

## **Joining the Underground Economy**

Adapted from: *Surviving the New World Order* - by LightMan  
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When discussing alternative economics, it is not uncommon to get blank stares. Many people have no idea that such systems exist, and are astonished to learn of their vitality and widespread acceptance.

Lots of folks participate in the alternative economy, many without even realizing it. When they pay cash, host a garage sale, swap labor, or trade goods and services with their neighbors, they are working in the alternate economy. This is the original, natural economy, one that has existed in human cultures for eons.

The ruling elite promote the view that the alternative (underground) economy is primarily composed of criminals and drug dealers. In truth, it is mostly made up of everyday folks like you and I: single moms, students, tradesmen, entrepreneurs, retired couples, service providers, organic gardeners, self-reliant types, tax rebels, and of course the self employed. One needs to make a clear distinction between the alternative economy and the criminal underground.

Many people supplement their visible income with invisible cash. Even those in legitimate small businesses will take some cash under the table. They use this cash to pay for out of pocket expenses, etc. This is money that can't be easily traced or taxed.

Even people who don't barter, trade, or swap in the alternative economy, are usually more than willing to pay cash for your goods or services if they are offered a cash discount (10-15%). This is money that will never be taxed to pay for bullets or bombs.

The alternative economies are huge! In Canada, it is estimated that as much as 65% of the Gross National Product (GNP) is generated under the table. In the U.S., it is conservatively estimated to be around 35%.

Alternative economies thrive during hard times. They tend to stabilize national economies in times of recession, helping to keep them afloat. This is because the alternative economy is based on real goods and services, instead of credit and paper currency (which has nothing substantial backing it up).

Working in the alternate economy has its ups and downs. But the rewards go far beyond saving a few tax dollars. Money withheld from the clutches of the ruling elite is money that can be channeled back into your local community, into sustainable investment.

Even though there are risks involved, participating in the alternative economy makes good sense. Use your informed purchasing power, vote with your wallet, and help to build economic independence in your community.

## **Joining the alternate economy**

If you don't already participate in the alternative economy, it may be time for you to begin doing so. More than a few respected international economists fear that we are heading for an international economic collapse, and that this one that will make the Great Depression seem trivial by comparison. The man on the street

knows that economic disaster is already underway,

The devaluation of the U.S. Dollar, a teetering housing market, and rising gold prices do indicate that this is more than just a theory. The traditional economic systems of the ruling elite are in trouble worldwide. We are seeing the initial stages of this in 2008.

### **So what can the individual do?**

The best strategic economic choices that an individual can make are to: convert all liquid assets to gold and silver, cash out all stocks, bonds, futures etc., downsize one's lifestyle, relocate from the cities to the country where nature's resources are readily available, cut out all unnecessary expenditures and purchases, become self-employed, join the alternate economy, learn to barter and exchange labor and services.

By redirecting our personal finances into the local alternative economy, we help build community. While hedging our bets with the purchase of silver and gold coins we insure that we have an inflation resistant currency.

Coins should be bought directly from legitimate coin dealers using cash. Buy amounts under \$300 per dealer, and go to several dealers over an extended period of time if necessary. Those who are obviously stockpiling may be targeted by criminals, and will certainly be "persons of interest" by government agents as well.

Do not buy gold and silver futures. Get coinage and bullion you can hold in your hands.

Precious metals should not be stored in your bank safety deposit box, as it is now legally permissible for the government to freeze (or seize) your bank assets in times of national emergency.

Investing in the local economy, and squirreling away a stash of gold and silver coins makes good sense in times of financial instability. Both of these strategies empower the individual while giving nothing back to the institutions of the elite. It is essential that we stop supporting the tyrants and their top-heavy economic institutions, and invest instead in our local well being. This is a primary pillar of natural economics.

### **Doing business in the alternate economy**

The alternative economy is thriving in many cities, towns and rural places. It relies upon the equitable exchange of cash, labor, goods and services. This system is, in essence, an economic cooperative. Transactions are discretely made 'under the table,' and away from the prying governmental eyes.

