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Reflective Summary of ?Spanish Green Economy Experience,? Dec10, 2013

These are some of my thoughts gleaned from our walk/ride/drive on our 35 day ?Camino Way Francis Walk/passage? across over 800kms of Spain from St-Jean Pied-de-port in the Pyrennes in France to Santiago de Compostela.

As I walked across Northern Spain I became increasingly aware of the social, environmental & economic impact of the **UN/EEC driven ?green-based policies & practices?** that are a dominating presence to me across this whole region.

In my view, in the Spanish government?s goal was/is to change a perceived dependence by humans on burning fossil-fuels. They falsely believe CO2 has a greenhouse/global warming/climate change effect. It is clear that an immense amount of money must have been borrowed for this purpose on projects. As CO2 is an essential ingredient in plant growth & the evidence of any man-caused influence is miniscule, I think there has been a gross misuse of the European money! The country must be indebted needlessly to Germany & other countries for generations to come. A recent media report said the country is over **a trillion Euros in debt** with little chance of repayment of the loan-money. Recently the Spanish Treasurer was jailed when he was found to have **58 million euros in his Swiss bank account**, so you can imagine the type of person in charge of the country?s finances. What are some of the policies and consequential damage to the environment, industry, economy & mostly wonderful people of this beautiful country that disturbed me most?

As we travelled across the country, observed the changing landscapes & conversed with many local residents, & local & foreign travellers we saw evidence constantly of heavy spending/investment in building **wind-farms, solar energy panels, and planting vast plantations of trees as key projects**. Likewise we saw, or crossed or used, **newly built high class rail & main highway roads, bridges & viaducts, airports, culture centres, (all built at great expense & variable quality)** etc. My impression is that the **wind-farms** (which can?t store electricity) are inconsistent in their operation. Recently I have read in a main-line media report on Spain that the govt is trying to recover some money from owners of the heavily subsidised solar panel owners with new taxes to help recover the huge loan money involved, much to their horror! (***There is, incidentally, mounting evidence world-wide that each year wind farms are killing at least a million birds. Another study of bats including NZ is that an estimated 660,000 were killed by wind-farms per annum. On 15th Nov an environmental agency in the USA reported in an issue of Re Wire that staff at a solar energy farm/plant documented mass insect (e.g. migratory Monarch butterflies & dragonflies) attracted by the panels but then caught in a ?Funnel Effect? on insectivorous & omnivorous birds, including many raptors which are in turn killed by the hot panels.***)

This is typical, I believe of the ill-considered consequences of such initially well-meaning efforts to save the planet.

I had read in the traveller's guide books that walkers could expect to encounter large areas planted in **eucalyptus trees** over the second half of the 800 kms walkway. This was absolutely true as from **Leon**, the trees dominated the landscape looking in all directions was conspicuous from there right to **Finnestere** on the west coast. Why have many millions of eucalyptus trees been planted rather than oaks or pine-trees? The idea is that as Eucalyptus are **hardwood trees so they qualify for double the carbon value credits!** The trees were also planted to help establish a pulp & paper industry (not a likely printable enterprise), timber industry (few mills or logs seen in transit), chemicals/oils for cosmetics, & to attract bird & animal life. We saw few birds or animals when we were walking through these vast areas of trees. There was one squirrel in a plantation though how it could survive without acorns which have been its traditional source of food is a mystery.

What I have found is that eucalyptus have been planted across vast areas of Spain, Portugal, California & many other countries. What have been the issues of concern apart from changing the landscapes dramatically? These trees are notorious for soaking up & storing ground-water leaving the ground very dry, producing lots of bark especially one of the dominant trees, **Nitens**. We saw millions of newly planted trees through to stands of giant trees with **deep layers of bark on the trunks & on the ground to walk over**. Many of these trees were planted close to dwellings, schools & other public buildings. What has already happened across Australia, California & other countries has been **very fierce fires & costly efforts to put them out**. I predict this will happen with huge personal, property & environmental damage across Europe & other parts of the world.

Spain has bought into the **EMS (Emissions Trading Scheme) cap & trade scheme** which puts a theoretical value on carbon which means CO₂ which has been demonised as a pollutant responsible for Global Warming/Climate Change & carbon locked into trees until they are either harvested or burned. For members of the EEC the price of carbon was set at circ 33 Euros (expecting to rise to 40-50 Euros) but was down to less than one Euro earlier this year after the govts stopped paying the huge subsidies for wind farms & solar panels! Businesses that own trees, currently can theoretically sell at 4.60 Euros per carbon ton to industrial burners of ?fossil-fuel? though there have been major scams, theft of millions of Euros, tax evasion & delays in pay-outs.

What we encountered across Spain were mostly depressed & poverty-ridden rural areas with occasional pockets of grandeur & upgrading of properties. We walked through a large town that had been built for rich owners and tourists but had been all but abandoned because there was no interest in occupying them. These towns had all the imaginable infrastructure golf courses, swimming pools, etc but virtually no residents & the weeds was growing up to the windowsills. In most cities we witnessed some of the 29% of distressed unemployed people marching around the streets waving placards & making a lot of noise. Recently there was better news with a 26% figure reported. I believe there was 50% unemployment for the youth of this country but is now 60%. In my opinion there has been a huge misappropriation of money that has left this country a mess for many years to come!

