

Evolution of the Apocalypse: Empire's Demise, - Human Renaissance

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Apocalypse ([Greek](#): *Apokálypsis*; "lifting of the veil") is a term applied to the disclosure to certain privileged persons of something hidden from the majority of humankind. Today the term is often used to refer to the [end of the world](#), which may be a shortening of the phrase *apokalupsis eschaton*, which literally means "revelation at the end of the æon, or age.[1]"

The unraveling of the US and global financial system should not be a surprise to anyone who has been paying attention, doubted the news headlines over the past decade, or plunged into an odyssey of self- and world-discovery by reading books, studying history, or seeking the truth behind the cultural myths that cocoon Americans into the notion that they live in the world's beacon of democracy and freedom. The most surprising factor is that people who have created the crisis think that they can continue the scam by stealing another \$850,000,000,000 overtly through the bailout, and even larger amounts covertly, to keep the game going for the world's wealthiest people at the expense of everyone else.

In the past, Egypt, Babylon, Persia, and Rome fell when a small percentage of the population controlled nearly all of the wealth. [2] Today, the rich have never been richer nor the poor poorer. The concentration of wealth has been achieved by conquest, as well as by one of the most powerful tools of empire money.

Debt-based monetary systems are the building blocks of empires, and generally empires collapse or topple when they have destroyed their ecological base. The current global empire severely threatens the forests, the oceans, the climate, the fertility of the soil, the aquifers, the bees, and innumerable other species, including humanity.

There is a Cree prophecy that goes as follows[3]:

"When all the trees have been cut down, when all the animals have been hunted, when all the waters are polluted, when all the air is unsafe to breathe, only then will you discover you cannot eat money."

Caught up in the empire game, many have forgotten the difference between money and real wealth. Money is a human invention. It is not neutral. Who creates it, how it flows in a society, a nation, and the world is important and subject to change. Money is an agreement that can be backed either by force or by a spirit of cooperation.[4]

Bankers, like magicians, do not want to reveal their secrets. Able to create money out of thin air, they have learned that belief in the value of money is the key to their success. When people begin to doubt the purchasing power of money, banks fail and currencies collapse.

The “modern” fractional reserve banking system has evolved over centuries.[5] “Mortgage” literally means “death-gamble.” When mortgages were first introduced, those who risked their land to borrow money were literally risking the lives of their families, their liberty, and their hopes for the future. Only gradually, over eons of time, did the idea of a “mortgage” become more commonplace, acceptable, and even encouraged. Mortgages became attached to the “dream of home ownership” and provided the liquid currency to fuel “national economies.”

The origins of paper money can be traced to receipts that goldsmiths provided to their customers, who would leave their gold with a goldsmith for safekeeping. Centuries ago goldsmiths began giving out receipts for the gold that they safeguarded, and people soon learned that the receipts were more useful for business transactions than heavy amounts of gold. Some enterprising goldsmith figured out that it was not necessary to maintain a supply of gold equal to all the receipts issued, because all the customers would never come to claim their gold at the same time. Because large amounts of gold weren’t necessary to ensure the utility of receipts, the goldsmith was able to issue many times as many receipts as he had gold in his vault, and the fractional reserve system was born. Since goldsmiths began to loan gold and receipts at interest, the system of “debt money” was born in which customers had to pay back more money (receipts) than were in circulation thus ensuring that the community as a whole would always be in debt to the goldsmith.

When money is created by the banks and loaned to governments or business at interest, it is mathematically impossible to pay back all the money with interest. Not all debts can be repaid, so foreclosures occur. In this way wealth is continually transferred from the poor to the rich.

Kings, queens, and nations have succumbed to the power of those who lend them money, finance their wars, pay their armed forces and own the means of communication, which either provide rulers their aura of legitimacy or can just as easily demonize and dethrone them.

Over a hundred years ago, the populist movement in the United States rose up in the wake of the collapse of agricultural prices that threatened farmers and enriched bankers. The farmers pushed for monetary reform, including the demand that dollars be backed by silver rather than gold. The populists also argued that money should be created by the government for the benefit of the people, rather than by banks for the benefit of the bankers.

In 1890 the German economist Silvio Gesell formulated a theory of money that was as revolutionary as the notion that the earth circles the sun, rather than the other way around—despite appearances. Gesell suggested securing the money flow by making money a governmental service subject to a use fee. Instead of paying interest to those who have more money than they need, people would pay a small fee if they kept money out of circulation. The fee would serve as income to the government and would reduce the amount of taxes needed to carry out public tasks.

