ordering of things through his creation of human nature, a nature that is determined by self-interest. There are many other related norms and assumptions, but this list is enough to show the foundations of legitimacy for the oligarchs who rule our lives.

But these norms and assumption are now under fire. The oligarchs and their narrow world will stand on ever shakier ground as they are gradually discredited in the eyes of many and also in their own eyes, especially in the eyes of their children and grandchildren.

A BRIEF FORETASTE OF WHAT THE SIX ARTICLES ARE ABOUT

The six articles that follow this introduction strikingly show a way forward. It is a way that forsakes the now increasingly suspect norms and assumptions underlying the rule of the oligarchs. It is a way — based also on the best in the past — that provides a creative, credible, and scientifically accurate foundation for the emergence of a new era of human success on this planet.

We start with an article on food. Food is very close to the heart of things human, as it is also of such paramount importance to any natural being. Laura Burkle, drawing on Michael Pollan's exciting work, points the way to overthrowing the assumptions of agri-business in favor of localized, community-centered agriculture. We then shift the focus to religion with Maynard Kaufman. Religion is another matter of utmost importance to the human project and prospect on this planet; and Kaufman shows how Christianity as a leading religion has within it the resources, if developed, to lead to a richly experienced spiritual growth and revival. In the third article, we close with and confront the "dismal science": economics. Richard Lawson boldly goes to the roots of human economy and invites us to think again and productively of a new economics. It is an economics that is in accord with nature and that liberates human activity, as well as the discipline of economics itself, from the tyrannical implications of the second law of thermodynamics.

In the fourth article, Terry Fowler comes in with a seminal analysis that goes to the core of our human attitude towards life. The mechanistic sciences — stemming from the 17th and 18th centuries and fostered by the oligarchs — seemed to portray human beings as powerless reactors to natural and human-conditioned forces. Fowler draws on post-mechanistic science to show that at the root of all things is life's self-organizing power — and that all natural beings, including human beings, participate in that power. One can readily see how truly revolutionary this new thinking is — it provides a trenchant support for democracy and for self-governing communities.

Which brings us quite naturally, and inevitably, to that most ambivalent, treacherous, and yet somehow indispensable part of human life: politics. Steve Welzer, in the fifth article, describes the failure of left-wing politics to confront and overcome the oligarchs, partly due to its embrace of many features of the oligarch philosophy and attitude towards life. He shows that a clear way exists for organizing human society beyond both capitalism and socialism.

In the sixth article, yours truly indulges his expectation of what the first 100 days of a Green Party administration in Washington would have for policies both domestic and foreign. It is based on actions that support localization and community self-reliance and that help shift power decisively away from the oligarchs and to communities, both in the United States and abroad. It also calls for actions that will change fundamentally the way in which the nation and the world measure good livelihood. This new way of measuring is a pre-condition for developing and channeling the abundant resources of the world away from waste and the dynamics of greed and towards a sustainable planet and a sustainable livelihood for all peoples.

"I am a most unhappy man. I have unwittingly ruined my country. A great industrial nation is controlled by its system of credit. Our system of credit is concentrated. The growth of the nation, therefore, and all our activities are in the hands of a few men. We have come to be one of the worst ruled, one of the most completely controlled and dominated governments in the civilized world—no longer a government by free opinion, no longer a government by conviction and the vote of the majority, but a government by the opinion and duress of a small group of dominant men."

— President Woodrow Wilson, under whose administration the Federal Reserve was created.

MICHAEL POLLAN

Speaks to Doctors About Food

From “Nutritionism” to Localizing Our Food Supply

BY LAURA BURKLE

Food is often at the center of culture, providing pleasure, community, ritual, and identity, among others.

Let us look to other cultures, the distilled wisdom of many groups, to develop our consciousness about food and healthy, fulfilling ways to eat.

IN DEFENSE OF FOOD: THE OMNIVORE’S SOLUTION

One chilly morning in November, I biked over to the medical school campus of Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri to attend Michael Pollan’s seminar “In defense of food: the omnivore’s solution.” Coming from the environmental sciences and reading Pollan’s work in light of my views as an ecologist, I was excited by the opportunity to hear what he had to say about our nation’s food system to a room full of doctors. His insights did not let me down. I have distilled some general golden nuggets of wisdom from his seminar for this article.

“NUTRITIONISM”

Pollan began with the history and tenets of “Nutritionism” as an ideology. Nutritionism is the way that many people think and talk about food in this country. First, proponents of Nutritionism believe that food is the sum of its nutrient parts and that food is merely the delivery system for these nutrients. Second, since nutrients are invisible, you need experts to tell you what to eat, akin to religious leaders guiding you to the path of salvation. Third, like many ideologies, Nutritionism divides the world into good and evil, but the nutrients that fall under each category change with alarming swings. For instance, the evil nutrient today is trans-fat, and the blessed nutrient is omega-3 fatty acid, but these satanic and elevated statures, respectively, will likely not be held for long.

At the turn of the last century, one might be surprised to hear that protein was the evil nutrient, releasing evil spirits into your body. In order to eliminate high quantities of protein from people’s breakfasts, cereal was created, and carbohydrates took their turn as a favored nutrient. It seems that the pendulum has indeed swung to the other end of the spectrum on this perspective in recent years! Fourth, Nutritionism believes that the whole point of eating is health – either improving or ruining it.

But, we must ask, have we forgotten that other cultures eat for many other reasons? Food is often at the center of culture, providing pleasure, community, ritual, and identity, among others. Pollan argues, and I agree, that these other reasons for eating are just as legitimate, if not more so, as for our health alone. Community, identity, and pleasure through eating can certainly contribute positively to our health, but not through the delivery of nutrients, as Nutritionism would advocate. As a whole, Nutritionism is not a helpful way to look at food, as increases in our knowledge do not correlate with increases in public health.

Like many ideologies, Nutritionism tries to take the very complex concept of food and present it piecemeal as discrete black and white statements. The variety of diets on which humans have flourished healthily throughout human history is amazingly large. Just look to the cattle-product consuming Masai in Africa, the agriculturalists feeding on corn and beans in Central America, and the seal hunters of Greenland for examples, and you will see that we truly are omnivores, and there is no one healthy diet. Intimately

related to the health of a diet is, of course, life style and tradition, along with many other interacting factors. It is actually astounding that, in recent history, via the ideology of nutritionism, we have been able to find the one diet and life style that make people sick! Culture is not a trivial source of information about how and what to eat. Let us look to other cultures, the distilled wisdom of many groups, to develop our consciousness about food and about healthy and fulfilling ways to eat.

“EAT FOOD, NOT MUCH, MOSTLY PLANTS”

Pollan continued on to give his listeners a few guidelines to consider while we are choosing what and how to eat. These guidelines will help us distinguish between real food and “edible food-like substances.” First, he says, do not eat anything your grandmother would not recognize as food (such as a yogurt-like product in a tube). Do not eat anything processed with more than five ingredients or containing any ingredients that a first grader cannot pronounce. Stick to the perimeter of the store when shopping – this is where the perishable food lives. The stuff in the middle of the store will last forever. Related to this is: do not eat anything that won’t eventually rot.

Now that we have a few hints about *what* to eat, we must remember that eating is not just about food, and we must also consider *how* to eat. Often we eat on the run, standing up, alone. It is astounding that 20% of food that Americans eat is in a car! This is not how we should approach healthy eating. Again, mindful, healthy eating is cooked by you and your loved ones and eaten slowly and joyfully with them. The loss of the culture of cooking is one of the worst things that has happened to American health.

These are not simple, easy changes to make. The American lifestyle of life-on-the-go with convenient, fast food options is not currently compatible with healthy, wholesome home-cooked meals, enjoyed with friends and family. Further hurdles to changing our approach to food become evident when considering today’s economy. Time and funds to create such healthy meals are not forthcoming to a growing proportion of our society. For instance, one can purchase approximately 1,250 calories per dollar in the middle isles of the grocery store where processed food lurks. But, only 250 calories per dollar is available from fresh produce. If you are in the unfortunate situation where you are forced to shop for calories, you will find yourself buying unhealthy food.

Our government subsidizes practices that sustain this trend. The perennial Farm Bill is written to support the production of maximum calories per acre of crop, most of which are for growing corn.

Pollan points out that doctors play a very important role and have a large responsibility to enact change. The voice of public health is not often heard when it comes to farming practices, but there is a strong need for doctor representatives informing the Secretary of Agriculture and the Senate. The reason we have a fast food society is because we pay farmers to grow fast food, and advocacy by doctors can help turn the tide. As an ecologist, I was interested and intrigued to hear this public health perspective, and what excites me most is that the two views are parallel. Practices that are good for our health are also good for the environment and vice versa.

FIELD OF DREAMS

How do we relocalize the food supply? This was a question from a doctor in the audience. The short answer: If you demand it, local food will come. We started processing food so that it would last longer while traveling long distances. But processing foods eliminates much of the nutritional value of food – it is those

important nutrients in food that make it perishable. So to improve our health and the environment, we need to re-localize the food supply. Farmers markets are popping up everywhere. Support them and give them your patronage! Institutions with food services can demand that at least 5% of the food served be local. If institutions and citizens create the need for

local food, local farmers will come.

Many people do not realize the strong link between current agricultural practices and fossil fuel consumption leading to the release of greenhouse gasses. The creation of nitrogen-based fertilizers, pesticides, and of course, the transport of food all over the world contributes 25% of the total greenhouse gas emissions per year. It will be a Herculean

project to reform the food supply, but to do so will benefit both food health and environmental health.

The reason we have a fast food society is because we pay farmers to grow fast food, and advocacy by doctors can help turn the tide.

If institutions and citizens create the need for local food, local farmers will come.



LAURA BURKLE

just moved from Vermont to St. Louis, Missouri in the heartland of America. She was happy to wait in line to vote for three hours in the last election and is glad that Missouri came close to a majority vote for Obama. Burkle is a Postdoctoral Research Associate in Ecology at Washington University in St. Louis. Her current challenge: composting in her apartment.

From Holy Spirit to Earth Spirit

BY MAYNARD KAUFMAN

As a cultural organism, Christianity includes both dominant and recessive genes. The spiritual dimension in our religious tradition can be seen as a recessive gene.

The twelfth century nun, Hildegard of Bingen, saw the Holy Spirit in nature: "The Holy Spirit is greening power in motion, making all things grow, expand, celebrate."

WE CAN EXPECT that as the magnitude of the problem of climate change seeps into our collective consciousness it will lead people back to religion. Religion deals with ultimate issues, and global warming is clearly an ultimate issue. If this process leads us to an earth-centered spirituality, it would be a good thing since we obviously need to cultivate a more intimate relationship to the earth.

We may also need to give up our desire for economic growth and the easy life it made possible for some of us. Some parts of our religious tradition, inspired by the sacredness of the earth, could help us to do what must be done. And some parts of the tradition will not be of much help because they have denied the sacredness of the earth. So responsible action requires us to make critical judgments about our religious traditions.

When people turn to religion in the United States, it is usually a turn to Christianity. Since the Christian tradition has evolved into a religion focused on the sin and salvation of individuals, it may not be helpful. Given this emphasis on salvation, on a more popular level people may seek supernatural deliverance, expect miracles and, even worse, turn to miracle-workers who promise to fix the problem. Or, believing that God is in control, many will deny that humans could destroy the earth as a human habitation.