Garage sales, barter fairs, and farmers markets run primarily on cash. These support local economies and provide a profitable venue for marketing your products without government interference.

A secondary medium of exchange is trade, or barter, which is an equitable exchanging of goods and services of like-value that does not utilize currency.

The third medium of exchange is labor. There are labor exchanges springing up around the world, helping to establish a global alternative economy. Many

community currencies assign labor hours a fixed rate of exchange, so a fisherman's labor hour is equal to that of a dentist's.

One can buy, trade, barter or swap one's produce, services and supplies outside of traditional economic channels. These transactions are increasingly frequent in smaller communities, among the self-employed, and online. Millions of alternative transactions take place in these online forums daily in"

- online auctions like eBay
- online classifieds like Craig's List
- barter exchanges like barterplanet.com

My favorite is [www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org), which is defined in Wikipedia as: ...a centralized network of online communities, featuring free classified advertisements.

I have bought many items through Craigs List, including the vintage aluminum trailer that now houses my design studio. Craigs List is a great way to connect with people who have what you are looking for, without a middleman taking a cut.

### **Discretion in the Alternate Economy**

When participating in the Alternative economy, transactions must be done discretely, and only among those you know and trust. Working in the alternate economy can easily be used as a method of economic protest, directing vital resources away from the corrupt elite while empowering those who support self-reliance and independence.

Uncle Sam wants us to declare these like-trade transactions on our income tax forms. Few actually do this. Many feel that withholding the tax dollars is an important act of civil disobedience. But to do this openly is asking for trouble. Visible tax protesters are frequently targeted. They have lost their homes, businesses, sometimes... their lives.

The less one contributes to the coffers of the ruling elite, the more wrenches one tosses into their imperialistic machines. The fewer dollars granted the tax man, the less bullets and bombs the imperialists can afford.

Self employment in the underground economy is the rule, and not the exception. If you don't have a legitimate business, you can work under your own name instead of a company name. This is entirely legal and is termed: D.B.A./Your Name (doing business as). In this way you don't need a costly business phone, local business license, state tax registration, etc. The down side of this is that you cannot advertise in the yellow pages or deduct legitimate expenses on your 1040 forms.

Running an underground business in the alternate economy requires cunning. The complications are, however, greatly reduced if one can avoid dealing with state and federal forms, inspectors, auditors and taxes.

If you don't register with them as a business in the first place, and you don't advertise under a listed business name, then they will have a hard time finding out that you even exist. Advertise through word of mouth, business cards, or on the internet. Web sites rarely offer their true locations, but legitimize your business and services.

As you participate in the alternative economy, you will naturally begin forming a network of like-minded associates. This is the basis of building a local micro-economy. In small communities, it is common for people make ends meet by trading services, produce, eggs, herbs, transportation, materials, salmon, construction, firewood, labor and much more. I wouldn't be surprised if 30%-40% of all local business takes place in the alternate economy.

When making transactions that you need to keep private: trade or use cash, coinage, small money orders or cashier checks. If you must accept checks, have them made out to 'cash' or to your own name, and cash them at the bank where the check was issued. Don't offer your I.D. when cashing a check, unless the teller asks for it. If a bank records info from your ID, or if they want your fingerprint, complete the transaction... but don't go back there. You can sometimes find tellers that don't bother with ID, especially if they already know you. Small hometown banks are often very friendly and accommodating in this way. If you find one... support it.

### **The role of Cash in the underground economy**

The underground economy has always been primarily cash-based. This is still true today in 2008, but it is slowly changing. Business clients can often be encouraged to pay in cash, especially if they are offered a "cash discount" of 10-15%. Most will do this without question. Cash is green energy. It can be converted into anything you want, within reason. As mentioned earlier, large cash transactions wave large red flags to government lackeys.

Under-the-table cash is best used for daily living and operating expenses, and not for purchases that leave a paper trail.