On 18th November Reuters reported a ?Fragile Spanish economy limped out of recession though the country's economic crisis looks far from over. GDP inched 0.1%

between July & Sept ending a two year slump. Spain's economy has been shrinking or close to flat since a decade long property burst in 2008, putting thousands of companies out of business and driving up an unemployment rate that has not dropped below 25% since spring 2012.?

We saw virtually no substantial industries, commerce or industrial traffic moving across Spain. We drove along three lane highways built to a very high standard with a speed limit up to 120kms but there were only a few cars & buses & rarely a truck. I/we felt much sympathy/empathy for the Spanish people we encountered though we noted a lack of trust towards visitors in the cities but not so much in the countryside & villages.

What are some of the lessons that we should learn from this experience? First of all, I see no merit for our country to adopt a dominantly 'green-economy' with all its costly, wasteful & unproductive policies & practices as witnessed by me in Spain but also across France, Britain, the Channels, England, Wales, Scotland, the Orkney Islands & Florida; which is highly likely from November next year when the election may well produce a Labour/Greens coalition. Meantime, we are constantly subjected to misinformation, green propaganda & lies from virtually all media...newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, internet, Green Party politicians, Green Peace, Generation 0, Flat-Earthers, WWF & similar radical organisations have pushed hard from all levels of the education system as we move relentlessly towards fully implemented Core Curriculum (National Standards in NZ) in schools & **the full implementation of the UN Agenda 21; especially over the next 15 years.**

What we need is a much stronger voice from the scientific, political, business, church & any surviving enlightened leaders in this country if we are not going to end up with, I think permanently damage to our still beautiful country, with basically sound economy but at risk nature and balanced use of our resources. Implementing a planned radical Green Economy, which is being under the increasing control of the UN, we will increasingly lose control of our sovereignty, social, economic & personal control of our destiny & that of our children & grandchildren. The best summary of this reality can be seen if one takes the trouble to read **Ian Wishart's** latest book *'Totalataria'*. Ian is one of the few Investigative journalists & writers that I have full faith & trust in his knowledge, understanding & advice. I couldn't be more complimentary & grateful for his efforts to educate & enlighten us all over many years now. **Leighton Smith** is to be congratulated on the down to earth, honest & common-sense angle he takes on controversial subjects such as the global warming scam. His book, *'Beyond the Microphone'* is a good read, too, I think. I do appreciate the sound messages one can read on **Climate Depot.co., Muriel Newman NZCPR.com, Amy Brooke's Claiming Back New Zealand & Climate Realist websites.**

Spain has been in the news because the more prosperous **Catalonia region** with its 7.5 million people has been demanding that the govt allow them to hold a referendum on separation because of the gross mismanagement of the economy by the state govt. Apparently there are 17 regions in Spain & some of the others would like separation too.

On December 11th the AFP news report from **Madrid** gave another typical example of how the state government has wasted money. *'A huge airport in central Spain that cost 1 billion euros (\$NZ1.65 billion) to build but has not received a commercial flight since 2011 has gone up for auction for just E100 million. With a runway long enough to land an Airbus 380, the world's largest airliner, & a capacity to handle 10 million passengers a year, the airport at Ciudad Real, some 200km south of Madrid, has become a symbol of Spain's real estate bubble. Spain's first private international airport operated its first flight in December 2008 but*

passenger traffic never took off & CR Aeropuertos, the operator of the terminal, went into bankruptcy with debts of about E300 million. Bidding will close on December 27, a spokesman for a commercial court in Ciudad Real which is overseeing its sale said.

Ciudad Real, a city of about 75,000 residents, located halfway between Madrid and Cordoba, attracts few visitors & the airport was designed to serve both the Spanish capital & the Andalusion coast, which are both less than an hour away by high speed rail.

Another private airport at Castellon, on the Mediterranean coast has fared even worse. It opened in March 2011 but has not handled a single flight.?

Now to switch back to New Zealand; I have a block of two hectares (5 acres) pine trees growing in the Greenhills block west of Gisborne under the management of Forest Enterprises & due to start being harvested in about 10 years. I was invited to go to Gisborne for a meeting with the professional management team, inspect the block of trees & to meet fellow owners on 10th November. This is the first time my wife & I have been to Gisborne &/or seen the trees. The forest is growing very well on erosion prone land. Plans are being made over roading & harvesting. The trees have a 'so-called' carbon value at present of NZUs-\$3.50 (was \$29) or ERUs-\$0.14 (Emissions Reduction Units) in the NZ carbon market. Our managers seem happy to use our few carbon credits to pay some of their costs but unless we withdraw from the scheme we may be liable for a hefty repayment tax at time of harvest. We are invited to go back to Gisborne for another inspection & meeting in 5 years. Meantime we note the slow & primitive loading of logs at Gisborne port that may need to be addressed by someone soon. We were also appalled to learn that the editor of the local newspaper is refusing to accept &/or publish any letter that isn't 'pro climate' change in nature. In light of my/our knowledge of the global warming scam & its total lack of truth & reality I feel very sad for the readers both in that district & across the rest of NZ.

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