

Wake Up! Wake Up!

by Jack Reed

These are indeed exciting times in which we live. So many countries in the world are in economic and environmental crises, and one wonders where all the money is if all the countries are in such massive debt? Some experts are predicting that these are the end times for the world's economic system, and I say, "Don't tease me—I've been waiting for this a very long time".

According to the IMF, to try to fix the economy in the U.S., "Would require an immediate and permanent 60% hike in the federal income tax or a 50% cut in Social Security and Medicare benefits." Neither of those options are politically possible, so it's only a matter of time before this Empire collapses.

With Peak Oil and environmental crises also looming, these are interesting times indeed. What many of these experts don't understand, however, is that the world long ago stopped working for the billions of people who live in abject poverty without even decent sanitation. Globalization, brought on by Western imperialism and the creation of banana republics, did those billions no favors. Also, even if we could lift those billions out of poverty using the current model, we don't have the six planets worth of resources it would take for the world to live like "us".

One thing that amuses me is that we award Nobel Prizes in economics to people for things like "analyses of markets with asymmetric information." Having stuffed themselves so deeply in the box, what all these experts don't seem to get is that money is an illusion—you can't really do anything tangible with it because it's not real like baskets, sheep and bushels of corn were, or even the gold standard that money is supposed to represent. Currency was created to assist with trading and it is derived from current: that which helps the flow. It was not meant to be hoarded. To say we can't do something—like provide healthcare, address world hunger, or stop destroying the planet because there isn't enough money—is REALLY CRAZY!!! What we are actually saying is that we can't provide what's necessary because there is *not enough cooperation*.

In their 1863 letter to fellow financial power brokers, the Rothschild Brothers of London wrote that the few people who understand the financial system are either so caught up in its profits or so dependent on the lifestyle they enjoy from it that they won't do anything to change it. Then they said that the rest of the people aren't even aware of how the system works, so they'll continue to labor as if this were the only option, "spending their lives in virtual enslavement to us while we reap the benefits".

For so many reasons I feel like carrying around a sign that just says "WAKE UP, WAKE UP". The power/money elite have, for thousands of years, concentrated control into their hands. This everyone-for-themselves (E-F-T) system has been their game, and it has largely gone unquestioned for thousands of years. Focusing on our individual survival, we indeed became the unwitting slaves to which the Rothschilds referred. But now the survival of our planet is threatened, and the game is playing out. However, if we had a cooperative society, 85% of the current jobs and all the resources associated with them would be unnecessary. So, when the politicians and economists say we need more jobs, it is lunacy. What we need is more cooperation and fewer jobs. We need to eliminate all those jobs that are created by the E-F-T system and instead focus on restoring the environment and creating more Loving relationships within ourselves, with others and with Nature.

It's just so easy to criticize what's not working. Therefore, when I give my presentations, I simply say "the economic system is broken" and "the political system is broken", because most of us already know what's not working. What people don't know is what to do about it. With the E-F-T no longer a viable option for the survival of the planet, we need to play a new game—one where everyone wins.

People with consciousness can create a model that will work for everyone. A few years ago we formed the Community Planet Foundation and created such a model we call "For The Highest Good Of All". With our belief that "the way we live together and relate together in Community is the basic building block needed to transform the planet", we designed the blueprint for Communities of 500 people that will work on cooperation as the medium of exchange and redefine wealth as "use and access rather than possession.

From this model I wrote the book, *THE NEXT EVOLUTION: a Blueprint for Transforming the Planet*. In the book, those of us who created the Community Planet model described how this new system (which has much in common with The Venus Project's Resource-Based Economy) would work:

"What if we thought of ourselves as one family where the needs of one, whether it be a person, a group or a country, are the concern of everyone? Granted that to do this we would have to rein in our egos and sacrifice our selfishness, but what could we gain? What do we really want more of in our lives? Some immediate thoughts are more leisure time, more play, quality time with good friends, opportunities for creative expression, beauty in nature, etc. We'd all probably

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Banking on Ethics

by Joshua Yeley

Is there a particular issue from the past and or present, which influences greater importance for humanity's future, than the idea of a monetary system? Fraught with social, moral, and ethical issues, this system exploits and robs people of their most treasured possession – happiness. This paper will systematically compare moral and ethical principles to the practices and byproducts of the current monetary system. After this comparison, an outlook on monetary usage and how it may endanger our future will be presented. Does money and power take precedence over moral and ethical decisions?

Monetary funds are a very interesting phenomenon that has occurred in various forms throughout the ages. Suppose we suppress the emotions felt when realizing the level of disparity and inequality that are unequivocally byproducts of a monetary system. We can then perhaps use reason to paint a clearer image of the goals that those in control of such systems have. According to Waller (2008), “Plato and Kant insist that acting ethically requires vigorously suppressing the emotions, relying instead on the dispassionate power of reason” (p. 44). This seems an easy enough endeavor as we begin to understand the significance of, as Locke, et al., puts it, “no other incentive or motivational technique comes even close to money” (Tang, Furnham, Davis, 2002). Therefore, it is perhaps reason that has led to the development of such a system. However, if reason is the culprit, then how can we account for the side-effects of this system?