Take care when accepting cash. There is a lot of counterfeit U.S. currency floating around now (15-20% of 50s and 100s). Inspect bills being passed to you carefully. Learn to spot the bogus ones so you don't get stuck with them, or get the blamed for passing them. Special pens are available that detect counterfeits when marked.

The new currency designs being circulated do help cut down on counterfeit bills, but their security features do pose their own threats. Micro RFID (radio frequency identification) chips are reportedly being inserted into the new \$20 and \$50 dollar bills. This could be just paranoia, but it does sound like something the Elite would do.

New generation scanners, rumored to be in use in Walmart and other super stores, are supposedly capable of scanning your wallet from a short distance, reading your ID off of a credit card, logging cash purchases under your name and Social Security number, and forwarding this information to interested parties.

RFID chips can be disabled by microwaving them, flashing them with an EMP (electromagnetic pulse), or by exposing them to powerful rare earth (Neodymium) magnets. Warning: don't microwave a pile of cash all at once. One guy did this and had his stack of bills explode and burn. He had to have them reissued at the bank. Some folks keep their currency and scannable credit cards in metal mint tins (Altoids) or in foil because of this possibility. In any event, it is probably wise to

avoid RFID chipped products and the stores that use them.

New (2008) Washington State drivers licenses have an RFID chip built in that can be read from about 20 feet away, so when you finally are face to face with a Homeland Security agent—he or she already knows who you are.

### **Problems with a ca\$hless society**

The elite are rapidly herding us towards a cashless society, and electronic transactions are becoming the ‘coin of the realm.’ As a result, the tax-free advantages of greenbacks, and the inherent security of anonymous cash purchases are becoming less easy to pull-off. It is already frowned to make large cash purchases.

So... when buying money orders with cash from U.S. Post Offices or banks, don't get more than a few from each location. Keep money orders and cashier check purchases under \$300, as any over this amount are routinely monitored, tagged, and reported. Most car dealerships, airlines and department store chains are suspicious of large cash transactions, and are required to notify the authorities. Large cash transactions will raise red flags, and attract undue attention.

### **Micro economies and community currencies**

The present economic system that regulates our financial lives is deeply flawed. This system is designed to funnel riches, land and power into the hands of the ruling elite, the same ones who herding us into their New World Order. These systems are prone to manipulation, fluctuations and periodic failures, and react wildly to world events and disasters. The elite are opportunistic, routinely use these events to plunder more and more riches. Every time a disaster occurs, it is reflected in the stock markets, etc. and they prosper. This is the basis of disaster capitalism (read Naomi Klein's book *The Shock Doctrine*). We are vulnerable to the machinations of the elite, and because of this we are easily manipulated.

When a society's currency devalues, corresponding social and political chaos often results. When this occurs, support systems fail, empires fall, and their ecosystems often suffer serious damage as a result.

The concept that money-equals-wealth is erroneous. This belief needs to be scrapped. A society's success manifests itself in sustainability and healthy ecosystems. When all life coexists in balance and harmony, all life forms are interwoven into the majestic tapestry of being. This is the definition of true success. But this is not how the ruling elite view life on earth. They are blind to everything but money, materialism, and power. To them, everything else is irrelevant.

We are being forced to choose between our own freedoms and well-being, and the continued enrichment and empowerment of the ruling elite. We the People, citizens of the richest and most powerful country on Earth have been scammed and betrayed through: the exportation of U.S. jobs to the third world, the unrestrained illegal immigration into the country, the exorbitant costs of food, fuel, shelter, insurance, and medical care. We are being downgraded into wage slaves, allowed to only eke out a meager living. This servitude keeps us disempowered, weak and

docile.

All of the people of the Earth are now engaged in a life or death struggle against the economic and regulatory systems of New World Order: The World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Federal Reserve, World Trade Organization, World Economic Forum, and the various Free Trade Associations. If we fail to stop their quest for global domination, our hopes for future financial stability will be crushed.

