

The Struggle for the World Food Noosphere

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The world seems to me like an awesome thriller movie. There is intrigue, war, and behind the scenes maneuvering for world power. At the same time there is incredible human love, heroism and mass movements for change. The Earth itself and the climate are changing. I catch glimpses of the action via the internet, newspapers and from first hand reports.

What is going to happen next in world affairs? We each have our own perspective. Each one of us could be considered a broadcasting antenna. Our belief structures about the future and our cosmology are transmitted to the overall planetary mind of humanity. We each contribute to the planetary human mind. The “noosphere” is one of the terms to describe this planetary mind consciousness. Further, each nation has a national character (or characters), a national noosphere. Also each culture, people and tribe has its noosphere. Judging from the wide diversity of thinking in the world today, one might think the collective noosphere must be confused, at war with itself and riddled with contradictions. The corporate media, Hollywood, television and advertizing have a strong influence on the noosphere. The noosphere is not static. Powerful ideas which catch on in a big way in the planetary mind are called memes. Ideas can sweep across the world, especially in these days of rapid communication. Peace, freedom, localization, and many good memes are out there as well as the negative ones stirred up by people with dark agendas.

Just as I believe that every person will eventually evolve into a loving, enlightened being, so I believe that humanity’s noosphere is evolving to a higher state. A state marked by love, high ethics, neighborliness, service to one’s community and equitability. With a consequent decrease in hatred, war, greed, violence and disregard for the environment.

How would this manifest in the way we grow food? Industrial agriculture will wane, or perhaps even suddenly collapse. The forerunners of the new food system are rapidly falling into place with the development of things like the expansion of farmer’s markets, the growth in home gardening, the growth in organic gardening and farming, permaculture, biodynamic farms, CSA farms, farm internship programs training new farmers, school gardens, farm to school food supplies, food security councils and initiatives, farm to chef links, food forests, buy local campaigns, and so forth. Together they only produce a small part of the food consumed in the US at this point. Most of our food is still produced by industrial agriculture and a lot of it is sourced from countries around the world. The US recently became a net importer of food for the first time in history. The US now imports more food than it exports.

There are still over 500 million small farmers in the world. Many of them are subsistence

farmers with only a few acres. The number of subsistence farmers has been diminished greatly over the past several centuries. Dispossession of land, economic pressures forcing them off land and into the slums, dumping of subsidized crops by “developed nations”, and millions killed by colonial and neo-colonial wars and aggressions and western-supported dictators. Still they persist and in some cases resist. India for example is a hotbed of farmer’s movements fighting against multi-national agribusiness control. Small farmers have it tough everywhere in the world, but still many are hanging on and some are even doing well. In the US, small-scale farming is hard economically and there are an ever increasing burden of regulations. The FAO estimates that in 1994, there were some 500 million landless people in rural areas of the world.

The corporate, agricultural complex is part of the military/industrial/financial complex which has thoroughly embedded itself in the US federal government, congress, and government regulatory agencies. Through economic means and government influence it is striving for ever greater control of the food system and discourages grass-roots movements for change. This world struggle for control of the food system is part of the fascinating, thriller movie that I am studying. Recently I watched the movie “*The World According to Monsanto*” and also the movie “*Food, Inc.*”. Both are films which expose some of the shadow side of big agribusiness. I also watch films about new developments in local, small-scale agriculture. Monsanto and agribusiness have power and money on their side, but I believe they are losing the battle for the world food noosphere. The home gardening meme is growing and could rapidly expand if the need arises. There is an international movement for urban gardening which has been growing over the past two decades.

Cuba and Russia are two examples of how agriculture can change on a national scale. Industrial agriculture in both countries largely collapsed in 1990. Cuba invented a gardening movement which became a major food supplier within several years. Cuba’s agriculture underwent an organic revolution because the embargo allowed few industrial inputs. Today, Cuba’s food production is predominantly from home gardens, small-scale, organic farms and farmer cooperatives. In Russia, the people responded to the crisis by doubling their gardens and home food production. Today, the Russian people still home produce 85% of their fruits and berries, 75% of their vegetables, and 45 to 50% of their meat and dairy in their family gardens. The Russians had a distinct advantage as they still were a gardening culture while the Cubans did not have much of a gardening tradition. Russia is also a large country with lots of available land and is not under a US embargo like Cuba was and still is. If the Cubans could do it, just about everyone could.

Growing a garden is a good idea even if there are no crises. The fresh, tasty food, the exercise and mental enjoyment, and the thrill of eating your own food are well worth it and can save a few bucks too if that is important for your family. If you have never gardened before, you would be well advised to start this year. It takes years to build up skills and knowledge. Over time, your yields will get better and with less work on your part. Garden smart. Your failures and successes will teach you. Find the best gardens in your area and study them. Talk to the gardeners. Most gardeners are happy to share knowledge and sometimes plants. Pay special attention to the organic types and those

who rely on local inputs. The permaculture approach to home food production offers a lot of ways to grow food economically.

I have been studying and practicing organic gardening and farming since 1972 and permaculture since 1981. Sustainable agriculture in general has been my life-long quest. I have studied dozens of different sustainable growing methods and permaculture is the best that I have found. The permaculture meme is a growing presence in the world noosphere as is human-friendly farming and gardening in general. The agribusiness meme may have captured a large chunk of the world's pocketbooks at this point, but they have lost the battle for people's hearts.