When you hear that the root cause of most suffering, by all humans, could be directly linked to the system of money, bartering, and trade we live by, what does your intuition tell you about possible

causes for this misery? The answer is obviously one filled with many variables and, as Waller (2008) warns, “...requires careful attention to detail, clear conceptual understanding of the language of morality, openness to our moral experiences and unbiased consideration of all relevant factors” (p.40). Now let's explore a few of our experiences and their factors.

Truth be told, the monetary system has significantly limited government power, created an immeasurable level of poverty and vast hunger, caused numerous depressions and recessions, and has been the sole cause of most of the wars we have seen throughout our history. And the very interesting part of these examples was the means in which each was done – creating scarcity.

“So then, what does it mean for society when scarcity, either produced naturally or through manipulation, is a beneficial condition for industry? It means that sustainability and abundance will never occur in a profit system, for it simply goes against the very nature of the structure. Therefore, it is impossible to have a world without war or poverty, it is impossible to continually advance technology to its most efficient and productive states...and most dramatically, it is impossible to expect human beings to behave in truly ethical or decent ways.” (www.zeitgeistmovie.com)

And these are just a few examples of what has come of this extreme level of self-indulgence. Now, let's turn our focus to the idea of emotions playing a role in ethics.

Consider that Hume, according to Waller (2008), “believes ethics is rooted in our emotions: Without emotions, ethics would not exist (p. 44).” Strong feelings of empathy and emotional responses to the atrocities listed above are then altogether human. However, what emotions are, or should be, attributed to those who exploit and manipulate such a system?

Another principle of ethics, stated by Waller (2008), is the utilitarian's belief that when we strip away the mysteries and confusions, what we really want is to enjoy pleasures and avoid suffering (p. 50). And this includes others. Waller (2008) clears this up by adding, “My own pleasures and pains are part of the sum, but they count no more and no less than the pleasures and pains of others” (p. 51). It is highly unlikely that expanding and contracting money supplies, warring with others, creating debts, creating crime, and the various other attributes of a monetary system constitute as either pleasurable and or aids to avoid suffering for all people. In all honesty, it does the latter much more efficiently than the previous.

Social contract theorists believe that, “Ethics is constructed by social groups, and exists for the benefit of those groups” (Waller, 2008, p. 70). While it may be noteworthy to mention the various group structures: cultural, economical, governmental, etc. in a monetary system, it ultimately boils down to one thing – profit.

In this form of ethical egoism, we can safely say that democracy, fascism, communism, and perhaps all other social contract theories we are born into, have the same thing in mind. We can also safely attribute the profit-based thinking to the organizations within those groups. According to Gbadamosi and Joubert (2005) “The workplace is changing so rapidly that the opportunity to set ethical agendas by the management of organizations is both timely and urgent” (p.762). It is interesting that both Gbadamosi and Joubert use the word ‘ethical’ and ‘management’ within the same context, as if they could actually co-exist. Perhaps Jacques Fresco said it best, “...don't talk about decency and ethics... we cannot afford it and remain in business.” (www.zeitgeistmovie.com)

In 1832, then US President Andrew Jackson said, “Every monopoly and all exclusive privi-

leges are granted at the expense of the public, which ought to receive a fair equivalent” (Avalon Project, 2007). Why, then, do the relatively small number of people controlling the means of money-changing, loaning, and taxing attempt to make it universal ethical egoism, when in fact it is individualistic at its core? Perhaps contemporary ethical views would attribute performing great injustices, fraud, and taking advantage over those less fortunate, simply for a means of profit, as being private and not the whole of life. According to this view, “in the purely individual private sphere, ethics doesn't apply (Waller, 2008, p. 102).

Waller (2008) describes the focus of virtue ethics as, “Rather than focusing on right or wrong actions, this tradition concentrates on the character of the actor” (p. 103). Before we continue, let's look at just one of the goals and or agendas of those who use, control, and run the monetary system today; a one world economy. The bankers and or corporations that support this system are looking for nothing more than further consolidation of resources. This cartel, composed of all the central banks, dictates credit policies to all nations, continually provides financial support for both sides of conflicts, and is the sole reason for widespread hunger and poverty. In his 1966 book *Tragedy and Hope*, former Georgetown University professor Carroll Quigley wrote:

“The power of financial capitalism had a far-reaching plan, nothing less than to create a world system of financial control in private hands able to dominate the political system of each country and the economy of the world as a whole.” (www.themoneymasters.com)

Let's take a look at one more principle of ethics and see if the character of the monetary actor indeed comes into focus.

Waller (2008) describes care ethics as emphasizing “the value of

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fostering relationships, paying as much attention to personal details as abstract principles and recognizing the ethical importance of affection and care for others” (p. 122). It is clear from that description that the characters of those who control and manipulate the monetary system are exactly the opposite.

Now that we have examined many of the principles of ethics and compared them to the usage mannerism of the monetary system, mainly by those who control

giero, 2008, p. 109). And finally, Ruggiero writes that the ideal of prudence “consists of choosing one’s behavior judiciously by consulting experience and deliberating thoughtfully about what response is most appropriate” (p. 107). From these ideals, a person is left in awe and wonder at the complete disregard by those implementing, and using, this system of monetary means when selecting an ethical and or moral decision.

“Power from any source tends to create an appetite for additional power.... It was almost inevitable that the super-rich would one day

erty and in severe insurmountable levels of debt. Not only that, but consider the loaning of funds, by private banks, to both sides of feuding nations, just to generate a collection of debt that is simply unequaled. Ethically speaking, when deciding between two possible choices, the one with the least amount of harm should be chosen, not both in hopes of merely gaining a profit. In light of what has been presented, clearly money and power do take precedence over what is just and ethical. Perhaps no one questions it simply because it has become part of our world.

