

DISMANTLE GLOBALLY, RENEW LOCALLY

[Partially excerpted from the chapter, “It’s Time To Get Out”, by permission from author; typos most likely copying errors.] -*Anticiv.net Collective*

If you’ve gotten this far in this book—or if you’re simply anything other than entirely insensate—we probably agree that civilization is going to crash, whether or not we help bring this about. If you don’t agree with this, we probably have nothing to say to each other (How ’bout them Cubbies!). We probably also agree that this crash will be messy. We agree further that since industrial civilization is systematically dismantling the ecological infrastructure of the planet, the sooner civilization comes down (whether or not we help it crash) the more life will remain afterwards to support both humans and nonhumans.

*If you agree with all this, and if you don’t want to dirty your spirituality and conscience with the physical work of helping to bring down civilization, and if your primary concern really is for the well-being of those (humans) who will be alive during and immediately after the crash (as opposed to simply raising this issue because you’re too scared to talk about the crash or to allow anyone else to do so either), then, given (and I repeat this point to emphasize it) that civilization is going to come down anyway, you need to start preparing people for the crash. Instead of attacking me for stating the obvious, go rip up asphalt in vacant parking lots to convert them to neighborhood gardens, go teach people how to identify local edible plants, even in the city (*especially* in the city) so these people won’t starve when the proverbial shit hits the fan and they can no*

longer head off to Albertson's for groceries. Set up committees to eliminate or, if appropriate, channel the (additional) violence that might break out.

We need it all. We need people to take out dams and we need people to knock out electrical infrastructures. We need people to protest and to chain themselves to trees. We *also* need people working to ensure that as many people as possible are equipped to deal with the fallout when the collapse comes. We need people working to teach others what wild plants to eat, what plants are natural antibiotics. We need people teaching others how to purify water, how to build shelters. All of this can look like supporting traditional, local knowledge, it can look like starting rooftop gardens, it can look like planting local varieties of medicinal herbs, and it can look like teaching people how to sing.

The truth is that although I do not believe that designing groovy eco-villages will help bring down civilization, when the crash comes, I'm sure to be first in line knocking on their doors asking for food.

People taking out dams do not have a responsibility to ensure that people in homes previously powered by hydro know how to cook over a fire. They do however have a responsibility to support the people doing that work.

Similarly, those people growing medicinal plants (in preparation for the end of civilization) do not have a responsibility to take out dams. They do however have a responsibility *at the very least* to not condemn those people who have chosen that work. In fact they have a responsibility to support them. They especially have a responsibility to not report them to the cops.

It's the same old story: the good thing about everything being so fucked up is that no matter where you look, there is great work to be done. Do what you love. Do what you

can. Do what best serves your landbase. We need it all.

This doesn't mean that everyone taking out dams and everyone working to cultivate medicinal plants are working toward the same goals. It does mean that if they are, each should see the importance of the other's work.

Further, resistance needs to be global. Acts of resistance are more effective when they're large-scale and coordinated. The infrastructure is monolithic and centralized, so common tools and techniques can be used to dismantle it in many different places, simultaneously if possible.

By contrast, the work of renewal must be local. To be truly effective (and to avoid reproducing the industrial infrastructure) acts of survival and livelihood need to grow from particular landbases where they will thrive. People need to enter into conversation with each piece of earth and all its human and nonhuman inhabitants. This doesn't mean of course that we can't share ideas, or that one water purification technique won't be useful in many different locations. It does mean that people in those places need to decide for themselves what will work. Most important of all, the water in each place needs to be asked and allowed to decide for itself.

I've been thinking a lot again about the cell phone tower behind Safeway, and I see now how these different approaches manifest themselves in this one small place. The cell phone tower needs to come down. It is contiguous on two sides with abandoned parking lots. Those lots need to come up. Gardens can bloom in their place. We can even do our work side by side.²⁹⁶