

There has been a tendency in civilized culture to separate and categorize the various aspects of life as independent entities rather than as inseparable, interdependent parts of a complex system. This is seen today in the separate treatment of social, economic, political, moral and ethical beliefs. Believing these to be unrelated allows for conflict without any apparent hypocrisy, where a form of double-speak and doublethink exist, and even the most exploitative systems are considered to uphold the ideals of freedom, democracy, and equality. Revolutions of the past have often targeted only the political system without fully addressing changes in other areas. How can the U.S. claim to embody equality when there is socio-economic class division, authoritarian hierarchy, and patriarchy? If a complete social transformation is to take place, it must target the entirety of our way of life and not just a solitary aspect.

While moving towards an egalitarian way of life, the effort to insure environmental sustainability must be a primary concern. To speak of change only in the social realm defines an unnecessary division between the human and non-human. The damaging environmental effects of civilization are causing mass extinctions which will inevitably make the planet uninhabitable for humans. Any social revolution will be short lived if the causes of these catastrophic events are not altered.

Examining the way that civilization functions exposes a dependency upon inequality and nothing exemplifies this more than the global economic system, which promotes the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the few. In economically driven cultures, everything is commodified, and that which cannot be is discarded as worthless or too costly; for example, a healthy environment. The quality of life is expressed by narrow abstractions, like the Gross National Product, which does not factor in communities, biodiversity, clean water and air, fertile soil, social equality, mental wellness, or whether or not everyone has food, clothing and shelter. These are ignored, while the accumulation of property, fossil fuels, technology, "precious" metals and stones, as well as abstractions like money and speculations, are lusted after. These are factors that we as consumers are taught to desire, usually under the guise of "entertainment"; however, they are merely used to obfuscate the social and ecological problems of the system: to deter us from questioning it's unequal and exploitative practices. The economic system is held up by the political system, in the form of subsidies, tax breaks, corporate welfare and bailouts, and is protected from dissenters by government agencies, laws, and propaganda. In turn the elite, who benefit from the economic system, ensure the political system through financial support.

The accumulation of monetary wealth is a misguided step towards fulfilling needs and wants because it has no inherent value. Security and support are two terms that might best include the needs and modest wants of most peo-

ple. Economically, 'security' is money, property, investments, and speculation, and we are taught to 'support' ourselves through the accumulation of these things. The system is set up so that a select few get most of the security and support, while the majority of people get little or none. This is not the way it has always been, nor does it need to remain this way. Security and support should be viewed holistically, and the wants and needs fulfilled through a system that functions without inherent inequality.

Pre-civilized cultures practiced a mutual support 'economy' that was based on reciprocal altruism. By keeping their wants at a modest level, the needs of all were met, unlike our present system which is based on an infinite number of wants and is unable to meet the needs of all: even with tens of billions of dollars, Bill Gates continues to accumulate wealth. Mutual support cannot be commodified and restricted to social security and welfare, as it is in the US. It is not an economic relationship, but instead a social one. It is entirely possible to create a mutual support system similar to, or inspired by, pre-civilized cultures, without the need

to "go back the stone age."

If we look at the needs of each individual, we find that they are relatively simple to provide for if an egalitarian approach is taken. Everyone needs food, water, clothing, and shelter. For the most part, civilization has been able to provide the minimum of these basic needs for most of it's members, given they were willing to submit to literal, or virtual, slavery and not concern themselves with other needs and wants. However, prior to civilization, not only

were an individual's requirements and desires met to a greater extent, other needs were met that are often over looked today: social needs. Humans are social animals, and it can only be assumed that in addition to the physical needs of sustenance and protection, there are needs of a mental and emotional origin that can only be fulfilled through social support.

The rulers of civilizations, by instituting oppressive systems which deny the egalitarian social support of pre-civilized cultures, have managed to keep the vast majority of people on the edge of survival, where they are so concerned with meeting their primary physical needs, they have little time or energy left to demand their social needs be met. Despite the apparent prosperity of first world countries like the U.S., social needs are still not being met. There are entire aspects of our culture concerned only with distracting us from meeting important goals, like social equality and environmental sustainability, and instead focus on illusory values of wealth and commodity fetishism. The myth of a high quality of life is supported by showcasing technologies and luxuries that only a few can afford, and by comparing first world conditions to third, which is exploited for the prosperity of the elite. By ignoring illusionary distractions, and denying the validity of the present establishment, we can collectively work towards a new system which would provide for all.

The isolating competitive tendencies which civilization fosters can make it difficult to restore the skills necessary to form healthy social groups.

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