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Field study from the public sector in Swaziland. *The Journal of Management Development*, 24 (7/8), 754. Retrieved November 16, 2008, from ProQuest Direct database.

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Tang, T., Furnham, A., Davis, G. (2002). The meaning of money: The money ethic endorsement and work related attitudes in Taiwan, the USA and the UK. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 17 (7/8), 542. Retrieved November 16, 2008, from ProQuest Direct database.

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in nature, etc. We’d all probably also opt for less stress, more peace, less pollution, and more healthiness.

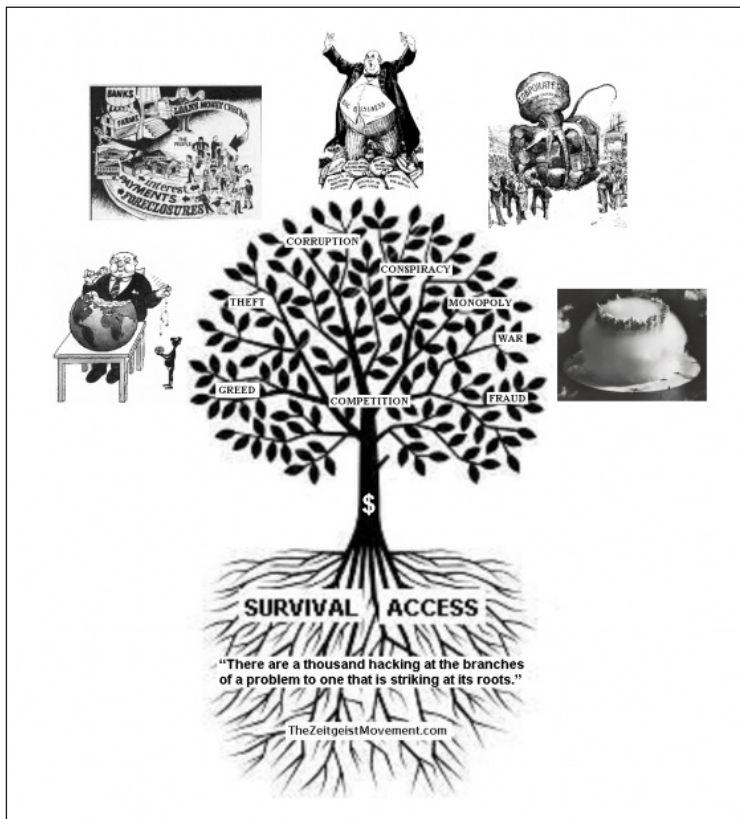
“Because most of the people in the world would have no idea what it would look like if we chose to live together for The Highest Good Of All, the first step would be to create a MODEL COMMUNITY, based on the concept of making life work for all of us, to show the world how life could be very, very different. While ‘intentional’ egalitarian communities are certainly not a new idea, with many small ones currently existing, none have been created with the intention and on the scale that is needed to arouse worldwide interest. We need to see an approach that not only could heal the planet but will also show a different way of living with a daily quality of life that would be more uplifting for almost anyone living on the planet.

“With the successful demonstration of this model, people from all over the world will be able to see and hear about a lifestyle that they too can enjoy and how we can start by setting up life to work for everyone, for The Highest Good Of All. There are enough resources and manpower for all of us, all life on the planet, to live together very abundantly. We just haven’t set it up that way yet because of the legacy of our everyone-for-themselves socio-economic-political approach. It is now time.”

Jack is the director of the **Community Planet Foundation**.

The Next Evolution:
a Blueprint for Transforming the Planet, which presents the Community Planet’s vision in detail, has won several book awards, including the Legacy winner of the Eric Hoffer Awards. For more information, including seeing the 36 minute video that describes the project, please go to the website.

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it, perhaps it would do well to examine specific moral ideals – the cardinal virtues – within these actions. In his book *Thinking Critically about Moral Issues*, Ruggiero provides an adequate list but, due to length constraints, the focus will be on courage, honesty, and reparation.

Ruggiero (2008) attributes, to courage, the ability to turn “the mind relentlessly to seek or face the truth” (p. 108). For honesty he states, “This idea entails being truthful to others and refusing to mislead or deceive” (Rug-

aspire to the control not only their own wealth, but the wealth of the whole world.” - W. Cleon Skousen (www.peoplesbankparty.org)

In conclusion, this monetary idea of living has held, and will continue to hold, great power over the common person. Banks continuously falter and are brought back by means of bailouts. Loaning, interest, and debts allow rich countries to live while placing great hoards of wealth into fewer and fewer hands. Meanwhile others are left to starve in pov-



My Suicide Bomber

by Josiah White

On July 17th, 2006, sometime before noon, someone decided to take his life in defense of an unknown ideal. Five people's lives were changed forever with the pull of a pin. The suicide bomber, accomplishing his mission of martyrdom, would not survive to see the result of his actions. Two Iraqi soldiers, serving their country as valiantly as any other soldier across the globe, were killed instantly without so much as a warning. Two American Marines, one of whom was days away from returning to the States to see his newborn daughter for the first time, were severely injured and moments away from death before their counterparts saved their lives. The other Marine was me, a fresh faced boy of twenty-one, four-and-a-half months of that short life spent in Iraq and one year and one month in the United States Marine Corps. All five of us had our lives changed in ways the suicide bomber might never have considered.