REPRESSED ASPECTS OF OUR TRADITION

There is, however, much in our religious tradition that can help us recover a sense for the sacredness of the earth, but it has been repressed or pushed aside by the dominant forms of Christianity. As a cultural organism, Christianity includes both dominant and recessive genes. The spiritual dimension in our religious tradition can be seen as a recessive gene. Early Church Fathers, as they tried to make sense of the new revelation of God in Christ, saw fit to develop a doctrine of the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As Christianity evolved the Holy Spirit was identified with the Spirit of Christ, but some of the early Church Fathers, such as Irenaeus in the second century, also recognized that the Holy Spirit was active long before Christ appeared, all over the world and among all peoples. Thus they affirmed the Holy Spirit as the Third Person, as an autonomous manifestation of God. The Spirit is often manifest in natural symbols such as breath or wind, as in the Creation story where the wind – or the Spirit of God – moved over the face of the waters.

By this time readers may wonder why they should continue reading about arcane doctrines such as the Trinity or the Holy Spirit. But many recent religious thinkers who try to address ecological issues have been discovering the relevance of the Holy Spirit who, as "Lord and Giver of Life," (to quote an ancient creed) is the animating power in nature. Experiencing that spiritual vitality within and knowing that it is also the animating power in all of nature empowers us to heal the earth. In the words of the twelfth century nun, Hildegard of Bingen, "The Holy Spirit is greening power in motion, making all things grow, expand, celebrate." We have seen books about the death of God and about the death of Nature, but the Spirit is life.

THE TRANS-CULTURAL PRESENCE OF THE SPIRIT

And the Spirit is everywhere. An example of this trans-cultural reality of Spirit comes from an anthropologist writing on shamanism in the Taoist tradition. "*Chi* is an

elusive term whose meanings include vitality, life force, and bio-electricity. But the significance of *ch'i* is perhaps best suggested by its literal meaning – breath. In Taoist tradition everything in existence contains *ch'i*: heaven and earth, sun and moon, day and night, months, hours, the air we breath and the food we eat. Thus, while *ch'i* may partly be understood as breath or wind, it also includes essence, soul, energy and universal vital force.” A description such as this clearly articulates the kind of creative activity that is understood in Biblical religion as the work of the Holy Spirit. And it helps to integrate the human with the cosmos.

The South American theologian, Leonardo Boff, has given eloquent expression to the transcultural presence of the Spirit. “*Spiritus* to Romans, *Pneuma* to Greeks, *Ruach* to Hebrews, *Mana* to Melanesians, . . . *Wakan* to Dakota Indians, *Ki* to the peoples of North-east Asia, *Shi* to the Chinese – no matter what the names may be, we are always dealing with life, with the universe as an organism.” Such transcultural phenomena suggest that the Spirit is active as an independent cosmic power quite beyond the historical particularity of Christianity.

THE DENIGRATION OF NATURE IN CHRISTIANITY.

Given these aspects of the Holy Spirit, it is easier to see why the Judeo-Christian tradition has too often tried to repress the vitality of the Spirit in nature. Nature is seen as defective, in need of divine grace. Those who emphasize salvation assume the totality of the Fall: “In Adam’s Fall, We sinned all.” Like their Hebrew predecessors, many Christians define themselves in opposition to the pagan gods in nature. Most of the Near Eastern religions – out of which the Hebrews emerged – worshiped gods in nature. In stark contrast, the Hebrew deity, Yahweh, was manifest in human history as He delivered the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt. When I studied theology some years ago we were constantly reminded that God is active in history. The Incarnation of Christ in the historical Jesus reinforced this sense of history as a linear process in which revelation occurs. A secularized version of this linear process gave us the ideology of progress, which is now measured by economic growth.

But this “economic growth” is responsible for polluting the planet and changing its climate, so what we need now is a new relationship to nature, one that includes a sense of cyclical time. Living within natural cycles can lead us to contentment rather than constant striving for more and more goods. Although we still have seasonal holidays, at Christmas and Easter for example, they have been identified with the birth and crucifixion of Jesus as events in history. And both of them, sadly, have been not only secularized but also commercialized. Only a few neo-pagan groups have been trying to recover seasonal holidays as celebrations of the seasonal cycles.

PROBLEMS WITH ANTHROPOCENTRISM

In a famous essay written in the late 60s, Lynn White, Jr. reminded us that “Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen.” The creation story teaches that man was given dominion over all other creatures and shares the Creator’s transcendence over nature. To counter anthropocentrism, Lynn White proposed Saint Francis as the patron saint for ecologists because “he tried to substitute the idea of the equality of all creatures, including man, for the idea of man’s limitless rule of creation.”

Saint Francis reclaimed the truth in pagan polytheism with its rich pantheon of divinities that inhabit all the spaces in nature. In all innocence Saint Francis was able to affirm the beauty and goodness of the natural world as God’s good creation. And, yes, we do need to recover the word “pagan” which meant “country-dweller”, in contrast to Christianity which spread from city to city.

Needless to say, the Church later persecuted the spiritual Franciscans. The Roman Catholic Church especially, which may always have been a bit imperialistic, insisted on

In a famous essay written in the late 60s, Lynn White, Jr., reminded us that “Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen.”

As people realize that the vitality that inspires them on a personal level is the same vitality that greens the natural world, they can regain the sense of kinship needed to live in and care for the natural world.

a creed that confined the Spirit within the church. The Eastern Orthodox Church, in contrast, asserted that the Spirit proceeds from the Father independently, whereas the Western or Roman Church insisted on the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son (*filioque*). These three little words, “and the Son,” contributed to the split between Western and Eastern Christianity in the eleventh century, and they reflected profound differences between them. Western Christianity made the church sacred as it desacralized nature. (The church was considered the Body of Christ.) Eastern Christianity was able to incorporate more mysticism and spirituality embedded in nature.

Slowly, over time, the freedom of the Spirit was circumscribed by canon law in the West, quenching the vitality of the Spirit. This finally resulted in what Paul Tillich, a leading theologian of the last century, called “Christocentric Unitarianism” in many Protestant churches. The Holy Spirit was repressed.

THE RECENT EMERGENCE OF THE SPIRIT

Many of those who feel estranged from the church have been attracted to various forms of spirituality on the margins of Christianity. And even many recent theological thinkers are affirming the Holy Spirit apart from the Church. For example, Mark I. Wallace affirms the primal spirituality of native Americans and the neo-pagan rituals sometimes practiced by radical groups such as Earth First! Wallace also sees reflections of the Holy Spirit in the writings of John Muir: “His nature writing is a fusion between a love of God and a lust for the earth that paves the way for a life-centered theology of the Spirit appropriate to our own time.” And ecofeminist religious writers have been asserting their independence. They had been put down by patriarchal Christianity which taught that woman is “merely earthly” and thus not on a par with men. As they seek healing for Gaia (their word for earth), they not only affirm continuity between Christian and neo-pagan forms of spirituality but also the Spirit as a female power. The Hebrew word for *ruach*, breath or spirit, is feminine, and the Holy Spirit is also seen in Sophia, the figure of Wisdom in the wisdom literature in the Bible. We can think of the Holy Spirit in contemporary terms as a personification of Gaia, the Earth Spirit.

Some Christians do try to take responsibility for nature. Many Evangelicals affirm “Creation Care,” usually as an aspect of a stewardship ethic. But, although some critics of the idea of stewardship worry that it might reinforce the anthropocentric attitude, it can also lead to a love of the earth, since it affirms the goodness and value of Creation. This is articulated by such outstanding religious thinkers as Matthew Fox and Thomas Berry who have been promoting a creation spirituality to redress the imbalance caused by an excessive emphasis on sin and salvation.

In summary, I have raised the possibility that people in a self-professed Christian country can affirm an earth-centered spirituality. It is a spirituality that can help us recover a sense for the sacredness of the earth. A new recognition of the Holy Spirit

can help Christians affirm the Earth Spirit in nature without feeling that they are unfaithful to their tradition. We are thereby energized to move beyond our cultural paralysis and to cope with the crisis of climate change and with other forms of human destructiveness.

It is not likely that conventional Christianity can help people affirm the sacredness of nature as long as it seeks to constrain the freedom of the Spirit. But we have seen evidence that some Christian thinkers are moving toward a new recognition of the Holy Spirit as the Earth Spirit and to an affirmation of the spiritual vitality in nature. Various forms of creation spirituality and neopaganism are helping in the recovery of the Holy Spirit as She imbues the earth with life and vitality. Where this Spirit is recognized, affirmed and appropriated in human and cultural life, so that health can flourish, the need for salvation is radically diminished. And as we realize that the vitality that inspires us on a personal level is the same vitality that greens the natural world, we can regain the sense of kinship needed to live in and care for the natural world. Thus the dichotomy between nature and grace is abolished and natural grace prevails.



MAYNARD KAUFMAN

This essay is based on his new book, *Adapting to the End of Oil, Toward an Earth-Centered Spirituality*. His response to the energy crisis of the 1970 was to become a part-time farmer and establish a School of Homesteading. After his retirement as a professor of religion and environmental studies at Western Michigan University, Maynard worked with

other Green activists for several years and then focused his energy on local organic food systems by organizing Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance. In 2001 Maynard and his wife Barbara moved into their off-grid house that is powered by renewable energy. They enjoy gardening and earth-centered rituals that celebrate the cycle of the seasons.

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A UNIFIED PHILOSOPHY OF WORK

Heralding a New Economics Rooted In Physics and Biology

BY RICHARD LAWSON

IN THIS ARTICLE, I advance the proposition that all true economic work is eco-friendly. The corollary of this proposition is that any economic system that is not eco-friendly is in fact bad economics.

Work is part of life. Life is a highly ordered state that is sustained by work. The word “work” refers to the act of increasing order in a system. This is true for work in both its physical and economic contexts.

In what follows I will develop these ideas and try for a unified philosophy of work. I will show that the present world economic system is anti-life, anti-work, and anti-human survival. The conclusion is that we need an ecologically centered, green-founded, economics.

PHYSICAL WORK AND THE SECOND LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS

The second law of thermodynamics holds that over time, systems lose order. Thermodynamics expresses this as “over time the entropy of a system tends to increase”.

In mechanical physics, work is defined as force applied through a distance. If work is applied to lifting a mass M through a vertical distance, a state of increased order is created, with a new distinction created between the present position of the mass M , and its previous position. In thermodynamic terms, the entropy in the system comprising mass M and its supporting environment has been reduced through the application of work, entropy being the opposite of order. Mechanical work applied in this way opposes the tendency of the Second Law of Thermodynamics.

Most male students can observe the functioning of the Second Law of Thermodynamics by taking a look at the state of their flat as disorder increases with the passage of time, assuming that no work (in this case, ordering the placement of garments and used food dishes) has been done.

Physical work therefore results in the creation of order or organisation. It can be viewed as a counterforce to the Second Law of Thermodynamics.

THE WORK OF LIFE

Life is a category of self-sustaining ordered complexity that obstructs or transcends the operation of the Second Law of Thermodynamics during the period of time that the life form exists. Life processes, like physical work, increase order.

The primary act of order or distinction in life is formation of the cell membrane that sets a boundary between the interior and exterior. Within the cell interior, highly ordered information systems (DNA and RNA) encode the plans necessary to generate the proteins that will order the processes which will enable the cell to move, respond, digest, respire, excrete and reproduce, all of which require the application of energy.

