

War on the World

The oil “spill” in the Gulf of Mexico can be blamed on BP and our own Government’s cozy relationship with the oil companies. But is that worse than burning the oil and furthering climate change, with rising sea levels which would inevitably mean the destruction of wetlands, flooding of New Orleans? Not this year but in ten years. or fifty. When I think about it, the only difference I can find is *when*. The disaster of oil in the water now is acute, the world wide disaster of rising ocean levels is later, an unknown number of years later. The so-called spill, which is not a spill of course but a hole in the bottom of the ocean, with a geyser of oil, is now and dramatic and so far relatively local. Climate change is global.

Now we are beginning to learn that oil disasters of one kind or another have been happening for decades, all over the world as well as in the US. We have no idea what damage today’s millions of gallons/barrels of oil in ocean water will do in the long run. At the delta of the Niger river in Africa oil has been spilled for decades with catastrophic results for land and people. But of course that doesn’t make the news here. We never knew about the Amazon oil spills that destroyed not just many square miles of forest. but rivers and the very existence of the indigenous people whose lives depended on the jungle and the river.

For years we have known, and accepted, that oil companies are ruthless in the destruction of nature, and the people who rely on nature, in order to maintain their monstrous profits while keeping the price of “gas” as we call it, lower than anywhere in the world. And yes, it is likely, that a portion of oil profits (after deducting the stellar incomes and bonuses of the owners of the companies) are to drip down to investors; among them pension funds.

The extraction of oil, coal, minerals, diamonds, has made a few people unbelievably rich while damaging nature and seriously impoverishing millions probably billions of people. The burning of oil and coal is effecting the entire planet by rapid warming, causing climate change. A change that has become a planetary process that has already increased the average temperature of the planet and is very likely no longer stoppable.

All that we call resources have been extracted from the planet with high tech scientific machines, and almost total disregard of what that extraction has killed, or will kill, in the process. The same is true for what we proudly call food production, modern agriculture and mass meat factories, that destroy the soil, pollute the animals, our food, and the environment beyond repair. No, perhaps repairable but not in the short run.

The Gulf of Mexico disaster is but the latest lesson in the true cost of our way of life. Or, more accurately, it is the closest to home example; similar examples have destroyed huge swaths of land, poisoned and killed millions of people, in other parts of the world. And while oil is bleeding out of the planet in one place, ice caps on both poles are melting. Every year melting more, a little earlier, a little longer. It does not take a mathematician to figure out that something is happening. More water in the oceans that

are now more acid, and seriously robbed of fish and other marine life — but less water in rivers here and everywhere. Read that Las Vegas is building new houses; where does the water for those new houses come from tomorrow, next year? Less water in Los Angeles, a world city? Less water to irrigate the million acre farms in California? Birds and plants get it, they move north. We can't seem to get it, it seems.

Of course Man is smart, we have large brains (almost as large as dolphin brains in proportion to our weight and size). But we apply our brains to things that endanger our own survival as a species. Most of us humans probably don't apply our brains much at all. We play games on little gadgets. We have few true facts available in a world drowned in propaganda and advertising: both forms of information meant to mislead, misinform. We believe what "they" tell us loudly and repeatedly. And so, it is too much trouble to think about the world we leave to our children and grandchildren. Too many of us use our brains to make war. We make wars on people, on countries, on the poor, on drugs, on what is now called terrorists (meaning anyone we don't like for one reason or another). We're going down fighting.

Not all that long ago we used our brains to make art, to tell stories, to figure out the best way to live in harmony with what we found all around us where we were. That meant we lived simply. And strange as that may sound to us today, we were a lot happier than we are now. We worried less. For a long, long time we thought life was about surviving. And almost everywhere we had learned how to survive, and we learned from our elders how to survive well, and peacefully. Today we no longer question whether we can survive, we assume someone will figure it out for us. The brains among us are too busy making money by inventing new ways to kill to worry much about surviving.