My job, along with another Marine named Donny, a bald, tattooed, muscular, sarcastic man whose job in life was to annoy you to the point of laughter, was to train two Iraq soldiers (*jundies*) how to safeguard the entrance to a hospital next to our base by patting down people walking in. Our main purpose was to stop weapons and explosives from somehow finding their way into the hospital, and also to check IDs for suspected insurgents. We also had to report any gunshot or explosive injuries, anything that could have been caused by the war. Plenty of children came to the hospital with skinned knees and other youthful injuries, we didn't care about them. There were two entrances, one for the males and another for the females. The locals did not take kindly to foreigners patting down women for any reason, so they passed through the entrance



unchecked. A logical person might ask, "What's to stop someone from dressing as a woman, considering most women are clothed head to toe in concealing burkas, and walking in through that point?" There were many other problems with the whole setup, but in cases like those the people in charge conveniently look away until something bad happens (usually at the cost of a life), then they decide to change it. A long walkway connected a road covered liberally with concertina wire to the checkpoint where we all sat.

It was a Sunday, and in the local culture, the first work day of the week. People were hustling around about their daily chores, and plenty of people were entering the hospital, so we were busy. The heat of the day was stifling, an average of 120 degrees Fahrenheit—so hot that even the breeze was not welcome. Imagine a blow-dryer as tall as a human, turned on full blast directed right at your face. Then throw some fine dust into the current, and that is the heat of Iraq. As a result, one of the *jundies* decided to sit under the shade instead of near the road where he should have been, giving people a preliminary pat-down before they came near us. We knew this was not okay (he was the first line of defense and an early warning in case someone decided to rush us) but it was hot and we could relate to him wanting to sit in the shade. The sight of two Americans dressed to the hilt with body armor and covered

with every conceivable piece of ammunition sitting lazily by as if waiting for a car wash must have been rather humorous to the independent observer. There were no signs of trouble, no rumors of anything crazy, just a typical lazy day in a war zone. Then, an explosion.

The damage has been done. Moments after the blast, I regained consciousness and tried to assess the situation. Along with the heat I felt as if my hands and face were burnt, and hot liquid was slowly trickling down various parts of my body. I stood up slowly, walked around and gazed utterly bewildered at the scene. The archway welcoming patients into the hospital seemed to have been smashed by a sledgehammer from below and had cracked, exposing raw concrete and the rebar supporting it. The hard metal bench the *jundies* were sitting on was moved a few feet away. A dark black burn mark scarred the ground and there seemed to be some black mass shoved up against a tree. *Don't look at it. It's not good. Don't look.* An ambulance parked nearby was peppered with what looked like bullet holes near the red crescent moon. Four bodies lied strewn about in various levels of completeness. One of these bodies was moving slightly—Donny was bleeding from somewhere and his hands were moving, but he wasn't responding to my calls. Maybe I wasn't even calling at all. I couldn't even hear my own voice. There was a loud buzzing noise overpowering everything, mostly from my right ear. I stumbled about, trying to find help but my mental faculties were not in full swing. My body armor, the main reason why I am still alive, weighed me down and caused me to drag my feet. The human body does not respond well to an extra sixty pounds. The injuries I would soon find on me also did not help. I knew only a few feet away I could walk into view of another guardhouse on the base. It seemed so far though, so out of reach, despite being only a few seconds' walk. My body just would not let me expend the little bit of extra energy that would bring me into view of the base

to let them know there were still people alive. I finally sat down on the bench and looked down. My chest was covered in a dark red-black film of unknown origin. Did this come from me? Something was coming out of my ears. I stuck my fingers in them and inspected the fluid and saw it was clear. *At least it isn't blood.* Later, I would find out that this fluid surrounds the brain. My camouflage uniform was rapidly taking on a foreign tinge of red. Both of my legs and my left arm were bleeding, my left leg nearly gushing blood.

All around were pieces that used to be Maluk and Hamis, the two Iraqi soldiers. It was impossible to distinguish the body parts, which part belongs to whom. In death, all creatures look alike. Although I did not know them very well, plenty of people did, and they had built up reputations of being the nicest Iraqis in our group. Hamis' nickname was "Uncle", because he had the face and demeanor of everyone's jolly older uncle. Maluk was famous among us. If anyone had ever stood watch at the hospital they came back with fond memories of him. Now the final memory of them would be cleaning up their parts—no famous last words, no insights, just a mess.

Someone ran by and picked up a pistol lying on the ground. I recognized the gun; Maluk had it on him at all times. He kept it strapped to his leg and let me play with it just hours before. Fearing that he was going to point the pistol at me and finish the job, I screamed at him to give it to me. *Jib le! Jib le! Give me! Give me!* My rudimentary Arabic came back. He stared at me with a strange look of surprise mixed with a nervous smile, then handed me the gun and ran away. At least my voice still worked. Something was wrong with the clip, and I knew it wouldn't work. Donny's machine gun and my rifle were gone; the radio I kept in my top left pouch on my chest was missing, presumably blown to bits; everyone except me guarding

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the hospital was incapacitated. I had no way to defend myself, no way of sending for backup, and no friendly face to guide me. Everything I had relied on so much up to then was swept away like straw.