Although each individual cell eventually falls prey to disorganisation when it dies, and its constituent parts return to the physical environment, to be relatively evenly distributed in accordance with the Second Law, its informational order continues in its progeny. The only absolute victory that the Second Law can claim is that ultimately it will overcome life on earth in five billion years when the sun expands into a Red Giant and takes our home planet back into itself.

Paradoxically, we human beings who are given to regarding ourselves as superior in consciousness and intellect to other species, have contrived to behave as if we were mere blind, mechanical forces of nature acting in accordance with the Second Law of Thermodynamics.

True work is human economic activity that sustains life. It goes with the grain of life, and results in a net increase in order on the planet. Work that does not have this as its net result will have to be redefined.

The expenditure of energy (defined in physics as the ability to do work) is necessary for all the processes of life.

With time, and left to its own devices, life tends to generate increasing levels of complexity, as species form sub-species in adaptation to the ever-changing environment. Mutations form, mostly useless or even maladaptive (satisfying the Second Law), but sometimes useful and enabling a new sub-species with a particular advantage in a particular environment to emerge. Here again, life is defying the Second Law in becoming more complex and ordered, not less, with the passing of time.

Life has created a rich profusion of highly organised and inter-dependent entities within the physical environment offered by our home planet, but the effect that human actions are having on Earth's biotic system is to diminish that complexity. In the last few hundred years, the world has experienced many extinctions due to massive changes in habitats, brought about through our economic activities. Something is wrong with the way humans are working in the world, wrong with our economic system.

WORK IN ECONOMICS

All animals have to work at keeping alive. Herbivores have to find their source of food, and have to pull it into their stomach, massage it and treat it with enzymes to make it available to energise their cells. All the time they are working on pumping air in and out of their lungs. Carnivores have to expend energy in order to identify, stalk, chase, kill and eat their prey. Life forms are always expending energy (doing work) in order to keep their heads above the waters of the Second Law.

Humans have to work to live in the same way, but we take work a great deal further than our fellow creatures. We have been, quite rightly, applying our prodigious powers of cognition and tool-making to adapting ourselves to varied environments. To manage thirst, we work to supply ourselves with piped water. To get food, we dig earth, sow seed, tend and harvest crops and store food. Against cold we use fire, against exposure we build shelters, and to guard against the commonest deadly illness, gastroenteritis, we try to dispose of our faecal waste in such a way that it does not get back into our water or food. These are the primary actions that humans take, the basic building blocks of the primary level of the economy. Each of these actions involves mechanical physical work, in the sense of force moving through distance, and each of them involves the creation of order, in the sense of useful arrangement or organisation.

Natural, primary work, the economy of the hunter-gathering tribe, or the "subsistence farmer" takes place in order to maintain life. Primary economic work and physical work share the same essential quality, the creation of a state of increased order.

Next question: is the creation or order implicit in all forms of economic work?

All economies are founded on the same primary function of organising the provision of water, food, shelter and hygiene within the environment, but more complex modern societies

have further layers: the secondary layer is that of distribution, exchange and transport, a tertiary layer of services and administration, and a quaternary layer of financial services. These later functions all require a high degree of ordering; the third level of the economy, services and administration, are essentially about good order and organisation.

There is more to economics than paid work. The work of the home maker/parent, although not usually formally paid, involves a huge amount of re-ordering. The young child is an entropy engine, creating disorder wherever s/he goes. Parenting involves teaching the child to distinguish between delight and danger, toy and tool, food and faeces, and eventually teaching the child to tidy up the toys when play is over.

The crucial insight that mankind must be understood in the context of a web of life stretched across a finite planet, and of the reflexive interconnectedness of our actions upon that biosphere and the biosphere's actions on us, that is, the ecological world view, is an insight at least as important as the Enlightenment.

Green economics (that is, economics which is founded on the knowledge of ecology) therefore affirms the value of good work. It is necessary for life, for good order in the world, and is generally good for our health, and it opposes the Second Law of Thermodynamics.

IS ALL WORK THEREFORE GOOD?

So far we have been reviewing work in a purely theoretical and structural way, building from physics to biology, and from biology to economics. On the other hand, it is abundantly clear, considering the extinctions mentioned above, and considering climate change, that the prevailing world economic system in the early 21st century is far from perfect. One third of the world's human population is undernourished, while a significant sector of the Western population is obese – a clear failure of good ordering in the global economy. Moreover, human economic activity is creating disorder in the world's life support system rather than increasing order and promoting life, as our use of fossil fuels and our destruction of forest is disturbing the atmospheric equilibrium of the planet.

Our economic work was first powered and energised by human effort. Later we enlisted horse, ox and ass power, then wind and water, and finally we discovered steam power, at first from solar radiation that was incorporated into wood through photosynthesis, and later on, unfortunately, through tapping into the vast stores of ancient solar energy that is embedded in coal, oil and gas. Only recently, after 200 years of exploitation, have we discovered that using this fossil energy was not such a good idea. Not only have we become addicted to the huge energy resources that we have obtained, not only has the power that we have released been used unwisely (for example, in making machine guns and motor cars), not only has the power of fossil fuels enabled us to consume inordinate amounts of biomass, and

to invade the habitat of many species, driving many of them to extinction, but also we now know that combustion of coal, oil and gas cause serious planetary heat retention problems.

In doing all of these things, we are reducing the overall level of complex order in the planetary environment. If current trends in biodiversity loss and extinctions are projected into the future, the only species left on earth in the end would be *homo "sapiens"*, his domesticated animals, and all those pests that we are unable to exterminate, like rats, cockroaches, mosquitoes, bacteria, fungi and viruses. Such a world would not be well ordered. It would have fallen away from the rich diversity of mutually sustaining ecological interrelationships that obtained in nature before we came to dominance. The conditions at the end of the present trend would not be sustainable, and the system of life on earth might no longer be sufficiently robust to support the human "civilisation" that brought life to such a low ebb. If we escape auto-extinction, we would still find ourselves to be at a low level of survivalist, subsistence living.

Paradoxically, we who are given to regarding ourselves as superior in consciousness and intellect to other species, have contrived to behave as if we were mere blind, mechanical forces of nature acting in accordance with the Second Law of Thermodynamics.

From consideration of the nature of work in its physical, biotic and economic aspects there arises a new definition of economic work. True work is human economic activity that sustains life and results in a net increase in order on the planet. Work that does not have this as its net result will have to be redefined.

ANTI-WORK AND THE DYSECONOMY

What kinds of work reduces the level of order in the world? The most obvious example is the work of the bomber, the product of whose labour is a pile of rubble and dead bodies. The transition from house to rubble, and from life to death is clearly a transition from order to disorder.

Work in manufacture of armaments and explosives, taken in conjunction with the politics of national or sectional self-interest, should be redefined as a species of *anti-work*, or *negative work* since their ultimate effect is to increase, not decrease, the entropy in the environment. At the same time, the politics of rivalry, distrust and paranoia should also be redefined as, *anti-politics*, since the proper work of the politician is to resolve differences by dialogue.

In these terms, any process that is not carbon-neutral or carbon positive will have to be seen as contributing to an increase in entropy, since each and every process that has a net carbon emission is disrupting the order in the planetary environment that sustains the present degree of bio-diversity and ecological ordering. Global warming, if its progress is not stopped and reversed, will destroy the level of biological and human social order that obtains at the present time.

This realisation shifts the terms of reference of the economic debate. From being "unorthodox" or "alternative", green economics now becomes the norm, and orthodox economics (i.e. economics

which does not take proper account of ecology) must be redefined as *dyseconomics*, since its end product is an increase in the entropy of terrestrial ecology.

In order to reverse the impending Second Law outcome, we will have to stop using CO2 emitting forms of energy, as well as those energy forms that lend themselves to the development of weapons of mass destruction, and turn to the use of the energy of our sun in a major way, while at the same time taking our current and past CO2 emissions out of the atmosphere by enhancing natural carbon sinks.

This is mankind's proper work in the twenty-first century: economic action that opposes the Second Law and protects the present historical state of ecological order in the planet. This is the only reasonable option that is available to us. Governments, which over the last century have become subservient to the superior power of industry and business, must reassert their democratic authority and make dyseconomic processes progressively more difficult and expensive until they become obsolete. At the same time they must make truly economic processes easier and more profitable by exerting a guiding force on the economy in general and the market in particular.

The work to be done in healing the planet is challenging: it focuses on the necessary transition from stored carbon based energy to that based on the solar income, but also it involves a huge amount of other restorative work. The scale of the work required is so great that the concept of economic recession, with its hand-maiden, unemployment, becomes absurd. There is also be no ideological or financial room for military forces at the current grotesque levels of expenditure, where the military spend every two weeks an amount of money that could meet the basic life needs of the undernourished sector of the human population for fifty two weeks.

The essence of the economic transition will be to create a political and economic milieu that enables every human individual, family, society, nation and institution to take part in the great work of undoing the entropic increase that has been caused to our planet by ill-considered economic theories.

A FULL VERSION OF THIS ESSAY CAN BE READ ON:
[HTTP://WWW.GREENHEALTH.ORG.UK/PHILOSWORK.HTM](http://www.greenhealth.org.uk/philoswork.htm)



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THE LIFE FORCE: *Something Out of Nothing*

BY EDMUND P. FOWLER

*For most of us,
feeling disempowered
is a spectacularly
ingrained habit.*

*Amid the ecological
and cultural devastation
wrought under this
leadership, we would do
well to look to the wisdom
of those who have refused
to be stampeded.*

THE ALMOST UNIVERSAL FEELING of powerlessness among humans is a learned condition, a profound human mistake. It flies in the face of what science now tells us is implicit in and characteristic of all organisms. Like the rest of nature, humans participate in the life force as active beings, and that life force is rooted in the principle of self-organizing power.

The election and inauguration of Barack Obama is a parable that illustrates this perverse relationship we humans have with power. Obama's victory produced an outpouring of euphoria across the world. And it is stirring to see an African-American as head of such a powerful nation, when that very nation has so viciously exploited Africans and their American descendants and excluded them from its own material and social successes.

However, in many ways the powerful position Obama now holds negates the symbolism of what he has achieved. He is seen as the Leader whose progressive policies will help to solve the nation's systemic dysfunctions (which are many) — in particular to lift the poor and broad sections of the middle class, working and nonworking, out of their political and economic powerlessness. Obama's personal achievement lay in not waiting for a leader to empower him but doing it himself. Unfortunately, his position as leader, by popular definition, puts him in the place of telling eagerly awaiting followers what to do, of perpetuating their disempowerment.

Obama is acutely aware of this irony and has already addressed it, telling his supporters not to hang back but to pitch in and do what needs doing in their neighbourhoods. One is reminded of John F. Kennedy's inaugural admonition, "Ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country." Obama's political training in this respect was exceptionally appropriate: the Saul Alinsky method of community organizing in Chicago. Alinsky had no patience with neighbourhood organizations waiting for someone to fix things up. Instead, his organizers were trained in helping residents of disadvantaged areas to realize their own ability to challenge the local power structure collectively. In this enterprise, disciplined organization was as crucial as the different talents of individual activists. A number of writers have stated that true leaders are similar to Alinsky organizers — they empower others.

A LONG HISTORY OF DOMINATION

Here we come face-to-face with an intriguing mystery. Why do so many of us — not just the poor — feel disempowered? David Korten has written a skilful summary of human history illustrating how, in all our so-called civilizations, the few have always dominated the many. Thus, for most of us, feeling disempowered is a spectacularly ingrained habit.