Our choice is clear. We must oppose and defeat the ruling elite if we are to remain free. This can only be accomplished by withdrawing our support from the financial institutions of the elite, participation in local alternate economies, and the widespread use of community currencies.

“We need to reinvent money democratically at the grassroots level, along with a communications network. Then when the local community is active and aware enough to control local government -- local government could issue its own currency. Ideally monetary reform encourages land reform, a shift in priorities, recognition of our interdependence with the natural world, nurturing healthy relationships between people locally and throughout the world.” - from *Reinventing Money, Restoring the Earth, Reweaving the Web of Life* - by Carol Brouillet / <http://www.communitycurrency.org/reweaveWeb.html>

As unlikely as our success seems considering our current situation, there is a global movement underway dedicated to replacing the elite's economic systems with interconnected, community based systems. Many towns, cities, and countries are developing stable, locally based economies.

These progressive communities are taking back their power, and regaining control of their financial institutions. They are doing this by issuing their own local currencies, setting up labor exchanges, building food cooperatives, and by investing in their community infrastructure. This is growing quickly into a worldwide movement.

## **Gold and silver as insurance**

In addition to participating in local alternate economies, we should also hedge our bets with “coins of the realm.” A favorite strategy against currency devaluation is to convert a portion of your paper money into silver and gold coinage. Community based currencies are doing this as well.

Canadian Maple Leafs are a popular choice for gold and silver coinage. They are available at Canadian currency exchanges, by mail order, are easily converted and exchanged. Maple Leafs have the highest gold and silver content of any international coinage. American silver and gold coins are alloyed with as much as 10% base metals.

To protect ourselves in uncertain economic times, it makes sense to secure a quantity of silver and gold coinage, as paper currency is prone to radical devaluation. This has happened many times in history, and we are seeing it happen to the U.S. dollar now. Don't get stuck with a pile of worthless cash.

## The growth of community currencies

One of the best ways to withdraw economic support from elite controlled institutions is to create our own inflation-free community currencies. These are instrumental in establishing strong locally based economies. This is not a silly pipe-dream. Many towns and cities around the globe are already doing this successfully.

Community currencies challenge existing economic systems by transforming powerless “consumers” into enlightened citizens who wield informed purchasing and investment power. This trend is a powerful tool for social change. Adopting local currencies is a dynamic way of raising community consciousness, and for restructuring our lives in sustainable ways.

Community currencies are inflation free, and very stable. This is especially true when backed up with precious metals, real goods and services. There are even popular alternate currencies that can be exchanged for silver and gold coinage such as Salt Spring Dollars and Liberty Dollars.

Unfortunately, the Liberty Dollars got too popular, and far too much attention. The Secret Service and the FBI raided the headquarters of the Liberty Dollar in late 2007, seizing over seven tons of *Liberty* and *Ron Paul* dollars. The gold, silver and copper coins have apparently vanished into thin air, despite a lawsuit brought brought repeatedly against the feds. The fed’s position is that the coins vaguely resembled American coinage, and have been treated as if they were counterfeit.

“The creator of the coins, Bernard von NotHaus, who lives in Miami, claims that the federal government is trying to shut down production of his liberty dollars, as the coins are called, because of the competition they pose to the greenback. In recent years, his precious metal coins have outperformed the dollar, whose value has plunged in relation to gold.” source: by Joseph Goldstein / NYSun, 6.20.08

The most widely accepted community currencies are based on the *Ithaca Hour* concept. (<http://www.ithacahours.org/>) The Ithaca Dollar is a paper currency tied to a \$10 per hour labor rate. This currency was conceived of by Paul Glover of Ithaca, N.Y. and was first issued in 1991. The acceptance of the *Ithaca Dollar* was very successful in the local area, and the concept has spread like wildfire.