Memories of training flashed back quickly in a jumbled mess. I was bleeding pretty badly and I needed to stop it. There was something strapped to my right side that would help me but I couldn't remember the name, only how to use it. My left arm wasn't working very well—something was stopping me from bending my elbow. The weight of gravity combined with a rapid heartbeat, fueled by gallons of adrenaline gushing into my system rapidly pulled my blood downward and through several jagged slits in my skin. My body movements slowed by the second. I was content to only look forward, periodically yelling "Donny!" in an attempt to get my friend to respond. He could only lie there, moving only slightly, his face frozen in a horrid grimace.

After seeing my injuries I knew something was wrong, but I couldn't feel anything. People always talk about being in shock, but then I guess I was feeling it. I felt like I should feel pain, but I just couldn't. Something in my brain disconnected and I started crying out in pain even though I had no reason to. I remember thinking at the time: *why am I doing this?* Looking left, I saw people arguing and pushing each other. Were these the doctors and nurses coming out of the hospital to see the devastation? I can only imagine the mind-bending horror of being a doctor in a war-torn country and then coming out of your own clinic only to see more bloodshed literally at the front door.

The tourniquet (*that's* what it's called!) found its way out from under a bottle of iodine and various comically undersized bandages, much too small to cover the wounds that war creates. I

knew how to use a tourniquet, but unfortunately the engineers who designed this particular model had in mind a person with two functioning arms, and I was only able to perform a couple of steps before coming to a reluctant halt.

Seeing Donny on the ground brought back memories formed only weeks before. Donny was serving his third tour in Iraq and wasn't very surprised by the daily happenings. People who go on so many tours usually hate talking to people who haven't. They've seen and experienced things that will forever separate them from those who have spent their life in naivete. What made Donny special was that someone who *was* surprised by all the crazy daily happenings (me) could talk to him and he would answer all questions honestly and quickly, without being pretentious or aggressive, as is the norm amongst more seasoned vets. He had formed an unofficial group that would get together periodically and cook food we happened to scrounge up. Only the night before we cooked up a massive bowl of chili (much different and tastier than the usual slop) in a pot we stole from the cooks. He was a friend to all and an enemy to none. Now, seeing him sprawled on the pavement, hands in the air permanently clawed, fighting the inner demons raging in his head, I felt guilty. It's the new guy that's supposed to die, not the seasoned vet! He has a wife and a newborn girl, so much more to lose and he is the unconscious one—while I, with only my family and distant friends to care about me, sit here enjoying copious amount of consciousness, only able to stare at him in wonder and disgust.

My brain allowed me to reflect and digest some information as it slowly grew dim. Some bomb had exploded, that much was obvious. Was it a mortar shot from afar, a grenade, a missile, was it accidental? For the last couple of weeks, our base had been fired on by mortars but there hadn't been any injuries. There was a very low chance, not impossible, that a gunner fired a perfect shot hitting

right between the buildings flanking us. I looked on the ground to my right and saw a leg, detached below the knee without a stitch of clothing, not even a sock. Empirical evidence told me this was not my leg. A noxious smell permeated the area, a mixture of exhaust or cordite and a generous portion of an unidentifiable smell, all strengthened by the latent heat and the sweat soaking my clothes, accumulated over the day. Empirical evidence told me this unidentifiable smell came from the ruptured entrails of a once-living human. I thought quickly of the medals I would receive if I lived, the coveted Purple Heart, one of the most secretly sought after but most ill-earned award that military service has ever produced. I was relieved to know that even near death, vanity is still a strong human characteristic, perhaps the most overpowering. I wondered if at any moment tunnel vision would kick in, and I would take the short trek towards inevitability...

Around the corner came relief. My fellow Marines heard the explosion and ran to my rescue. The rest of the story is quite boring, filled with strange medical terms such as perineal nerve, chest tube, wound vacuum, orthopedic blah blah. Suffice it to say, I survived. Donny also survived. The silly nurses at the hospital made the mistake of placing us in the same room. For the next month, I had to endure constant pranks and streams of salt water shot out of syringes pointed at my face. Now, many years later, I walk around relatively fine. The final tally of my injuries: permanent total hearing loss in my right ear; the inability to lift my left foot or move it side-to-side; eight bits of shrapnel hanging out near the surface of the skin (again, vanity will not allow me to remove these, considering how much fun they are at parties); a bone missing in my left foot; parts of my left bicep missing; partial loss of taste; and other strange side effects (the old joke "you should see the other guy!" is wildly grim but a sure-fire hit). Donny has many of the same in-

juries, making for a very comical scene, the two of us walking down a street side-by-side, exaggerating our limps and screaming at each other to be heard.

Sometimes I think I got the better end of the deal. My friends who stayed behind saw a helicopter fly away with two of their friends in it who they didn't know were going to survive. The mess I left behind wasn't going to be easy to clean up. Three whole bodies were sitting under a hot sun, along with the pints of blood Donny and I bled out. There is no janitorial service in Iraq: if there is a mess, the Marines clean it up. Imagine waking up in the morning and going about your daily routine, then only hours later having to scoop parts of people into a body bag whom you knew personally and had developed a relationship. The stereotypical tough Marine breaks down and vomits on the pavement and adds more stink.