The paradox, as Korten also stresses, is that other organisms have no such hang-ups. From what science has been able to tell us, from life's beginning even single cells have been extraordinarily adept at organ-izing themselves — as the word suggests, making an organism. (Korten 1999, 107-11, 121) This process, the essence of the life force, requires creative imagination and willingness to cooperate, without waiting around to be told what to do. This process, the essence of the life force, requires creative imagination and willingness to cooperate, without waiting around to be told what to do.

This notion is strange only to humans, who have used their self-consciousness to imagine themselves progressively further and further removed from the rest of nature, as they see it. Life, as Lynn Margulis and Dorion Sagan have said, is matter capable of

choosing its own direction and matter's minute-by-minute choices are mutual self-empowerment. (Korten 2006, 267-74) The only entities who are unsettled by this account of how things work are the authorities we invented to provide ourselves with more secure and ordered lives.

These authorities are gods and secular rulers and their representatives: priests, kings, lords, presidents, prime ministers, beadles, and satraps. Although we invented these authorities, we do not usually actively choose to submit to them. They acquired their dominance by playing on our fears and insecurities, and once that dominance became established – either by custom or by formal institutions – it was extremely difficult to dislodge. Dominance of the many by the few became the habit of human societies.

This pattern of dominance has become so habitual that we now shake our heads sagely and pronounce it to be “human nature” and then proceed to re-interpret nature using that human template. This reinterpretation process became especially influential following the creation of 17th century mechanistic science, which was itself part of a project by religious and secular élites to shore up their authority during the violence and disorder of the early 17th century. If matter was thought of as inert and subject to the laws of God and His creation Nature, then human society could be no different. Inert citizens must similarly be subject to secular laws of the state. “On earth as it is in Heaven,” was not intoned lightly, and it had distinct political overtones, as Stephen Toulmin reminds us.

Even mainstream science has moved beyond this machine model of the cosmos, but our institutions and our personal behavior are mostly still shaped by it. There is a good reason for this state of affairs: a mechanical view of nature and society legitimizes the political dominance of those who rule “according to law.” The authority of mechanical science has been vastly increased by general acceptance of its claim to be neutral and therefore above politics. It is of course nothing of the sort. [The corporate media nevertheless ignores hundreds of books and articles that have exposed the biases of mechanistic science, which are thus ignored by ruling institutions and ultimately by the vast majority of citizens.] Hundreds of books and articles that have exposed the biases of mechanistic science are nevertheless ignored by the corporate media, by ruling institutions, and ultimately by the vast majority of citizens.

AN APPRECIATION OF SCALE

While virtually all of the authoritarian civilizations self-destructed sooner or later, mechanistic civilization has gone global and its self-destruction promises to have extremely grave, global consequences. The industrial farming, the factories, and the transportation and energy systems that grew out of the mechanical science revolution raised the standard of living for a few hundred million people for a short time. But those technologies have stripped the entire planet of a substantial proportion of its natural capital, such as forests, clean water, fish stock, and top-

soil, and have spread a ghastly mix of toxic chemicals over all that remains. Even more alarming, resource extraction and industrial development have been releasing greenhouse gases that are warming up the weather worldwide with potentially disastrous consequences. Climate change and the other destructive effects of the industrial revolution are very literally threatening the lives of billions of humans.

These billions are mostly Third World poor people, who ironically have maintained self-sufficient local communities for millennia before the stampede of industrial “progress” ravaged their economies. We should distrust both the leaders of this charge and their definitions of progress. At the beginning of the 21st century “amid the ecological and cultural devastation wrought under this leadership, we would do well to look to the wisdom of those who have refused to be stamped.” (Broomfield, 197)

Without romanticizing peasant and hunter-gatherer societies, we must acknowledge that many of them have been remarkably resilient, losing ground only when industrial invasions have pulled their supports out from under them. Their expertise of how to survive, especially in harsh times, irrespective of the rulers and empires that swept over their lands, is crucial to everyone's survival now. Developing this expertise required participation, co-operation, and a sense of self-reliance. These are the sorts of qualities needed by the single-celled organisms to create larger, more complex ones.

However, the self-organizing cells had, and still have, an appreciation of scale. There are sizes beyond which organisms cannot grow, and there are practical limits to the number of organisms in a community. All organisms had already worked this out. But humans kept building bigger empires, cities, and institutions whose ability to create new expressions of human intelligence we celebrate as making us far superior to the old peasant societies. But there was a big catch: the larger the scale of these human organizations, the less sustainable they became and the less participation there was by everybody in decisions about the goals and direction of the organization.

Thus, we have developed a collective amnesia about our abilities to organize ourselves, embedded as we are in dozens of different huge centralized systems that control our food and agriculture, our patterns of urban development, our treatment of sickness, our communications with each other, and even our culture and entertainment. This is a political reality that goes far beyond our large governmental institutions and it seems to have blocked any genuine progress.

The crisis we now face presents us with an unprecedented problem and thus an unprecedented opportunity: how do we continue along the evolutionary path started by self-organizing cells without these pervasive but destructive human institutions?

DISSOLVING THE BLOCKAGES

I think we are part way there. Many of us have already become aware that our institutions are driving us towards our own

extinction. The next step is to see that their fatal flaw is to repress our talent as organisms to self-organize, and to self-organize again, and again. In other words, to realize we have the inherent ability to adapt our self-organizing methods and principles constantly.

Our social and political evolution towards a sustainable economy requires the self-confidence – despite everything we’ve been taught – to understand we can create something out of nothing. This is a somewhat misleading phrase, since there is always some sort of context or ground that helps to explain the emergence of a new organism or organization. However, as materialists we of the mechanistic persuasion are convinced that something new must nevertheless come from previously identifiable parts that have been reconfigured, just like the development of a new machine. Self-organizing is a dance of life that allows creative new patterns of cooperation to emerge without judging them.

Self-organization occurs when the “parts” literally redefine themselves by inventing new kinds of relationships with other parts. For years policymakers (before they gave up) were grappling with the problem of the middle class exodus from the centers of American cities. How, they wondered, could they “bring back the middle class”? Jane Jacobs retorted that sensibly built city districts “grow” the middle class. (The analogy to a petri dish is very tempting.) Her argument was that dense, physically diverse urban areas provide the proper medium for imaginative people – who are everywhere – to create not only new economic activity but also new kinds of economic activity.

Roberta Brandes Gratz gives one of my favourite examples in her book *The Living City*. She tells the story of Kelly Street in the south Bronx, which, in the mid-1970s, fitted the stereotype of that part of New York City – derelict buildings, vacant lots filled with rubble, and serious street crime. The street had a number of determined people, however, centered on Frank Potts and his family of eight. Over the previous fifteen years they had scraped and saved and worked incredibly hard to buy and renovate first one, then two, then more of the four story buildings on Kelly Street. When three more apartment buildings were scheduled by the city for demolition because of nonpayment of taxes, the Potts family, some neighbours, a social worker, and a few other helpers offered *to take the buildings off the city’s hands and renovate them. They were willing to ... provide some unpaid labor. They wanted to build low-cost cooperative housing that would not be a permanent burden on taxpayers, as was massive subsidized new construction ... They knew ... that there was an endless resource of neighborhood people looking for just this kind of job opportunity ...* (Gratz, 113-4)

Eventually, by seeking out contacts and support from conventional politicians and from university and nonprofit groups set up to assist such ventures, Kelly Street was rebuilt by its residents.

The initial impetus was the threat of housing demolition, but, significantly, even while details were being worked out, the community started a garden on one of its vacant lots. Some time later, they organized a food cooperative and started recycling

paper and glass for income. And, of course, dozens of young residents learned the skills needed in carpentry and construction for the renovation process. As new residents filled up the apartments, local merchants stopped going out of business and new stores opened. All this happened rather gradually, over a period of ten or more years.

NETWORKS OF COMMUNITIES

The idea behind the Green movement and other movements related to it – local food, self help, and intentional communities, for example – is to become aware of our personal abilities to meet our own needs and desires by cooperating with friends and neighbors in our own communities. “Transition towns” in the UK are seeking “practical steps that communities must take on their own to become self-sufficient in food, energy, and materials.” (Hamer) A few of them have gone quite far along this path.

Such local communities in the 21st century would never resemble Stone Age tribal settlements completely isolated from each other. Thanks in part to mechanistic technology we have a broad number of sophisticated ways of communicating with each other about our successes, our failures, our bright ideas for the next step. There will of course be fearsome disputes, requiring far more political skill and maturity than we presently have. But power would be diffused. There would be networks of communities in constant contact with each other but rich in their abilities to be self-sufficient in more and more elegant ways. This would be the human version of the self-organizing cell. Just like cells, local settlements would have defined boundaries, but also intensely sensitive to a vast network of other cells in the area. Humans will have started to reweave themselves into the cosmos.



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Beyond Capitalism *and* Socialism

BY STEVE WELZER

THE COVER STORY of the February 16, 2009, issue of Newsweek magazine was titled: “We Are All Socialists Now.” This was a reference to the escalating degree, scope and nature of governmental intervention in capitalist economies worldwide since the onset of the current financial turmoil. A less ironic title for the article might have been: “We Are All Groping for Answers Now.” Bailouts of banks and detoxification of assets are surely not socialism, but they do indicate the extent of the crisis of capitalism.

It might be observed that, in fact, the struggle between capitalism and socialism is ending in the common ruin of the contending systems. The Great Ideological Debate that so dominated the twentieth century now commands fewer and fewer partisans—on either side—as the crises mount and the decades pass. A commentary on the *Newsweek* Web site expressed the sentiment well: “I don’t care what they call the system, I just want the context of my productive life to have some semblance of rationality and fairness. I want things to make sense again.”

The last several decades have witnessed extreme market gyrations under capitalism and the near-total collapse of communism. The resultant disorientation and malaise have led to a search for new answers and new directions. The emergence of the movement for Green politics has been one of the most hopeful developments. Riding a tide that is now moving across the world, favoring localization and communitarian economics, the Greens are presenting a holistic, “off the spectrum” alternative which has the potential to fundamentally transform our culture, politics, and lifeways.

WHAT HAPPENED TO SOCIALISM?

The discourse of ‘transformation’ had formerly been the province of the socialist movement. One hundred and sixty years ago, Marx and Engels’ *Manifesto* raised expectations among the masses by suggesting that the “historical dialectic” is leading inexorably toward the abolition of class division. But hopes for a “revolutionary reconstitution of society at large” have been disappointed. Not a single attempt to implement a socialist transformation has resulted in a classless society or democratic control of the economy.

After about 1980 the evident failure of the socialist movement to achieve its liberatory aspirations emboldened conservative politicians and commentators to proclaim that the ideological contestation between socialism and capitalism was over. The latter had won out, they said, and for good reason: Capitalist economic relations are the basis for freedom, democracy, and prosperity, while socialism tends to foster bureaucracy (or, worse, autocracy), economic torpor, and statist dependency. The British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher went so far as to declare that “There Is No Alternative” to capitalism (the ‘TINA’ assertion).

During the era of Thatcher, Reagan, Clinton, and Blair, interest in socialism waned to such a degree that a whole generation of young radicals (meaning: those who sense that injustice and exploitation are endemic to the current system and who therefore advocate for thoroughgoing social change) came of age less than fully aware of the extent of and the reasons for socialism’s former appeal. Yet the special challenges activists face now—subject to pronouncements about “the end of history” and the lack of alternatives—can hardly be appreciated unless the fate of the socialist movement is understood.

