

## Death of the Liberal Class

Anger and Betrayal: these are what millions of disenfranchised Americans express. These emotions spring from the failure of the liberal class over three decades to protect the minimal interests of the working class and the middle class (p6), as corporations dismantled the democratic state, decimated the manufacturing sector, looted the U.S. Treasury, waged imperial wars, and gutted the basic laws that protected the interests of ordinary citizens (p6).

Classic liberalism has four principle features, or perspectives which give it a recognisable identity: it is individualist, in that it asserts the moral primacy of the person against any collectivity; egalitarian, in that it confers on all human beings the same basic moral status; universalist, affirming the moral unity of the species; and meliorist, in that it asserts the open-ended improvability, but use of critical reason, of human life (p7).

The liberal era, which flourished in the later part of the nineteenth century, and the early years of the twentieth, was characterized by the growth of mass movements and social reforms that addressed working conditions in factories, the organising of labour unions, women's rights, universal education, housing for the poor, public health campaigns, and socialism (p7).

Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, put in place only when the capitalist system collapsed, was the final gasp of classical liberalism in the United States. The New Deal reforms, however, were systematically dismantled in the years after world war II, often with the assistance of the liberal class (p7).

A mutant outgrowth of the liberal class emerged after World War I in the United States. This brand of liberalism, fearful of being seen as soft on communism, struggled to find its place in contemporary culture as its stated value systems became increasingly at odds with increased state control, the disempowerment of workers, and the growth of a massive military industrial complex (p8).

By the time Cold War liberalism shifted into a liberal embrace of globalization, imperial expansion, and unfettered capitalism, the ideas that were part of classical liberalism no longer characterized the liberal class (p8).

The liberal class, cornered and weak, engaged in the politically safe game of attacking the barbarism of communism rather than attempting to fight the mounting injustices and structural abuses of the corporate state (p8).

The anemic liberal class continues to assert, that human freedom and equality can be achieved through the charade of electoral politics and constitutional reform. Law has become, perhaps, the last idealistic refuge of the liberal class (p8).

In a traditional democracy, the liberal class functions as a safety valve. It makes piecemeal and incremental reform possible. It offers hope for change and proposes gradual steps towards equality. It endows the state and the mechanisms of power and the state with virtue. It also serves as an attack dog that discredits radical social movements, making the liberal class a useful component within the power elite (p9).

But the assault by the corporate state on the democratic state has claimed the liberal class as one of its victims. Corporate power forgot that the liberal class, when it functions, give legitimacy to the power elite. And reducing the liberal class to courtiers or mandarins, who have nothing to offer but empty rhetoric, shuts off this safety valve and forces discontent to find other outlets that often end in violence (p9).

The inability of the liberal class to acknowledge that corporations have wrested power from the hands of citizens, that the Constitution and its guarantees of personal liberty have become irrelevant, and that t

he phrase consent of the governed is meaningless, has left it speaking and acting in ways that no longer correspond with reality (p9). It has lent its voice to hollow acts of political theater, and the pretense that democratic debate and choice continue to exist (p9).

The liberal class refuses to recognize the obvious because it doesn't want to lose its comfortable and often well-paid perch. Churches and universities enjoy tax exempt status as long as they refrain from overt political critiques (p10).

Labour leaders make lavish salaries and are considered junior partners within corporate capitalism as long as they do not speak in the language of class struggle. Politicians, like generals, are loyal to the demands of the corporate state in power and retire to become millionaires as lobbyists or corporate managers (p10).

Artists who use their talents to foster the myths and illusions that bombard our society live comfortably in the Hollywood hills. The media, the church, the university, the Democratic Party, the arts, and labour unions - the pillars of the liberal class - have been bought off with corporate money and promises of scraps tossed to them by the narrow circles of power (p10).

The media, catering to corporate advertisers and sponsors, at the same time renders invisible whole sections of the population whose misery, poverty, and grievances should be the principle focus of journalism (p10).

Christian heretics acculturate the Christian religion with the worst aspects of consumerism, nationalism, greed, imperial hubris, violence and bigotry. Years spent in seminary or rabbinical schools, years devoted to the study of ethics, justice and morality, prove useless when it comes time to stand up to corporate forces that usurp religious and moral language for financial and political gain (p10).

Universities no longer train students to think critically, to examine and critique systems of power and cultural and political assumptions - to ask the broad questions of meaning and morality once sustained by the humanities. These institutions have transformed themselves into vocational schools. They have become breeding grounds for systems managers trained to serve the corporate state (p11).

These universities, like the media and religious institutions, not only remain silent about corporate power but also condemn as "political" all within their walls who question corporate malfeasance and the excesses of unfettered capitalism (p11).

Unions, organizations formerly steeped in the doctrine of class struggle and filled with members who sought broad social and political rights for the working class, have been transformed into domesticated negotiators with the capitalist class (p11).

The social demands of unions in the early twentieth century that gave the working class weekends off, the right to strike, the eight-hour workday, and social security, have been abandoned. Universities, especially in political science and economic departments, parrot the discredited ideology of unregulated capitalism and have no new ideas (p11).

The arts, just as hungry as the media or the academy for corporate money and sponsorship, refuse to address the social and economic disparities that create suffering for tens of millions of citizens. Commercial artists peddle the mythical narrative, one propagated by corporations, self-help gurus, Oprah and the Christian Right, that if we dig deep enough within ourselves, focus on happiness, find our inner strength, or believe in miracles, we can have everything we desire (p11).

Such magical thinking, a staple of the entertainment industry blinds citizens to corporate structures that have made it impossible for families to lift themselves out of poverty or live with dignity. But perhaps the worst offender within the liberal class is the Democratic Party (p11).

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The party consciously sold out the working class for corporate money. Bill Clinton, who argued that labour had nowhere else to go passed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which betrayed the working class (p12).

He went on to destroy welfare and in 1999 he ripped down the firewalls between commercial and investment banking, and turned the banking system over to speculators. Barack Obama, who raised more than 600 million dollars to run for president served corporate interests just as assiduously as his party. He continued the looting of the U.S Treasury by corporations, refused to help the millions of Americans who have lost their homes because of bank repossessions and foreclosures, and has failed to address the misery of our permanent class of unemployed (p12).

Populations will endure the prepression of tyrants, as long as the rulers continue to manage and wield power effectively. But human history has demonstrated that once those in positions of power become redundant or impotent, yet insist on retaining the trappings and privileges of power, their subject populations will brutally discard them (p12).

Such a fate awaits the liberal class, which insists on clinging to its positions of privilege while at the same time refusing to play its traditional role within the democratic state (p12).

The liberal class has become a useless and despised appendage of corporate power. And as corporate power pollutes and poisons the ecosystem and propels us into a world where there will be only masters and serfs, the liberal class, which serves no purpose in the new configuration, is being abandoned and discarded (p12).

The death of the liberal class means there is no check to a corporate apparatus designed to enrich a tiny elite and plunder the nation. An ineffectual liberal class means there is no hope, however remote, of a correction or a reversal. It ensures that the frustration and anger among the working and middle classes will find expression outside the confines of democratic institutions and the civilities of liberal democracy (p12).

In killing off the liberal class, the corporate state, in its zealous pursuit of profit has killed off its most integral and important partner. The liberal class once ensured that restive citizens could settle for moderate reforms. The corporate state, by shutting down reform mechanisms, has created a closed system defined by polarization, gridlock, and political theater (p12).

It has removed the veneer of virtue and goodness provided by the liberal class. The collapse of past constitutional states, whether in Weimar Germany or the former Yugoslavia, was also presaged by the death of the liberal class (p13).

It opens the door to totalitarian movements that rise to prominence by ridiculing and taunting the liberal class and the values it claims to champion. The promises of these totalitarian movements are fantastic and unrealistic but their critiques of the liberal class are grounded in truth (p13).

Liberals have historically discredited radicals within American society who have defied corporate capitalism and continued to speak the language of class warfare. The fate of the liberal class is tragic. It has been annihilated by the corporate state it supported, while it willingly silenced radical thinkers and iconoclasts who could have rescued it (p13).

By refusing to question the utopian promises of unfettered capitalism and globalization, and by condemning those who did, the liberal class severed itself from the roots of creative and bold thought, from the only forces that could have prevented it from being subsumed completely by the power elite (p13).

The death of the liberal class means a new and terrifying political configuration. It permits the corporate state to demolish, without impediment, the last vestiges of protection put in place by the liberal class. Hedges, Chris (2010). *Death of the Liberal Class*. Nation Books, New York.

Employees in public sector unions are denounced for holding “Cadillac health plans” and generous retirement benefits. Teachers unions in California and New Jersey are attacked by corporate pundits and politicians who portray teachers as parasites thriving at taxpayer expense (p13).

The increasing restrictions imposed on public-sector employees, are draconian and illustrate the corporate state’s final attack on unionized workers. In turn, labour organizations facilitate the disempowerment and impoverishment of workers (p13).

The liberal class cannot reform itself, it does not hold within its ranks the rebels and iconoclasts with the moral or physical courage to defy the corporate state and power elite. The corporate forces that sustain the media, unions, universities, religious institutions, the arts and the democratic party oversaw the removal of all those who challenged corporatism and unfettered capitalism (p14).

By the 1980s, political philosophers such as Sheldon Wolin, who attacked the rise of the corporate state, were no longer printed in publications such as the New York Review of Books or the New York Times. Radical clerics such as Father Daniel Berrigan spent the latter part of their careers harassed by church authorities. Economists, such as Michael Hudson, who attacked the financial bubble and system of casino capitalism, had difficulty finding academic employment (p14).

Those left in these institutions lack the vision and fortitude to challenge dominant free-market ideologies. They have no ideological alternatives, even as the democratic party openly betrays every principle the liberal class claims to espouse: nonprofit healthcare; an end to our permanent war economy; high quality, affordable public education; a return to civil liberties; jobs and welfare for the working class (p14).

Since the presidency of Ronald Reagan, the corporate state has put the liberal class on a death march. Liberals did not protest the stripping away of the country’s manufacturing base, the dismantling of regulatory agencies, and the destruction of social service programs (p14).

Liberals did not decry speculators, who in the seventeenth century would have been hanged, as they hijacked the economy. Liberals retreated into atrophied institutions. They busied themselves with the boutique activism of political correctness (p14).

The liberal class was eventually forced in this death march to turn itself inside out, championing positions it previously condemned. That it did so with almost no protest exposed its moral bankruptcy (p14).

The left once dismissed the market as exploitative. It now honors the market as rational and humane. The left once disdained mass culture as exploitative, now it celebrates it as rebellious. The left once honored independent intellectuals as courageous; now it sneers at them as elitist. The left once rejected pluralism as superficial; now it worships it as profound. We are witnessing not simply a defeat of the left, but its conversion and perhaps inversion (p15).

The greatest sin of the liberal class, throughout the twentieth century and into the early part of this century, has been its enthusiastic collusion with the power elite to silence, bank, and blacklist rebels, iconoclasts, communists, socialists, anarchists, radical union leaders, and pacifists who once could have given the working class the words and ideas with which to battle back against the abuses of the corporate state (p15).

The repeated “anti-Red” purges of the twentieth century United States, during and after both world wars were carried out in the name of anti-communism, but in reality proved to be devastating blows to popular social movements (p15).

The old communists in the American labour movement spoke in the language of class struggle. They understood that Wall Street, along with corporations such as BP, is the enemy. They offered a broad Hedges, Chris (2010). *Death of the Liberal Class*. Nation Books, New York.

social vision that allowed even the non-communist left to employ a vocabulary that made sense of the destructive impulses of capitalism (p15).

But once the communist party, along with other radical movements, was eradicated as a social and political force in the 1940s and 1950s, the country was robbed of the ability to make sense of the struggle with the corporate state (p15).

The liberal class became fearful, timid and ineffectual. It lost its voice. It became part of the corporate structure it should have been dismantling. It created an ideological vacuum on the left and ceded the language of rebellion to the far right (p15).

Capitalism was once viewed by workers as a system to be fought. But capitalism is no longer challenged. Capitalist bosses, men such as Warren Buffet, George Soros, and Donald Trump, are treated as sages, celebrities and populists. The liberal class functions as their cheerleaders (p15).

Such misguided loyalty ignores the fact that the divide in America is not between Republican and Democrat. It is a divide between the corporate state and the citizen. It is a divide between capitalism and workers. And for all the failings of the communists, they got that (p16).

Fear is a potent weapon in the hands of the power elite. The fear of communism, like the fear of Islamic terrorism, was used to suspend civil liberties, including freedom of speech, habeas corpus, and the right to organize - values the liberal class claims to support (p16).

In the name of anticommunism, the capitalist class, terrified of the numerous labour strikes following World War II, rammed through the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947, culminating with the congressional override of President Harry Truman's veto (p16).

It was the most destructive legislative blow to the working class until NAFTA. It was fear that in 2001 allowed the state to push through the Patriot Act, practice extraordinary rendition, and establish offshore penal colonies where we tortured detainees stripped of their rights (p16).

Fear led us to embrace the endless wars in the middle east. Fear allowed us to stand meekly by as Wall Street helped itself to billions of taxpayer dollars. The timidity of the liberal class leaves it especially prone to manipulation (p16).

The organs of mass propaganda used by the power elite to make us afraid employ the talents of artists and intellectuals who come from the liberal class (p16).

The robber barons of the late nineteenth century turned to police, guards, vigilantes and thugs to beat up the opposition. The work of justifying corporate power is now carried out by the college-educated elite, drawn from the liberal class, who manufacture mass propaganda (p16).

The role of the liberal class in creating these sophisticated systems of manipulation has given liberals a financial stake in corporate dominance. It is from the liberal class that we get advertising, brands and mass-produced entertainment that keep us trapped in cultural and political illusions (p16).

And the complicity of the liberal class, cemented by the corporate salaries the members of that class earn, has sapped intellectual and moral independence. It is one of the great ironies of corporate control that the corporate state needs the abilities of intellectuals to maintain power, yet outside of this role it refuses to permit intellectuals to think or function independently (p16).

The idea of the intellectual vocation, the idea of a life dedicated to values that cannot possibly be realized by a commercial civilization, has gradually lost its allure. And it is this, rather than the abandonment of a particular program, which constitutes our rout (p17).

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The belief that capitalism is the unassailable engine of human progress is trumpeted through every medium of communication, official propaganda, institutional advising and scholarly writings of people until a few years ago were its major opponents (p17).

The truly powerless people are those intellectuals - the new realists - who attach themselves to the seats of power where they surrender their freedom of expression without gaining any significance as political figures (p17).

For it is crucial to the history of the American intellectuals that whenever they become absorbed into the accredited institutions of society they not only lose their traditional rebelliousness, but to one extent or another they cease to function as intellectuals (p17).

Hope will come with the return of the language of class conflict and rebellion, language that has been purged from the lexicon of the liberal class. This does not mean we have to agree with Karl Marx, who advocated violence and whose worship of the state as a utopian mechanism led to another form of working class enslavement, but we have to learn to speak again in the vocabulary Marx employed (p17).

We have to grasp, as Marx and Adam Smith did, that corporations are not concerned with the common good. They exploit, pollute, impoverish, repress, kill and lie to make money. They throw poor families out of homes, let the uninsured die, wage useless wars to make profits, poison and pollute the ecosystem, slash social assistance programs, gut public education, trash the economy, plunder the US Treasury and crush all popular movements that seek justice for working men and women (p17).

They worship money and power. And as Karl Marx knew, unfettered capitalism is a revolutionary force that consumes greater and greater numbers of human lives until it finally consumes itself. In the late nineteenth century, Fyodor Dostoyevsky saw Russia's useless liberal class, which he starved and excoriated, as presaging a period of blood and terror (p18).

In novels such as *Demons*, he wrote about the impotence and disconnection of the liberal class, the failure of the liberals to defend the ideas they espoused, led to an age of moral nihilism. In *Notes from Underground* he portrayed the sterile, defeated dreamers of the liberal class, those who held up high ideals but did nothing to defend them (p18).