I can see my wounds. They are as tangible as the air I breathe. Some wounds form in the mind after a seriously traumatic event. These wounds are often unnoticed and untreated, and will only grow in the brain until they become so large that it's impossible to remove them despite centuries of psychological knowledge and years of therapy. Somehow, despite my brief exposure to this mess, I avoided these wounds, but I was lucky. My friends who stayed behind will forever remember that time, and as much as they pity me, I pity them even more. Periodically I will look down and see my longest scar stretching from above the knee down to the ankle and think back to cause of the event: my suicide bomber.

Who was he? I know nearly nothing about him. Sifting through the various pieces he left behind, my fellow Marines determined that he was male. His age, name, home of record, occupation, were all erased. Only those who knew him before knew who he was, but I will never meet his friends or

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relatives, so to me he is but an event.

Why did he do this? He didn't stop just before detonation and enter into a speech so that those who were about to die would understand his motives. No note was left behind, and no organization bothered to phone the local news network to claim his victory as their own. Perhaps he was a member of a terrorist organization, and after months of indoctrination he was chosen to be the glorious martyr who would strike at the imperialist pigs, and drive them from their home country. Perhaps he was a foreigner and had nothing to live for, and out of boredom enlisted in the first radical group he could find. Perhaps he was a law-abiding citizen working in the nearby cement plant, but after witnessing the death of a friend or family, struck out blindly at the nearest enemy he could see. His motives are forever sealed.

What then can we say about this person? These things we know: he had at least one mother and one father; he had lived long enough to see adulthood; and someone must have cared for him to some small extent as a child. What can be drawn from this information? He was a human being just like me, just like the person reading this, just like the billions alive today and the billions who have died and the billions who will be born.

My suicide bomber probably loved his country. He had grown up under propaganda, in a country still reeling from colonialists and wars. When the invaders came, the same people he was taught to revile, a strong wave of patriotism must have arisen in him. Pressured from all sides by religious figures, pseudo-friends, many people trying to find someone who would fight

their battles for them, he must have been overwhelmed until finally he decided to do something about it. He must have been willing to lay down his life for a cause he fervently, but perhaps naively, believed in. Thinking honestly, we follow a very similar life-line. Terrorists had attacked my country and killed thousands of innocent civilians, my fellow citizens. Decades of conflicts and near-misses left us on a hair trigger, ready to fight at any provocation. Since high school I witnessed the initial invasion of Iraq, the Mission Accomplished banner, the first appearance of something called an Improvised Explosive Device, and a massive resurgence of violence with an enemy who didn't wear a uniform and could blend into the populace. Politicians, church leaders, relatives, all spoke of a sacred duty to defend our country because freedom wasn't free, and other catch-phrases. Finally, I decided to do something about it, and just like my suicide bomber, I was willing to lay down my life for a cause I fervently, but as I learned later, naively believed in. When I enlisted, I asked for the hardest job, the infantry, knowing full well that I would be shipped out to Iraq or Afghanistan and might not come back home. This made me proud, strong, separate from my peers. A rifle in my hand changed me from a regular Joe to a blood-thirsty killer. My suicide bomber must have felt the same feelings the first time he tried on his suicide vest.

I often think about him. His event is permanently imprinted in my psyche. I think about what could have happened. Suppose he had gotten cold feet on the day itself, deciding rather to hide from the heat indoors. Perhaps this leisure time would be spent in meditation and he would rethink his plans. What if the military decided to not occupy that particular city? Would he

"I forgive you. I never knew you and you never knew me, but I forgive you. I am sorry for whatever drove you to your end."

have traveled the extra distance to accomplish his task, or maybe run out of gas half way there and hitchhiked back home? If the proper materials, explosives, wires, detonation cap, all of the destructive and illegal devices had not been procured, would he have fretted and complained or would he have taken it as a sign that he was destined to live? What if America had never invaded his country? Would he be sitting at home right now with his family? What if thousands of years ago we as a species realized the folly of war and abolished it completely? These are the questions I ask almost daily.

I forgive you. I never knew you and you never knew me, but I forgive you. I am sorry for whatever drove you to your end. I am sorry for the history between our countries. I am sorry for the hateful indoctrination that must have influenced you. I am sorry I was there and the terror I must have represented. I am sorry that you saw me as a target, and not the peace-keeping force we were supposed to represent. If we ever met again, if I was transported back to that time and place of our first and only

meeting, I would not lash out in anger. I would calmly ask you to sit down and I would talk to you, human to human. I would ask why you were doing this and if there was anything I could do to make it better. We would both undoubtedly have misconceptions about each other, but I am confident that in our discourse, we would understand each other better. Perhaps we might have even become friends. At the end of our talk, I would sit quietly back where I was before and allow you to do your business. But I know, after talking with each other, we would come to some common ground and you would not be forced to sacrifice your life for your cause.

But it's all over now, and I sit here and ponder how to make situations like mine a thing of the past. Some say it's not possible. Perhaps so, perhaps we are a species doomed to fight ourselves until the end of time. Until I have incontrovertible proof that all human beings cannot live without murder, I will struggle to end it all. The first step is to look into myself and see the pain and the latent hate, the same reptilian genetic material that led my suicide bomber to me, and to cut it out, forcefully, against all illogical notions of survival or flight-or-fight. To emulate the famous Chief Joseph, I will fight no more forever.