ASCENT AND DECLINE

Socialism arose after the French and American revolutions when a handful of ideological theorists recognized that political democracy by itself is not enough to realize egalitarian

“The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle ... Oppressor and oppressed stood in constant opposition to one another, [carrying] on an uninterrupted ... fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.”

- Karl Marx and Frederick Engels
in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848)

The discourse of ‘transformation’ had formerly been the province of the socialist movement.

goals (including democratic control of the economy). Even if all citizens have an equal vote on election day, wealth/status disparities are bound to result in power disparities. In other words, workers might each have one vote at the ballot box and the owners of productive assets might each have one vote, but the disparity of effective power and influence between the two groups is enormous.

Around 1820 writers such as Robert Owen in England and Henri de Saint-Simon in France were expounding bold new ideas: (a) meaningful political democracy could only be achieved under conditions of a classless society, and (b) the achievement of a classless society and democratic control of the economy requires social ownership of the major means of production. This is the essence of socialism.

The movement based on these principles quickly became an influential force in European politics and then gradually gained adherents all over the world. After World War I it suffered a split between its reformist and revolutionary wings, but, in time, each claimed dramatic successes. Socialists achieved majority representation in many national parliaments, while a number of successful revolutionary movements were led by Communists.

Through the ballot or through insurrection there were attempts to institute manifestations of socialism in countries as diverse as Russia, China, Cuba, Vietnam, East Germany, Yugoslavia, Britain, Sweden, Ghana, Angola, and others. Under the heading “List of Socialist Countries,” Wikipedia delineates almost 60 nation-states “that declared themselves socialist either in their names or their constitutions” at some point in their history.

But the movement peaked during the latter half of the twentieth century. Only 14 countries now still make any reference to socialism in their constitution. There has been something of a revival in a number of Latin American countries during the recent period and there are still supporters worldwide who maintain that “the resistance of the capitalist ruling classes will eventually be overcome.” But as the decades pass, the idea that the fully-realized socialist transformation remains on the historical agenda is warranting less and less credibility.

ENTER: THE MOVEMENT FOR GREEN POLITICS

The growth in ecological consciousness during the 1960s culminated in the worldwide celebration of the first Earth Day in

1970. It was logical that this phenomenon would find political expression. Soon the liberal and social democratic parties were starting to incorporate policies reflecting a narrow-focused environmentalism into their platforms.

Those who viewed ecology as broadly transformative, rather than “just another issue,” found themselves engaged in a debate. Some advocated for joining (or remaining in) the socialist parties with the objective of “greening the left.” Others advocated for the establishment of new parties. In standing up to criticism that they were “further splitting the left,” these proto-Greens made the case that they were in the process of developing a distinctly alternative worldview “neither left nor right” . . . motivated by an assessment that the socialist vision suffers from fundamental deficiencies in key areas. For example:

- * Socialism is wrong to presume that collectivized property relations could be the basis for subjective, democratic control of a modern industrial economy. The notion is chimerical because the means of production have become centralized, specialized, and complex to such a degree that it’s delusive to believe “the people” can democratically run the economy.
- * Socialism’s perspective on history (higher and higher stages of progressive development) is flawed. Greens tend to be more chastened about the trajectory of history. If it’s been a process of “progressive development,” why do we find ourselves on the verge of multiple potentially catastrophic crises, at risk of provoking global ecocide?
- * Socialism’s conception of transformation — the Final Conflict of the Class Struggle resulting in victory for the proletariat, ushering in an era of generalized abundance and security — has not demonstrated any relationship to our lived reality. Greens, instead, tend to view social transformation as a generations-long process of gradually “turning the ship” to go in a different direction . . . at a politico-economic level, yes, but also at deeper levels involving culture and lifeways. Moreover, it’s questionable whether people actually have much interest in identifying with or struggling on behalf of the abstraction: “the working class.” Rather, identification with family, community, and a particular

The special challenges activists face now — subject to pronouncements about ‘the end of history’ and the lack of alternatives — can hardly be appreciated unless the fate of the socialist movement is understood.

New ideas about alternative pathways are now 'in the air'.

place-on-earth provides real, timeless, natural, and healthy grounding for aspirations of human liberation.

* Socialism has a misguided techno-optimistic attitude regarding the liberatory potential of industrialism. In many ways the Greens' eco-communitarian vision of living more lightly and more locally—with an inference of scaling down, slowing down, simplifying and decentralizing—is diametrically opposed to the socialist vision of “unfettered development of the productive forces” and industrial-scale planning.

FINDING OUR WAY OUT OF THE IDEOLOGICAL CUL-DE-SAC

One aspect of positing a “third way alternative” (Green) is an implication that the former Great Ideological Debate was focused on the wrong issues. If that was the case, then it should not come as a surprise that each “side” was able to advance a perfectly valid critique of the other. Injustice and exploitation are, indeed, endemic to capitalism; but bureaucracy and statist dependency are, indeed, endemic to socialism. The old debate failed to resolve anything because, while both of the contenders could score points against each other, neither could delineate a path forward.

We'll remain stuck in an ideological cul-de-sac until we acknowledge that solutions to the crises of modern societies don't lie in the realm of property relations at all. The debate has been sterile for over a century, and so we find ourselves in a situation where regimes labeled liberal, conservative, or socialist all preside over a common state of malaise characterized by injustice, alienation, unsustainability, superficial democracy, and poor quality of life.

Also important to understand is that, even though capitalist theory and socialist theory are each deficient in their particular ways, at a deep level the two share critical values in common. In “The Fall of Communism, The Triumph of Capital” (*Fifth Estate*, Spring 1992) David Watson writes: “The desire for industrial growth and the expansion of needs, for the exploitation and valorization of nature for exchange, is shared by bourgeois and commissar alike; it is the ideology of the modern world, East and West, left and right.”

“Communist” China increasingly relies on market mechanisms while “capitalist” America socializes the losses of its largest enter-

prises and all but nationalizes its banking system. At the core of modern mega-systems—whether they profess to embody socialist or capitalist property relations—is an industrial-statist Leviathan managed by wealth/power elites to advance their own self interest.

TOWARD THE GREENING OF OUR CIVILIZATION

The *Communist Manifesto* disparaged “the idiocy of rural life” and extolled the “subjection of nature's forces to man and machinery . . . the clearing of whole continents.” Greens prioritize a revival of our relationship with the land.

Socialism envisioned an internationally planned economy with a worldwide division of labor. Greens want to move toward direct production for our communities, suggesting that relocalization is the key to devolution of power and subjective control of the economy.

There is an alternative to capitalism, but it's not some new universal socio-economic system. Humanity will not find a path to liberation through collectivization of the means of production.

Greens have a more nuanced, more sophisticated sensibility regarding both the process and the objective of social change. David Watson: “We have to talk tentatively about how an unprecedented, megatechnic empire and its corresponding constellation of cultures might become a qualitatively different kind of society; how a grid might become an organic weave of diverse, egalitarian, communal societies; and how an atomized, mass human being might again become a whole person embedded in a community.”

New ideas about alternative pathways are now “in the air.” The broad-based, multi-generational project of greening our long-misguided civilization has only just begun.

**STEVE WELZER**

a co-editor of this magazine, has been a Green movement activist for almost twenty years. He's a member of the Executive Committee of the Green Party of New Jersey (of which he was a primary founder in 1997) and is a New Jersey

delegate to the National Committee of the Green Party of the United States. Steve holds a Masters degree in Economics from Rutgers University. He lives in East Windsor, New Jersey, and is currently pursuing a project to establish an ecovillage in that state.

One of the motivations for Greens to proceed to form their own separate, distinctive parties was an assessment that the socialist vision suffers from fundamental deficiencies in key areas.

THE FIRST 100 DAYS *of a Green Party Administration*

BY JOHN RENSENBRINK

WITH A VIEW towards staking out a practical vision that is adequate to the crises facing the United States and the world, I set forth this past January 20th (Barack Obama's Inaugural Day) the highlights of what a Green Party agenda for its first 100 days in office might/could look like. At the end of this article I describe the criteria I used in order to choose which policies to include.

The Green Party's President-Elect is about to take office in Washington, D.C. She will be joined by Green Party majorities in both Houses of Congress.

DOMESTIC POLICY

Initiate a one-trillion dollar community-based grant-in-aid program from the national government to local communities. These funds will be channeled through collaborative arrangements between state and local governments. They will require maximum feasible participation in governance by all parts of each local community receiving these grants. Also required is a 5% matching grant from each participating local community.

The purposes of the grants are for sustainable community development and community empowerment. The grants include funds for renewable energy, conservation, work-force housing, small business development coupled with apprenticeship programs to hire the unskilled, open space, extra support for teachers and for ecologically informed education, college scholarships, food and water security, public works, public transportation, regional cooperative projects, support for neighborhood policing programs, and support for the arts. This replaces the 750 Billion dollar "bailout from the top" scheme initiated in late 2008 called the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP).



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the Maine Green Independent Party; has written two books about the Green Party in the U.S.: *The Greens and the Politics of Transformation* (1992) and *Against All Odds, The Green Transformation of American Politics*. (1999) He is a member of the National Committee of the U.S. Green Party and of its International Committee; and serves as a U.S. Green Party representative to the Global Green Network. He is a founding member of the Cathance River Education Alliance and is politically active in his hometown of Topsham, Maine. He lives with his wife Carla on the banks of the Cathance River.

Direct the national Treasury Department to shift the measurement of economic progress away from reliance on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to reliance on Genuine Progress Indicators (GPI). This will assist government officials, business executives, and university economists to provide, and be provided with, a critical tool to measure sustainable economic activity. We can no longer deceive ourselves that 50,000 deaths a year on our highways contribute to our well-being—which by present measurements seems to be the case because all the work connected with these deaths adds to the Gross Domestic Product. Or that building more prisons adds to GDP. Or piling up waste adds to GDP. Or buying more oil because our buildings leak tons of energy. Or waging wars for oil (thus adding enormously to the GDP!) when you can shift to renewable energy. There are thousands of such examples. We need to measure well-being, not commodity transactions of goods and services.

Substantially lower the income tax and combine this with a carbon tax of \$250 per ton to be phased in at the rate of \$25 per year from 2009 to 2020 --the carbon tax to be offset at each step of the way with a matching reduction in income tax. This is advocated by Lester Brown of "State of the World" fame and is designed to discourage fossil fuel use and to stimulate investment of renewable sources of energy.

Extend Medicare to the entire population; in other words, a single payer health care program for all.

Establish a financial transactions fee. Economist Dean Baker (Co-Director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington, D.C.) estimates that a very small fee – ranging up to, say, 0.25% will yield \$100 billion or more annually. The fee will be placed on the sale or transfer of stocks, bonds, and other financial assets, including the great variety of exotic and speculator-driven financial instruments so much in the news lately.

Initiate a Reparations Program for dispossessed African American and Native American peoples.

Initiate a constitutional amendment for the election of President and Vice President by popular vote.

Pressure state and local governments to institute Instant Run-off Voting in elections and to develop pilot programs for proportional representation.

Push for laws and administrative rules in military and civilian life that provide support for gay marriage and gay families.

End the Drug War, decriminalize cannabis, and support growing hemp for industrial use.

Initiate a constitutional amendment affirming that the word “person” in the 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States applies to real persons and not to corporations.