Gesell’s ideas were tested by the mayor of Worgl, Austria, in 1932 when economic conditions were deplorable. The mayor proposed to substitute a local currency for the national currency which he called “work certificates.” On the first of every month the holder had to affix a 1 percent stamp of the face value of the certificate. The “taxes” went into the community chest, to provide a relief fund for the invalids or elderly who were unable to

work. Because of the stamp tax, taxes were paid quickly, accounts were settled without the usual delays, and even the bank became eager to loan out money, as fast as it received it.

The mayor then embarked upon a public works program “to alleviate want, give work and bread,” which exceeded his highest hopes. The conditions of the streets of Worgl had been a standing joke to the people in the surrounding countryside. In less than four months, sewers and improvements were completed. Later, other streets were paved, and even streets outside of Worgl were repaired. Prosperity blossomed throughout Worgl.

Inspired by Worgl’s success, a meeting of 200 Austrian mayors decided unanimously to follow the Worgl example in their impoverished communities. At this point, fearful of losing its power, the private Austrian National Bank protested against the shattering of its money-making monopoly. After a legal fight, the Austrian Supreme Court sided with the bank, as might be expected. Although this experiment was abruptly terminated in Austria, the Worgl experience inspired three or four hundred scrips in circulation in the United States, Canada, and Mexico during the Great Depression.[6]

If the Federal Reserve were actually a part of the US government, would the US government need to borrow money? Wouldn’t it be able to just print its own? In 1913 the Federal Reserve Act took away Congress’s Constitutional power of regulating the value of money and bequeathed it to private banks.[7] Since then the financial plight of the US government has been dire and under pressure from the very rich, who choose which candidates and politicians will serve their interests and oust those who threaten them.

In recent times there have been numerous communications revolutions, including radio, television, and the Internet, and social movements have also arisen. At the same time there has also been the consolidation and expansion of corporate power served by new centers of supranational power, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization. Alex Carey said:

“The twentieth century has been characterized by three developments of great political importance: the growth of democracy, the growth of corporate power, and the growth of corporate propaganda as a means of protecting corporate power against democracy.”[8]

During this time money and resources have flowed from poor countries to rich industrialized nations. The Structural Adjustment Programs forced upon nations by the World Bank and the IMF have meant shifting food production from domestic needs to export crops, devaluing local currency to encourage exports, cutting social spending on health and education, reducing wages, privatizing national industries, selling off natural resources, and removing tariff protections for local industries. Hunger, unemployment, hardship and inequality are the direct and calculated results of these World Bank policies.

The vertical integration of entire industries has taken place with the rise of giant transnational corporations whose economies are larger than that of many countries.

At the end of World War II, when the Bretton Woods Agreements were signed, the dollar became the de facto “world currency” and was backed by American gold reserves. In 1972, in the midst of the Vietnam War, when President Nixon detached the dollar from the gold standard, he detached the dollar from anything of real tangible value and basically allowed the currency rates of every nation to fluctuate in relationship to one another’s currencies. The dollar was then backed by oil and American military might.

In those days 98 percent of foreign exchange transactions had to do with the exchange of goods and services and only 2 percent were speculative. Today the vast majority of foreign exchange transactions have been speculative and less than 2 percent are for the exchange of real goods and services.

Measurements have inherent limitations and biases. The family existed before money did. Villages grew out of interdependent relationships between families. As societies have grown more complex, hierarchies have developed and the “public family” or the state has created institutions that have taken over many of the functions once met within the household, such as educating children and caring for the sick. [9]

In urban environments, basic living skills have been lost, people are more dependent than ever on the state or a monetized economy to meet their basic needs. In order to get slaves or labor to serve industries, people had to be forced away from the land where they once were able to sustain themselves.

In the film “Who’s Counting? Marilyn Waring on Sex, Lies and Global Economics,” Marilyn unravels many of the problems in the global system. The IMF and the World Bank were created to maintain certain power relations and exercise control over the world’s resources. The U.N. System of National Accounts was based upon a pamphlet entitled “How to Pay for the War.” That system, imposed upon every country that joins the U.N., enables the global elite to finance their militaries, to engage in conflicts with other nations, and to build internal security forces to control populations who might not agree with the expropriation of their country’s resources.