Josiah White is a member of "Iraq Veterans Against War" and was recently interviewed on V-RADIO. That interview is available within the archives at V-RADIO.org.



OSE and The Zeitgeist Movement

By Marcin Jackubowski, PhD

As founder of the Open Source Ecology Project (OSE), I would like to share a few comments on the common ground between OSE and the Zeitgeist Movement. The OSE concept began towards the end of my Ph.D. studies in physics at U. Wisconsin, Madison in 2003. As I became greatly disenchanted with the lack of practical applications from my studies - and filled with knowledge of pressing world issues from my independent studies - the OSE concept was born: open, global collaboration towards solving these issues by local solutions.

First, what is the common problem statement to both OSE and the Zeitgeist Movement? We are both concerned about the Debt Matrix. For anyone paying attention, it is common knowledge that control over people, communities, and countries is implemented most effectively via the creation of debt. The formula is simple. Step one is getting the party of interest into debt through a candy-coated deal. Step two is to control them absolutely - as a debt slave whose first obligation is to repay. Control is control over debt. We recommend the insightful movie, *The International*, for a more dramatic portrayal of this rather simple game - which applies on a personal as well as a geopolitical level.

OSE is an NGO that is engaged with developing open source infrastructures for resilient communities - as a remedy to

the Debt Matrix. Our program is also quite simple - to open-source key infrastructure technologies to lower the cost of living and to create transparent access to the means of production. The goal is to empower communities to create resilient economies - so that these communities can provide their needs from local resources - to transcend the economics of scarcity. This is the resource based economy. See our presentation on the [Economy in a Box](#) - for a recent update on our work and thinking. Our claim is that enabling technology is here. It is simply a matter of acting. On the other side lies freedom from external control - and unleashing of human creativity.

How do we begin? We focus on widespread access to the means of effective production as the time-proven formula for transcending the economics of scarcity. We do things on the ground. We build things such as [Open Source Tractors](#), [automated Compressed Earth Brick presses](#), [PowerCubes](#), [agriculture and utility equipment](#) and [open source Fab Lab equipment](#). Just as nature is self-replicating, the technology base can also be self-replicating - by means of the open source Fab Lab with digital fabrication. We foresee the age of the digital craftsman on the rise - a generalist fueled by knowledge and open source equipment - as a cornerstone of resilient communities and a substitute for The Corporation.



Are we saying that everybody should be a digital craftsman, farmer, or builder? No, these are just the basics, as a foundation for building advanced civilization. Yet every community should have these functions built in - for their own resilience and for self-determination. We are calling for people to become producers of essential resources for the community - not passive consumer employees filled with fear, dependence, and impotence. The curious phenomenon of the job will vanish - as survival is guaranteed by one's responsibility to ethical production - not by a paycheck from a remote power center.

This brings us to the original point. How do we work together? To date, we've seen that The Zeitgeist Movement is one of our biggest supporters through the awareness it has raised about our work. [William](#), one of our on-site participants, found out about us through The Zeitgeist Movement and the V-RADIO broadcast. (You can find this broadcast at [V-RADIO.org](#)) As far as our role - we can only continue what we're doing today - by bringing more and more prototypes of actual technologies to create a resilient future by helping others get started right now.

We are looking for people to join our on-site team. If you have the ideas and skills for building new civilization - we want you to join us. We're building the world's first open source, resilient community - along the lines mentioned above. We're taking baby steps towards this goal, and we are seeing promising results. We are

now beginning production of our open source, high performance [CEB press](#). We're giving away our plans for free, to promote open business models. We're looking for custom fabricators and others, to help us make history - by bootstrapping into successive depths of a resource-based economy. Contact us at opensourceecology@gmail.com if you would like to get involved.



[See our weblog for updates.](#) See the [OSE License for Post-Scarcity Economics](#) to find out more about our motivations. If you cannot get involved, consider [supporting our work](#). We just may be the best small investment that you have ever made in your life.

You can listen to V-RADIO's most recent interview with Marcin Jackubowski and William Cleaver [here](#).



Science, Wonder and the Beauty of What's Real

By Aaron Moritz

The struggle to find meaning in life seems almost to be a basic human impulse. Those who choose to engage in that struggle will find it both difficult and rewarding.

Finding true meaning, for me, doesn't come from made up stories, or from superstitious, mystical explanations of consciousness and the universe. It comes, simply, from the inherently staggering beauty of nature, and from the puzzles and contradictions that arise the deeper we examine it. It is the thrill of finding truth, an answer to a question.

When I attempt to comprehend the totality of our unusual, subtle, and elegant universe I feel ecstatic to be a part of it. I almost feel like walking around, proselytizing to anyone I meet of the great joy I feel to be on this earth, full of hundreds of beautiful species, each the current pinnacle of their own evolution.

Contemplating nature, I sometimes feel like I've tapped into a power greater than myself and I can feel it's love flow through me, fill my soul, and spill out into the world around me. I can glimpse the fullness of perfection and realize that wherever we find its absence in our world, we should strive to implement and exemplify it. I am utterly connected, and surrendered to the absolute. The infinity of existence.

I could go on and on, but at the end there, I kind of lost my steam. The words stopped naturally flowing from this caffeine buzz I'm riding,

and I started using random abstract concepts that sound nice, but don't really mean much. But the language is powerful. Humans have this amazing ability to channel the essence of our emotions into words. The thing is, words can get confused.