The main character in *Notes from Underground* carries the bankrupt ideas of liberalism to their logical extreme. He eschews passion and moral purpose. He is rational. He accommodates a corrupt and dying power structure in the name of liberal ideals (p18).

The hypocrisy of the underground man dooms imperial Russia as it now dooms the American empire, It is the fatal disconnect between belief and action (p18).

## Permanent War

Since the end of World War I, the United States has devoted staggering resources and money to battling real and imagined enemies. It turned the engines of the state over to a massive war and security apparatus (p19).

These battles, which have created an Orwellian state illusion of permanent war, neutered all opposition to corporate power and the tepid reforms of the liberal class. The liberal class, fearful of being branded as soft or unpatriotic in the Cold War, willingly joined the state's campaign to crush popular and radical movements in the name of national security (p19).

Permanent war is the most effective mechanism used by the power elite to stifle reform and muzzle dissent. A state of war demands greater secrecy, constant vigilance and suspicion. It generates distrust and fear, especially in culture and art, often reducing it to silence or nationalistic cant (p19).

It degrades and corrupts education and the media. It wrecks the economy. It nullifies public opinion. And it forces liberal institutions to sacrifice their beliefs for a holy crusade, a kind of surrogate religion, whether it is against the Hun, the Bolshevik, the fascist, the communist or the Islamic terrorist (p19).

The liberal class in a state of permanent war is rendered impotent. The liberal class had mistakenly placed its hopes for human progress in the state. This was a huge error. The state, once the repository of hope for the liberal class and many progressives, devoured its children in America as well as the Soviet Union (p20).

And the magic elixir, the potent opiate that rendered a population passive and willing to be stripped of power, was a state of permanent war. The political uses of the ideology of perpetual war eluded the theorists behind the nineteenth and early twentieth century reform and social movements, including Karl Marx (p20).

The reformists limited their focus to internal class struggle and never worked out an adequate theory of the political significance of war. Until that gap is filled, modern socialism will continue to have a somewhat academic flavor (p20).

The collapse of liberalism, whether in imperial Russia, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Weimar Germany, the former Yugoslavia or the United States, was intimately tied to the rise of a culture of permanent war. Within such a culture, exploitation and violence, even against citizens, are justified to protect the nation (p20).

The chant for war comes in a variety of slogans, languages and ideologies. It can manifest itself in fascist salutes, communist show trials, campaigns of ethnic cleansing, or Christian crusades. It's all the same. It is a crude, terrifying state repression by the power elite and the mediocrities in the liberal class who serve them, in the name of national security (p20).

It was a decline into permanent war, not Islam, that killed the liberal, democratic movements in the Arab world, movements that held great promise in the early part of the twentieth century in countries such as Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Iran. The same prolonged state of permanent war killed the liberal classes in Israel and the United States (p20).

Permanent war, which reduces all to speaking in the simplified language of nationalism, is a disease. It strips citizens of rights. It reduces all communication to a patriotic cant. It empowers those who profit from the state in the name of war. And it corrodes and diminishes democratic debate and institutions (p20).

“War”, Randolph Bourne remarked, “is the health of the state”. US military spending, which consumes half of all discretionary spending, has had a profound social and political cost. Bridges and levees collapse. Schools decay. Domestic manufacturing declines. Trillions in debt threaten the viability of the currency and the economy. The poor, the mentally ill, the sick, and the unemployed are abandoned (p21).

Human suffering is the price for victory, which is never finally defined or attainable. The corporations that profit from permanent war need us to be afraid. Fear stops us from objecting to government spending on a bloated military. Fear means we will not ask unpleasant questions of those in power (p21).

The imposition of fear ensures that the corporations that wrecked the country cannot be challenged. Fear keeps us penned in like livestock. Dick Cheney and George W. Bush may be palpably evil while Obama was merely weak, but to those who seek to keep us in a state of permanent war, such distinctions do not matter. The liberal class, like Dostoyevsky’s Underground Man, can no longer influence a society in a state of permanent war and retreats into its sheltered enclaves, where its members can continue to worship themselves (p21).

The corridors of liberal institutions are filled with underground men and women. They decry the social chaos for which they bear responsibility, but do nothing. They nurse an internal bitterness and mounting distaste for the wider society. And, because of their self-righteousness, elitism and hypocrisy, they are despised (p21).

The institutional church, when it does speak, mutters pious non-statements. It seeks to protect its vision of itself as a moral voice and yet avoids genuine confrontations with the power elite. It speaks in a language filled with moral platitudes (p21).

The US conference of Catholic Bishops assured believers that God would not object if they supported the war. The National Council of Churches, which represents thirty-six different faith groups did not condemn the war (p22).

A Gallup Poll in 2006 found that “the more frequently an American attends Church, the less likely he or she is to say that the war was a mistake”. Given that Jesus was a pacifist, and given that all of us who graduated from seminary rigorously studied just war doctrine, a doctrine flagrantly violated by the invasion of Iraq, this is startling (p22).

The attraction of the right wing, and the war-makers is that they appear to have the courage of their convictions (p22). These zealots have little left to lose, we made sure of that. And the violence they inflict is an expression of the economic and institutional violence they endure (p22).

These movements are not yet full-blown fascist movements. They do not openly call for the extermination of ethnic or religious groups. They do not openly advocate violence. But in Germany there was a yearning for fascism before fascism was invented. This is the yearning that we now see, and it is dangerous (p23).

Societies that do not reincorporate the unemployed and the poor into the economy, giving them jobs and relief from crippling debt, become subject to the hysterical mass quest for ecstatic deliverance in unreason. The nascent racism and violence leaping up around the edges of US society could become a full-blown conflagration (p23).

Attempts by the liberal class to create a more civil society, to respect difference, will be rejected by a betrayed populace along with the liberal class itself. One thing that is very likely to happen is that the gains made in the past forty years by black and brown Americans, and by homosexuals will be wiped out (p23).

Jocular contempt for women will come back into fashion. The words “nigger” and “kike” will once again be heard in the workplace. All the sadism that the academic Left has tried to make unacceptable to its students will come flooding back. All the resentment which badly educated Americans feel about having their manners dictated to them by college graduates will find an outlet (p23).

The hatred for radical Islam will transform itself into a hatred for Muslims. The hatred for undocumented workers in states such as Arizona will become a hatred for Mexicans and Central Americans. The hatred for those not defined as American patriots by a largely white mass movement will become a hatred for African Americans. The hatred for liberals will morph into a hatred for all democratic institutions, from universities and government agencies to cultural institutions and the media (p23).

In their continued impotence and cowardice, members of the liberal class will see themselves and the values they support, swept aside. The liberal class refused to resist the devolution of the US democratic system into what Sheldon Wolin calls a system of inverted totalitarianism (p23).

Inverted totalitarianism, represents the political coming of age of corporate power and the political demobilization of the citizenry. Inverted totalitarianism differs from classical forms of totalitarianism, which revolve around a demagogue or charismatic leader. It finds expression in the anonymity of the corporate state (p24).

The corporate forces behind inverted totalitarianism do not replace decaying structures with new, revolutionary structures. They do not import new symbols or iconography. They do not offer a radical alternative. Corporate power purports, in inverted totalitarianism, to honor electoral politics, freedom and the Constitution. But these corporate forces so corrupt and manipulate power as to make democracy impossible (p24).

Inverted totalitarianism is not conceptualized as an ideology or objectified in public policy. It is furthered by power holders and citizens who often seem unaware of the deeper consequences of their actions or inactions (p24).

But it is as dangerous as classical forms of totalitarianism. In a system of inverted totalitarianism, it is not necessary to rewrite the Constitution, as fascist or communist regimes would. It is enough to exploit legitimate power by means of judicial and legislative interpretation. This exploitation ensures that the courts, populated by justices selected and ratified by members of the corporate culture, rule that huge corporate campaign contributions are protected speech under the first amendment (p24).

It ensures that heavily financed and organized lobbying by large corporations is interpreted as an application of the people's right to petition the government. Corporations are treated by the state as persons, as the increasingly conservative US Supreme Court has more and more frequently ruled (p24).

Those within corporations who commit crimes can avoid going to prison by paying large sums of money to the government without “admitting any wrongdoing”, according to this twisted judicial reasoning. There is a word for this: corruption (p24).

Corporations have thirty-five thousand lobbyists in Washington and thousands more in state capitals that dole out corporate money to shape and write legislation. They use their political action committees to solicit employees and shareholders for donations to fund pliable candidates (p24).

The financial sector, for example, spent more than 5 billion dollars on political campaigns, influence peddling, and lobbying during the past decade, which resulted in sweeping deregulation, the gouging of consumers, our financial meltdown, and the subsequent looting of the US Treasury (p25).

The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America spent 26 million in 2009, and drug companies such as Pfizer, Amgen and Eli Lilly kicked in tens of millions more to buy off the two parties. The oil and gas industry, the coal industry, defense contractors and telecommunications companies have Hedges, Chris (2010). *Death of the Liberal Class*. Nation Books, New York.

thwarted the drive for sustainable energy and orchestrated the steady erosion of regulatory control and civil liberties (p25).

Politicians do corporate bidding while giving lip service to burying political and economic issues. The liberal class is used as a prop to keep the fiction of the democratic state alive. The Constitution is conscripted to serve as power's apprentice rather than its conscience (p25).

There is no national institution left that can accurately be described as democratic. Citizens, rather than authentically participating in power, have only virtual options in what Cahrlotte Twight calls "participatory fascism". They are reduced to expressing themselves on issues that are meaningless, voting on American Idol or in polls conducted by the power elite (p25).

The citizens of Rome, stripped of political power, are allowed to vote to spare or kill a gladiator in the arena, a similar form of hollow public choice (p25).

It is politics all of the time but a politics largely untempered by the political. Party squabbles are occasionally on public display, and there is a frantic and continuous politics among factions of the party, interest groups, competing corporate powers, and rival media concerns (p25).

And there is, of course, the culminating moment of national elections when the attention of the nation is required to make a choice of personalities rather than a choice between alternatives. What is absent is the political, the commitment to finding where the common good lies amidst the welter of well-financed, highly organized, single-minded interests rabidly seeking government favors and overwhelming the practices of representative government and public administration by a sea of cash (p26).

Hollywood, the news industry, and television - all corporate controlled - have become instruments of inverted totalitarianism. They saturate the airwaves with manufactured controversy, whether it is the Tiger Woods sex scandal or the dispute between NBC late night talk show hosts Jay Leno and Conan O'Brien, or the extramarital affair of John Edwards (p26).

We confuse knowledge with our potted responses to these non-events. And the draconian internal control employed by the US Department of Homeland Security, the military, the police, coupled with censorship practiced by corporate media, does for inverted totalitarianism what thugs and bonfires of prohibited books did in previous totalitarian regimes (p26).

Liberals, socialists, trade unionists, independent journalists, and intellectuals, many of whom were once important voices in our society have been banished or muzzled by corporate control throughout academia, culture, the media and the government (p26).

The uniformity of opinion molded by the media is reinforced through the skillfully orchestrated mass emotions of nationalism and patriotism, which pain all dissidents as "soft" or "unpatriotic". The patriotic citizen, plagued by fear of job losses and possible terrorist attacks, unfailingly supports widespread surveillance and the militarized state (p26).

There is no questioning of the 1 trillion dollars spent each year on defense. Military and intelligence agencies are held above government, as if somehow they are not part of the government. The most powerful instruments of state control effectively have no public oversight (p27).

We, as imperial citizens, are taught to be contemptuous of government bureaucracy and yet we are mute when Congress permits our private correspondence and conversations to be monitored and archived. We endure more state control than in any time in US history (p27).

And yet the civic, patriotic, and political language we use to describe ourselves remains unchanged. We pay fealty to the same national symbols and iconography. We find our collective identity in the same

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national myths. We continue to deify the founding fathers. But the America we celebrate is an illusion. It does not exist (p27).

The liberal class has aided and abetted this decline. Liberals who clam to support the working class, vote for candidates who glibly defend NAFTA and increased globalization. Liberals who claim to want an end to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, continue to back a party that funds and expands these wars (p27).

Liberals, who say they are the champions of basic civil liberties, do not challenge politicians who take these liberties from them (p27).

Obama lied as cravenly, if not as crudely, as George W. Bush. He promised that the transfer of 12.8 trillion dollars in taxpayer money to Wall Street would open up credit and lending to the average consumer following the financial crisis. It did not (p27).

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, FDIC, admitted that banks have reduced lending at the sharpest rate since 1942. As a senator, Obama promised he would filibuster amendments to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, FISA, which retroactively made legal the wiretapping and monitoring of millions of American citizens without warrant; instead, he supported the passage of that legislation (p27).

He told us he would withdraw American troops from Iraq, close the Guantanamo Bay detention camp, end torture, restore civil liberties such as habeas corpus, pass a health care bill with a robust public option, and create new jobs. Almost none of his promises had been kept (p27).

Obama, after promising meaningful environmental reform, did nothing to halt the collapse of the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Conference, a decision that ended perhaps our final chance to save the planet from the catastrophic effects of climate change (p28).

He empowers Israel's brutal apartheid regime. He has expanded the war in Afghanistan and Pakistan, where hundreds of civilians, including entire families have been slaughtered by sophisticated weaponry such as drones and the AGM-144 hellfire missile, which sucks the air out of its victims' lungs. He is delivering war and death to Yemen and Somalia (p28).

Obama is part of the political stagecraft that trades in perceptions of power rather than real power. The illegal wars and occupations, the largest transference of wealth upward in US history, the deregulation that resulted in the environmental disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, and the egregious assault on civil liberties - begun under George W. Bush - raise only a flicker of protest from the liberal class (p28).

Liberals, unlike the right wing, are emotionally disabled. They appear not to feel. They do not recognize the legitimate anger of those who have been dispossessed. They retreat instead into the dead talk of policy and analysis (p28).

The Tea Party protestors, the myopic supporters of Sarah Palin, the veterans signing up for Oath Keepers have brought into their ranks legions of dispossessed workers, angry libertarians, and many others who, until now, were never politically active (p28).

The three-thousand word suicide note left by Joe Stack, who flew his Piper Dakota into an Internal Revenue Service office in Austin Texas, on February 18, 2010, murdering an IRS worker and injuring thirteen others, expressed the frustration of tens of millions of workers over the treachery of global corporations and a liberal class that abandoned them (p28).

Stack, in his note, remembered when he was an eighteen or nineteen year old student living in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, he occupied an apartment next to an elderly widow. The woman had been married to a steel worker, who Stack wrote "had worked all his life in the steel mills of central Pennsylvania with promises from big business and the union, that, for his thirty years of service, he Hedges, Chris (2010). Death of the Liberal Class. Nation Books, New York.

would have a pension and medical care to look forward to in his retirement.” But the worker got nothing “because the incompetent mill management and the corrupt union raided their pension funds and stole their retirement”. The widow lived on social security (p29).

“When I got to know this poor figure and heard her story I felt worse for her plight than for my own. I was genuinely appalled at one point, as we exchanged stories and commiserated with each other over our situations, when she in her grandmotherly fashion tried to convince me that I would be “healthier” eating cat food, like her, rather than trying to get all my substance from peanut butter and bread. I couldn’t quite go there, but the impression was made. I decided that I didn’t trust big business to take care of me, and that I would take responsibility for my own future and myself” (p29).

Stack’s life soon made clear that the corporate government served its own interests at the expense of the citizen. And the liberal class and its institutions, including labour unions, the media, and the democratic party, would not defend them (p29).

“Why is it that a handful of thugs and plunderers can commit unthinkable atrocities and when it’s time for their gravy train to crash under the weight of their gluttony and overwhelming stupidity, the force of the full federal government has no difficulty coming to their aid within days if not hours?” Stack wrote.

This letter is a coherent and lucid expression of views and concerns, many of them legitimate, shared by millions of sane, struggling citizens. All of them feel betrayed, as they should, by both the government and the liberal class (p30).