The system assumes that the unpaid work of women who are bearing children, raising them, feeding them, caring for the sick and aged, and maintaining a home or garden is of little or no importance. Nor does the system recognize the value of forests or the natural world unless they can be chopped down and sold or monetized in some way. Monetary transactions are measured, no matter how devastating their effects are on the environment. The arms industry is the most lucrative of all industries. It is in the economic interest of the major powers that there always be a war going on somewhere. This pathological system does not recognize the inherent value of life, peace, or the earth itself. It does not even notice anything of unquantifiable value; it only sees that which it measures money. [10]

Maximizing profits is the primary value in modern economics. The economic measure of monetary flow is directly related to the rape of the earth, the amount of exploitation occurring within a country, and how effectively the world’s parasites are expropriating the labor of others and the natural world.

Because the greatest profit can be made through war and drugs, the global economy is a war economy. While the importance of oil for both energy and military purposes is enormous, dwarfing the oil industry in monetary terms is the illegal trafficking in drugs. Laundered drug money in enormous quantities has always found its way into the large financial centers and into key industries.

In [criminal law](#), *fraud* is the [crime](#) or offense of deliberately [deceiving](#) another in order to damage them – usually, to obtain property or services unjustly. [1] ...

Fraud for profit is often perpetrated by industry professionals. There are generally multiple loan transactions with several financial institutions involved. These frauds include

misrepresentations including the following: Income is overstated, assets are overstated, collateral is overstated, the length of employment is overstated (or fictitious employment is reported), and employment is backstopped by conspirators. The property value is inflated (faulty appraisal) to increase the sales value to make up for their being no down payment and to generate cash proceeds in fraud for profit.[11]

In the 80s, Congress paved the way for the savings and loan scandal by loosening regulations, which cost taxpayers \$160.1 billion. John McCain was one of the “Keating Five” rebuked by the Senate Ethics Committee for exercising “poor judgment” for intervening with the federal regulators on behalf of Charles Keating, who was at the center of the scandal and convicted of fraud, racketeering, and conspiracy.

The history of the stock market reveals a transition from investments in real companies producing tangible, measurable products and services toward “financial instruments” of an increasingly speculative nature. Electronic money, borrowed and loaned into existence, flowing through cyberspace, can wreak havoc and collapse entire nations’ economies. In the 90s the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) was devised to ensure the ability of speculators and multinational corporations to move capital in and out of countries without governmental involvement or public interest safeguards.[12] Recognizing the dangers of this agreement to the interests of people everywhere, civil society organized global resistance via the Internet to defeat the MAI.

The 90s also witnessed major consolidation of the mass media, the frenzy of speculation in the high-tech industry, and the development and expansion of Internet commerce. New technologies permitted local, national, and international communications and organizing to occur, which profoundly challenged the credibility and legitimacy of established governments, corporations, and the corporate press.

Global resistance to corporate globalization broke through the mainstream media barrier in the US in 1999 in Seattle, Washington, when tens of thousands of protestors tried to peacefully shut down a World Trade Organization meeting. The first Indymedia.org website was created specifically for that protest to share information from the point of view of activists. Since then the Indymedia network has grown to span the globe particularly in those cities where international protests have been organized, the main website is accessible in eight languages.

Under President Clinton in 1999 and the leadership of Senator Phil Gramm (now co-chair of the McCain campaign), Congress repealed the Glass-Steagall Act which removed Depression-era laws separating banking, insurance, and brokerage activities and helped pave the way for the next wave of financial integration and fraud. In late 2000 when Gramm chaired the Senate Banking Committee, he pushed through the Commodity Futures Modernization Act which prohibited federal agencies from regulating financial products called *credit default swaps*, which have been used to back up the mortgage-based securities. The credit default swaps are the major reason for the 54 trillion dollar liabilities that are threatening financial institutions worldwide.[13] (After the legislation passed, the Swiss bank UBS purchased American institutions. UBS then hired Gramm as a lobbyist and paid him over \$750,000. UBS alone issues over \$18 billion in subprime mortgages.) [14]

Throughout history there has been a struggle in all societies between a ruling class and the many who are not so privileged. Toynbee noted that the world struggle takes place between a few vested interests and social justice. There has always been a struggle

between tyrants and ordinary people, where the people have made some gains and have also had setbacks.

Social movements are born when public myths are shattered, societal secrets are revealed, and people realize that powerholders are acting in violation of deeply held values. In the current era, the Internet has allowed for the increasingly rapid transmission of information challenging powerholders, institutions, and cultural myths.

