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In a dark time the eye begins to see
~Theodore Roethke

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THE WAR ON TAXISM

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"I've killed more people than (Unabomber Ted) Kaczynski because I've been paying a lot of taxes the past fifteen years, and he hasn't."

~EXENE CERVENKA (Lead Singer Punk Band X)

American history boiled to the bone might be encapsulated as war and money rather than about rights, liberties and equality — and the reduction might be further compressed if it is argued that the wars have all been fought for money, which would reconfigure the pursuit of wealth as the total fabric of the USA's 'Manifest Destiny'.

This perspective of history is obviously an injustice to those who have struggled and often been jailed, bled or died for the larger beliefs relevant in the Bill of Rights. Yet the very fact of the intensity of the strife for equity and justice within our own Constitution gives legitimacy to the claim that for the powerful elite money is the only mainspring of the nation's history.

If indeed this narrow view of history has any credence, it must be realized that a select few have from the very beginning profited from the collective effort of the many. In this context the term freedom is misapplied — both politically and economically; "free enterprise" is a misnomer, for the fact that throughout the country's 226 year history the wealthiest Americans have for the most part accumulated and maintained their wealth at government expense — essentially through sales and subsidies, which can also be defined as the blood and taxes of the majority who generally make possible but seldom share in the abundance.

Newt Gingrich, if anyone remembers him, used to say "the engine that pulls the train must be refueled." By that he meant the New Tories of wealth and business should not share tax obligations with the common folk. "Affluent taxpayers must receive breaks because they invest money and create jobs for others," Newt explained disingenuously — as if it hadn't been said before.

In reality those "affluent taxpayers" rarely invest in anything except their own stock portfolios, and they not only do not pay their fair share of taxes, they gorge on public money which people like Gingrich and the current President G.W. Bush call welfare when it is distributed among the poor and investment when extorted by the rich. At the same time our political lords cut off welfare to single mothers and downsize workers they initiate special tax breaks to favored corporations that amount to billions of dollars. They cut the taxes of Big Business (which invests a portion into the welfare of favored politicians) and the rich (who are shareholders in most of these same corporations) and spoil them with billions more in subsidies they claim are essential to the free market, which is regarded as a natural force. Public services and poverty programs are gutted to make up the shortfall. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer because the poor subsidize the rich. That is national tax policy.

Corporations are, after all, inherently socialist rather than capitalist. Big business does not compete for sheer love of competition in an unfettered emporium of commerce, which is the myth of capitalism. The almighty free market is in truth the savage battleground to dominate the American economy in the bitter ruthless goal of winner take all.

The New Tories quote Jefferson, twist him into a *laissez faire* philosopher. (Gingrich again: "When Jefferson said 'Every generation needs a revolution' he wasn't making an argument for chaos. He was making an argument for the creative replacement of the old order with a new order.")

But old Tom's intent was to replace a repressive and corrupt colonial government with a truly revolutionary guarantee of power to the people. The New Tories' purpose is to return the USA to the vertically organized and patronage dominated 18th century that the American and French revolutions blew asunder. Attempting to reestablish an old order of privilege and power based on wealth and property in this new millennium runs counter to Thomas Paine's vision of a decent and happy life for ordinary Americans who are assumed to be rulers rather than ruled.

The plutocrats who control the major corporations claim the economy defines the nation more than its ideology: money, they say, is the nation's ideology. What they mean by their strict definition of the "economy" is their own personal domination of the national wealth. In theory, everybody has an equal chance to make a buck and live the American Dream, but of course some are more equal than others. Narrow monetary policies that singularly benefit the upper layers of society draw money from less well-off levels which keeps them less well-off and always under pressure to pay what is demanded. Releasing public money (most of it pried from middle-class and blue collar labor) to business and the wealthy elite is considered sound investment and essential to the economy. Providing public funds to the poor is regarded as uneconomical and a severe drain on the national treasury.

Corporate culture is conditioned by commercial and public falsehoods that coerce the people to buy and pledge allegiance to America Inc., which transform the American public from a democratic citizenry responsible for its rights, liberties and pursuit of justice and equality to pre-adolescently avaricious consumers for whom only money and material possessions count. (Ralph Nader says that a civic culture has been swarmed over by a corporate culture.)

The pattern of corporate dominance is as true for the USA today as it was for the Nazis and Fascists early in the 20th century: wage slashes and huge government subsidies and tax cuts. The Nazis and Fascists maintained their grip on power by enriching their industrial patrons while tyrannizing the populaces of their nations.

Corporations receive rebates on taxes they never paid, and resent government "intrusion" into their affairs, criticizing regulations regarding their methods of business; however they do not think government tax breaks or subsidies should be curtailed.

The rupture between corporate profit and national economic growth is seen in the dependence of the private sector's profits in looting the public treasury, pillaging the natural environment and reducing social services instead of developing new technology and enlarging markets through expansion of goods and services. Hundreds of millions of dollars are appropriated from important areas like health care and housing. The private plunder of the public domain extends to natural resources — land, seabeds and timber are stripped or despoiled without regard for longterm consequences.

Eliminating millions of laid-off workers from employment necessitates huge welfare costs which the wealthy who eliminate the jobs are not paying, leaving it up to already overburdened middle and working class taxpayers to pay.

The U.S. gloats in its reigning superpower status and acts in the old Roman way, inflicting its immense capacity for war upon the world, which is its main offering to the New World Order. But it is a defective colossus. Its economy is coming undone, the imperial fabric tearing apart due to its own internal rapacity and the hundreds of billions of dollars of public money wasted on the military at the expense of its own internal civic disintegration in the holy names of Defense, National Security and now this new War on Terrorism, which must be paid for. Taxes will be raised from the humble and underfed, more money will be looted from already prostrate social programs, and heavy borrowing from other more cash-fattened nations will probably be essential to prop up and replenish our hugely expensive military machine.

The domestic decline of the United States is primarily the responsibility of the armed might that has bestowed its celebrated victories, the military/industrial complex that one of its most fortunate and celebrated benefactors, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, warned the nation about when he left office four decades ago. This giant interlocking mafia of corporations and the military machine they built fashioned an American overseas empire. The nation was itself created and forged by war and an insatiable appetite for military power. "War is the ultimate form of economic competition," Brooks Adams wrote at the beginning of America's reach for global supremacy.

But the Pentagon's bloated budget has soared to a huge black hole into which everything is eventually drawn and disappears, such as the nation's wealth and resources, with neither replaced. Now, at the start of the 21st century, amidst the flaring testosterone of a new war and claims that it justifies the huge new \$72 billion budget, the largest raise in two decades, the infrastructure of American society has declined further and ever larger numbers of the nation's useful citizens sink into poverty.

The malign neglect of the huge and growing underclass that lives abandoned and without hope in the nation's crumbling inner cities and impoverished rural areas will eventually ravage the society more than foreign terrorists can ever hope to achieve and will certainly give rise to domestic terrorism if only for the purposes of survival.

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