American workers are not the only workers who have been betrayed by the new global economy. Ching Kwan Lee writes about workers in the northeast province of Liaoning, which, like the rust belt in states such as Ohio, has been abandoned by the Chinese government (p30).

Liaoning has declined into a wasteland of bankruptcy and a hotbed of working class protest by its many unemployed workers and pensioners. Unpaid pensions and wages, defaults on medical subsidies, and inadequate collective consumption are the main grievances triggering labour unrest in Liaoning (p30).

Lee found “satanic mills” that run at such a nerve racking pace that workers physical limits and bodily strength are put to the test on a daily basis. Workers can put in a fourteen to sixteen hour day with no rest day during the month until payday (p31).

In Lee’s words, the working conditions “go beyond the Marxist notions of exploitation and alienation”. Each year, scores of workers threaten to commit suicide by jumping off high rises or setting themselves on fire over unpaid wages (p31).

“If getting paid for one’s labour is a fundamental feature of capitalist employment relations, strictly speaking many Chinese workers are not yet labourers (p31). The sense of betrayal, and the expression of rage and bitterness, by workers in China and the United States are very similar (p31).

Workers in China have been used and discarded, in much the same way as workers in other global industrial centers, from Michigan to India to Vietnam to South Korea. The fury that Joe Stack expressed against corporate abuse of the working class is a fury that, Lee warns, is reverberating around the globe in a multiplicity of tongues (p32).

India, along with China and other emergent economies has experienced the same desperation. An estimated 182,936 Indian farmers committed suicide between 1997 and 2007. Debt in Indian peasant households doubled in the first decade of India’s neoliberal “economic reforms” (p32).

Seed prices, controlled by corporate seed companies such as Monsanto, skyrocketed. And farmers finally could not cope. Many simply walked away from their land (p32).

Hedges, Chris (2010). *Death of the Liberal Class*. Nation Books, New York.

Noam Chomsky is one of the few intellectuals who challenges the structure and inequity of corporate capitalism and our state of permanent war. Perhaps America's greatest intellectual, Chomsky is deeply reviled by the liberal class (p34).

His massive body of work, which includes nearly one hundred books, has for decades deflated and exposed the lies of the power elite, the myths they perpetuate, and the complicity of the liberal class. Chomsky has done this despite being largely black listed by the commercial media and turned into a pariah by the academy (p34).

He combines moral autonomy with rigorous scholarship, a remarkable grasp of detail, and a searing intellect. He curtly dismisses our two-party system as a mirage orchestrated by the corporate state, excoriates the liberal class for being toadies, and describes the drivel of the commercial media as a form of "brain washing" (p34).

Chomsky warns that we have little time left to save our anaemic democracy and our ecosystem. "It is very similar to late Weimar Germany", Chomsky says. "The parallels are striking. There was also tremendous disillusionment with the parliamentary system. The most striking fact about Weimar was not that the Nazis managed to destroy the social democrats and the communists but that the traditional parties, the conservative and liberal parties, were hated and disappeared. It left a vacuum which the Nazis very cleverly and intelligently managed to take over" (p34).

"America is extremely lucky that no honest, charismatic figure has arisen. Every charismatic figure is such an obvious crook that he destroys himself. The mood in the country is frightening. The level of anger, frustration, and hatred of institutions is not organized in a constructive way. It is going off into self-destructive fantasies" (p35).

"I listen to talk radio", Chomsky said. "I don't want to hear Rush Limbaugh. I want to hear the people calling in. They are like Joe Stack. 'What is happening to me? I have done all the right things. I am a God-fearing Christian. I work hard for my family. I have a gun. I believe in the values of the country, and my life is collapsing'" (p35).

Chomsky reminds us that genuine intellectual inquiry is always subversive. It challenges cultural and political assumptions. It critiques structures. It is relentlessly self-critical. It implodes the self-indulgent myths and stereotypes we use to aggrandize ourselves and ignore our complicity in acts of violence and oppression (p35).

And genuine inquiry always makes the powerful, as well as their liberal apologists, deeply uncomfortable. Chomsky reserves his fiercest venom for members of the liberal class who serve as a smokescreen for the cruelty of unchecked capitalism and imperial war (p35).

He has consistently exposed their moral and intellectual posturing as a fraud. And this is why Chomsky is hated, and perhaps feared, more among liberals than among the right wing he also excoriates (p35).

"if you read in the papers that Iran is defying the international community, ask, "Who is the international community". India is opposed to sanctions. China is opposed to sanctions. Brazil is opposed to sanctions. The Non-Aligned Movement is vigorously opposed to sanctions and has been for years (p37)."

"So, who is the international community? It is Washington and anyone who happens to agree with it. You can figure that out but you have to do work. It is the same on issue after issue", Chomsky says (p37).

Chomsky's courage to speak on behalf of those whose suffering is minimized or ignored in mass culture, such as the Palestinians, is an example for anyone searching for models of the moral life. Perhaps even more than his scholarship, his example of moral independence sustains all those who defy the cant of the crowd, and that of the liberal class, to speak the truth (p37).

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The liberal class critiqued the War in Vietnam and the Gulf War on practical grounds but not moral grounds. The virtues of the nation, even in an act of war, are sacrosanct. The liberal class cannot question these virtues and remain within the circles of the power elite (p38).

War becomes a necessary evil. The rhetoric of the liberal class, however, mocks the brutal reality of war. Most liberals have never been in combat. Their children rarely serve in the military. They neither know nor understand the destructive power of modern weaponry or the propensity on the part of armed combatants, whose fear and paranoia are raised to a fever pitch, to shoot any person, armed or unarmed, or obliterate whole villages in air strikes, if they feel threatened (p39).

The liberal class joined the Bush administration in carrying out a project that under international law was illegal and resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, far more than had ever been slaughtered by Saddam Hussein, and thousands more Afghani and Pakistani civilians (p39).

War and violence as instruments of virtue, are a contradiction in terms. But you can't fully grasp this unless you have been in combat, and combat has been something that the liberal class has been able to hand off to the working class since World War II (p40).

The solitary voices of dissent that condemned the war in Iraq at its inception were attacked by the liberal class as by the right wing. When documentary film maker, Michael Moore accepted his Oscar for his film *Bowling for Columbine* on March 23, 2003, he used the occasion to denounce the war, which had begun a few days earlier (p40).

"We live in fictitious times," Moore told an increasingly hostile audience. "We live in a time when we have a fictitious election result that elects a fictitious president. We live in a time where we have a man sending us to war for fictitious reasons, whether it is the fiction of duct tape or Orange Alerts. We are against this war, Mr. Bush. Shame on you, Mr Bush! Shame on you!"

Moore was booed and jeered. He had crossed the parameters drawn by the power elite. Liberals, in denouncing him, fulfilled their political role. They discredited Moore because he did not obey the rules. And they did it with enthusiasm. Moore was portrayed as a "far-left" radical who needed to be escorted off the premises (p40).

American liberal intellectuals take special pride in their 'tough-mindedness', in their success in casting aside the illusions and myths of the old left, for these same 'tough' new liberals reproduce some of that old left's worst characteristics (p40).

They may see themselves as having migrated to the opposite shore, but they display precisely the same mixture of dogmatic faith and cultural provincialism, not to mention the exuberant enthusiasm for violent political transformation at other people's expense (p41).

The value of such persons to ambitious, radical regimes is an old story. They were first identified by Lenin himself, who coined the term that still describes them best. Today, America's liberal armchair warriors are the "useful idiots" of the war on terror (p41).

The voices of sanity, the voices of reason, of those who have a moral core have little chance now to be heard. The liberal class, which failed to grasp the dark intentions of the corporate state and its servants in the Democratic Party, bears some responsibility (p44).

Support for the war has allied the liberals with venal warlords in Afghanistan, who are as opposed to the rights of women and basic democratic freedoms, and as heavily involved in opium trafficking, as the Taliban (p44).

The supposed moral lines between the liberal class and our adversaries are fictional. The uplifting narratives used to justify the war in Afghanistan are pathetic attempts by the liberal class to redeem acts of senseless brutality (p44).

War cannot be waged to instill any virtue, including democracy or the liberation of women. War always empowers those who have a penchant for violence and access to weapons. War turns the moral order upside down and abolishes all discussions of human rights (p44).

War banishes the just and the decent to the margins of society. The power of modern weapons means inevitable civilian deaths or “collateral damage”. An aerial drone is our version of an improvised explosive device. An iron fragmentation bomb is our answer to a suicide bomb. A burst from a belt-fed light machine gun causes the same terror and bloodshed among civilians no matter who pulls the trigger (p44).

We need to tear the mask off the fundamentalist warlords who after the tragedy of 9/11 replaced the Taliban. They used the mask of democracy to take power. They continue this deception. These warlords are mentally the same as the Taliban. The only change is physical (p44).

These warlords during the civil war in Afghanistan from 1992 to 1996 killed sixty-five thousand innocent people. They have committed human rights violations, like the Taliban, against women and many others (p44).

This is a war on innocent civilians. Look at the massacres carried out by NATO forces in Afghanistan. Look what they did in May in the Farah Province, where more than 150 civilians were killed, most of them women and children (p44).

They used white phosphorus and cluster bombs. They put into power men who are photocopies of the Taliban. Over the past ten years of occupation, Afghanistan’s boom in the opium trade, used to produce heroin, has funneled hundreds of millions of dollars to the Taliban, al-Qaida, local warlords, criminal gangs, kidnapers, private armies, drug traffickers, and many of the senior figures in the government of President Hamid Karzai (p45).

The opium feeds some fifteen million addicts worldwide and kills around one hundred thousand people annually. These fatalities should be added to the lists of war dead (p45).

The Taliban’s direct involvement in the opium trade allows them to fund a war machine that is becoming technologically more complex and increasingly widespread. The Taliban earned \$90 million to 160 million a year from taxing the production and smuggling of opium and heroin between 2005 and 2009, as much as double the amount it earned annually while it was in power nearly a decade before (p45).

The drug lords in Afghanistan are the only ones with power. Yet those who support the war talk about women’s rights. There are no human rights now in most provinces. It is as easy to kill a woman in Afghanistan as it is to kill a bird. In some big cities like Kabul, some women have access to jobs and education, but in most of the country the situation for women is hell (p46).

Rape, kidnapping and domestic violence are increasing. These fundamentalists during the so-called free elections made a misogynist law against Shia women in Afghanistan. The law has even been signed by Hamid Karzai. All these crimes are happening under the name of democracy (p46).

Thousands of Afghan civilians have died from insurgent and foreign military violence. And American and NATO forces are responsible for almost half the civilian deaths in Afghanistan. Tens of thousands of Afghan civilians have also died from displacement, starvation, disease, exposure, lack of medical treatment, crime, and lawlessness resulting from the war (p46).

Hedges, Chris (2010). *Death of the Liberal Class*. Nation Books, New York.

NATO, in choosing sides in a battle between two corrupt and brutal opponents, has lost all legitimacy in the country, an opinion echoed by a high level US diplomat in Afghanistan, Matthew Hoh, who resigned in protest over the war (p46).

Hoh wrote in his resignation letter that Karzai's government is filled with "glaring corruption and unabashed graft". Karzai, he wrote, is a president "whose confidants and chief advisers comprise drug lords and war crimes villains who mock our own rule of law and counter-narcotics effort" (p46).

The \$36 billion poured into the country went into the pockets of the drug lords and the warlords. There are 18 million people in Afghanistan who live on less than 2 dollars a day, while these warlords get rich. The Taliban and warlords together contribute to this fascism while the occupation forces are bombing and killing innocent civilians (p47).

Many Afghans side with the Taliban. They do not support the Taliban, but they are fed up with these warlords and this injustice, and they go with the Taliban to take revenge. The U.S. wastes taxpayers' money and the blood of their soldiers by supporting such a Mafia-corrupt system of Hamid Karzai. They chained the country to the center of drugs. If Obama were really honest he would support the democratic minded people of Afghanistan. There are a lot of such people (p47).

More people have been killed in the Obama period than even during the criminal Bush. Success in Afghanistan depends on the ability to create an indigenous army that will battle the Taliban, provide security and stability for Afghan civilians, and remain loyal to the puppet Karzai government (p48).

A similar task eluded the Red Army, although the Soviets spent a decade attempting to pacify the country. It eluded the British a century earlier. And the United States, too, will fail (p48).

U.S. military advisers who work with the Afghan National Army or ANA, speak of poorly trained and unmotivated Afghan soldiers with little stomach for military discipline and even less for fighting. The advisers describe the ANA units as filled with brigands who terrorize local populations, engaging in extortion, intimidation, rape, theft and open collusion with the Taliban (p48).

They contend that the ANA is riddled with Taliban sympathizers. And when U.S. and ANA soldiers fight together against the Taliban insurgents, the U.S., advisers say that the ANA soldiers prove to be fickle and unreliable combatants (p48).

Military commanders in Afghanistan, rather than pump out statistics about enemy body counts, measure progress by the size of the ANA. The bigger the ANA, the better we are supposedly doing. The pressure on trainers to increase ANA numbers means that training and vetting of incoming Afghan recruits is nearly nonexistent (p48).

The process of induction of Afghan soldiers begins at the Kabul Military Training Center. American instructors routinely complain of shortages of school supplies such as whiteboards, markers and paper. They often have to go to markets and pay for these supplies on their own or do without (p48).

Instructors are pressured to pass all recruits, and they graduate many who have been absent for a third to half of their training time. Most are inducted into the ANA without having mastered rudimentary military skills (p48).

Afghan soldiers are sent from the KMTC directly to active duty ANA units. The units always have American trainers, known as a "mentoring team" attached to them. The rapid increase in ANA soldiers has outstripped the ability of the American military to provide trained mentoring teams (p49).

The teams, normally composed of members of the Army Special Forces, are now formed by groups of American soldiers, plucked more or less at random, from units all over Afghanistan.

Hedges, Chris (2010). Death of the Liberal Class. Nation Books, New York.

There is a major learning curve involved that is sometimes never overcome. Some advisers play a pivotal role, but many have little effect nor none as mentors. But what disturbs advisers most is the widespread corruption within the ANA, which has enraged and alienated local Afghans and proved a potent recruiting tool for the Taliban (p50).

In Kabul, on one humanitarian mission they handed out school supplies to children in an attempt to lend validity to the ANA and they had the ANA distribute the supplies. As it turned out, the very same group of ANA had been extorting money from the villagers under the threat of violence. In essence, they teamed up with well-known criminals and local thugs to distribute aid in the very village they had been terrorizing, and that was the face of American charity (p50).

We spend some \$4 billion a month on Afghanistan. But we are unable to pay for whiteboards and markers for instructors. Afghan soldiers lack winter jackets. Kabul is still in ruins. Unemployment is estimated at about forty percent. And Afghanistan is one of the most food-insecure countries on the planet (p51).

So what are we doing? Where is all the money going? Look to the civilian contractors. These contractors dominate the lucrative jobs in Afghanistan. The American military, along with the ANA is considered a poor relation. And war, after all, is primarily a business (p51).

Americans and foreign nationals from Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia are holding jobs in great numbers in Kabul. There are a ton of corporations in Afghanistan performing labor that was once exclusively in the realm of the military. If you're a military cook, someone from Kellogg Brown and Root has taken your spot. If you're a logistician or military adviser, someone from MPRI will probably take over your job soon (p51).

If you're a technician or a mechanic, there are civilians from Harris Corporation and other companies who are taking over more and more of your responsibility. One officer reported "Nearly half our unit had to be reassigned because their jobs had been taken over by civilians from MPRI. It seems that even in a war zone, soldiers are at risk of losing their jobs to outsourcing. And if you're a reservist, the situation is even more unfortunate. You are torn from your life to serve a yearlong tour of duty away from your civilian job, your friends, and family, only to end up in Afghanistan with nothing to do because your military duty has passed on to a civilian contractor."