Social movements are collective actions that alert, educate, and mobilize the public to redress social problems or grievances. With all the problems confronting humanity there are innumerable social movements, which have evolved and learned from one another. At times they have come together in increasingly powerful coalitions. Professor and author Anthony Hall has called them “the fourth world,”[15] and others refer to them as the “anti-corporate globalization movement” or the “global justice movement.”

In January of 2001 while the World Economic Forum was meeting in Switzerland, thousands of people from hundreds of countries met at the first World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, a convergence of social movements. Their points of agreement included opposition to the policies of the IMF, World Bank, and WTO; opposition to militarism, corporate globalization, and environmental destruction; and support for public participation in decision-making processes, and for the respect for people and life over profits. Social movements are an evolutionary force that pushes people to live up to their ideals and values and enables people to exercise their collective power.

When people believe that power flows downward from those at the top of institutions towards the helpless at the bottom of the pyramid, tyranny rules. Most people believe in this model. Under this model, change can be achieved only by appealing to elites, using persuasion. However, when people discover their own power and belief in democracy that government should be “of, by, and for the people” power flows from them through institutions to powerholders and public servants. True democratic power comes from the bottom, results in social progress, and powerholders and policies are changed to meet popular social demands.[16]

The strategy of the powerholders is not to broadcast the truth about their beliefs, actions, policies, and programs. They know who benefits from the unfair distribution of benefits and costs within the existing system. They must keep their actual policies hidden from the public, because they rightly fear that the majority would rebel if they knew the truth. Powerholders habitually use myths, slogans, and rhetoric to sell their policies and programs to the public.

One of the great American myths that is promulgated by powerholders is the idea that we have a watchdog press. Over 3,000 people attended the last two National Conferences on Media Reform, primarily because of their deep concern about the failure of the traditional media. Lord Northcliffe said, “News is something that someone wants suppressed; all the rest is advertising.”

Colossal crimes have been committed and then masked by the media for centuries. But the larger pattern in this era of information including names, dates, evidence, and various kinds of documentation is coming to light at a staggering rate, beyond the capacity of any one individual to absorb, read, process, and disseminate all the details. In turn the

information is gradually reaching the most heavily propagandized target audience the American public, who are increasingly losing faith in their government, the war, the Congress, and the financial system.

As Aung San Suu Kyi wrote, "It is not power that corrupts, but fear of losing power and fear of the scourge of those who wield it."

Fear, war, and terror are routinely used to shut down rational thinking processes a tactic that Naomi Klein outlines in her book *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*[17] (as well as in the video[18]). Klein fails to recognize, however, that 9/11 was designed to terrorize Americans and the world into going along with the bogus "War on Terror," to forget about the missing \$2.3 trillion on the Department of Defense books[19], the stolen election[20], the evidence destroyed in the Securities and Exchange Commission's offices in World Trade Center 7,[21] to not even notice the massive insider trading,[22] and then to permit a giant escalation in the military budget and the construction of the surveillance industry. The plunge in the stock market and the "apparent attack" on America's financial center also prompted the Fed to lower interest rates, which helped the housing market and Bush encouraged folks to "go shopping."

The best historical parallel to 9/11 would be the Reichstag fire, which Hitler used to vilify and target "communists" and pass the Enabling Act (similar to the PATRIOT Act), before launching wars of aggression. The PATRIOT Act was mirrored by legislation passed in Canada, Australia, and the UK, severely eroding civil rights and granting more power to governments to chill dissent to monitor and crack down on those they considered a threat.

With the bust of the dot com bubble, speculative money went into real estate, housing, and derivatives[23]. Congress and the Bush administration changed laws and regulations to lure people into borrowing money, purchasing homes, and investing their savings in the 21st century Ponzi schemes. Elliot Spitzer was vilified by the press the day before he wrote an article naming Bush as the "Predator Lenders' Partner in Crime," saying

"In 2003, during the height of the predatory lending crisis, the OCC invoked a clause from the 1863 National Bank Act pre-empting all state predatory lending laws, thereby rendering them inoperative. The OCC also promulgated new rules that prevented states from enforcing any of their own consumer protection laws against national banks. ...

"Not only did the Bush administration do nothing to protect consumers, it embarked on an aggressive and unprecedented campaign to prevent states from protecting their residents from the very problems to which the federal government was turning a blind eye." [24]

Close scrutiny of powerholders running the government, institutions, and corporations reveals conflicting loyalties and economic interests. Legislators in fact represent the millionaires and billionaires who fund them and who continually rewrite the rules in their own favor and have decided that the Constitution is obsolete.