*Ithaca Dollars*, and their sibling currencies have become the most widely accepted alternative currencies worldwide. Ithaca Dollars are accepted by the New York Alternatives Federal Credit Union, and it’s siblings are traded in Japan, Canada, Mexico, and many other countries.\*

\*<http://www.ithacahours.com/otherhours.html>

Ithaca Hours are financing local economic and social programs including: The Ithaca Health Fund, and the Whole Ithaca Stock Exchange. In early 2001 Ithaca Dollars were the subject of a one hour PBS documentary was "*How to Spend an HOUR.*" It was broadcast nationwide.

Ithaca’s Paul Glover offers an inexpensive *Hometown Money and Starter Kit* to communities interested in developing their own community currencies.\*

\*<http://www.lightlink.com/hours/ithacahours/starterkit.html>

To learn more about community currencies and alternative economics, investigate the following online resources.

LETS Systems - <http://www.gmlets.u-net.com/>

Global Exchange - <http://www.globalexchange.org/>

Liberty Dollar - silver & Gold backed currency - <http://www.libertydollar.org/>

Salt spring Island Dollars - <http://saltspring.gulfislands.com/money/welcome.htm>

Time Banks USA - <http://www.timebanks.org/>

Community Currencies Archives - [http://www.ratical.org/many\\_worlds/cc/](http://www.ratical.org/many_worlds/cc/)

## **Derailing the elite's institutions**

Opposition to the IMF, World Bank, WTO and the Federal Reserve has grown worldwide. Ordinary people uniting together have won major victories against the global elite. The elite-sponsored Free Trade Programs such as NAFTA, and the FTAA have suffered significant setbacks. The WTO debacles in Seattle and Cancun, and the Free Trade protests in Florida showed that the elite are not invincible. As expected, they retaliated with violence and repression. But the people stood bravely against them, and scored major victories. The birth of the Fair Trade Movement, and its meteoric growth in the third world, has caused the elite additional consternation.

The ruling elite understand that their plans are in jeopardy. This is why they are resorting to violence against dissenters. They are out of options, and have their backs against the wall. Add to this their dawning awareness of extreme vulnerability and dependence upon we, the “consumer” class.

Let's use the retail giant Walmart as an example. Walmart relays on the cheap, slave labor-produced goods of China and the third world. They refuse to pay living wages to their store employees, and are strongly antiunion. They also rely on illegal immigrant labor in the U.S. to handle the dangerous and dirty work that no one else will do. WalMart's politics and labor practices are clearly totalitarian, their connections to organized crime and the Red Chinese Army are self-evident. This has become a well know fact, and a number of WalMart boycotts have been very successful.

Boycotts are highly effective against elite-owned businesses. And there are other equally persuasive methods of opposition them as well: large organized protests and the reeducation of consumers are two of the most effective. Another we have already discussed for withdrawing from the elite's crooked economic systems, is to create community-based local economies to supply our needs.

Despite the excellent progress we are making: organized protests, boycotting, civil disobedience, and the development of community based economies, most of us are still vulnerable to, and dependent upon, traditional economic and financial systems—the same ones that empower the tyrants and support their institutions. It is in our best interests to withdraw our precious energy from the elite's parasitic economic systems, and begin to make the transition to economic self-reliance. By supporting the local alternate economies, we invest in our communities, and

participate in socially responsible capitalism

## **Natural Capitalism**

In the vast world of global economics and finance, three relatively new trends are gaining momentum and inertia; social responsibility, sustainable investment, and enlightened consumer purchasing power. These powerful tools are being used to redirect resources away from the war mongers, and then use the funds to support socially responsible, sustainably oriented companies and communities.

The concept that we can boycott the ruling elite and the corporations that support them is a potent strategy and a powerful source of leverage against their totalitarian policies. They are dependent upon these profits, and are deeply affected by the losses. On the other hand, the companies that we do support are empowered by our assistance.

As we begin to manage our money ethically and responsibly, we are in essence voting with our wallets and pocketbooks. Those companies that behave responsibly will thrive, those that do not will fail.

A leading proponent of sustainable investment is Hunter Lovins, founder of the Natural Capitalism Group and cofounder of the Rocky Mountain Institute.