What was once done by the military, concerned with tactical and strategic advancement, is now done by war profiteers, concerned only with profit. The aims of the military and the contractors are in conflict. Any scaling down of the war or withdrawal means a loss of business to corporations. But expansion of the war, as many veterans will attest, is making the situation only more precarious (p52).

American and Afghan soldiers are putting their lives at risk, Afghan civilians are dying, and yet there's this underlying system in place that gains more from keeping all of them in harm's way rather than taking them out of it. "Peace and profit are ultimately contradictory forces at work in Afghanistan", said one officer (p52).

It is estimated that only ten percent of the money poured into Afghanistan is used to ameliorate the suffering of Afghan civilians. The remainder is swallowed by contractors who siphon the money out of Afghanistan and into foreign bank accounts (p52).

It is this system of waste and private profit from public funds that keeps Kabul in ruins. It is this system that manages to feed westerners across the country steak and lobster once a week while an estimated 8.4 million Afghans suffer from chronic food insecurity and starvation every day (p53).

When you go to Bagram Air Base or Camp Phoenix or Camp Eggers, it's clear to see that the problem does not lie in getting supplies into the country. The question becomes who gets them. And we wonder why here's an insurgency (p53).

Hedges, Chris (2010). *Death of the Liberal Class*. Nation Books, New York.

The problem in Afghanistan is not ultimately a military problem. It is a political and social problem. The real threat to stability in Afghanistan is not the Taliban, but the widespread hunger and food shortages, crippling poverty, rape, corruption, and a staggering rate of unemployment that mounts as foreign companies take jobs away from local workers and businesses (p53).

The corruption and abuse by the Karzai government and the ANA, along with the presence of foreign contractors, are the central impediments to peace. The more we empower these forces, the worse the war will become (p53).

The plan to escalate the number of U.S. soldiers and Marines, and to swell the ranks of the Afghan National Army, will not defeat or pacify the Taliban. What purpose does a strong military serve with a corrupt and inept government in place? What hope do we have for peace if the best jobs for Afghans involve working for the military (p53)?

What is the point of getting rid of the Taliban if it means killing civilians with airstrikes and supporting a government of misogynist warlords and criminals (p53)?

But it is not the financial cost of the war that makes the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan so tragic, wasteful and immoral. War as an instrument of change is brutal, savage, impersonal and counterproductive. It mocks the fantasy of individual heroism and the absurdity of utopian goals, such as the imposition of Western-style democracy or the liberation of women (p54).

In an instant, industrial warfare can kill dozens, even hundreds of people, who never see their attackers. The power of industrial weapons is indiscriminate and staggering. They can take down apartment blocks in seconds, burying or crushing everyone inside (p54).

They can demolish villages and send tanks, planes and ships up in fiery blasts. The wounds, for those who survive, result in terrible burns, blindness, amputation and lifelong pain and trauma. No one returns the same from such warfare. And once these weapons are employed, all talk of human rights is a farce (p54).

The explosive blasts of these weapons systems for those who have witnessed them work, inevitably kill and maim civilians, including children (p54).

“There were three of us inside when the jeep caught fire”, Israeli soldier Yossi Arditi says. He is describing the moment a Molotov cocktail exploded in his vehicle. “The fuel tank was full and it was about to explode, my skin was hanging from my arms and face - but I didn’t lose my head. I knew nobody could get inside to help me, and that my only way out was through the fire to the doors. I wanted to take my gun, but I couldn’t touch it because my hands were burning”.

Soldiers and Marines, especially those who have never seen war, buy cases of beer and watch movies like *Platoon*, movies meant to denounce war, and as they do, they revel in the destructive power of weaponry. The reality of violence is different. Everything formed by violence is senseless and useless. It exists without a future. It leaves behind nothing but grief, death and destruction (p55).

War’s effects are what the state and the media, the handmaidens of the war-makers, work hard to keep hidden. If we really saw war, what war does to young minds and bodies, it would be impossible to embrace the myth of war. If we had to stand over mangled corpses of schoolchildren killed in Afghanistan and listen to the wails of their parents, we would not be able to repeat clichés we use to justify war (p55).

This is why war is carefully sanitized. This is why we are given war’s perverse and dark thrill but are spared from seeing war’s consequences. The mythic visions of war keep it heroic and entertaining. And the media are as guilty as Hollywood (p56).

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During the start of the Iraq war, television reports gave us the visceral thrill of force and hid from us the effects of bullets, tank rounds, iron fragmentation bombs and artillery rounds. We tasted a bit of war's exhilaration, but were protected from seeing what war actually does to human bodies (p56).

The wounded, the crippled, and the dead are, in this great charade, quickly carted offstage. They are war's refuse. We do not see them. We do not hear them. They are doomed like wandering spirits, to float around the edges of our consciousness, ignored, even reviled (p56).

The message they tell is too painful for us to hear. We prefer to celebrate ourselves and our nation by imbibing the myths of glory, honor, patriotism, and heroism, words that in combat become empty and meaningless. And those whom fate has decreed must face war's effects often turn and flee (p56).

Public manifestations of gratitude are reserved for veterans who dutifully read from the script handed to them by the state. The veterans trotted out for viewing are those who are compliant and palatable, those we can stand to look at without horror, those willing to go along with the lie that war is the highest form of patriotism (p56).

"Thank you for your service", we are supposed to say. These soldiers are used to perpetuate the myth. We are used to honor it (p56).

Despair and suicide grip survivors. It is estimated that as many Vietnam veterans committed suicide after the war as were killed during it. The inhuman qualities drilled into soldiers and Marines in wartime defeat them in peacetime. This is what Homer taught us in *The Iliad*, the great book on war, and *The Odyssey*, the great book on the long journey to recovery by professional killers (p57).

Many never readjust. They cannot connect again with wives, children, parents or friends, retreating into personal hells of self-destructive anguish and rage (p57). "They program you to have no emotion - like if somebody sitting next to you gets killed you just have to carry on doing your job and shut up, says Steve Annabell, a British veteran of the Falklands War. "When you leave the service, when you come back from a situation like that, there is no button they can press to switch your emotions back on" (p57).

"So you walk around like a zombie. They don't deprogram you. If you become a problem they just sweep you under the carpet (p57)".

Steve Annabell says, "to get you to join up they do all these advertisements - they show people skiing down mountains and doing great things - but they don't show you getting shot at and people with their legs blown off or burning to death". They don't show you what really happens. It's just bullshit. And they never prepare you for it. They can give you all the training in the world, but it's never the same as the real thing" (p57).

"Nobody comes back from war the same" says Horacio Javier, who fought the British in the Falklands. "The person, Horacio, who was sent to war, doesn't exist anymore. It's hard to be enthusiastic about normal life; too much seems inconsequential. You contend with craziness and depression" (p57).

The disparity between what we are told or what we believe about war and war itself is so vast that those who come back are often rendered speechless. What do you say to those who advocate war as an instrument to liberate the women of Afghanistan or bring democracy to Iraq. How do you tell them what war is like? How do you explain that the very proposition of war as an instrument of virtue is absurd? (p58).

How do you cope with memories of small, terrified children bleeding to death with bits of iron fragments peppered throughout their small bodies. How do you speak of war without tears?

Look beyond the nationalist cant used to justify war. Look beyond the seduction of the weapons and the pornography of violence. Look beyond Obama's ridiculous rhetoric about finishing the job or fighting terror. Focus on the evil of war (p58).

War begins by calling for the annihilation of the Other, but ends ultimately in self-annihilation. It corrupts souls, mutilates bodies. It destroys homes and villages and murders children on their way to school. It grinds into the dirt all that is tender and beautiful and sacred (p58).

It empowers human deformities - warlords, Shiite death squads, Sunni insurgents, the Taliban, al-Qaida and our own killers - who can speak only in the despicable language of force. War is a scourge. It is a plague. It is industrial murder. And before you support war, especially the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, look into the hollow eyes of men and women and children who know it (p58).

## Dismantling the Liberal Class

World War I ushered in the modern era. The war bequeathed industrial killing as well as vast wartime bureaucracies, which could for the first time administer and organize impersonal mass slaughter over months and years that left hundreds of thousands dead in an instant, many of whom never saw their attackers (p61).

Civil War battles rarely lasted more than two or three days. Battles in the new age of industrial warfare could rage for weeks and months with a steady flow of new munitions, mass-produced supplies, and mechanized transports that delivered troops by ship, rail, and motorized vehicles to the battlefield (p61).

A nation's entire industrial and organizational capacity, as well as its centralized systems of information and internal control, could be harnessed for war. World War I gave birth to the terrible leviathan of total war (p61).

Just as ominously, the war unleashed radical new forms of mass propaganda and mass manipulation that made it possible to engineer public opinion through the technological innovations of radio, cinema, photography, cheap mass publications and graphic art. Mass propaganda astutely exploited the new understanding of mass psychology as well as the work of pioneering psychologists such as Sigmund Freud (p62).

The war destroyed values and self-perceptions that had at once characterized American life and replaced them with fear, distrust and hedonism of the consumer society. The new mass propaganda, designed to appeal to emotions rather than disseminate facts, proved adept at driving competing ideas and values underground (p62).

It effectively vilified all who did not speak in the language imparted to the public by corporations and the state. For these reasons, it presaged a profound cultural and political shift. It snuffed out a brief and robust period of reform in American history (p62), one that had seen mass movements enraged at the abuses of an American oligarchy, sweep across the country and demand profound change (p62).

The rise of mass propaganda made possible by industrial warfare, effectively killed populism. The political upheavals in the years before the war had put numerous populists and reformers in positions of power. While a few of those would linger until the 1950s, the war would chart a new course for the country (p62).

War propaganda not only bolstered support for the war - including among progressives and intellectuals, but also discredited dissidents and reformers as traitors. The rise of mass propaganda signalled the primacy of Freud, who had discovered that the manipulation of powerful myths and images playing to subconscious fears and desires, could lead men and women to embrace their own subjugation and even self-destruction (p62).

What Freud and the great investigators of mass psychology realized was that the emotions were not subordinate to reason. If anything, it was the reverse. Prior to World War I, much current American thinking, following post-enlightenment European thought, relied on the assumption that reason could rule, that debate in the public sphere was driven most powerfully and effectively by strong underpinnings (p62).

Many Classical philosophers, beginning with Plato, warned that the appeal to emotion was only as good as the man making the appeal. But in the twentieth century mass propaganda, this warning was cast aside. The idea was to sway, and to use any means to do it (p63).

The moral aspect of public persuasion was pushed aside in pursuit of the targeted arousal of mass emotions. The war, sold with simple slogans such as “the war to end all wars” or “the war to make the world safe for democracy”, did not so much emasculate intellectuals, artists and progressives as seduce them (p63).

The enthusiastic embrace of war by many intellectuals and dissidents stunned the few stalwarts, people like Randolph Bourne and Jane Addams, who watched in horror as a nation descended into a collective war madness (p63).

Twelve thousand people, roused by German attacks on American cargo vessels and fiery denunciations in the press, rallied on March 22, 1917, in Madison Square Garden to call for war at a mass meeting organized by the American Rights Committee (p63).

The Socialist party abandoned their opposition and issued a call for war the next day. The anti-war movement crumbled, with widespread defections. Preachers in the nation’s most prominent pulpits blessed the call to arms, and the few voices that continued to resist the intoxication of battle were attacked (p63).

Huge rallies calling for war were held in Philadelphia, Denver, Boston and Chicago, often addressed by progressive leaders and politicians. The beleaguered leaders of the Emergency Peace Federation who tried to hold counter-rallies, were shouted down by crowds of war supporters, and were heckled and beaten by police (p64).

By the time war was declared by Congress, most of these holdouts let nationalism overcome principle and backed the war effort. There were still significant pockets of opposition within the population, but the antiwar movement had been decapitated (p64).

Wilson easily pushed through draconian laws to squelch dissent, but he hardly needed have bothered. Congress passed the Espionage Act in 1917, which criminalized not only espionage but also speech deemed critical of the government (p65).

Next year, Congress passed an amendment, known as the Sedition Act, that made it a crime to use “disloyal” or “profane” language that could encourage contempt for the Constitution or the flag. The Espionage Act and the Sedition Act became the coarse tools used by the Wilson administration to silence isolated progressives and the dwindling populist forces that questioned the war (p65).

Postmaster General Albert Bursleson, empowered by the Espionage Act, cancelled the special mailing privileges of journals he condemned as unpatriotic, instantly hiking their postal rates and putting about a hundred out of business (p65).

A few thousand people, including the Socialist politician Eugene Debs, were arrested for their continued denunciation of the war and calls for draft resistance and strikes (p65).

Progressive politics had enjoyed an upsurge before the war, bringing on a golden era of American journalism and social reform, but that was now ended. Progressivism would flicker to life again in the 1930s with the great depression and then be crushed in the next war (p65).

Progressives in World War I shifted from the role of social critics to that of propagandists. They did this seamlessly. The crusades undertaken for the working poor in mill towns and urban slums were transformed into an abstract crusade to remake the world through violence (p65).

The former socialists and activists were, perhaps more susceptible to Wilson’s utopian dreams of a democratic League of Nations that would end warfare forever. Wilson, after all, came from the ranks of the liberal class. He was articulate and literate, knew many of them and was comfortable in the world of political theory and abstract thought (p65).

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He wrote his own speeches. He reflected their high ideals. These intellectuals, once on the margins of society, became trusted allies in Wilson's crusade to recreate the world through violence. They were lauded and praised in public ways that were new and seductive (p65).

They no longer felt alienated from power but rather felt valued and appreciated by the elite. They lent their considerable skill to war propaganda and, in an intellectual and moral sense, committed suicide. Very few found the moral fortitude to resist. And their combined effort to sell the war fatally corrupted the liberal class (p65).

Arthur Bullard, who witnessed the power of revolutionary idealism and propaganda, believed that heavy censorship and secrecy laws that Wilson advocated would backfire, especially with many Americans viewing the war as one pushed down their throats by bankers and industrialists (p68).

The bankers and industrialists wanted to ensure that the massive loans to the European powers would be repaid, something that would not happen if Germany won the war. He grasped that a more potent weapon than overt repression could be found in mass propaganda (p68).

Propaganda could, he understood, feed the dormant sentiments of nationalism and the lust for violence that made war possible. The public, he grasped, would, with the right kind of guidance, become enthusiastic war supporters. He sent a copy of his book, *Mobilizing America* to Wilson in early 1917 in an effort to influence the president's management of the war. In it, he argued that if the government controlled all the mechanisms of information, and used the creative arts to bolster its message, the country could be indoctrinated to support the war without resorting to overt forms of control (p68).

"Truth and Falsehood are arbitrary terms", Bullard wrote. "There is nothing in experience to tell us that one is always preferable to the other... There are lifeless truths and vital lies... The force of an idea lies in its inspirational value. It matters very little whether it is true or false" (p68).

Walter Lippmann, in a private letter to the president on March 11, reiterated Bullard's call for a government publicity bureau. He told Wilson the war had to be sold to a skeptical public by fostering "a healthy public opinion" (p68).

Lippmann, especially in his 1922 book *Public Opinion*, emerges as perhaps the dark figure of the period. He assumes the intellectual role of the Grand Inquisitor, fearful of popular rule and brilliant enough to know how to manipulate public opinion (p69).

The war would prove him to be extremely prescient, and *Public Opinion* became a bible to the new power elite. Wilson got the message. He agreed to set up the bureau Lippmann and Bullard proposed and turn it over to progressives and artists. "It is not an army we must shape and train for war, it is a nation", he stated (p69).

A week after the war was declared, the president established the Committee for Public Information, CPI. The CPI, headed by George Creel, which became popularly known as the Creel Commission, would become the first modern mass propaganda machine (p69).

Its goal was not, as Creel confessed, simply to impart pro-war messages but to discredit those who attempted to challenge the nation's involvement in the conflict. And Creel, who knew the world of journalism, set out to demolish decentralized and diverse systems of information (p69).