The unfolding financial crisis has been arriving in wave after destructive wave. People have lost their homes, their jobs, their savings, their health, their marriages, their kids, and finally their hope.

The housing bubble began to burst when home prices in the US began to decline in

March and April of 2007. The IMF warned of risks to global financial markets. Bear Stearns was in trouble in June 2007 because of its mortgage-backed securities. In the summer of 2007 German banks were in trouble and foreclosures in the US almost doubled. In September 2007 there was a run on Northern Rock, which the British government nationalized, and the Fed began to drop interest rates to help the housing market. In January 2008, UBS reported \$18 billion in write-downs due to US real estate exposure. In February, Fannie Mae reported a \$3.55 billion loss. [25]

In March, however, the Federal Reserve and the Treasury Department directed money towards the 85-year-old investment bank Bear Stearns, via JP Morgan[26] and \$200 billion went to prop up Fannie Mae. By April the IMF projected \$945 billion in losses. In June housing possessions doubled again, and the FBI announced the arrest of over 400 people charged with mortgage fraud, including two senior managers of the failed Bear Stearns Hedge Funds.[27] In July Congress passed the Foreclosures Prevention Act, which was a \$33 billion hand-out to those who helped create the problem, according to a report by the Laborers' International Union of North America. Under the bill's little-publicized "carry-back" provision, builders would get billions in tax breaks and the 15 largest corporate homebuilders, who made \$16 billion in profits on \$100 billion in revenues, would receive a third of the benefits.[28]

In September 2008, the Fed, in an unprecedented move, lent \$85 billion to the American International Group (AIG), the nation's largest insurance company, which also handled credit default swaps and suffered losses from its subprime mortgage-backed securities holdings.[29] Then Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy, and Bank of America devoured Merrill Lynch. Soon there was a run on money market funds, and short selling of financial stocks was suspended globally. Bush made a speech acknowledging that there was a serious crisis, and backed Paulson's bailout plea.

There were only a few voices in Congress that dared to challenge the current bailout of the speculators so intimately involved in created the current financial crisis. Anyone could look up Henry Paulson on the internet to discover his ties to Goldman Sachs, but these ties were not emphasized in the mainstream media. According to Wikipedia notes:

"Paulson was Staff Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense at the Pentagon from 1970 to 1972... He joined Goldman Sachs in 1974... He became a partner in 1982. From 1983 until 1988, Paulson led the Investment Banking group for the Midwest Region, and became managing partner of the Chicago office in 1988. From 1990 to November 1994, he was co-head of Investment Banking, then, Chief Operating Officer from December 1994 to June 1998; eventually succeeding Jon Corzine (now Governor of New Jersey) as its chief executive. His compensation package, according to reports, was US\$37 million in 2005, and US\$16.4 million projected for 2006. His net worth has been estimated at over US\$700 million. Paulson has personally built close relations with China during his career. In July 2008 it was reported by The Daily Telegraph that: "Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson has intimate relations with the Chinese elite, dating from his days at Goldman Sachs when he visited the country more than 70 times. ...

"There is increasing evidence that Paulson was influential with two U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission Chairmen, William H. Donaldson and Christopher Cox, in receiving restraint in the Commission's exercise of oversight requirements. In 2004...the Commission agreed unanimously to release the major investment houses from the net capital rule, the requirement that their brokerages hold reserve capital that limited their leverage and risk

exposure. The complaint that was put forth by the investment banks was of increasingly onerous regulatory requirements in this case, not U.S. regulator oversight, but European Union regulation of the foreign operations of US investment groups. In the immediate lead-up to the decision, EU regulators also acceded to US pressure, and agreed not to scrutinize foreign firms' reserve holdings if the SEC agreed to do so instead. The 1999 Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, however, put the parent holding company of each of the big American brokerages beyond SEC oversight. In order for the agreement to go ahead, the investment banks lobbied for a decision that would allow "voluntary" inspection of their parent and subsidiary holdings by the SEC.

