

POSTMORTEM, from page 8

functions, when normal mechanisms for change are shut down, then you vomit up figures like Slobodan Milosevic or Hitler. Tea Party figures provide an emotional consistency but their political agenda is utterly irrational. They want to dismantle government and yet don't want to touch the military, the part of the government that consumes more than 50 percent of discretionary spending.

They have a great deal of rage, which is legitimate because they have been betrayed by establishment figures like Bill Clinton and Barack Obama. And that rage is also effectively used by the demagogues to target weak scapegoats, which always happens, so they demonize Muslims [and] undocumented workers [and] funnel that rage away from Wall Street and the criminal class that manage our financial institutions.

Although we live in a period of relative stability that will change if we don't radically alter our economic and political policies, especially the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, for which we're borrowing from the Chinese at the absurd rate of \$2 billion per day to fund. If that doesn't change, we're playing with an implosion of our currency, and if that happens and we enter a period of instability or crisis, we're no more immune from the effects of breakdown than were the Yugoslavs or the Germans or the Russians or anyone else. And then it becomes very frightening.

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R.L.: Like journalist Jeremy Scahill, you also see growing privatization of traditional government functions as part of a corporate class takeover.

C.H.: Yes, they've hollowed the state out from the inside, and now they're gunning for social security. They're parasitic. A corporation like Halliburton is a classic example. It is a creature of taxpayer money and its stock has quadrupled since the start of the war in Iraq, and yet most of its subsidiaries are set up in Dubai so they don't have to pay taxes. Corporations are supranational: they're quite happy to destroy the state as they've destroyed our manufacturing sector, to leech off the state in terms of sucking taxpayer money out of it. Goldman Sachs and Citibank and Wall Street investors have done (this), then refused to invest that money back into the country. That's what has happened: a reconfiguring of American capitalism into a very frightening feudalism.

R.L.: In "Death of the Liberal Class," you date a takeover by corporate power and a state of perpetual war to the era of Woodrow Wilson and World War I.

C.H.: That's the seminal moment when the massive reconfiguration of American society begins. The first system of modern mass propaganda was created during World War I under the Committee for Public Information headed by George Creel. It employed the understanding of mass psychology pioneered by Trotter, Le Bon and Freud that grasped that people are manipulated more effectively by appeals to emotion rather than fact or reason.

The Committee for Public Information had a news division that churned out pro-war stories, a speakers' bureau and graphic artists [that] saturated the culture. It was very closely studied by Goebbels (Hitler's propaganda minister). It seduced most of

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the country, including a lot of the leading socialist intellectuals. Randolph Bourne and Jane Addams wrote quite movingly on how effective that propaganda was, and how few people were able to resist. Those who did resist were silenced with a cruder form of state control under the Espionage and Sedition Acts.

Once the war was over, the effective psychological manipulation continued, so the dreaded Hun was instantly replaced with the dreaded Red. The Espionage and Sedition Acts were used to deport Emma Goldman and others. The climate of fear, the search for the internal enemy, the constant witch hunts for the communist sympathizers never left American society.

Dwight MacDonald writes that World War I "was the rock on which progressive movements broke."

So we saw a dismantling of populist radical movements, and an internal purging within traditional liberal institutions. It was the radical movements that kept the liberals honest.

Those radical movements, certainly after the witch hunts of the 1950s, were destroyed, and the liberal institutions pushed out thousands of people — teachers, social workers, professors, journalists — who weren't affiliated with the Communist party but had a moral autonomy that was unacceptable. With the rise of neo-liberalism, under Clinton in particular, these liberal institutions didn't fight back or withered as effective counterweights to power.

R.L.: You mentioned the press as a dying liberal institution. Why did you leave *The New York Times*?

C.H.: Because I was very outspoken against the Iraq War, and that became a

public issue after I gave a commencement address at Rockford College that was picked up by Fox and all the trash cable shows. *The Times* responded by giving me a formal written reprimand saying that I could no longer speak about the war in Iraq. I had a choice: I could muzzle myself in service of my career, which I was unwilling to do, and (so) I left the paper.

R.L.: What are your political beliefs?

C.H.: I believe in heavy taxation, heavy regulation. Without heavy government interference in a capitalist society, it descends into a mafia political system and a mafia economic system, which is pretty much what's happened. I'm a European

socialist, not a Marxist. And I'm not an anti-capitalist. I'm anti-corporate capitalism, and if you don't set up huge barriers to protect against corporate capitalism, it becomes predatory and will destroy your country.

R.L.: You foresee not only the end of democracy but the environmental ruin of civilization as we know it.

C.H.: Of course. The commodification of human beings, which is what corporations do, is matched by a commodification of the natural world. Nothing has an intrinsic value; everything is exploited for money or profit until exhaustion or collapse, and that's why the environmental crisis is intimately twinned with the economic crisis.

R.L.: Your prognosis for American democracy is bleak, but you find hope in the stories of figures such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Ralph Nader, journalists Sydney Schanberg and I.F. Stone, historian Howard Zinn, and [Catholic social activist] Dorothy Day.

C.H.: Hope comes from physical actions: resistance or rebellion. It's not going to come from placing our faith in bankrupt liberal institutions. All those people you mentioned are essentially American radicals who understood that. We don't have a progressive wing of the Democratic Party that has any power or influence. Labor unions are spent. Liberal churches are irrelevant. Universities and the press have been corporatized.

So it's incumbent upon those of us who care about protecting what's left of civil society to recognize that hope comes in physical acts of resistance. If we're not willing to do that, hope is extinguished.

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