News, which had previously grown out of local discourses and public discussions, which reflected local public sentiment and concerns upward, would be dictated from above. It would have to deliver a consistent drumbeat of propaganda, a consistent pro-war narrative, and shut out or discredit dissenting views (p69).

It would have to leech off the news pages into every aspect of the nation's cultural life, from theater to film to novels to advertisements. The wide diversity of newspapers, and with them the diversity of opinions, concerns and outlooks, had to be managed and controlled (p70).

All information about the war would come from one source, a practice that in later generations would be codified as "staying on message". There would be a total uniformity of ideas. Creel's efforts had the twin effect of saturating the country with propaganda and dismantling the local, independent press (p70).

The committee would by the time the war ended, see the president lionized as "the greatest propagandist the modern world has ever known". No other president in American history did more to damage the independence and freedom of the press, or set back its cause of social reform, than Wilson.

The newspapers, with Creel feeding them propaganda packaged as news releases, began a relentless campaign of manipulation of public opinion thinly disguised as journalism. The papers not only published without protest the drivel handed to them by the CPI, including manufactured stories of German atrocities and war crimes, but in their news pages questioned the patriotism of dissenters (p70).

The mass propaganda established during the war, which included journalists, entertainers, artists, and novelists, became the model for twentieth century corporate and governmental advertising and publicity (p73).

The selling of the Iraq war by the administration of George W. Bush was lifted from the playbook of the CPI, as was the tactic used by Exxonmobil to use \$16 million to fund a network of forty-three "grassroots" organizations opposed to the science of climate change, recruit scientists to publish non-peer-reviewed articles challenging the scientific evidence, and repeated placement of these "experts" on the national airwaves to manufacture public confusion (p74).

The use of these propaganda techniques has permitted corporations to saturate the airwaves with images and slogans that deify mass consumer culture. And it has meant the death, by corporate hands, of news. Creel was, in many ways, the godfather of modern public relations (p74).

But his power was resented by many in Washington, and after his usefulness ebbed with the war's end, he would never regain his prominence, although he made many attempts. Creel knew that his task of selling the war would require emasculating powerful social movements that not only had opposed the war but also had exposed the brutality and ruthlessness of major industrialists such as John D. Rockefeller (p75).

Labour unions, progressive journalists, pacifists, isolationists and large numbers of immigrants who disliked the British would prove to be obstacles to Wilson's war if left alone. The Industrial Workers of the World, IWW, or Wobblies, with some 100,000 members, and perhaps another 200,000 active supporters, denounced the war as capitalist exploitation, encouraged draft dodging, and called for strikes (p75).

Wilson's initial worries about lukewarm public support proved well grounded. Enlistment rates were paltry with only seventy-three thousand young men volunteering for the army between April and the middle of May. The government was forced to institute conscription. It was then Creel went to work (p76).

Creel and his associates, which included artists, cartoonists, graphic designers, filmmakers, journalists, and public relations experts saturated the cultural and intellectual life of the country with war propaganda (p76).

It did this by crossing the traditional boundaries of propaganda. It created the Division of Syndicated Features, one of the nineteen divisions, which hired novelists, short-story-writers and essayists. These Hedges, Chris (2010). *Death of the Liberal Class*. Nation Books, New York.

fiction writers masked the pro-war and pro-government message in stories that reached an estimated twelve million people a month (p76).

Posters and ads in support of war blanketed the country. Hollywood, which had a deserved reputation of sleaze, churned out war favourites such as *The Kaiser*; the beast of Berlin, *Wolves of Kultur* and Pershing's *Crusaders*. A movie entitled *To Hell with the Kaiser* was so popular that Massachusetts riot police were summoned to deal with an angry mob denied admission (p76).

Creel's committee established direct relationships with eighteen thousand newspapers, eleven thousand national advertisers and advertising agencies, ten thousand chambers of commerce, thirty thousand manufacturer's associations, twenty two thousand labour unions, ten thousand public libraries, thirty two thousand banks, fifty eight thousand general stores, 3,500 YMCA branches, ten thousand members of the Council of National Defense, one thousand advertising clubs, fifty six thousand post offices, fifty five thousand station agents, five thousand draft boards, one hundred thousand Red Cross chapters, and twelve thousand manufacturing agents (p76).

All were showered daily with war propaganda tailored specifically toward their interests and members. And the few institutions reluctant to spew out war propaganda were shut down (p76).

The committee manufactured daily news stories through its bureau that were run in the nation's papers. It provided a syndicated news service to disseminate "facts" about the war. It had a foreign language division, with a large group of translators, to plant pro-American stories in the foreign press (p77).

It established a speaker's bureau thanks to which speakers, known as "four minute men", would get up in crowded movie houses, in churches, at civic functions, or even on the street to deliver pro-war messages (p77).

By the end of the war, Creel had some seventy-five thousand speakers who gave four-minute talks on topics prepared for them by the committee. Dos Passos wrote, "in an astonishingly short time George Creel had the entire nation repeating every slogan which emanated from the President's desk in the wordy war to 'make the world safe for democracy'. (p78)"

The few figures who resisted, such as Bourne, Addams, Debs, Emma Goldman or Bertrand Russell became pariahs. The press accused them, with Creel's help, of being disloyal and pro-German. Addams noted that papers began to "make pacifist activity or propaganda so absurd that it would be absolutely without influence and its authors so discredited that nothing they might say or do would be regarded worthy of attention (p78).

*The Masses*, another left-wing journal, decided to cease publication for the duration of the war, but *Appeal to Reason* buckled and reluctantly agreed to back the war effort. The effect of Creel's work on American debate and culture was cataclysmic (p78).

The virus of nationalism infected every aspect of society. The severe weakening of popular forces during the war led to their obliteration when the war was ended. The war propaganda, which used fear as its engine, instantly switched the target of its hatred from Germans to communists (p79).

During the Palmer Raids on November 7 1919, more than ten thousand alleged communists and anarchists were arrested. "By a campaign of publicity and advertising on a scale history had never witnessed before, by chicanery and lying, by exaggeration and misrepresentation, by persistent and long-continued appeals to the basest as well as the noblest traits of man, by every imaginable and unprecedented manner and method, the great financial interests, eager for war, thrust humanity into the world war," wrote Berkman and Goldman (p80).

Many people had long supposed liberalism to be the freedom to know and say, not what was popular or convenient or even what was patriotic, but what they held to be true. Now those very liberals came to Hedges, Chris (2010). *Death of the Liberal Class*. Nation Books, New York.

realize that a distinct aftermath of the war was the dominance of the mass over the individual to such an extent that it constituted a veritable revolution in our social relationships (p80).

“It was, of course, the astounding success of propaganda during the war that opened the eyes of the intelligent few in all departments of life to the possibilities of regimenting the public mind,” wrote Edward Bernays in his 1928 book *Propaganda*. “It was only natural, after the war ended, that intelligent persons should ask themselves whether it was not possible to apply a similar technique to the problems of peace” (p81).

The Hun, the object of hatred and scorn during the war, was supplanted by the Bolshevik. Social manipulation through fear, which had consolidated the power of the elite during the war, was employed again and again to ferret out those attacked as “internal enemies” and ward off external ones (p81).

But it was corporate advertising, rather than government witch hunts, which would prove the most deadly (p81). The war launched the destruction of American cultures - through mass communication. It would turn consumption into an inner compulsion and eradicate difference (p82).

Old values of thrift, regional identity that had its own iconography, aesthetic expression and history, diverse immigrant traditions, self-sufficiency were destroyed by corporate culture. New desires and habits were implanted by corporate advertisers to replace old (p82).

Individual frustrations and discontents could be solved, corporate culture assured the populace, through the wonders of consumerism and cultural homogenization. American culture was replaced with junk culture and junk politics. Manufactured commodity culture became American culture (p82).

As newspapers consolidated into chains, local and independent voices were silenced (p82).

Civil and political discourse became poisoned by loyalty oaths, spy paranoia, and distrust of dissent. This manufactured fear used appeals to internal and external threats to persuade the country that it should devote a staggering half of all government spending to defence, following world war II, and pour billions more into its intelligence service to prop up heinous dictators in Latin America, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa in the name of the battle worldwide against communism (p83).

The quaint literary serials, poems, local reports, town debates, and other forms of popular expression that had once been so prominent in the press, vanished from the pages of mass produced newspapers. It was replaced by celebrity gossip; the new, angry rhetoric of the Cold War, and nationally syndicated columns. The papers became as commercialized and centralized as the rest of mass culture (p83).

The liberal class - buoyed by the rise of an independent press, militant labour unions, workers' houses, and anti-poverty campaigns embraced institutions, and especially the state, as tools for progress. The faith created a new form of liberalism that departed from “classical liberalism”.

While these two belief systems shared some of the same characteristics, including a respect for individual rights, the new liberal class was and remains distinctly utopian. It places its faith in practical state reforms to achieve a just society (p84).

Classical liberalism, while it embraced the goals of the Enlightenment, was colored by a healthy dose of skepticism about human perfectibility and acutely aware of the nature and potency of evil. Modern liberalism lost this awareness (p84).

Human institutions and government were seen as mechanisms, that under the right control, would inevitably better humankind. Before the war, the Wobblies led hundreds of thousands of industrial workers on walkouts (p86).

They conceived of themselves not simply as a union but a revolutionary movement. The Wobblies, unlike most other unions, included women, immigrants, and African Americans. They preached an uncompromising class struggle (p86).

But then the war was declared and it was over. Dwight Macdonald noted gloomily that “American radicalism was making great strides right up to 1914; the war was the rock on which it was shattered”. The suicidal impulses and industrial slaughter of World War I mocked the utopian vision of a heaven on earth and the inevitability of human progress embraced by the Social Gospel (p87).

The Swiss theologian Karl Barth tore apart the Social Gospel’s naïve belief that human beings could link the will of God to human endeavors. Christians, Barth argued, could neither envision nor create the kingdom of heaven on earth. The liberal church never found an adequate response to Barth’s critique. It retreated into a vague embrace of humanism and self-absorbed forms of spirituality (p87).

After the war, all systems of public discourse, communication and expression were “systematically designed to avoid including any information or knowledge that might encourage people to evaluate the situation”, said Stuart Ewen (p87).

By the late 1920s you have the emergence of a fairly elaborate social psychological apparatus designed to take the temperature of public emotions, not for the purpose of reporting on what people feel, but for the purpose of shaping what people feel (p87).

The liberal class, believing it had to fit its ideas into the new sloganeering of mass communications, began to communicate in the child-like vocabulary of simplistic sound bites demanded by commercial media (p88).

Intellectual debate, once a characteristic of the country’s political discourse, withered. The liberal class became seduced by the need for popular appeal. This was not a good thing: as in art, it is a deforming and crippling factor (p88).

The cultural embrace of simplification meant reducing a population to speaking in predigested clichés and slogans. It banished complexity and further pushed to the margins difficult, original, or unfamiliar ideas (p88).

The assault on radical and original thought, which by definition did not fit itself into the popular cultural lexicon, saw art forms such as theater suffer. The radical current in theater of the 1920s and 1930s brought potent new ways of thinking to audiences who had neither the time nor the inclination to read social theory (p88).

The theater became one of the last effective ways in which artists could compete with corporate consumerist culture by appealing to emotion and fact. It opposed mass propaganda by using many of the same methods of commercial propaganda (p88).

Dos Passos called for a theater that “draws its life and ideas from the conscious sections of the industrial and white collar working classes which are out to get control of the great flabby mass of capitalist society and mold it to their own purpose” (p89).

During the New Deal, the works progress administration, wpa, recruited Hallie Flanagan in 1935 to become the head of the Federal Theatre Project. This effort, which brought radicals and liberals together, became an effective tool for social change and perhaps the last potent counterweight to the propaganda state (p89).

Theater suddenly became available to people across the country. They produced high-quality works that spoke to ordinary lives and the misery that had engulfed the country. New plays, classical drama, modern drama, radio drama, puppet plays, Yiddish, Spanish, Italian and German Language theater; Hedges, Chris (2010). *Death of the Liberal Class*. Nation Books, New York.

children's theater, dance drama, musicals, religious drama, vaudeville and circuses - hundreds and hundreds of productions in every state of the union poured out of the project. It was the high point of American theater (p90).

The Cradle Will Rock, like much of the popular work that came out of the Federal Theatre Project, addressed the concerns of the working class rather than those of the power elite. It excoriated greed, corruption, the folly of war, the complicity of liberal institutions in protecting the power elite, and the abuses of capitalism (p90).

Money, as in the rest of the liberal establishment, rewarded those who behaved and did not speak or write from the bottom up. But the bolder and more popular the Federal Theatre Project became, the more it was accused of being a breeding ground for communism (p94).

In a popular children's play, The Revolt of the Beavers, actors dressed as beavers, rushing around on roller skates, overthrew an evil beaver king so all the beavers could eat ice cream, play, and be nine-years-old. Congressional critics attacked the beaver actors for disseminating communism (p94).

In 1939 the theater project was killed. Said Flanagan, "if this first government theater in our country had been less alive it might have lived longer. But I do not believe anyone who worked on it regrets that it stood from first to last against reaction, against prejudice, against racial, religious and political intolerance. It strove for a more dramatic statement and a better understanding of the great forces of our life today; it fought for a theater as one of the many expressions of a civilized informed and vigorous life" (p95).

The House Un-American Activities Committee, HUAC "terrorized and split the artistic community and, worse, it led to self-imposed censorship among American theater workers who, for the sake of their careers, largely fostered and accepted the notion that politics and art don't mix", Malped said (p95).

It was not until the civil rights movement that theater regained its energy. African American artists and playwrights cut their ties with the commercial theater, along with many white artists, to speak out of their own experience (p96).

The Living and Open theaters harbored many pacifists. The founders of these theaters often spent time in jail for non-violent civil disobedience against the Vietnam War. Richard Nixon, who remained frightened enough of the counterculture to attempt to placate its demands, encouraged the National Endowment for the Arts, which had been founded in 1965 (p97).

The NEA, at the start, funded the radical theater movements. Ticket prices were kept low, and, as in the 1930s, the productions attracted a wide and varied audience. When Ronald Reagan was elected in 1980, he immediately ordered that NEA grants to small - read leftist - theaters be abolished. Reaganism eroded the public perception that a great democracy deserves great art (p97).

Without government support for funding innovation and the non-commercial, the theater began to institutionalize and to censor itself. Some subjects were out of bounds altogether, including strong critiques of capitalism or American foreign policy, in other words, anything that might cause individual donors to stop donating (p98).

Theater, once again unplugged from what gave it vitality, became increasingly mediocre and was produced as spectacle or celebrity-driven entertainment. Audiences dwindled and aged. Critical debate onstage was largely banished. Entertainment became directed toward the mass, a set of statistics, at the "non-man" (p98).

Mass art denies the existence of individual taste or experience, of an individual conscience, or anything that differentiates people from one another. Art is an individual experience. It forces us to examine

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ourselves. It broadens perspective. Entertainment masquerading as art, by contrast, herds viewers and audiences into the collective (p98).

It limits perspective to that experienced by the mass. It is only when artists control their own work that great socially relevant theater can be sustained. The funding for this kind of work will never come out of the world of corporate sponsorships, which uses theater and the arts as a diversion (p99).

The new corporate capitalism and mass production sustained themselves through the promotion of a new ethic that promoted leisure, self-indulgence, and wasteful consumption, activities that called for traits such as charm, a pleasant appearance, and likeability. Consumption was more important than production (p100).

The new ethic of the liberal class was one that embraced the idea of salvation by child, which proposed a new educational system by which children are encouraged to develop their own personalities, to blossom freely like flowers, then the world will be saved by this new, free generation (p101).

It supported female equality. It embraced the therapeutic culture, the belief that if our individual repressions can be removed - by confessing them to a Freudian psychologist - then we can adjust ourselves to any situation, and be happy with it (p101).