"During this repeal of the net capital rule, SEC Chairman Donaldson agreed to the establishment of a risk management office that would monitor signs of future problems. This office was eventually dismantled by Chairman Cox, after discussions with Paulson. According to the New York Times, 'While other financial regulatory agencies criticized a blueprint by Mr. Paulson, the [new] Treasury secretary, that proposed to reduce their stature and that of the S.E.C. Mr. Cox did not challenge the plan, leaving it to three former Democratic and Republican commission chairmen to complain that the blueprint would neuter the agency.' Only in late September 2008, Chairman Cox and the other Commissioners agreed to end the 2004 program of voluntary regulation."

With the unregulated credit default swaps posing enormous liabilities to the financial institutions that dwarf the global economy, Paulson's allegiances to Goldman Sachs and AIG will help determine which institutions will fail or escape, survive, and profit in the current turmoil.[30]

Henry Paulson asked for and received over \$700 billion in taxpayer money with little or no oversight as to who will actually get the money. It is clear that it won't be going to Main Street, and it is more than likely to go to Paulson's Wall Street and foreign friends.

Ohio Representative Marcy Kaptur spoke out bravely against the bill, explaining precisely how it was being rushed through Congress[31], and Dennis Kucinich condemned it as well. Their token resistance was swept aside, even as Representative Brad Sherman pointed out the fear mongering and panic pressure placed on Congress to push it through.[32] The fear that was generated by insiders and the media, as well as some token pork, helped to get the bill passed on Friday, October 3, 2008. Democrats, Republicans, and both presidential hopefuls were behind the bailout.

Amongst Obama's advisers are Franklin Raines, who was a chairman and chief executive officer at Fannie Mae; and Tim Howard, who was the chief financial officer of Fannie Mae; and Jim Johnson, who was an executive at Lehman Brothers and later forced from his position as Fannie Mae CEO. Howard was forced to retire when auditing discovered severe irregularities in Fannie Mae's accounting activities. The books ran afoul of generally accepted accounting principles for four years, and Fannie Mae had to reduce its surplus by \$9 billion. The Government filed suit against Raines and Howard when the scandal became clear[33]. The court ordered Raines to return \$50 million he received in bonuses based on the misstated Fannie Mae profits. The government investigation determined that "Chief Financial Officer Tim Howard failed to provide adequate oversight to key control and reporting functions within Fannie Mae." Raines and Howard resigned under pressure in late 2004. Howard's golden parachute was estimated at \$20 million. Raines left with a "golden parachute valued at \$240 million in benefits. A look at the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight's May 2006 report on mismanagement and corruption inside Fannie

Mae reveals that Fannie Mae had hidden a substantial amount of Johnson's 1998 compensation from the public, reporting that it was between \$6 million and \$7 million when in fact it was \$21 million." Johnson is currently under investigation for taking illegal loans from Countrywide while serving as CEO of Fannie Mae. Johnson's Golden Parachute was estimated at \$28 Million.[34]

Any close scrutiny of the financial ties of major politicians particularly those in office such as Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Pelosi, and Feinstein reveal major conflicts of interest between the politicians and the military, oil, and pharmaceutical industries. At the highest levels, however, there is no accountability. Laws are meaningless to these people. They have the power and influence to pass murderous legislation that enriches and empowers them and their cronies and threatens and impoverishes the rest of us, all of this veiled by a subservient corporate press that bestows upon them an aura of legitimacy. Within government agencies there is corruption, fraud, and the persecution rather than protection of whistle-blowers.

When Congress voted \$87 billion to occupy Afghanistan and Iraq, some of that money was earmarked to suppress dissent in the US. In 2003, thousands of protestors gathered in Miami to oppose the negotiations of the Free Trade Area of the Americas. Pre-emptive arrests, violent violation of civil rights, brutal treatment of innocent medics, and criminalization of dissent became known as "the Miami model." The militarization of the police and Homeland Security's targeting of anti-war and peace activists have continued and expanded since then as seen most recently in the protests at the Democratic and Republican Conventions where even the regular press was arrested, and organizers were arrested and charged with "terrorism."

There is a battle going on a clash of worldviews over what is true, legal, and moral; over who is a terrorist, and who is serving humanity; over who has the right to live, and who has the right or duty to jail, kill, or torture anyone. Every individual will have to decide for themselves what is true and what is legitimate what is best for themselves, their families, their country, and the whole planet.

The strategy of all social movements is to convince the public that a problem exists and that policies must be changed, and to exercise the people power that resides within themselves into a force that finds solutions to commonly recognized problems.