FOREIGN POLICY

Initiate *Peace, Justice, and Sustainability Summits*, starting with Summits engaging respectively the governments in the Americas, in Europe, in Africa, in the Middle East, and in the Asia-Pacific region, leading to a World Summit on Peace, Justice, and Sustainability within two years. The initiation of these Summits will be conducted through genuine collaborative diplomacy.

Promote in these Summits a worldwide program for collective security, renewable energy, and science-based roll-back of carbon emissions. Of equal importance, the Summits will be dedicated to producing support for community-based sustainability programs in food, water, energy development, education, transportation, and local self-reliance, with guaranteed participation by all sections of the local community.

Promote in these Summits plans and provisions to end the trade in arms, the trafficking of women, and the militarization of space.

End the war and the military occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Promote equally the security and rights of both Israel and Palestine.

Develop and execute a plan to close American military bases throughout the world, phasing out the bases in step with collab-

orative actions to provide the affected countries with alternative collective security arrangements.

Take leadership in promoting a worldwide financial transactions fee, the funds raised to be directed primarily to solar power development in developing countries.

Institute a world-wide carbon tax, proceeds to be used to lower taxes that burden small businesses.

Create a World Environmental and Labor Protection Organization alongside the World Trade Organization (WTO) — OR expand the WTO to include protection of the environment and labor.

SIX CRITERIA USED IN CHOOSING THE POLICIES FOR A GREEN PARTY PRESIDENT’S FIRST 100 DAYS.

First and foremost, I choose those policies that most contribute to a profound shift in the power structure. The reader will readily see that the strong emphasis in the above agenda on community preservation, community building, and community self reliance and self-governance, both in the United States and abroad, is a major feature of getting the nation and the world out from under the repressive and often lethal domination of the oligarchs. Other policies also contribute to a shift, as for example the item on electoral reform in the U.S.; also, the item on a revolutionary change in the way “progress” is measured; and the item on ending the bizarre notion that corporations are persons in the eyes of the law. They all significantly contribute to a profound shift in the power structure.

A second criteria is timeliness — in two dimensions. Is the need for the policy imminent – is there little time to waste in getting at the issue? And, a second dimension, related but not the same, is it something heavy on the public’s mind? Health care is such an issue.

A third criteria is the need to foster diversity among the people so that differences of race, gender, sexual orientation, and class cease to be opportunities for bias and discrimination and cease to be stumbling blocks to the achievement of unity in a diverse, multi-cultural society.

A fourth criteria is to choose policies that directly interconnect with one another; as for example, imposing a carbon tax and at the same time pushing strongly for renewable energy; also, pushing for collective security through collaborative diplomacy while at the same time withdrawing from U.S. military bases.

A fifth criteria for selection of the issues is to have directly in mind the Ten Key Values of the Green Party of the United States: Ecological Wisdom, Personal and Social Responsibility, Grass Roots Democracy, Non-Violence, Respect for Diversity, Gender Equity, Community Economics, Decentralization, Global Responsibility, and Sustainability (thinking to the seventh generation). The domestic and foreign policy intentions and plans for the “First 100 Days” strongly reflect these values.

A sixth criteria is have the issues chosen be consistent with, and be supported by, the United States Green Party Platform.

THE IRISH GREEN PARTY

An Impact Disproportionate to Their Size

BY BRIAN KALAR

The dilemma is whether to retain the comfortable purity of the outsider or to inch forward with incremental changes and risk accusations of “selling out.”

IRELAND'S GREEN PARTY, Comhaontas Glas, faces a dilemma similar to that facing successful Green Parties around the world. The dilemma is whether to retain the comfortable purity of the outsider or to inch forward with incremental changes and risk accusations of “selling out.” After joining the ruling political coalition in mid-2007, Comhaontas Glas has had to deal with another difficulty as well—governing while banks collapse, fuel and commodity prices oscillate wildly, and economic storms shake governments around the world.

“We’re in very rough times, not a time that anyone would choose to be in government,” said former Green Party leader Trevor Sargent, now minister of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. “But as we have predicted, the current consumer economy couldn’t last, so Greens I think were better prepared psychologically than some.”

SEATS IN THE DAIL

Ireland’s Greens had remained independent outsiders for a quarter-century, slowly building their base until they won several seats in the Dail (national legislature, rhymes with toil). They were aided by Ireland’s voting system, which uses proportional representation, in which multiple candidates from various parties are elected from a certain area in proportion to their percentage of the vote and ranked voting, in which voters can list their first and second choices. Such a system allows multiple parties to flourish. The two main parties, Fianna Fail (rhymes with tall) and Fine Gael, each usually receive between 25 and 45 percent of the vote, and must forge alliances with one or more of the four smaller parties – Labour, Progressive Democrats, Sinn Fein and the Greens.

Many Greens had hoped that the mid-2007 election would be their breakthrough year. It was the first election since issues like peak oil and climate change, long derided as fringe issues, percolated into the mainstream. It was only the second election of the Celtic Tiger, which had transformed the previously agrarian nation into an economic powerhouse. It also came after widespread dissatisfaction with the dominant Finna Fail (rhymes with tall) party. The party’s leader, Bertie Ahern, was under investigation for corruption and had to step down shortly after the election.

JOINING A COALITION TO GOVERN – POLICY SUCCESSES

At first, though, the election changed little. Fianna Fail held control with 45 percent, while the Greens held only four percent of the TDs (Teacha Dala, or seats in the Dail). One thing that did change, however, was that Fianna Fail’s old coalition partner, the Progressive Democrats, lost most of their seats, and Fianna Fail needed a new ally to have a majority. Armchair politicians put minor parties together like jigsaw pieces to create new alliances, but FF reached out to the Greens, and after days of tough negotiations, the Greens made a deal with them.

The coalition was controversial from the beginning, with pundits and some Greens claiming the Greens received too few concessions from the alliance. Three Greens were appointed ministers or junior ministers, however – posts that are like US Cabinet secretaries. John Gormley became minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government; Eamonn Ryan headed the Department of Energy, Communications and Natural Resources; while Trevor Sargent became junior minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

The Greens also got several reforms out of the deal. Shortly after attaining power, they received a quick commitment on climate change from the Irish government. Sargent said that “smart metering,” is being implemented in a pilot programme to 21,000 homes – an infrastructure change that will both save energy and pave the way for replacing centralized power plants with a network of solar, tidal and wind power generators.

Building codes have also changed radically in Ireland. “It has long frustrated people who understood that we weren’t going to heat our homes well under old codes in a world with less energy,” Sargent said. “We have instituted much stricter energy-saving standards, and we have cancelled developments that didn’t meet these standards, that ordinarily would have gone through.”

Sargent is perhaps the only world leader to ride his bicycle to work every morning. He is particularly proud of the new government’s commitment to organic food and Farmers’ Markets. The government’s new policies, he said, will increase organic food production 500 percent by 2012.

“Genetically Modified food was an issue that would not have been on the agenda without the presence of the Green Party in the coalition,” Sargent said. “Ireland has the objective of becoming a GM-free zone. There are no GM foods grown in Ireland, although GM feed is imported. Legislation is now being put in place to see that the onus is on a farmer choosing to grow GM crops to be liable for contamination which may occur on a neighbouring farm” – as opposed to some countries, where farmers are liable if a neighbour’s GM pollen blows onto their crops and fertilizes them.

Green candidate Gary Fitzgerald said the Greens’ contribution to government has been radically different from that of any other party.

“The other four major parties are very similar in their energy policy, roads, most areas,” Fitzgerald said. “They ignore the fact that we live on a finite planet. We come at it from a different angle.”

Certainly the Greens continue to talk about issues like peak oil, climate change or ecological collapse with a candour that is rare among world leaders. At a meeting of the Kildare Transition Town last October, Sargent said that in the next few decades, “The world needs to drop oil or the planet will drop a lot of people.”

The Greens did have to back down on a number of government policies long protested by the party’s activist core; for example, the U.S. government’s “rendition” flights through Shannon airport; highway construction close to the Hill of Tara, the ancient seat of Irish kings and an important archaeological site; and Shell Oil’s gas pipeline through the village of Rosspoint on the western coast. Fitzgerald said these issues were mostly “a done deal” when the Greens entered government, and could not be changed after the fact, but the party’s lack of protest still angered some members.

Former Green Party member Andy Wilson, now running for local office as an independent, said he believed the Greens could have held out for a much more advantageous deal with Fianna Fail, and could have stood their ground on several occasions since joining the government.

“Fianna Fail had only two options, to join with the Greens or with Labour,” said Wilson, who left the party in protest last year. “Labour had a much larger constituency and would have fought for a tougher deal. So from the perspective of Fianna Fail, the Greens were a soft touch really.”

Wilson especially criticized the government’s cuts in social programmes like education. “[T]here were plans in place to reduce classroom size, put more money into primary education and so on. When Fianna Fail’s budget was released, however, we were not only not going further in that direction, we were going in the opposite direction. They [the Greens] could have negotiated, but they chose to go along with what the major coalition partner required.”

Ireland’s Greens] were aided by Ireland’s voting system, which uses proportional representation . . . and ranked voting, in which voters can list their first and second choices.

“The other four major parties are very similar,” Fitzgerald said. “They ignore the fact that we live on a finite planet. We come at it from a different angle.”

We have had an impact disproportionate to our size.

While the Greens have achieved a goal of 20 percent cuts in carbon emissions, Wilson believes that here, too, they could have achieved much more.

“[W]e might meet that goal without trying, solely because of economic recession,” Wilson said. “We could, and should, go for much more, like 40 percent.”

DEFLECTIONS

Wilson is not the only one. In January Cork city Councillor Chris O’Leary announced he was quitting the party, saying the Greens were committed to staying in government “no matter what.” The next day Dublin City Councillor Bronwen Maher announced her resignation from the Greens after 20 years of activism, and called for the resignation of GP leader John Gormley. According to the Irish Times, she said the Greens had become a “centrist lifestyle-lite Green Party.”

Around the same time Patricia McKenna, who made history by becoming Ireland’s first Green member of the European Union Parliament in 1994, also quit the party, saying it was in “free fall.”

“The recent defections were disappointing, but the public seemed to respond by saying we were doing a good job — we went up in the polls from five percent to eight percent,” Sargent said. “Being in opposition gives us the luxury of not having to be responsible for anything, and now we are responsible for a nation, and have to follow through.”

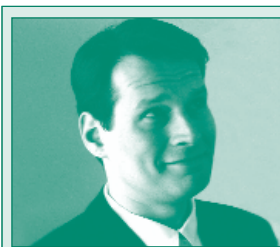
Adding to the Greens’ difficulty were the fuel price spike and the economic crisis that began shortly after they joined the government. While the Greens were the only party not to predict continued rapid growth in the Irish economy, Sargent said, the banking crisis surpassed their worst fears. On the bright side, he said, such difficult times might create the political will to push through reforms that had not been feasible.

“A situation like this means that some proposals, like greater carbon taxes to conserve finite resources, can be on the table now, when it would not have been taken seriously before,” he said.

GREEN IMPACT

Fianna Fail’s approval numbers have continued to fall since the 2007 election, in the wake of Ahern’s resignation and economic crisis. A poll published on February 7 by the organisation Red C showed that FF’s approval ratings had dropped to 28 percent, making their main rival Fine Gael the front-runner. The Greens, however, have “avoided any of the political fallout,” according to the Sunday Independent – those polled who said they would vote Green jumped from five to eight percent, and Fitzgerald said that party membership has also risen by about a third.