The environment no longer needed to be altered, and that explains why most radicals who became converted to psychoanalysis gradually abandoned their political activism (p101).

Artistic expression soon became devoid of social purpose. It created the religion of art which inevitably led down blind alleys. Abstract painting emerged as the artistic expression of a sterile form of rebellion, an outgrowth of the apolitical absurdist and Dada movements (p102).

The intellectual and artistic class were welcomed into the embrace of consumer culture. As long as the liberal class did not seriously challenge capitalism, it was permitted a place in the churches, the universities, the unions, the press, the arts and the democratic party (p103).

Minimal reform, as well as open disdain for Puritanism was acceptable. A challenge to the sanctity of the capitalist system was not. Those who continued to attack these structures of capitalism, to engage in class warfare, were banished from the liberal cloisters (p103).

The final purges of radicals included the blacklisting of writers, actors, directors, journalists, union leaders and politicians. The purge was done with the collaboration of the liberal class. The complicity of the liberal class was, in part, a product of insecurity, especially since many reformers and liberals had flirted with communism during the depression, given the breakdown of capitalism in those years (p103).

But it was also the product of a craven careerism and desire for prestige and comfort. The scurrilous newsletter Counterattack promised to expose "communist" labor unions. It published a book which listed the alleged communist affiliations of 151 actors, writers, musicians and other radio and television entertainers (p103).

Movements and ideas that had once been acceptable were now beyond the pale. Though communists and their allies were the direct victims, the mainstream liberals and former New Dealers within the Democratic party were the indirect ones (p105).

The purges marked the last gasp of an era, one of progressive and radical artists who were allied with the working class movements and saw art as linked to the articulation and creation of social and political consciousness (p105).

In the wake of the witch hunts, networks such as CBS forced employees to sign loyalty oaths. Walt Disney and Ronald Reagan, President of the Screen Actors Guild, cooperated in hounding out artists deemed

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disloyal. Those who refused to cooperate with the witch hunts or who openly defied HUAC instantly became non-persons (p106).

The widespread dismissals of professors, elementary and highschool teachers, and public employees were often carried out quietly. The names of suspected “reds” were routinely handed to administrators and school officials under the FBI’s Responsibilities Program. It was up to the institutions, nearly all of which complied, to see that those singled out lost their jobs (p106).

Between ten and twelve thousand people were blackballed in the process - all instantly locked out of their profession. Unions, formerly steeped in the doctrine of class struggle and filled with those who sought broad social and political rights for the working class, collaborated with the capitalist class and merged with the liberal establishment (p107).

The embrace of fanatical anticommunism was, in essence, an embrace of the suspension of civil liberties, including freedom of speech and the right to organize, values the liberal class claimed to support (p107).

With the passage of Taft-Hartley the power of labor to fight back effectively against the corporate state died. Labour, once the beating heart of progressive radical movements, became as impotent as the arts, the media, the church, the universities, and the democratic party (p108).

## Politics as Spectacle

The radical upheavals of the 1960s were infused with the same hedonism and cult of the self that corrupted earlier twentieth-century counterculture movements. There was an open antagonism between most antiwar activists and the working class, whose sons were shipped to Vietnam while the sons of the middle class were often handed college deferrals (p109).

Working-class high schools sent twenty to thirty percent of their graduates to Vietnam during the height of the war, while college graduates made up two percent of all troops sent to Vietnam in 1965 and 1966 (p109).

Students who opposed the war were derided by the power elite, and many in the working class, as draft dodgers. Antiwar activists were portrayed as spoiled children of the rich and the middle class who advocated free love, drug use, communism, and social anarchy (p109).

The unions remained virulently anticommunist, spoke in the language of militarism and the cold war, and were largely unsympathetic to the civil-rights and antiwar movements. The AFL-CIO passed a resolution that read "The labor movements proclaims to the world that the nation's working men and women do support the Johnson administration in Vietnam" (p110).

Those who constituted the hard-core New Left, groups such as Students for a Democratic Society, SDS, found their inspiration in the liberation struggles in Vietnam and the third world rather than the labor movement, which they considered bought off by capitalism (p110).

The Black Panthers, the Nation of Islam, and the Weather Underground Organization, severed from the daily concerns of the working class, became as infected with the lust for violence and internal repression as the state system they defied (p110).

Only a few hundred radical Maoists, many of them living in communes in cities such as San Francisco, broke with the SDS and took jobs in factories as blue-collar workers in an attempt to organize the working class. But they were in a tiny minority (p110).

Protest in the 1960s was a movement that, while it incorporated a healthy dose of disrespect for authority, focused again on self-indulgent schemes for inner peace and fulfillment. The use of hallucinogenic drugs was a trend that would have dismayed the Wobblies or the militants in the old Communist Party (p110).

The counterculture of the 1960s, like the commodity culture, lured adherents inward. It set up the self as the primary center of concern. It too offered affirmative and therapeutic remedies to social problems that embraced vague, undefined, and utopian campaigns to remake society (p110).

There was no political vision, just a moral hollowness. These movements and the counterculture celebrities that led to them catered to the stage set for them by the television camera. Protest and court trials became street theater. Dissent became another media spectacle (p111).

Antiwar protestors in Berkeley switched from singing "Solidarity Forever" to "Yellow Submarine". The civil rights movement, which was rooted in the moral and religious imperatives of justice and self-sacrifice, was largely eclipsed by the self-centeredness of the New Left (p111).

Once the Vietnam war ended, once middle-class men no longer had to go to war, the movement disintegrated. The political and moral void within the counterculture meant it was an easy transition from college radical to a member of the liberal class (p111).

It shared commercial culture's hedonism, love of spectacle and preoccupation with the self (p111).

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Any movement that does not pay fealty to nonhistorical values of truth, justice and love inevitably collapses. The naïve belief in human progress through science, technology and mass production further eroded these non-historical values. By serving history and power, the liberal class, like the Marxists, surrendered their power and moral authority to the state. As Irving Howe noted: “it becomes a loose shelter, a poncho rather than a program; to call oneself a liberal one doesn't have to believe in anything” (p112).

The trust in the beneficence of the state, which led most of these liberal reformers naively to back the war effort, ceded uncontested power to the state during the war, especially the power to shape and mold public perceptions. The state, once it held these powers, never gave them up (p112).

Mass culture, and the state - the repository of the hopes and dreams of the liberal class- should have been seen as the enemy. The breach between the liberal class and the radical social and political movements it once supported or sympathized with was total. The rupture has left the liberal class without a repository of new ideas (p113).

The iron control of the arts is vital to the power elite, as important as control of the political and economic process, the universities, the media, the labour movement, and the church. Art gives people a language by which they can understand themselves and their society (p113).

And the corporate power structure was determined to make sure artists spoke in a language that did not threaten their entitlement. The liberal class, especially its most elitist and snobbish elements was used to help distance art from the masses, portrayed as too unsophisticated and uneducated to appreciate or understand authentic artistic expression (p113).

Museums and their arrogant curators appointed themselves as the arbiters of high culture. These liberal institutions ruthlessly filtered out artistic expression that confronted or exposed the darker side of the power elite. They championed abstract painters who had abandoned their earlier radicalism (p113).

Artistic expression became as domesticated and depoliticized as union activity, journalism, scholarship and political discourse. Art schools have become as utilitarian as journalism schools. Art schools train students not to be powerful in society but to fit into the art world, but not into the world as it exists (p115).

Most people if asked would say that art exists to infuse the world with beauty and vitality. But it is not understood, except by the art world itself, as a legitimate arena for controversy and debate. In this society, art is not defined within the arena of real power - namely, politics (p115).

Art schools produce the specialist, the expert groomed to conform to the tastes of the power elite. These specialists must master narrow, arcane subjects and disciplines rather than reflect on and challenge systems of power (p115).

The specialists reign over a tiny, often irrelevant kingdom and ignore pressing moral and social questions that require a broader understanding of the human condition. The specialist cedes questions of power to the elite. The specialist justifies this moral abrogation by believing what he or she is told (p115).

They are qualified only to speak about their minutiae of their area of study or discipline. And the specialist, once he or she corners an obscure topic, locks out the nonspecialist through the use of unnecessarily obscure vocabulary and opaque data (p115).

Liberal institutions and the power elite, from the media to museums to universities, determine who is permitted to dominate these specialized fields. The wider society, conditioned to rely on the specialist for its interpretation of reality, is fed approved assumptions (p115).

And this system is perfectly designed to reproduce itself. Universities, by demanding that professors attain doctorates, almost always written on narrow and obscure specializations approved by faculty committees, replenish their ranks with the timid and mediocre (p115).

The artist, like the specialist or the professor, is plugged into a system where he or she serves the interests and tastes of the power elite. The choice may be between high and low culture, but in each sphere members of the liberal class dare not risk losing their prestige and employment by defying the structures of power (p115).

Playwrights end up writing inane television scripts. Graphic artists draw and animate for corporations. Actors pay the rent by doing commercials and voiceovers. Filmmakers, editors, and writers sell themselves to corporate advertising agencies. And those on the upper end of the cultural spectrum, the tenured professors and cultural critics, speak and write only for one another like medieval theologians (p116).

Those who insist on remaining independent are locked out. Those who think, write, paint, film or sculpt in ways that defy the specialists or the demands of commercialized mass culture must break from the institutions run by the liberal class (p116).

Intentionally obscure art is used as an implicit insult to the lower classes when direct slurs are no longer acceptable (p117).

Today's sanctified works of art are essentially financial vehicles - stripped of burdensome humanity (p118). The biggest obstacle to the artist of conscience is the mainstream media. When the corporate media chooses to ignore serious political art, it marginalizes it. Millions of people who might see, read, or hear art, don't (p119).

Their questions, ideas, feelings are not validated by witnessing them portrayed accurately in art. Art tells many people that it's ok to think and feel unpopular things. Without that assurance, people are often isolated with their own perception of reality and will retreat to official conformity and the comfort of patriotism, even when it betrays the ideals it is meant to support (p119).

Millions of young people were radicalized to act for political causes, not by reading essays and taking courses, but by the spurring of art. Art told them their consciences were right. They could trust Bob Dylan and not LBJ or Nixon. Try to imagine the civil-rights or the antiwar movements without music (p120).

If the intent of the corporate media was to build a consensus good for profit, and that profit derived from war, exploitation, and imperialism, all they had to do was not report on or play art that carried a message of peace and resistance (p120).

It's not censorship. The artists are free to speak and produce. But not many people will know about it (p120).

"It's curious that we live at a time when 'art' is often described as literally anything the artist or critic says it is", said Shetterly. "The media accepts this definition... except when the art is political".

When we think about societies and civilizations of the past, what do we know about them? We know them through their art, which is what endures and communicates the given psyche of the people at that time (p121).

It is the task of the artist or the intellectual to translate troubles into issues and issues into terms of their human meaning for the individual. The failure to make knowledge and artistic expression relevant to human reality has left the public unable to see the roots of their own biases and frustrations, nor think clearly about themselves, nor for that matter about anything else (p122).

Hedges, Chris (2010). *Death of the Liberal Class*. Nation Books, New York.

The professor has become part of a petty hierarchy, almost completely closed in by its middle class environment and its segregation of intellectual from social life... mediocrity makes its own rules and sets its own image of success (p122).

They have abandoned politics for administration and personal success. The loss of will and even of ideas among intellectuals is due not simply to political defeat and internal decay of radical parties. The liberal class who accept their appointed slots in educational, state, institutional, and media bureaucracies have sold their souls (p122).

The new left of the 1960s turned out to be a mirage. The rupture within American politics was so severe that when the New Left arose, it had no roots. It existed in a historical vacuum. The counterculture of the 1960s, although it attracted a wide following at the height of the Vietnam War, never replicated the power of the Popular Front of the 1930s, which had included the working class and mixed social, labour and political movements (p123).

The New Left that arose in the 1960s was a fractured deracinated movement that could never reconstruct the ideological and cultural unity of its predecessors or overcome its own divisions. Even today, what passes for the left, the identity politics, lacks the sense of interconnectedness that disappeared with the lost world of American Communism (p123).

Protests, rather than disrupt manufacturing or the systems run by the power elite, usually become a media spectacle. The left and the right played their roles before the cameras. Politics had become theater (p123).

The militancy of previous generations had been erased from collective consciousness. The counterculture busied itself with disengagement rather than transformation. The appearance of decent and honorable political figures may have offered a moment of hope, but the traditional Democratic establishment not only colluded with Richard Nixon to crush McGovern in the 1972 presidential election, but also slyly rewrote party nominating rules so a McCarthy or a McGovern would never be able again to get the nomination (p123).

By now, the domesticated liberal class, represented in the political arena by the Democratic Party, needed no prompting to defend the interests of the power elite. It was a full member of the club (p123).

Marxists now became culture and literary critics. These theorists invested their energy in multiculturalism, with branches such as feminist studies, queer studies and African American studies. The inclusion of voices often left out of the traditional academic canon certainly enriched the university. But multiculturalism, rather than leading to a critique of structures and systems that consciously excluded and impoverished the poor and the marginal, became an end in itself (p124).

Stripped of a radical idiom, robbed of a utopian hope, liberals and leftists retreat in the name of progress to celebrate diversity. With few ideas on how a future should be shaped, they embrace all ideas. Pluralism becomes a catchall, the alpha and omega of political thinking (p124).

Dressed up as multiculturalism, it has become the opium of disillusioned intellectuals, the ideology of an era without an ideology. Political debate was replaced by multicultural discourse. Public values were subordinated to torturous textual analysis. There was nothing worth investigating, these poststructuralists insisted, outside of the text (p124).

Compared to the last generation of genuine, independent public intellectuals they have produced nothing of substance or worth. Their work has no vision, other than perhaps calling for more diverse voices in the academy (p124).

It is technical, convoluted, self-referential, and filled with so much academic jargon that it is unreadable (p124).

Hedges, Chris (2010). *Death of the Liberal Class*. Nation Books, New York.

While it seems on the surface to be a movement for social change, the campaign for cultural diversity does little to perturb the power elite. It does not challenge economic or political structures that are rapidly disempowering the working class (p125).

Making sure people of diverse races or sexual orientations appear on television shows or in advertisements merely widens the circle of new consumers. Multiculturalism is an appeal that pleads with the corporate power structure for inclusion (p125).

The appeal was achieved politically with the election of Barack Obama. It has seen the establishment of multicultural departments in many universities. The radical multiculturalists have internalized the rule that governs academia: write and teach what you want, but if you take a public stand that defies conventional mores and established structures, you risk your career (p125).

Universities hire by committee. It is not scholarship or ideas but collegiality and conformity committees prize most. And those who do receive tenure, after an average of seven years, long enough to integrate into the dominant culture, are rewarded for being conformists, not iconoclasts (p126).

The modern university by its conservative inertia, has become the most hostile place for the pursuit of truth. And tenure, once deemed precious, has become the most wasted, irrelevant principle. The lack of job security further inhibits any propensity to write or speak about topics that have political or social relevance (p126).

It is better for one's career to stay away from politics and wallow in the arcane world of departmental intrigue and academic gibberish. The media, like the university, are required to stay aloof from the issues of the day (p126).

The media, too, must assume the role of disinterested and impartial observers. This was, for those of us reporting on wars in Central America, the Middle East, and the Balkans, an impossibility. It is difficult to witness human suffering and not feel (p126).

But to express those emotions in the newsroom was to risk being reassigned or pushed aside by editors who demanded emotional disengagement. Those who feel in newsrooms are viewed as lacking impartiality and objectivity. They cannot be trusted (p126).

Journalists, unlike academics, have to intersect with the public. They write and speak to be understood. And for this reason they are more powerful and more closely monitored and controlled than other writers and speakers (p131).

Commercial media impart to the public a sense of self. Media tell members of the public who they are. They tell them what their aspirations should be. They promise to help them achieve these aspirations. They offer a variety of techniques, advice and schemes that promise eventual success (p132).