The perpetrators of 9-11 had a different strategy. Their strategy was to terrify the American people into silence and submission, then bully the Congress into nearly unlimited funding for war and a greatly expanded surveillance industry (the anthrax attacks came at a convenient time for this). The perpetrators of 9/11 used a BIG LIE to sell a "bogus protection racket" to their victims to institutionalize under the guise of "National/Homeland Security" a greater concentration of wealth and power into fewer hands. Their tools were violence, fear, criminal fraud, manipulating the financial markets, and selling it all to the American people through the megaphone of the mainstream media.

Cheney, like Napoleon, believes that you don't have to suppress a truth just delay it until it no longer matters. There are a growing number of people who are challenging the lies, especially through the Internet. It is apparent that those in power are very much afraid of the Internet, of people's ability to share information and communicate so that they can organize in unprecedented ways using emerging technologies, or simply gather together in a public space where free speech is still possible.

The deeply held values, symbols, beliefs, sensibilities and traditions that are important to the public are being violated today by the power elite. The majority of people are against the war, torture, and the bailout of Wall Street. Those in power depend on the public to be stupid, uninformed, disengaged, apathetic, cynical, powerless, and silent. Social movements are dependent on empowered, engaged, informed people at every level of society to uphold the values and principles that are being violated by powerholders and their policies. Will the American people continue to wake up and begin to exercise more control over the US government to force changes in policy?

A major cause of social problems is the concentration of political, economic, and military power in the hands of relatively few people. An informed, empowered, and politicized population is required to resolve today's problems and to establish a just, peaceful, sustainable world for all. Political and economic power ultimately rests with the majority population; rulers can only rule with the consent and acquiescence of the people. Where people put their time, energy, and money has a greater impact on society and the world than who they vote for. Elections have been stolen for decades; only an awakened citizenry can oversee and ensure honest elections.

The most important issue is the age-old struggle between the majority of people and the individual and institutional powerholders to determine whether society will be based on the authoritarian model where power flows from the top down or the "people power" model of genuine participatory democracy.

Kevin Barrett expressed the following in a talk entitled "A Folklorist Looks at 9/11 'Conspiracy Theories'" (*folk* meaning "the people," as opposed to the "rulers and the press" who in the past have authoritatively defined "event/reality"):

"Marshall McLuhan's famous line "the medium is the message" could describe the way the 9/11 Truth movement is an artifact of the Internet, and the radically-enhanced folk-communications it has brought. Thanks to digital audiovisuals, email and the world-wide web, the folk are now a leg up on their would-be manipulators, those well-paid professionals in corporate media, public relations, marketing, and psychological warfare or psy-ops, whose collective job is to reify and manipulate their fellow human beings.

"It is one thing for the content of informal, non-institutional, "folk" communication to subvert institutional authority. It is another and more significant thing for the very medium of folk communication to radically shift in a way that empowers the folk and disempowers the institutions. And that is what has happened. The world has been turned upside-down as the old oral-transmission grapevine has gone digital...

"Today's digitally-enhanced subversives and skeptics can spread large numbers of copies of audio, video and photographic evidence, along with an unlimited amount of writing, for pennies. This digital awakening may turn out to be our second post-Gutenberg revolution in half a century. Its importance may rival the emergence of writing, which created hierarchical societies of kings, priests and scribes; with the invention of the printing press, which created the kind of mass-literate societies we call "democratic"; and with the invention of television, which McLuhan suggests created a global village of creeping Orwellian fascism. 9/11, in this view, was the last gasp of television as a means of mind-control via mass hypnosis, while the 9/11 Truth controversies may represent the birth pangs of the new, digitally-enhanced democracy."

It is sobering to know that if the world's population was reduced to 100 representatives, only 1 would have a computer, or have attended college, and he would have more wealth than all the others and be from the United States. While 70 percent of American homes may have access to the Internet, they are not representative of the world. However, an enlightened American people would be a grave danger to the advancement of the American Empire. We are uniquely responsible and able to thwart or advance the aspirations of the US oligarchy. We are also directly under attack by that oligarchy, who view us as a threat and are trying to criminalize dissent.

The financial crisis that faces America and the world today was as orchestrated as the events of 9/11. Similar to what transpired after 9/11, it is likely that the financial crisis will be used to further concentrate wealth and power, crush dissent, criminalize larger and larger numbers of people, trash civil liberties, and generally replace the "rule of law" with the "rule of fear."

