We Must Be More Than Prophets
by Gary Lindorff

When enough people embrace a movement, that movement can spin a life of its own — a great spirit. And out of that greatness of spirit, a culture begins to emerge which, in turn, produces work, schools, values reflected in new art-forms, dance, food, all qualities of that shared spirit. If it attains viability, in time, more reality accrues to it, more culture, more substance, more credibility . . . Great books, poetry, art, revelations, a philosophy, maybe a new religion or a renewed old religion. The new spirit supplants the old. It lasts for a while. If the principles and ideas that support its legacy are sound and enduring whole generations will live and die within its field of influence, promoting its values, proving its worth. That is the story of Communism and Capitalism and Catholicism-as-we-know-it. But what I am curious about is, what happens to established movements that become oppressive systems and begin to collapse or cease to exist when there is nothing to replace them? My brother talks about the culture of Washington and Capitalism that is dying now and how the anti-war culture is like a movement of Cassandras. I had to think about this. For years the anti-war movement has been prophetic in predicting the demise of capitalism
but it, like Cassandra, 
was doomed 
or cursed 
to not be believed 
or listened to. That is in fact 
how many of us feel, have felt, 
for our entire lives!
We have been saying, 
This can’t last! 
This isn’t working!
This isn’t real!
Why have we failed 
to replace Capitalism?
It’s as if we were up against a curse.
Was it because we had nothing better to offer?
Was it because we failed to create a culture 
to back up the truth 
that motivates our spirit?
We have, indeed, been ‘blowing in the wind”.
Maybe we still haven’t figured out 
what a world founded on 
peaceful co-existence looks like?
I mean the nuts and bolts.
If a movement doesn’t carry the potential 
to evolve into a viable culture, 
it remains in the realm of ideas 
and prophesy.
Communism failed 
to produce a viable culture.
Capitalism has also failed to produce 
a viable culture.
We who see prophetically 
beyond the palpable darkness of our time, 
beyond the old religion of money 
beyond the collective disillusion 
of those multitudes of laborers 
who served to realize 
the sterile dreams of Lenin, 
we should be turning our thoughts and principles 
into culture. . .
That is, growing out of embracing a movement 
to conjuring the spirit 
of a bold new culture of co-existence.
What is our culture?
Who are we really, 
when we spread our wings 
to fully emerge from our cocoons of prophesy?