They tend to neglect reality - they don't run stories about how life is hard, fame and fortune elusive, hopes disappointed, and instead celebrate idealized identities - those that, in a commodity culture, revolve around the acquisition of status, money, fame and power, or at least the illusion of these things (p131).

The media, in other words, assist the commercial culture in "need creation", prompting consumers to want things they don't need or have never really considered wanting. And catering to those needs, largely implanted by advertisers and corporate culture, is a very profitable business (p132).

A major part of the commercial media revolves around selling consumers images and techniques to "actualize" themselves, or offering deductive forms of escape through entertainment and spectacle. News is filtered into the mix, but actual news is not the predominant concern of the commercial media (p132).

Hedges, Chris (2010). *Death of the Liberal Class*. Nation Books, New York.

Pick up any daily newspaper. At most, fifteen percent of the content in its pages is devoted to news. The rest is devoted to ways to feel or become a success. Reporters who persist in raising inconvenient questions, like academics who practice moral and independent scholarship, do not usually advance within liberal institutions (p132).

Liberal institutions were created to make the world a better place. They were designed to give a voice to those who were shunted aside, abused, and ignored by the larger society. Throughout their history, they have promised to protect the common good, educate, and fight injustice (p138).

These institutions, when they function, keep alive qualities that defy the raw greed of unchecked capitalism. The tragedy of the liberal class and the institutions it controls is that it succumbed to opportunism and finally to fear. It abrogated its moral role. It did not defy corporate abuse when it had the chance (p139).

It exiled those within its ranks who did. And the defanging of the liberal class not only removed all barriers to neofeudalism and corporate abuse but also ensured that the liberal class, in its turn, will be swept aside (p139).

Our oldest universities were formed to train ministers and inculcate into students the primacy of the common good. Labour unions had a vision of an egalitarian society that understood the inevitability of class struggle. Artists sought not only to explain social, political and economic reality, but also to use this understanding to fight for a social order based on justice (p139).

Movements that defied the power elite often started and sustained these liberal institutions, which were created as instruments of reform. One by one, these institutions succumbed to the temptation of money, the jargon of patriotism, belief in the need for permanent war, fear of internal and external enemies, and distrust of radicals, who had once kept the liberal class honest (p139).

And when it was over, the liberal class had nothing left to say. The remnants of the liberal class, and the hollow institutions they inhabit, flee from those who speak in the strange and unfamiliar tongue of liberty and justice.

## Liberal Defectors

The liberal class's disposal of its most independent and courageous members has long been part of its pathology. The liberal class could afford this rate of attrition as long as the power elite remained accountable to the citizenry, managed power with a degree of responsibility and justice, governed so that it could still respond to the common good, and accepted some of the piecemeal reforms proposed by the liberal class (p141).

But as the state was slowly hijacked by corporations, the liberal class purged itself of the only members who had the fortitude and vision to save it from irrelevance. The final phase of total corporate control, which began with Ronald Reagan, saw the steady assimilation of corporate ideology into liberal thought (p142).

It meant that the liberal class was forced to discard the principle tenets of liberalism. The liberal class, its institutions controlled by corporations, was soon mouthing the corporate mantra that economics and the marketplace, rather than human beings, should guide political and economic behaviour. Free market capitalism, a distinctly illiberal belief system, soon defined liberal thought (p142).

By the time the touted beliefs of globalization were exposed as a sham, it was too late. The liberal class was complicit in the rise of a new global oligarchy and the crushing poverty visited in globalization's wake on the poor and the working class (p142).

It abetted the decline of the middle class - the very basis of democracy. It has permitted, in the name of progress, the dismantling of the manufacturing sector, leaving huge pockets of postindustrial despair and poverty behind (p142).

But it would be a mistake to assume that the liberal class was simply seduced by the utopian promises of globalism. It was also seduced by careerism. Those who mouthed the right words, who did not challenge the structures being cemented into place by the corporate state, who assured the working class that the suffering was temporary and would be rectified in the new world order, were rewarded (p142).

They were given public platforms on television and in the political arena. They were held up to the wider society as experts, sages and specialists. Independent thought is an instant career killer. Doors shut, No longer are you invited on the television talk shows, given grants, feted in the university, interviewed on CNN, given tenure, or asked to write op-ed pieces in the New York Times (p143).

There is no cost to being wrong if the policies of the power elite are lauded. There is, however, a tremendous cost to being defiant, even if that defiance is prescient and correct. The liberal class, seeking personal and financial advancement as well as continued entrée into the inner circles of power, is not concerned with the moral but with the practical (p143).

As Edward Said wrote: "You do not want to appear too political; you are afraid of seeming controversial; you want to keep a reputation for being balanced, objective, moderate; your hope is to be asked back, to consult, to be on a board or prestigious committee, and so to remain within the responsible mainstream; someday you hope to get an honorary degree, a big prize, perhaps even an ambassadorship".

In *The Treason of Intellectuals*, Julien Benda argued that it is only when intellectuals are not in pursuit of practical aims or material advantages that they can serve as a conscience and a corrective. Once intellectuals transfer allegiance to the practical aims of power and material advantage, they emasculate themselves as intellectuals (p144).

The scholar may be highly useful as an intelligent decision maker, but not as a scholar. Those within the liberal class who challenge the orthodoxy of belief, who question reigning political passions, are usually removed from liberal institutions (p145).

The list of apostates, those once feted and ruthlessly banished by the liberal class, is long. It includes all those who refused, in the end, to “be practical” and serve power (p145). Liberals are expected by the power elite to police their own (p152).

The liberal class is expected to mask the brutality of imperial war and corporate malfeasance by deploring the most egregious excesses while studiously refusing to question the legitimacy of the power elite’s actions and structures (p153).

When dissidents step outside these boundaries, they become pariahs. Specific actions can be criticized, but motives, intentions and the moral probity of the power elite cannot be questioned (p153).

The liberal class has ossified. It has become part of the system it once tried to reform. It continues to speak in the language of technical jargon and tepid political reform, even though the corporate state has long since gutted the mechanisms of actual reform (p153).

The failure by the liberal class to adjust to the harsh new reality of corporate power and the permanent war economy, to acknowledge its own powerlessness, has left the liberal class isolated and despised. The liberal class has died because it refused to act as if anything had changed (p135).

It ignored the looming environmental and economic collapse. It ignored the structural critique that might pull us back from the horrific effects of climate change and a global depression. Our power elite and their liberal apologists lack the ideas and the vocabulary to make sense of our new and terrifying reality (p153).

We have entered a historical vacuum. The systems built around the old beliefs have failed, but new alternatives have yet to be articulated. The longer the power elite and the liberal class speak in words that no longer correspond to reality, the more an embittered and betrayed populace loses faith in traditional systems of government and power (p153).

The inability of liberals and the power elite to address our reality leaves the disenfranchised open to manipulation by demagogues. The moral nihilism Dostoyevsky feared with the collapse of the liberal class inevitably leads to social chaos (p153).

Alan Greenspan, the former head of the Federal Reserve Board, once treated with reverential deference by the power elite and the liberal class, announced in 2008, “I made a mistake in presuming that the self-interest of organizations, were such that they were best capable of protecting their own shareholders and their equity in their firms” (p153).

Greenspan exposed the folly of the liberal experts and economists, who had promoted a baseless belief in the power of free markets to self-regulate and solve the world’s problems. In holding up to what amounts to a strenuously defended utopianism, these leaders ignored three thousand years of economic and human history to serve a corporate ideology (p154).

All the promises of the free market have turned out to be lies (p154).

The mechanisms of control, which usually work to maintain a high level of fear among the populace, have produced, despite these admissions of failure, the “patriotic” citizen, plagued by job losses, bankrupted by medical bills, foreclosed on his or her house, and worried about possible terrorist attacks (p154).

Hedges, Chris (2010). *Death of the Liberal Class*. Nation Books, New York.

In this historical vacuum, the “patriotic” citizen clings to the privilege of being a patriot - or, perhaps, the double privilege of being white and a patriot. The retreat into a tribal identity is a desperate attempt to maintain self-worth and self-importance at a time of deep personal and ideological confusion (p154).

The “patriotic” citizen, although abused by the actual policies of the state, unfailingly supports widespread surveillance and permanent war. The “patriotic” citizen does not question the \$1 trillion in defense-related spending (p154).

The “patriotic” citizen accepts that the eighteen military and civilian intelligence agencies, most of whose work is now outsourced to private corporations, are held above government. The “patriotic” citizen accepts the state’s assertion that it needs more police, prisons, inmates, spies, mercenaries, weapons, and troops than any other industrialized nation (p154).

The “patriotic” citizen objects when anyone suggests that military budgets can be cut, that troops need to come home, that domestic policies need more attention than the pursuit of permanent war. The military-industrial lobbies have ensured that military budgets are untouchable (p154).

The “patriotic” citizen admires the military and somehow pretends that the military is not part of the government. In the name of patriotism, the most powerful instruments of state power and control are effectively removed from public discussion (p154).

We endure more state control than at any time in U.S. history. And the liberal class whose task was once to monitor and protest the excesses of the power elite, has assisted in the rout (p154).

The failure by the liberal class to articulate an alternative in a time of financial and environmental collapse, clears the way for military values of hypermasculinity, blind obedience and violence. A confused culture disdains the empathy and compassion espoused by traditional liberalism (p154).

This cruelty runs like an electric current through reality television and trash-talk programs, where contestants endure pain and humiliation while they betray and manipulate those around them in a ruthless world of competition (p155).

These are the values championed by an increasingly militarized society and the manipulation and dishonesty of Wall Street. Friendship, trust, solidarity, honesty and compassion are banished for the unadulterated world of competition (p155).

This hypermasculinity, the core of pornography, fuses violence and eroticism, as well as the physical and emotional degradation of women. It is the language employed by the corporate state. Human beings are reduced to commodities. Corporations, which are despotic, authoritarian enclaves devoted to maximizing profit and ensuring that all employees speak from the same prompt cards, have infected the wider society with their values (p155).

Hypermasculinity crushes the capacity for moral autonomy, difference, and diversity. It isolates us from one another. It has its logical fruition in Abu Ghraib prison, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, along with our lack of compassion for our poor, our mentally ill, our unemployed, our sick and our gay, lesbian, transgender and bisexual citizens. It is the antithesis of liberalism (p155).

A militarized culture attacks all that is culturally defined as feminine, including love, gentleness, compassion and acceptance of difference. It sees any sexual ambiguity as a threat to male “hardness” and the clearly defined roles required by the militarized state (p155).

The elevation of military values as the highest good sustains this perverted ethic, rigid social roles, and emotional numbness. The collapse of liberalism permits the hypermasculinity of a militarized society to redefine the nation (p155).

Hedges, Chris (2010). *Death of the Liberal Class*. Nation Books, New York.

Sexual metaphors of abuse and rape are used to justify imperial and military power. And once the remnants of the liberal class adopt the heartless language of sexual violence, they assent, consciously or not, to the rule of corporate greed and violence (p155).

The liberal class lacks the fortitude and the ideas to protect the decaying system. It speaks in a twilight rhetoric that no longer corresponds to our reality. But the fiction of democracy remains useful, not only for corporations, but also for the bankrupt liberal class (p156).

If the fiction is exposed as a lie, liberals will be forced to consider actual resistance, which will be neither pleasant nor easy. As long as a democratic façade exists, liberals can engage in a useless moral posturing that requires no sacrifice or commitment (p156).

They can be the self-appointed scolds of the Democratic Party, acting as if they are part of the debate, vindicated by their pathetic cries of protest. The best opportunities for radical social change exist among the poor, the working class, and the destitute (p156).

We must protest, learn to live simply and begin, in an age of material and imperial decline, to speak with a new humility. It is in the tangible, mundane, and difficult work of forming groups and communities to take care of others that we will kindle the outrage and the moral vision to fight back, that we will articulate an alternative (p157).

Dorothy Day, who died in 1980 founded the catholic worker movement with Peter Maurin in the midst of the Great Depression. The two Catholic anarchists published the first issue of the catholic worker newspaper in 1933 (p157).

Those within the Worker worry that economic dislocation will empower right-wing, nationalist movements and the apocalyptic fringe of the Christian Right. This time around, they say, the country does not have the networks of labour unions, independent media, community groups, and church and social organizations that supported them when Day and Maurin began the movement (p158).

They note that there are fewer and fewer young volunteers at the Worker, The two houses on the Lower East Side depend as much on men and women in their fifties and sixties as they do on recent graduates. "Our society is more brutal than it was", says Martha Hennessy, Day's granddaughter. "The heartlessness was introduced by Reagan. Clinton put it into place. The ruthlessness is backed up by technology. Americans have retreated into collective narcissism. They are disconnected from themselves and others" (p158).

As our society begins to feel the disastrous ripple effects from the looting of our financial system, the unravelling of our empire, the effects of climate change and the accelerated impoverishment of the working and middle classes, hope will come only through direct contact with the destitute, and this hope will be neither impartial nor objective (p158).

The ethic born out of this contact will be grounded in the real and the possible. This ethic, because it forces us to witness suffering and pain, will be uncompromising in its commitment to the sanctity of life (p158).

"There are several families with us, destitute families, destitute to an unbelievable extent, and there, too, is nothing to do but to love. What I mean is there is no chance of rehabilitation, no chance, as far as we can see, of changing them; certainly no chance of adjusting them to this abominable world around them (p158).

While all empires rise and fall, it is the religious and moral values, and the nonhistorical values, of compassion, simplicity, love and justice that endure and alone demand fealty. The current decline of American power is part of the cycle of human civilisations (p161).

Those who seek a just society, who seek to defy war and violence, who decry the assault of globalization and degradation of the environment, who care about the plight of the poor, should stop worrying about the practical short-term effects of resistance (p162).

No resistance movement can survive without a vigorous and disciplined spiritual core. "We went into situations in court and in prison and in the underground that could easily have destroyed us and that did destroy others who did not have our preparation" (p162).

The decline of the Catholic Church, traditional Protestant denominations, and liberal Jewish synagogues was a body blow to the liberal class. These religious institutions purged radicals as ruthlessly as their secular counterparts, and became as useless as the other pillars of the liberal establishment (p162).

It's fair to say that the early civil-rights movement would not have succeeded without white liberal support. But this changed in the 1960s and 1970s, when Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X didn't want white folks speaking for them, and had far more charismatic speakers themselves (p163).

Same for the women's movement. Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem, Germaine Greer were miles ahead, and wanted to speak for themselves. After Stonewall, they gays also spoke for themselves. This left white liberals with no role in society (p163).

They were welcome to follow the black, women, gay leaders, but not to speak for them. When they could no longer speak for anybody, they started the political correctness movement. The inane brilliance of this was that, by inventing disadvantaged groups, nobody could say they didn't have the right to speak for them (p163).

It is only when radicals exist that the commercial media wake from their slumber. The news media reached their peak in the 1960s and 1970s with the publication of the Pentagon Papers, the coverage of Watergate, and the reporting of the Vietnam War (p168).

This reporting took place against a backdrop of social unrest, including the civil-rights movement and the antiwar movement, and a discrediting of established centers of power. Mass movements acquired, if not formal political power, at least enough power to demand a voice (p168).

The acceptable debate between the two wings of the power elite broke down. The alternative press, including magazines such as Ramparts, exposed the egregious assaults on civil liberties directed at those outside the circles of established power and ignored by the liberal class (p168).

The pressure was an example of how important radical movements are for the vitality of the liberal class. Once Richard Nixon began to use illegal tactics against the liberal establishment, the commercial press fought back (p168).

The Watergate scandal, mythologized as an example of a vigorous press, in fact illustrates the deference the liberal class pays to power and privilege. Nixon had long engaged in similar illegalities against antiwar groups and dissidents such as Daniel Ellsberg, as well as against alternative publications, such as Ramparts, with little or no reaction from the liberal class (p169).

Nixon's fatal mistake was to use these illegal tactics on the liberal class itself. Once the Democratic Party and the liberal class became targets of Nixon's illegalities, the media were empowered to expose abuses they had previously ignored (p169).