There is another possibility, however, which we the people can promote. We can join together to speak up, organize, and challenge the lies, crimes, and illegitimacy of the powerholders and corporations that threaten the well-being of the people of the world. We can create and nurture new organizations to fulfill real needs and aspirations. This is already taking place and can be seen in the rise of nonprofit organizations over the past decade. Ignored by the corporate media, Ron Paul, Cynthia McKinney, and Ralph Nader have raised key issues that the corporate-anointed candidates won't discuss. The public must search the Internet for the statements of these courageous challengers to the oligarchy, because their views are ignored, marginalized, or dismissed in the corporate press but they nonetheless provide a rallying cry for people looking for true change. At a recent press conference, the third-party candidates clearly represented majority opinions and interests, far better than McCain or Obama.[35]

Repression, reform, revolution or renaissance?

When revolutions occur simultaneously in many different areas, the transformation of society can be called a renaissance. We are witnessing changes happening at a rapid pace in a multitude of areas, and few can begin to keep up with the new technologies and research. As traditional power structures are threatened, new possibilities and synergies are emerging. If the traditional banking system or the dollar collapses, money will be reinvented at the local, regional, national, and probably international levels.

Mike Nickerson, author of *Life, Money, & Illusion: Living on Earth as If We Want to Stay*, wrote:

"An alternative to panicking when GDP stops growing is to view it as a sign of maturity. Human activity cannot expand forever on our finite planet. Fuel prices, climate change and the sub-prime mortgage crisis are all symptoms of one cause. When we stopped growing as individuals, it was not the end of the world. Indeed, for most of us, life had scarcely begun before physical maturity. Even as physical growth ended, we became better informed, more comfortable in ourselves and we developed the skills and relationships that define our lives. The same can be true for civilization." [36]

The convergence of various crises including the financial system, peak oil, climate change, population growth, resource depletion, and mass extinctions is forcing humanity to collectively recognize its limits and mature as a species, simply to survive.[37]

In order to behave maturely, wisely, and responsibly and to make wise rational decisions—people need to know what is true, what is real.

Mike Nickerson has been championing the Genuine Progress Index to provide more accurate information about how people are affecting the planet and one another. If economic indicators were aligned with universal values such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, economists would ignore the marketplace and concern themselves with the health and well-being of the environment, the health and well-being of every person, and whether the basic human needs for food, water, shelter, clothing, and education were being met.

One of the heftiest charges against members of the Bush Administration is their attack upon science.[38] There is ample evidence that they have ordered agencies to be silent about their findings, or to fudge data to suit political purposes and shape public opinion. Only Bush science, as exemplified in the NIST report, could explain the collapse of all three World Trade Center buildings at free-fall speed as due to fire alone. Hundreds of independent scientists, architects, and engineers have rejected the conclusions of the NIST report. The scientific evidence indicates that two planes could not have shredded three steel-framed buildings, but that controlled demolition does explain their rapid disintegration.

It is increasingly challenging to evaluate scientific studies without knowing who has funded them, and for what particular purpose. Researchers whose findings challenge government or corporate objectives are vilified and lose their funding. Citizen-supported scientific research and data collection whose intention and purpose is clearly in the interests of the health and well-being of people and their environment whose data can be shared, checked, verified, and corroborated by others in a transparent manner will ultimately gain the widest acceptance.

Satyagraha, or “the force of truth,” pioneered by Gandhi, has inspired the social movements of today. According to Schopenhauer, “All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident.”[39]

The individual and human journey also passes through stages. As proposed by Abraham Maslow in his classic study *Toward a Psychology of Being*, healthy people outgrow the self-centered need for material acquisition and find greater joy and purpose in more expansive activities such as developing friendships, being of service to others, expressing creativity, and joining together with others to solve problems. The deliberate infantilization of the public and the manipulation of the public mind has contributed to the current crisis in values, where people seem to be concerned only for themselves and are cynical about what is happening in the world. The cure lies in the maturation of our species. The times that we live in are calling to us to grow up, individually and collectively. We need to develop a greater understanding of ourselves and our world, to develop our talents and skills to make this a better world. Despite the dangers and challenges of the time we live in, we can find meaning and joy through joining together in the search for truth, peace, justice, and freedom. As Gandhi and others have demonstrated, the truth, combined with love and compassion, will set us free. As we work together to pursue the truth and expand our awareness, we are lifting the veil and awakening from a media-induced trance so that we can more clearly see how we have allowed our power to be taken from us. This knowledge will empower us to reform the outmoded structures that are so oppressive and to create new systems that truly serve the needs of the people and the planet for current and future

generations.

NOTES

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