So, basically, I am Jesus. Wait. Not literally. What I mean is, I

could sit and make up a million different ways to say, basically, "I'm feeling good; I want to sustain that feeling and share it with others.

And I want to encourage others and myself to do only good things." You know, the stuff Jesus talked about, spreading the love -- except for Scientology, which, of course, we all know started as a money making scheme by science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard in the 1950's. Most religions probably start with a normal person, an endorphin rush, and some unique circumstances. Anyone could be Jesus. We all experience this love and we all have the ability to share it.

One thing I really do wonder about, however, is why none of these religious founders ever taught that we humans, ourselves, are the source of this great, infinite love. Just us. Except for maybe Buddhism (I'm not too clear on how that whole thing works), typical religious training is that some being greater than ourselves must be responsible for our love.

I don't believe in a 'power' greater than myself. I am the greatest thing this universe has ever created and so are you. I exult in the realization that my consciousness is just a transcendent property of my neurons firing, unique to me and my physical brain. Giving credit to a non-physical soul would cheapen the stunningly complex, yet simplistic nature of what we are. Atoms dancing with each other.

Because we are just atoms, and through how they interact, we are able to know ourselves, and learn about our universe. Sadly, this amazing gift is rarely nurtured. People are kept ignorant. The joy of discovering the truths of our world is robbed from children, their education reduced to a mind-numbing game of question/answer regurgitation.

Children should be led down a self-directed path of discovery, allowing them to freely explore their curiosities with a wealth of information at their feet. Not graded and compared, or made to compete and experience humiliation for failing to learn fast enough.

The most successful tool we have for discovering what is true is the scientific method. And yeah, the scientific method is strict, very strict, because if we want the truth, it has to be. It demands proofs and repetitions, continued experiment and revision. Truth is beauty and truth is power and science works because it is self-aware, self-correcting, and utterly devoted to the truth.

But being strict does not mean that science has to be cold and uninspired. The spiritual and philosophical power of what has already been discovered should not be dismissed. Us, plants, animals, water, the air, all of nature, all of almost everything, is made up of atoms forged inside of stars. This is a fact. Also, every being on the planet gets its energy, in one way or another, from the Sun. As Carl Sagan put it, "We are star stuff harvesting star light".

It is humbling to realize that beings as complex and experiential as us could, and did, evolve slowly over time through nothing more than subtle interactions between atoms, exchanges of force particles and photons, gluons, quarks, and neutrinos. The universe dancing with itself. When we get down even smaller, many physicists think that all these particles are made up of strings. All the strings are the same 'stuff'; they just vibrate, and resonate with each other in unique harmonious ways (through ten spacial dimensions, no less!), and from those harmonies the natural world unfolds. The orchestra has been building for 15 billion years, and it looks to me like we might be at a crescendo.

We currently face a choice. Will we continue this battle we wage against our own species? Become extinct, a sour note, allow-

ing the symphony to continue on without us? Because it will. The fall of humanity would be but a minor stumble, a single trumpet player faltering for just a moment, when we consider the vastness of this universal production. Or will we learn to resonate with one another, as our atoms and our strings do, and create music so beautiful that some seem to think it impossible, or unimaginable?

I find that sad, because I don't just imagine this beauty, I can see it, read about it. Science has shown that humanity's long-felt, deep connection to nature is a real and tangible thing. We are all dependent on each other: plants turn sunlight into our food and we

spread their seeds, they breathe in our CO2 and we breathe in their oxygen. Bees that pollinate flowers, bacteria that help us to digest our food, animals that eat each other... everywhere we look we see natural examples of living things being 'plugged in' to one another.

These realities raise our consciousness above vague, spiritual statements on connectedness. They empower us with the realization that we are physically, demonstrably, and irrevocably intertwined. We are extensions of one another, aspects of one planetary organism. We have come to see nature as neither a force to be reckoned with, nor an enemy to be vanquished. Nature is a set of highly interdependent variables that when broken down into smaller components can be known, recorded, understood, and ultimately influenced and maneuvered. This is what science shows us. This is the power we have been discovered to be holding.

Facing the future and all of its uncertainty, the search for truth through science, and its humanistic application to the way we live our lives, could be the key in the engine of the next revolution. A global, but personal and truthful revolution that implements institutions not of power, but of facts, and truth.



Letters

As many of you already know, Peter is very busy completing his work on the new movie, *Zeitgeist: Moving Forward*. So, out of consideration and respect for his tireless efforts, we're not distracting him with a request for a "Letter" for this issue. Look for his contributions and updates about "Z-Day - 2011" in the next issue.

- Global Newsletter Team

P.S. I'd also like to personally thank all of the people who help make this newsletter possible. The Newsletter Team, The Linguistics Team for all the great work you do with proofreading, translations, etc., and of course all those that have contributed articles, artwork, ideas and suggestions. You're all the best!

- Gregory W. (aka Thunder)



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ZEITGEIST: MOVING FORWARD

Quote of the month...

There is provided an escape from the narrowness and poverty of the individual life, and the possibility of a life which is other and larger than our own, yet which is most truly our own.

For, to be ourselves, we must be more than ourselves.

*What we call love is, in truth . . .
the losing of our individual selves to gain a larger self.*

- John Caird

If you would like to submit an article, please e-mail it to: newsletter@thezeitgeistmovement.com
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