We are a party of six TDs (Teacha Dala) in a government of 87 TDs, and so any impact we have is going to be somewhat proportional to our size,” Fitzgerald said. “But I think we have had an impact disproportional to our size, as we have pushed through a number of policies that would not have taken place if we had not been part of the government ... given our size, I think we have punched far above our weight.”



BRIAN KALLER

is a former newspaper reporter from the U.S. who lives in County Kildare, Ireland. He has worked for the Green Party of Minnesota and the Irish Green Party, and his community group, FADA, has brought Andy Wilson to speak at events. Kaller blogs at www.restoringmayberry.blogspot.com.

A Canadian Perspective

AS A CANADIAN GREEN I am suffering from conflicting feelings about how far we have come and whether or not the changes that are needed are going to be made in time. I'm referring to the changes we have to make personally and to the changes we have to make as a society. The changes are critical if our lives and livelihoods are to become sustainable and if we are to provide the means for our children to have a good quality of life in the coming years.

Part of me is optimistic and I rejoice in seeing so many creative minds at work discovering new technologies and techniques for using existing materials in new and sustainable ways. So much sustainable energy is available and we have the technology to make use of it. This part of me feels that the future is looking bright!

But then I look at where the vast majority of our energy does come from. It comes from oil, coal and gas — fossil fuels, all of which are big greenhouse gas emitters. The use of these traditional sources of energy is backed by the biggest, richest and most powerful corporations on the planet, and they don't want to change. Worse yet, all levels of government are beholden to these corporations and stubbornly maintain laws to keep us locked into a consumer society that is raping the planet for profit. We are fighting an unholy force of immense size and power that reaches around the globe. We have the technologies to build a sustainable society, but the political will to do so is absent.

Canada has definitely been backsliding in the last three decades. I can well remember the days when we Canucks were the Peacekeepers of the World; when we consistently were placed at or near the top on the list of environmentally responsible countries. Now we are involved in combat in far-flung countries, propping up corrupt puppet governments in the name of democracy while our own electoral system is anything but democratic. We now poll at or near the bottom on lists of environmentally friendly nations. At the recent climate change conference last December in Poznan, Poland we were awarded the top prize for obstructionist maneuvers, even beating out our southern neighbors for that dubious honor.

CANADIAN BACKSLIDING: WHAT WENT WRONG?

Part of the problem is that we Crazy Canucks tend to follow what the government and people of the United States are doing in the Land of the Free. This means that when Maggie Thatcher and Ronald Reagan got together and decided that the unbridled pursuit of profit was, in fact, the meaning of life, we followed along. We elected Brian Mulroney, who was eager to join the club. In mainland Europe the rich and the powerful were also up for a bit of free market fun, but they were constrained somewhat by the socialist traditions of their culture. So the stage was set in North America for a period when profit trumped everything and the environment was just a pesky externality. That has, in general terms, been the story ever since. The result of this has been a race to privatise everything in sight from penitentiaries to the Pentagon.

Eight years ago George Dubya appeared on the scene. Here in Canada we didn't know what to expect. We were used to the flawed but personable Bill Clinton, who was a past master of the "feel good" factor. Bill was no Green but he was not perceived as an enemy of the natural environment. The US seemed to be doing well when he left office and we assumed everything would carry on in the same way, but with a

BY PETER JOHNSTON

We have the technologies to build a sustainable society, but the political will to do so has been absent.

Thatcher and Reagan initiated a period when profit trumped everything and the environment was just a pesky externality.

*Nearly a million Canadians voted for Green candidates in the last election,
increasing our vote by 41%.*

Republican flavor. The first hint that things had changed was the collapse of the “Dot Com Bubble.” That was bad for many investors, but not for the average person, and things seemed to settle down fairly quickly in the aftermath.

THEN CAME 9/11

Canadians felt the impact of this attack in a personal way. Quite a few Canadians perished and we felt close to our friends to the south who had suffered this terrible tragedy. Indeed, most of the countries of the world were sympathetic to the citizens of the US in their grief. There were some exceptions where people considered Osama [Bin Laden] bin Laden to be a hero, but in general 9/11 generated sympathy and goodwill towards the USA.

However, it was not to last. In short order President Bush declared a ‘War on Terror’ saying, “You are either with us or against us.” Canadian troops then joined a large US force in the invasion of Afghanistan. The Greens could not support the use of Canadian forces in this combat role, especially as no attempt at a diplomatic solution had been tried. Grave misgivings were felt in the Green community regarding the effectiveness of using a conventional army to capture and eradicate a terrorist organization. Dubya seemed to be in his element, however. In no time he was ramping up the rhetoric against Saddam Hussein, accusing him of having WMDs and saying it was time for a regime change. Despite not getting a UN mandate, the US, with the support of Britain and a few other countries, invaded Iraq and toppled Saddam. In a moment of clarity the Canadian Prime Minister, Jean Chretien declined to send Canadian troops into Iraq. No WMDs were found, so the Bush administration dreamt up and promoted the story that Saddam was responsible for the attack on the World Trade Center (WTC).

By now people from around the world were turning against the United States government. Bush’s aggressive use of force was seen as a blatant attempt to show the world that America was boss and anybody who disagreed would get their butt kicked. The well known American respect for human rights seemed to have been forgotten with the use of torture, rendition and Guantanamo. Many thought that the invasion of Iraq was undertaken primarily to gain access to Iraqi oil, leaving oil-producing countries wondering if the same thing could happen to them. In less than two years the feelings of sympathy and brotherhood for the US had been transformed into fear and distrust, if not downright hatred.

Greens were especially horrified at the thought that southern Iraq was now covered in depleted uranium dust, which will be a health hazard for hundreds of thousands of years. Tens of thousands were killed and maimed, mostly non-combatants. Cities were destroyed and millions of refugees fled Iraq or were forced to live in miserable camps. Canadians could clearly see the neo-con agenda: seize control of vital resources and crush anyone who gets in the way; promote global Free Trade so that the multi-nationals, with their friends in the IMF and WTO, can control the economies of less prosperous nations for the benefit of the rich and the powerful.

Here comes the irony: What was the Canadian reaction to the antics of Bush and his neo-con administration? Why, we went right ahead and elected a neo-con of our own! Harper is, of course, a somewhat toned down version of G.W., but he always supported his big brother and is a strong advocate of corporatism.

A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

Happily, the Americans seem to have seen the light. Dubya has gone, and in his place the people of the United States have elected a president who favors diplomacy over warfare. Barack Obama also seems to understand the real meaning of wealth — that is, the holistic condition of well being rather than just financial accumulation. Of course we still must wait and see how things pan out, and I think we all realize how difficult is the task facing the new president. This is especially the case in light of the economic crash precipitated by the deregulated, “greed is good”, economic policies which have been pursued in North America for the last couple of decades and brought to their inevitable climax under G.W.

In regard to the environment, the USA has been the biggest holdout against adopting policies designed to move global society towards sustainability. President Obama has pledged to change that. In light of the economic crisis in which we find ourselves, the way is clear for a rapid change to policies promoting “green” industries. The whole world is watching, in the hope that America will change from being a laggard to a leader in the Greening of the Planet. I believe Americans, with their new president, will rise to the occasion.

WHERE IS OUR OBAMA?

For Canadians, the question is: “Where is our Obama?” Well, Harper is a somewhat toned down Bush supporter, so forget him. The Liberals, the Canadian version of the Democrats, have

I believe Americans, with their new president, will rise to the occasion.

just elected a new leader, Michael Ignatief. Mr. Ignatief is an intellectual powerhouse, but is, if anything, a little bit right of center. Prior to Ignatief the Liberals did, in fact, have their Greenest leader ever, by a long way — Stephan Dion. He is a committed environmentalist and is very sincere in his desire to see Canada as a leader in the move to sustainability. Unfortunately he is no Obama. His oratory skills are weak, especially in English, and he lacks charisma. For me that is not a problem as I focus on policy over personality, but in today's political theater he was unelectable as a prime minister. Consequently the Liberals were heavily defeated in the recent general election. The leader of the New Democratic Party (NDP), the third party in Canadian politics, has many political skills; and the New Democrats do, on the face of it, have a pretty good set of environmental policies. The problem facing them is that they are basically a socialist party and, as such, they will never form a federal government in Canada.

WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE US? IS THERE ANYBODY OUT THERE?

Fortunately, yes, there is. Elizabeth May, the leader of the federal Green Party of Canada, just might be the Canadian Obama. At first glance that might seem unlikely. However, on further examination, the similarities become more obvious. She is very personable, having the ability to talk to ordinary people as equals without any trace of the ego driven self-importance which is such a turn-off for most people. In the recent election she consistently polled as Canada's most popular political leader. The press loves her, except for the right-wingers who see her as a potential threat and are out to trash anything Green. Elizabeth has a well-developed sense of fun, but woebetide anyone who underestimates her intellectual abilities. Her whole life has been dedicated to protecting the natural environment and fighting for the rights of the common person. As a lawyer and as the CEO of the Sierra Club of Canada for fifteen years, she is very knowledgeable. In the televised debates during the election she was generally considered by the media to have come out on top. Elizabeth is a very good speaker in both official languages and rarely has to use notes. Like Obama, she is different from the established perception of a politician, not least because of her gender.

Of course, Elizabeth May is in a different situation from President Obama. While he is the elected presidential candidate of one of the two main parties, she is the leader of a party that

is still building to the point where it can be considered one of the main players.

However, the Green Party of Canada (GPC) has arrived. Nearly a million Canadians voted for Green candidates in the last election, increasing our vote by 41%. In fact, we were the only party to increase our vote; but because of the way Canada's less than fully democratic electoral system functions, we failed to win any seats. Elizabeth ran in the riding of Central Nova in Nova Scotia and in spite of running against Canada's Minister of Defense she came in a very strong second with 33% of the vote. If she had not been obliged to be away from her riding for much of the time because of her obligations as Party Leader, many think she could have taken the seat. So, the message to our Green friends down south is: "we are now part of the Canadian political landscape; we have the policies and we have the leader."

Like it or not, we Canadians do look to the USA for signs of what is going to happen in our own country. After all, we are not only allies, but more than that, we are very similar societies in many profound ways. Therefore, from the perspective of Canadian Greens, we are feeling a great sense of relief right now. We realise that, however good your leadership is for the next few years, you have been left with a hard row to harrow. However, with the neo-cons out of power and with a compassionate and intelligent president in the White House, there is a sense that the tide has turned. Now, if Canada acts according to convention, in a couple of years we will have a Green government. That may sound like an impossible dream, but, then, a couple of years ago, who would have thought that America would have an African American president?

P.S. - Incidentally, the GPC slogan in the 2006 federal election was: "We Can."



PETER JOHNSTON

From early childhood Peter Johnston has had a love of the natural world. He moved to British Columbia from the UK in 1967, working at various jobs that took him into the wilderness. He later moved to Alberta where he recently

became Deputy Leader of the Alberta Green Party, as well as the Alberta representative on the Federal Council of the Green Party of Canada. He has run in two provincial elections and two federal elections, garnering more than eight percent of the vote in the most recent federal election.

TITUS NORTH

Candidate for Congress from Pittsburgh 2008



PHOTO BY SOPHIA NORTH

INTERVIEW WITH JULIA JUDSON-REA

Having run twice before, people were getting more familiar with me... starting to see me as legitimate, and it was getting harder for the press to ignore me.

