

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?