



Justice Rising

Grassroots Solutions to Corporate Domination

Moving from Corporate Extraction to the Grassroots Restoration Economy

by Jim Tarbell

Increasingly over the past century, classical and neo-classical economics became the theology of the American culture—with money as God. According to this economic faith, the magical market place has a munificent invisible hand that distributes all fairly and efficiently as long as we all go about our lives in the greediest and most selfish ways possible. Corporate owners and managers latched onto this world view as the avenue to paradise. Unfortunately, corporatist economists devised this vision based on false assumptions, which made the true costs of the industrial revolution and the commodification of our lives uncalculated, largely unacknowledged and ignored. These false assumptions created an invisible hand that is blind to critical environmental, resource and human costs external to the market. Over the past century, these externalities have allowed the invisible hand to oversee a corporate extraction process that has consumed the earth's most precious resources, devoured unspoiled nature, dissipated the natural systems that are vital to existence, and exhausted the human spirit. Now, the reckoning day is upon us, the cataclysmic bill is coming due and the earth, biosphere and the human spirit are coming to straighten out the accounts.

On top of this, over the past 25 years, our corporate leaders and their wealthy patrons have been sucking hard-gained affluence out of the workers and middle class. In the past quarter century, a sea of cash created by international currency traders has caused a hyper growth in the price of assets. At the same time, the globalizing economy has forced a stagnation in wages. Between 1980 and 2005 real wages increased 17.5%. Meanwhile, real housing prices in the United States increased by 112%. Most astoundingly, however, real stock prices of the Dow Jones Industrial corporations increased 1,014%. Between 2001 and 2005, the wealthiest one percent of households, who earn mainly from return on assets, increased their share of total income by 3.6% while the lower 90% of households had a 4.2% decline. This is due not only to the fact that the rich

are making money more on assets, but also that through hedge funds and other exclusive financial vehicles, they are able to access rates of return far above those available to the average worker.

The exploitation and destruction created under this extraction theology is a well known tale. It is briefly covered in this issue of *Justice Rising*. Our main concern here is with the reckoning of the external costs. How can we create a restoration economy that restores nature, resources and the human spirit to their full potential? How can we birth what Riane Eisler calls a caring economy where the vision is not one of a selfish human race, but of a nurturing and revitalizing spirit that can deliver a true paradise on earth? Examples of this new vision abound. In the fabulously successful solidarity economy of Quebec, they have an economy with “values added.” In the blossoming localization movement, people are discovering community and how to thrive in a post-carbon world. These are the models of hope for a bountiful future.

We have created an empire... based around the World Bank and big corporations.

John Perkins, page 2

Peaks in fossil fuels virtually ensure that the world's energy supply will begin to shrink within a few years.

Richard Heinberg, page 3

Bigger machines, entailing ever bigger concentrations of economic power and exerting ever greater violence against the environment, do not represent progress

E. F. Schumacher, page 5

The Solidarity Economy thrives on building connections; reminding us that we are all related.

Julie Matthaei & Jenna Allard, page 12

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