And even more surprising, people from conservative backgrounds who were supporting me based on my anti-bailout position became very open-minded to peace and social justice issues.

What attracted you to the Green Party?

In 1996 I cast a write-in vote for Ralph Nader because I wasn't happy with Clinton. Shortly after, I became aware that the Allegheny County Greens were having meetings not far from where I was getting my PhD. I collected signatures and did poll watching in 2000. In 2004, I was the Allegheny County coordinator for Nader's campaign. I would see the Greens collecting for their candidate and we were all friendly; there was no animosity. In 2005 the Greens approached me to run for Mayor of Pittsburgh. I dove in blind to local politics! The Green Party has a coherent outlook and my view is similar, so it was an easy fit. Even now the issues I am most involved with are peace, social justice and economic issues. At my core, I'm an environmentalist. The Greens recognize how intertwined these issues are: peace, social justice, economics, the environment.

Why did you decide to run for Congress?

I first ran in 2006, when there was an intensity about Iraq. Also during that summer Israel and Hezbollah were fighting in Lebanon; and there were Israeli attacks into Gaza. There was a lot going on that I felt strongly about and I wanted to run. But in 2006, there was a challenge to Green Party candidates on the validity of their petitions to get them on the ballot in Pennsylvania. I spent most of my time at the end of the campaign sitting next to a representative of the Democrats going signature by signature to decide if it was valid or not. I felt ripped off because half the campaign season I had to be in Harrisburg and wasn't able to campaign in Pittsburgh. I felt like I was denied my shot, so I ran again for U.S. Congress in 2008.

In the 2008 campaign, you were pretty vocal about saying you didn't expect to win based on fundraising dollars. What were your goals for the campaign?

Wait a minute! I never said that! I was misquoted in many places. I never said I *won't* win, just that the odds were against me to win. I know I'm a long-shot. I got about 23,000 votes. In Allegheny County, registered Democrats outnumber Republicans 6:1.

Does the Democrat, Mike Doyle, get worried about an election? No, because of the ratio. I ran to present an alternative, to raise issues, and to win. I definitely accomplished the issue raising, particularly on the Palestinian issue, most certainly on the bailout issue.

What were the major factors that contributed to your achieving those goals?

I have 20 years of experience in financial markets, and was working with firms in Japan during their crisis and attempts at bailouts. People in this last election were focused on the bailout and it was an issue custom-made for me.

Having run twice before, people were getting more familiar with me, they remembered me, my stands on things like the war, or the stadiums, and other things. People were starting to see me as legitimate, and it was getting harder for the press to ignore me as they did when I was running for mayor.

I also had great volunteers. I've had people helping me who literally camped out in front of the State House in Harrisburg during the petition challenge.

What were the factors that hindered you?

There were a few things. The Obamamania was one thing and the fact that Mike Doyle started his own radio ad blitz of ads that were very misleading was another. The ads criticized the bailout, even though he had voted for it both times. His deceptive blitz definitely cost me votes. More than anything else, it is people's habit of always voting for a certain party. But in the precincts where I had volunteers distributing flyers door-to-door, I got 20 to 25% of the vote. If you extrapolate that, I would have gotten 75,000 votes. Unfortunately, I just didn't have the volunteer power to do that.

Tell me about anything that surprised you, any learning points in your campaign.

I was well received by a lot of people whom I would have thought of as conservative based on their position on the bailout. And even more surprising, people from conservative backgrounds who were supporting me based on my anti-bailout position became very open-minded to peace and social justice issues. That was very surprising, to have people who normally wouldn't be my supporters come out and be willing to pass out literature calling for reparations for slavery, gay marriage, et cetera. As people's minds were opened on one issue, they became open to others.

What issue did people best respond to? What was the real attention grabber for your constituents?

As I've said, people responded very well to my position on the bailout. But I have a well-rounded set of issues. I received a lot of support based on my willingness to speak out against the Israeli occupation of Palestine. When Ralph Nader came to Pittsburgh in 2008, I opened the event for him. I spoke about the war in Iraq. I said I didn't want my country occupying another and taking its resources, but does that make me unpatriotic? Therefore, if I say that I don't want Israel occupying Palestine, am I not saying that I want the same actions from Israel as I do for my own country? I got a very good response from that speech.

What do you see as the key to running a good campaign as a candidate for the Green party? What tools are most helpful?

Flying. The Greens have more energy than they do money. If you have more energy than money, then apply the energy and just enough money to get flyers printed and pass them out. In the very last weekend before the campaign, I bought television advertisement time on cable. I ran a martial-arts anti-bailout ad and put it on during the Colbert Report on Monday night. I got

a great response and a lot of attention from that ad and it was all over YouTube.

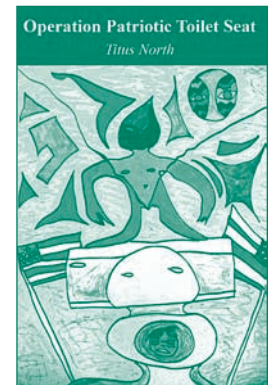
TitusTV was helpful, it's on my website, www.votenorth.org. When I make speeches, I record them. I can use my recordings as documentation to show people my commitment to issues. I also use it to make my own press, because it is so hard as a third-party candidate to get the attention of the press. And advertising is so expensive that it takes donors. I don't want to have to accept money for advertising or campaigning that comes with strings, so *TitusTV* was a way for me to make my own press and advertising.

What advice can you give to Green Party candidates for future campaigns?

It depends on the circumstances, but just stick to your principles. Do your best and then whatever happens, happens. That's what I would say. If we start tailoring things, if in doing that we compromise our principles in order to win an election, then that is a victory not worth winning.

You have a new book out, *Operation Patriotic Toilet Seat*. What is it about?

It's a fun book; I call it poli-sci-fi [political science fiction]. The book has elements of the absurd. The basic plot is that a recovering alcoholic joins the navy in order to get his life back on track. He stumbles up on a plot that seems so outrageous that he cannot believe it. He gets chased to the ends of the earth and eventually comes face-to-face with raw American power. The book deals with government surveillance of private citizens, of militarism, of the loss of constitutional rights, and with torture. The book can be found on the Enlightened Pyramid website, www.enlightened-pyramid.com.



JULIA JUDSON-REA

is about to complete her Master's Degree in International Development at the University of Pittsburgh. She has written previously for Green Horizon on ecological education and community supported agriculture.

Editor's Note:

We plan to feature interviews with Green Party candidates and/or office holders. This is our first.

FAIRVOTE MOMENTUM

in the United States

BY ROB RICHIE

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION: NEW COALITIONS FOR LOCAL REFORM

This year in Cincinnati we aided local reformers seeking to restore proportional representation in the city of our founding 16 years ago. We created materials, mobilized donations and sent staff to help. And voters responded. We won among people who voted early, but big spenders in City Hall and their special interest allies poured in close to \$100,000 in the final 10 days, fooled a gullible local media about the cost of implementing reform and eked out a 5% win. However, our wonderful allies, including a former governor, former mayor, Common Cause, the NAACP and many neighborhood groups will not give up on election reform. And neither will we.

Meanwhile, in Port Chester, New York, FairVote, represented by the Brennan Center for Justice, filed amicus briefs to try and remedy the Village's unrepresentative voting method with a proportional representation system. While the outcome of this case is not yet settled, we have high hopes for a non-winner-take-all solution. This comes on the heels of a victory for proportional representation in South Dakota, where the state's ACLU recently succeeded in defending the use of cumulative voting in Voting Rights Act cases at the Court of Appeals.

INSTANT RUNOFF VOTING RACKS UP NEW SUCCESSES

This year Vermont's legislature passed a bill to use instant runoff voting (IRV) for all U.S. House and Senate races. But the governor – perhaps sensitive to his own non-majority wins – ignored calls from nearly a thousand Vermonters and vetoed the bill. The bill had the support of Common Cause VT, League of Women Voters of Vermont, and others. Yet we will be back in 2009, with a new IRV election for mayor in Burlington, a ballot measure in Rutland and determination to increase legislative support.

We'll also build on openings created by two new state laws to boost IRV in North Carolina and Colorado, look for new chances to boost IRV as we did in this year's overwhelming landslide wins for IRV ballot measures in Santa Fe (NM), Telluride (CO) and Memphis (TN). In addition, we'll work to ensure the growing number of IRV elections go well. This year, for example, more than a million IRV ballots were cast in San Francisco and Pierce County (WA). Pierce County voters elected Washington's first woman county executive after IRV vaulted her past the first-round leader. In the four most contested IRV elections in San Francisco, the biggest spenders lost out

every time – with IRV and voters having the power to rank their choices making it much harder to win by smearing opponents.

UNIVERSAL & ADVANCE VOTER REGISTRATION HITS THE BIG TIME

Florida's governor this year signed into law our proposal to allow 16-year-olds to pre-register to vote – and in turn create new opportunities to register young people and introduce them to suffrage through programs like our new Learning Democracy curriculum. Next year, FairVote Rhode Island expects its state will enact the proposal and advance civic learning. By presenting pre-registration at a national meeting of Secretaries of State and advising congressional backers drafting a new bill, we expect more states will follow suit.

In 2008 our country of course had a historic presidential election – one that captured the imagination of millions. Voter turnout rose only slightly, however, and our post-election research showed how the current Electoral College system led to a disturbing turnout gap between the states where candidates campaigned and safe states. There was a greater than 6% turnout differential between the competitive 15 states and the rest of America where two-thirds of voters reside. Our reports, commentaries, media and many presentations to groups – ranging from hundreds of students at the National Archives to the League of Women Voters of Bucks County (PA) – showcased how our current system distorts the principles of fairness and equality.

A NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE FOR PRESIDENT BY 2012

We act as a catalyst for change. Our work in the National Popular Vote coalition had contributed to four states enacting the National Popular Vote plan for president and 21 state legislative chambers passing it. The latest polls confirm that landslide majorities of voters from all parties support a national popular vote and a 2012 election where every vote is equal. With steady outreach and media savvy, we can secure victory. Just this week, I was featured on NPR's *All Things Considered*, discussing the case for a National Popular Vote.

We can already see that the conversation is changing. A raft of recent polls, from a range of states, show support for a national popular vote at a supermajority of over 70%. It's no wonder then, that the Michigan House recently passed NPV with a 65-36 bi-partisan coalition.



GREEN HORIZON

Message to our donors for 2008/2009

We are very grateful and impressed by all who have made a financial contribution to the Green Horizon Foundation and its Magazine in response to our letters in November 2008 and in January 2009.

Just below is a partial list. Some have indicated they wish to remain anonymous. Others have not as yet indicated to us whether they want their name included. Those who do want this, we will include their names in the upcoming Fall issue along with others who will be making a donation this summer and fall.

Donations may be sent to Green Horizon, P.O. Box 476, Topsham, ME 04086.

Check to be made out to Green Horizon Foundation.

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Announcing two new books by our members

Paul Gilk, *Green Politics is Eutopian*. Published by WIPF and Stock Publishers, 199 West 8th Avenue, Ste. 3, Eugene, OR 97401 (Telephone 541-344-1528). Look for an article by him in our next issue. Paul lives in the woods of Northern Wisconsin and describes himself as a long practitioner of "voluntary poverty".

Maynard Kaufman, *Adapting to the End of Oil*. Please see his article in this issue. He also contributed an article in the previous issue (Fall 2008). Look at the end of either article for a short bio.



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