Hunter has co-authored nine books including *Natural Capitalism*, and is the recipient of numerous prestigious awards, including *Time Magazine* "Hero for the Planet." She shared a 1982 Mitchell Prize, a 1983 Right Livelihood Award (the alternative Nobel Prize), the Nissan Prize at ISATA, and the Onassis Foundation's first Delphi Prize, which is one of the world's top environmental awards. Her Natural Capitalism Group ([www.natcapgroup.org/](http://www.natcapgroup.org/)) is dedicated to the promotion of sustainable, profitable business practices around the world, and consults with many award winning, sustainable, and socially responsible corporations.

I was fortunate to spend some time with Hunter in the Fall of 2003, during a sustainability conference I cofounded here in the San Juan Islands.\* We had a number of conversations about Natural Capitalism, and the necessity of using these concepts in transforming local communities. If you ever get to hear Hunter speak, do so. Her slide presentations are awesome!

<http://www.navigatingourfuture.org>

A key element of Hunter Lovins work involves the application of biomimicry as a sustainable business model. Biomimicry studies the workings of sustainable natural systems, and applies these mechanics to production and business models. It helps us learn how to solve social and technical problems by studying how nature has resolved similar challenges.

Nature has already found solutions to many of the problems we are presently struggling to resolve: food, water, and shelter within a limited habitat. As Hunter Lovins is fond of saying: "Natural systems that don't work... are recalled!"

## **Basic principals of Natural Capitalism - by Hunter Lovins**

1. Radically increasing resource efficiency is the first principle of Natural Capitalism. It offers not only increased profits, but also the solution to most of the environmental dilemmas facing the world today. It greatly slows depletion of resources at one end of the economic process, and the discharge of pollution at the other end. It creates profits from not having to pay for either and it also buys time, forestalling the threatened collapse of natural systems.”

2. Eliminate the concept of waste by redesigning the economy on biological lines that close the loops of materials flows;

3. Shift the structure of the economy from focusing on the processing of materials and the making of things to the creation of service and flow; so as to reward resource productivity and loop-closing.

4. Reverse the planetary destruction now underway with programs of restoration that invest in natural capital.

The principals of biomimicry are essential to the successful application of Natural Capitalism. Janine Benyus, author of *Biomimicry: Innovation Inspired by Nature* defines it as “. . . a new science that studies nature’s models and then imitates or takes inspiration from these designs and processes to solve human problems . . . ”

The following principals of biomimicry are listed on Janine Benyus’s excellent web site: [http:// www.biomimicry.org](http://www.biomimicry.org).

Operating principals of biomimicry in nature:

1. Nature runs on sunlight
2. Nature uses only the energy it needs
3. Nature fits form to function
4. Nature recycles everything
5. Nature rewards cooperation
6. Nature banks on diversity
7. Nature demands local diversity
8. Nature curbs excess from within
9. Nature conforms to limits

When nature is used as a template for sustainable business and community models, the results are dramatic, and innovation abounds. Nature is the best teacher we have. If we study her ways, and apply what we learn, we will find the solutions to our most pressing problems.

If we look with trepidation at today’s seemingly insurmountable problems, then our ability to address and solve these problems is undermined. But if we summon up courage, and have faith in our ability to tackle even the toughest challenges, then we are granted hope.

There are good reasons for us to turn our backs on pessimism, even in the face of opponents as venal and powerful as the global elite’s New World Order. The elite

are subject to the same spiritual laws as we are, and they have amassed horrendous karmic debt through their evil actions. Retribution is on the way, and they will be held accountable for all of their deeds.

It is our obligation to create the kind of world that we can be proud of. By applying the tools of sustainability, self-employment, local currencies, and natural economics in our communities, we are several steps closer to achieving our goals.

When the tyrants have been deposed, our sustainable communities will be the templates for planting a brilliant New World Orchard. By gathering these precious gems now, we will be ready when our time comes to lead.