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Time to re-imagine capitalism

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There are many areas where rapid change is needed to confront and deal with climate change and ecosystem degradation. But our societies mostly refuse to face and discuss these issues. Some of this is nostalgia for the past. We dream of the days in the 1950's and 60's when the consumer economy grew rapidly, forgetting that this was made possible because the US kept the price of oil below \$3 a barrel, until first OPEC rebelled in 1973 and then Iran in 1979. It is more comforting to ignore the unknown future rushing towards us than face change.

Our global capitalist system grew rich on cheap oil and the freedom to exploit the Earth and the poor. By dumping the greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, and many waste-streams into the oceans, industries never had to budget for the downstream costs. Now the webs of deceit and corruption driven by wealth and ancient doctrines try to bury the truth of the disasters ahead for our children and all life on Earth.

Instead of nostalgia for business-as-usual, which made a few very rich, our communities need imagination to create a sustainable future for the Earth and our children. We need stability not growth. The democratic cooperative society that we dream of, but wealth, power and greed oppose.

As I write Greta Thunberg is in mid-Atlantic on the 45ft catamaran *La Vagabonde* heading for the Azores, and then to Lisbon in Portugal. Tropical storm Sebastien has just passed to their east. Greta has been in the United States for ten weeks. She had been planning to travel overland to Chile for the next round of U.N. climate talks. However, unrest there forced the COP25 climate conference to move from Santiago to Madrid in Spain. So Greta, sailing at 8 knots across a stormy Atlantic in November, hopes to reach Lisbon in early December, as the conference runs from December 2-13.

Meanwhile the ongoing corruption in Washington has distracted the American people from the real world climate and extinction crises ahead. While we shopped on Black Friday, a million youth around the world again went on strike for the climate.

Our central government crumbles into irrelevance on the global arena. Did our leaders read the August 7th IPCC Special Report on land degradation, sustainable land management and food security, or the September 25th Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere (ice)? Did they hear the November 6th "Warning of a Climate Emergency" by 11250 scientists across the world? I doubt it, as they prefer false information sweetened with cash.

The implosion in Washington threatens our democracy and our future. 'We the People' need to get together in our communities to imagine and create a way forward, both locally and at the state level. We have to ensure that businesses are responsible for all their waste-streams, and accept real responsibility for the future of the Earth and our children. We have to ensure that the oil companies, who still pocket \$100 billion in profits each year from the destruction of the Earth, are held responsible

for deliberately funding deception for the past thirty years. Their own scientists mapped out the long-term impact of climate change in the late 1970s, but management suppressed these reports.

We have to reject the archaic aspect of capitalism that corporations are only obligated to their shareholders, but are not responsible if their actions mean the destruction of the life-support systems of the Earth. This is clearly absurd, knowing what lies ahead for our children, but billions are being spent on trying to preserve the status quo. We have to expose the cruelty of this sophisticated extortion scheme, and collectively and imaginatively drive social change. It will not come if we sit back, wait and hope. Instead give thanks to the Earth for all that we have been given, and plan a better economic and social future for our communities.