My history teacher taught us that the Chinese invented what we now call gun powder. For a thousand years (more? less?) they used it to make little bangs to scare bad spirits away. It must have been a westerner who came up with the idea that little bangs can also be made to be big bangs that destroy buildings and people. We invented bullets and guns and bombs. So-called insurgents invented "IEDs," Improvised Explosive Devices. Explosives now used by who we call *suicide bombers*, they call martyrs. It is our thinking that made an innocent technique to scare off bad spirits into explosions that kill on a scale never before dreamed. The ultimate bang of course came from Einstein's simple formula, a little matter under certain circumstances makes an enormous amount of energy. Remember, we are the only ones who ever actually used The Bomb on a then enemy. Twice. Many other countries have exploded their own atom bomb and the next version, just testing -- making islands and whole stretches of land uninhabitable. We made no fuss when Israel, then Pakistan, then India tested their nuclear bombs, but when Iran admits to work with uranium as a source of green energy — which Obama also wants to do — we make a huge fuss. We know that North Korea, a very poor country whose people are starving, ruled by the cruelest kind of dictator, is known to have not only the bomb but is working on a missile that might be able to reach us here in Hawai'i, now a part of the US. We wonder what would happen when a nuclear bomb

explodes on a live volcano.

Hawaiians think very differently about things natural. To them nature is Mother Nature, the idea to “control” or change her cannot get into their minds. They can think wars with spears: their history reads like the history of any other country in the 19th century. But making war on nature?

To the Big Corporations who now seem to rule the world making war on nature is the norm, as is buying people to give them the needed pieces of paper. Destroying nature and so destroying the lives of all people who depend on that piece of nature to survive should be a crime against humanity. And being bought to give the permit?

For a long time we in this country have played see no evil, hear no evil, about anything outside our immediate neighborhood. Yes, we have had the War on Drugs to give us a taste of what it is to be in a war, but white people often could hide behind skin color, a better education, more income, more chances. But the last two years seem to have brought home, with interest, the other wars that have been waged in the poorer parts of the world (now often called the World’s South). Enormous oil spills have occurred everywhere. In this country, of course, in Australia, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Africa. At the delta of the Niger the country of Nigeria, oil has been flooding sea and land for ten years. In the depth of the Amazon large areas of rain forest have been destroyed to get at oil, and oil pollution has wiped out rivers, and at least one, perhaps more, indigenous tribes. Millions of acres have been destroyed by the deforestation of most of the enormous island of Borneo (part of it is Malaysia, the slightly larger part Indonesia) which is now one huge oil palm plantation: the promise of biofuel, but at what cost!

Now the war on Nature has come home. An economic meltdown, probably caused by five of our banks -- and they now have the best year in their history, thank you --, leading to large scale loss of homes, loss of jobs (manufacturing outsourced). Congress concerned with their inner disagreements, heavily bribed with many millions of dollars, and so obviously uninterested or unable to do much for We the People. And now the oil geyser in the Gulf that obviously is unstoppable until maybe August, or next year. There is at least one other deep water drill platform that is drilling even deeper than one mile under the surface of the ocean. An additional economic disaster for the southern States and for people who live there, reaching far inland. An unmeasurable ecological disaster. The Senate is ruled by the more and more ultra conservative minority who require a super majority, which now, for instance, stalls the continuing unemployment payments for 15 million unemployed Americans. Their only politics are, quite openly, to be the party of Hell No, meaning against anything this president is for. They vehemently proclaim they want less government, which translates to doing away with Social Security, Medicare, and if you believe one of their most extreme speakers, everything except the Pentagon, and (probably, she does not say) Police and Prisons. The government may indeed be too bureaucratic but that is a matter of fixing; not even very difficult. But no Government except to make war -- and instead free reign of the large international corporations-- seems like open war against We the People.

What of We the People? Blind and deaf and probably at least half of us with no thoughts at all, just trying to get by till tomorrow. Small groups unable to think clearly any more in a world that is becoming daily more confusing. We anonymously join social groups on the internet, creating a whole new language, texting. Have we figured out who or what the Tea Party is? They are against, that is clear. But against what? Even so-called Liberals are playing on the right side of the board. How can it be otherwise with Big Media who carefully choose what information to pass on, making invisible what makes sense, dominated by the loud and more and more meaningless political positions of their owners. A country run by Big Money, Big Oil, big Pharma, Big Insurance, Big Food, Big Agriculture, Big everything, all making war on Mother Earth and so making war on us.

Is *We the People* just one of the many species that are to be wiped off the planet in what is now called The Sixth Extinction?