

# Discover the Networks

## An Online Database of the Left and its Agendas, a Guide to the Political Left

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### Overview

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In April 1968, Italian industrialist Aurelio Peccei and Scottish scientist Alexander King [convened](#) a small international group of professionals from the fields of diplomacy, industry, academia, and civil society at a villa in Rome, Italy, to discuss their concerns regarding what they viewed as an alarming trend of “unlimited resource consumption” by industrialized nations. Thus was born The Club of Rome (COR) as an [independent](#), nonprofit organization committed to [finding](#) practical solutions to “the most crucial problems which will determine the future of humanity,” and to communicate those solutions to “decision-makers” in the public and private sectors.

COR members periodically address social and political issues by writing books that are [marketed](#) as “Reports to the Club of Rome.” From COR’s

founding through mid-2015, The Club released [33](#) of these reports. The first—published in 1972 under the title *The Limits to Growth*—was [commissioned](#) by COR to a group of systems scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Their task was to demonstrate “the contradiction of unlimited and unrestrained growth in material consumption in a world of clearly finite resources.” The book [concluded](#) that if the human population continued to grow and to become increasingly prosperous, it would place excessive burdens on the natural environment, resulting in a cataclysmic ecological collapse sometime within the ensuing 100 years. Selling more than 12 million copies in some 30 languages worldwide, COR’s highly influential book helped spawn the radical environmental movement in Europe and the United States.

In 1974 COR published its [second](#) report, titled *Mankind at the Turning Point*, which warned that in order to deal with “global problems” like overpopulation, food shortages, natural resource depletion, and environmental degradation, “now is the time to draw up a master plan for organic sustainable growth and world development based on global allocation of all finite resources and a new global economic system.”

Two years later COR [published](#) *Goals for Mankind*, proposing the creation of a “new global system”

wherein each nation in the world would be assigned responsibility for providing all other nations with a specific product or service—e.g., food, natural resources, manufacturing, financial services—so as to make all countries “highly interdependent” upon one another “for their common survival.”

In the 1980s COR aggressively [promoted](#) the concept of “[sustainability](#),” emphasizing “the interdependence of environment and economics.” The Club also broadened the scope of its work to include calls for increased public spending on education and social welfare programs.

In the '90s, COR [addressed](#) issues like global governance, cultural diversity, and the Digital Divide—a term connoting the unequal levels of access to information-and-communication [technologies](#) that exist in the co-called Global North and Global South.

A noteworthy COR [report](#) from this period was David Korten’s *When Corporations Rule the World* (1995), which examined the “the convergence of ideological, political, and technological forces that have driven an ever-greater concentration of economic and political power in a handful of corporations and financial institutions and [have] left the market system blind to all but its own short-term financial gains.” This anti-capitalist

book sold more than 150,000 copies and was translated into 20 languages.

With the advent of the 21st Century, COR's concerns about "rising global inequality" were augmented by reports in which the organization addressed "the consequences of climate change" and "unlimited consumption and growth on a planet with limited [natural] resources."

Describing itself as "a global catalyst for change," COR today prides itself on challenging numerous "underlying values, beliefs and paradigms" in its quest to promote "a new economy" and "alternative models of economic development" that: "produc[e] real wealth and wellbeing"; "provide everyone with purpose"; guarantee "meaningful jobs," and "sufficient income" for all people; "d[o] not degrade our natural resources"; are rooted in an "awareness of the increasing interdependence of nations"; "reduce the ecological foot-print per person, especially of carbon"; "decoupl[e] well-being from resource consumption"; "improve welfare systems"; "reduce inequality" by promoting the "redistribution of wealth everywhere"; "reduce consumption progressively in high-income countries"; "redistribute the work available in high-income countries"; and tightly "regulate the finance sector and trade."

While COR warns that “growth is unsustainable” over long periods of time, the organization refrains from openly advocating the purposeful shrinking of economies, [noting](#) that “de-growth is unstable.” Nevertheless, the “[Degrowth Movement](#)” which [developed](#) in Europe during the first decade of the 21st century was deeply influenced by COR’s philosophy.

In [2015](#) COR praised [Pope Francis’s papal encyclical](#) on the environment, a document replete with anti-capitalist themes and dire warnings about the dangers of anthropogenic “climate change.” While COR vice president [Roberto Peccei](#) proudly noted that the pope’s encyclical “makes points that are indistinguishable from those that The Club of Rome has been making for years,” COR [boasted](#) that, “like the Vatican,” its objective was “to solve our climate problems and build a fairer society” by placing “nature ... before economics and short-term profit.” To achieve this type of “fundamental change,” said COR, “politicians need to do what they are elected to do—which means regulate, especially emissions and the finance sector.”

For additional information on COR, [click here](#).