Hedges, Chris (2010). *Death of the Liberal Class*. Nation Books, New York.

Howard Zinn in *The People's History of the United States* examined history through the eyes of Native Americans, immigrants, slaves, women, union leaders, persecuted socialists, anarchists and communists, abolitionists, antiwar activists, civil rights leaders, and the poor (p169).

Zinn's work has been castigated by many academic historians, largely because he broke with the mold of writing about the great and the powerful. Zinn related history as it was experienced by people and he imploded numerous national foundation myths from the hijacking of the American Revolution by the wealthy, slave owning elite, to the treachery exhibited by European settlers towards Native Americans (p169).

Zinn also exposed the clay feet of the founding fathers, including George Washington, who was the richest man in the nation after the revolution, and national idols such as Abraham Lincoln, whose opposition to slavery was never emphatic or even principled (p169).

Zinn's honesty perhaps explains why the FBI, which released its 423-page file in July 2010, saw him as a threat. Zinn was a threat not because he was a violent revolutionary or a communist but because he was fearless and told the truth (p170).

The FBI, although Zinn was never suspected of carrying out a crime, eventually labels Zinn a high security risk. J. Edgar Hoover, who took a personal interest in Zinn's activities, on January 10, 1964, drew up a memo to include Zinn "in Reserve Index, Section A", a classification that permitted agents to immediately arrest and detain Zinn if there was a national emergency (p170).

FBI agents in November 1953 wrote up an account of a clumsy attempt to recruit Zinn as an informant, an attempt in which they admitted that Zinn "would not volunteer information" and that "additional interviews with Zinn would not turn him from his current activities" (p171).

The FBI, which describes Zinn as a former member of the Communist Party, something Zinn repeatedly denied, appears to have picked up its surveillance when Zinn, who was teaching at Spelman, a historically black women's college, became involved in the civil rights movement (p171).

He took his students out of the classroom to march for civil rights. Spelman's president was not pleased. "I was fired for insubordination", Zinn recalled, "Which happened to be true". We are amassing unprecedented volumes of secret files, and carrying out extensive surveillance and harassment. And a few decades from now maybe we will be able to examine the work of the latest generation of dimwitted investigators who have been unleashed upon us in secret by the tens of thousands (p173).

Did any of the agents who followed Zinn ever realize how they wasted their time? Do those following us around comprehend how manipulated they are. Do they understand that their primary purposes, as it was with Zinn, is not to prevent terrorism but discredit and destroy social movements as well as protect the elite from those who would expose them (p173)?

Zinn knew that if we do not listen to the stories of those without power, those who suffer discrimination and abuse, those who struggle for justice, we are left parroting the manufactured myths that serve the interests of the privileged. Zinn found that challenging these myths turned him into a pariah (p173).

The descent of Ralph Nader, from being one of the most respected and powerful public figures in the country to being an outcast, illustrates perhaps better than any other narrative the totality of our corporate coup and the complicity of the liberal class in our disempowerment (p173).

Between 1966 and 1973, Congress passed twenty-five pieces of consumer legislation, nearly all of which Nader had a hand in authoring. By 1973, Nader was named the fourth most influential person in the country (p175).

Hedges, Chris (2010). *Death of the Liberal Class*. Nation Books, New York.

When Reagan, the corporate pitchman, swept into office, he set out to dismantle some thirty governmental regulations, most put into place by Nader and his allies. All of them curbed the activities of corporations. The Reagan white house gutted twenty years of Nader legislation. And Nader, once a fixture on Capitol Hill, was thrust into the wilderness (p177).

Nader, however, did not give up. He turned to local community organizing, assisting grassroots campaigns around the country, such as the one to remove benzene, known to cause cancer, from paint in GM car plants (p177).

But by the time Bill Clinton and Al Gore took office, the corporate state was unassailable. Nader and his citizen committees were frozen out by democrats as well as republicans. Clinton and Gore never met with Nader while in office, despite Gore's reputed concern for the environment (p177).

Establishment liberals express a fascinating rage against Nader. The most common charge is that Nader is an egomaniac. Their anger is the anger of the betrayed. But they were not betrayed by Nader. They betrayed themselves (p178).

They bought into the facile argument of the least worst and ignored the deeper subterranean corporate assault on our democracy that Nader has always addressed. The anger they express is the anger of an exposed liberal class (p178).

It was an incompetent, corporatized Democratic Party, along with orchestrated fraud by the Republican Party, which threw the 2000 election to Bush. It was not Nader's fault. Nader argues that there are few differences between the Democrats and the Republicans. And during the Bush administration the Democrats proved him right (p178).

They authorized the war in Iraq. They stood by as Bush stacked the judiciary with "Christian" ideologues. They let Bush, in violation of the constitution, pump hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars into faith-based organizations that discriminate based on religious creed and sexual orientation (p178).

They permitted American children to get fleeced by No Child Left Behind. They did not protest when federal agencies began to propagate "christian" pseudoscience about creationism, reproductive rights and homosexuality (p179).

And the Democrats let Bush further dismantle regulatory agencies, strip American citizens of constitutional rights under the Patriot Act and other draconian legislation, and thrust impoverished Americans aside through passage of a corporate-sponsored bankruptcy bill (p179).

And then the Democrats helped transfer hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars to Wall Street. If the Democratic Party and the liberal class had challenged corporate welfare, corporate crime, the Wall Street bailouts, and issues such as labour law reform, if it stood up to these behemoths on behalf of the working and middle classes, rather than mutter thought-terminating cliches about American greatness, they could rally a disgusted public behind them (p179).

Nader's status as a pariah corresponded with an unchecked assault on the working class by corporations and their tacit allies in the liberal class. We are rapidly becoming a third-world country, cannibalized by corporations with two-thirds of the population facing severe financial difficulty and poverty (p181).

The system is broken. And the consumer advocate who represented the best of our democracy, and the best of the liberal class, was broken with it. The corporate media, which abet our vast historical amnesia, do nothing to remind us how we got here. They speak in the empty slogans handed to them by public relations firms, corporate paymasters, and the sound-bite society (p182).

Hedges, Chris (2010). *Death of the Liberal Class*. Nation Books, New York.

The right wing has won through intimidation. This intimidation works especially well in a culture of permanent war. In the months leading up to the war in Iraq, there were many credible critics, including former U.N. inspectors such as Hans Blix, who questioned the lies used to justify the invasion and occupation, but the media refused to include independent voices. The case for war, any war, is almost always presented without significant comment or criticism from the liberal class (p183).

Liberals are reduced to arguing over tactics. Martin Luther King Day has become a yearly ritual that seeks to turn a black radical into a red-white-and-blue icon. It is a day filled with old sound bites about little black children and little white children, that, given the state of America, would enrage King (p184).

Most of our great social reformers are sanitized for mainstream public consumption after their deaths, and turned into harmless props of American glory. King was not only a socialist but also fiercely opposed to American militarism (p184).

He was aware, especially at the end of his life, that racial justice without economic justice was a farce. Malcom X, who could never be an establishment icon because of his refusal to appeal to the white ruling class and liberal elite, converged with King's teachings in the last months of his life (p184).

But it would be wrong to look at this convergence as a domestication of Malcom X. Malcom influenced King as deeply as King influenced Malcom. At the end of their lives, each saw the many faces of racism and realised that the issue was not simply sitting at a lunch counter with whites but rather being able to afford the lunch (p185).

King grew up in the black middle class. He was well educated and comfortable in the cultural and social circles of the liberal class. He admitted that until his early twenties, life had been wrapped up for him like "a Christmas present" (p185).

Malcom grew up in urban poverty in Detroit, dropped out of school in eighth grade, was shuttled between foster homes, and eventually ended up in prison. There was no evidence in his hard life of a political order that acknowledged his humanity or dignity (p185).

The white people he knew did not exhibit a conscience or compassion. King came to appreciate Malcom's insights, especially after he confronted the insidious racism in Chicago. Malcom saw that white people did not have a conscience that could be appealed to to bring justice for African Americans (p186).

King realized that near the end of his life. He began to call most whites 'unconscious racists'. The crude racist rhetoric of the past has now been replaced by a refined, polite variety. We pretend there is equality of equal opportunity while ignoring the institutional and economic racism that infects our inner cities and fills our prisons, where a staggering one in nine black men between the ages of 20 and 34 is incarcerated (p186).

There are more African American men behind bars than in college. The cell block has replaced the auction block.

King and Malcolm would have excoriated a nation that spends \$3 trillion waging imperial wars in the Middle East and trillions more to fill the accounts of Wall Street banks while abandoning its poor. They would have denounced the liberals who mouth platitudes about justice while supporting a party that slavishly serves the moneyed elite (p188).

These men spoke on behalf of people who had nothing left with which to compromise. And for this reason they did not compromise and because of that, they were killed. If King and Malcolm had lived, they, too, would have become pariahs, victims of the liberal class (p189).

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Our destitute working class now understands that the cloying feel-your-pain language of the liberal class is a lie. The liberal class is not attempting to prevent wages from sinking, unemployment from mounting, foreclosures from ripping apart communities, or jobs from being exported (p190).

The gap between a stark reality and the happy illusions peddled by smarmy television news personalities, fatuous academic and financial experts, oily bureaucrats and politicians, is becoming too wide to ignore. Those cast aside are often willing to listen to anyone, no matter how buffoonish or ignorant, who promises that the parasites and courtiers who serve the corporate state will disappear (p190).

Right-wing rage is becoming synonymous with right-wing populism. Now that unions have been broken, rapacious corporations like Fed Ex and toadies in Congress and the White House are transforming our working class into serfs (p191).

A country that stops taking care of its own, that loses the capacity for empathy and compassion, that crumples up human beings and throws them away when it is done with them, breeds dark ideological monsters that will inevitably rise to devour the body politic (p191).

## Rebellion

All resistance must now recognize that the corporate coup d'état is complete. We must not waste our energy trying to reform or appeal to systems of power. This does not mean an end of resistance, but it does mean very different forms of resistance (p193).

The economic devastation of global capitalism will soon be matched by ecological devastation. The liberal class's decision to abet the destruction of the global economy was matched by its tacit decision to abet the corporate destruction of the ecosystem on which human life depends (p193).

The liberal class which clings to the decaying ideologies used to justify globalism and imperialism, which has refused to defy the exploitation or galvanize behind militants to halt the destruction of the ecosystem, has become a useless appendage (p194).

The decimation of our manufacturing base, the rise of the corporate state, and the contamination of our environment could have been fought by militant movements and radicals, but with these voices banished, there were no real impediments to the self-destructive forces of corporate power (p194).

The liberal class, which sought consensus and was obedient when it should have fought back, continues to trumpet a childish faith in human progress. It continues to peddle the naïve belief that technology and science will propel us forward into greater eras of human prosperity and save us from ourselves (p194).

The liberal class assumed that by working with corporate power it could mitigate the worst excesses of capitalism and environmental degradation. It did not grasp, perhaps because liberals do not read enough Marx, the revolutionary and self-destructive nature of unfettered capitalism (p194).

American society, although it continues to use traditional and sentimental iconography and language to describe itself, has in fact been so radically transformed by liberal gullibility and unchecked corporatism that it bears no resemblance to its self-image (p194).

Corporate interests have seized all mechanisms of power, from government to mass propaganda. They will not be defeated through elections or influenced through popular movements. The working class has been wiped out. The economy is in ruins. The imperial expansion is teetering on collapse. The ecosystem is undergoing terrifying changes unseen in recorded human history (p194).

The death spiral, which will wipe out whole sections of the human race, demands a return to radical militancy that asks the uncomfortable question of whether it is time to break laws that, if followed, ensure our annihilation (p195).

The demand for capitalist expansion, in a time of growing scarcity and environmental collapse, means we will endure harsher forms of abuse and repression. By silencing those who clung to moral imperatives, the liberal class robbed itself of the language and the analytical means to make sense of the destruction (p195).

Liberals assumed that the engines of capitalism could be persuaded to exercise rational self-control and beneficence - a notion that would have gotten anyone who proposed it laughed out of old militant labour halls (p195).

The liberal class, seduced by the ridiculous dictum that the marketplace could be the arbiter of all human political and economic activity, handed away the rights of the working class and the middle class (p195).

Even after the effects of climate change became known, the liberal class permitted corporations to continue to poison and pollute the planet. The liberal class collaborated with these corporate forces and did so with a stunning gullibility. The short-term benefits of this collaboration will soon give way to a systems collapse (p195).

The true militants of the American twentieth century, including the old communist unions, understood, in a way that the liberal class does not, the dynamics of capitalism and human evil. They knew that they had to challenge every level of management (p195).

They saw themselves as political beings. They called for a sweeping social transformation that would include universal health insurance, subsidized housing, social reforms, deindustrialization, and worker-controlled factories. And for this they were destroyed (p195).

They were replaced by a pliant liberal class that spoke in the depoliticized language of narrow self-interest and pathetic "buy American" campaigns. Our collapse, economic and environmental might not have been thwarted by anarchists and others, but at least someone would have fought against it. The liberal class was useless (p196).

The coup d'état we have undergone is beginning to fuel unrest and discontent. With its reformist and collaborative ethos, the liberal class lacks the capacity or the imagination to respond to this discontent. It has no ideas (p196).

Revolt, because of this, will come from the right, as it did in other eras of bankrupt liberalism in Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, and Tsarist Russia. That this revolt will be funded, organized, and manipulated by corporate forces that caused the collapse is one of the tragic ironies of history (p196).

But the blame lies with the liberal class. Liberals, by standing for nothing, made possible the rise of inverted and perhaps soon classical totalitarianism. We will have to grasp, as the medieval monks did, that we cannot alter the larger culture around us, at least in the short term, but we may be able to retain the moral codes and culture for generations beyond ours (p196).

As those who retained their identity during slavery or the long night of twentieth-century fascism and communism discovered, resistance will be reduced to small, often imperceptible acts of defiance. Music, theatre, art, poetry, journalism, literature, dance and the humanities, including the study of philosophy and history, will be the bulwarks that separate those who remain human from those who become savages (p196).

The fantasy of wide-spread popular revolts and mass movements breaking the hegemony of the corporate state is just that - a fantasy.

Radical anarchists often grasp the extent of the rot in our cultural and political institutions. They know they must sever the tentacles of consumerism. But many also naively believe it can be countered with physical resistance and violence (p197).

There are debates within the anarchist movement about acceptable degrees of violent resistance. Some argue, for example, that we should limit ourselves to the destruction of property. But that is a dead end. Once you start using plastic explosives, innocent people get killed (p197).

The moment anarchic violence begins to disrupt the mechanisms of governance, the power elite will use these acts, however minor, as an excuse to employ disproportionate and ruthless force against real and suspected agitators, only fueling the fear and rage of the dispossessed (p197).

Violence has inherent problems. Those who proved most adept at defending Sarajevo came from the criminal class. When they were not shooting at Bosnian Serbs, they were looting the apartments of ethnic Serbs in Sarajevo and often executing them, as well as terrorizing their fellow Muslims. When you ingest the poison of violence, even in a just cause, it corrupts, deforms and perverts you (p198).

Violence is also a drug. Those most addicted to violence are those who have access to weapons and penchant for force. And killers rise to the surface of all armed movements, even those that could be defined as just, and contaminate them with the intoxicating and seductive power that comes with the capacity to kill and destroy (p198).

When you go down that road, you end up pitting your monsters against their monsters. And the sensitive, the humane, and the gentle, those with a propensity to nurture and protect life, are pushed aside and often murdered (p198).

Violent response to repression, whether it achieves its goals or not, is counterproductive. It always results in the brutal sacrifice of innocents and the destruction of culture and traditions that make us human (p198).

Nonviolent acts of disobedience and the breaking of laws to disrupt the corporate assault on human life and the ecosystem will keep us whole. Once we use violence against violence, we enter a moral void (p198).

The election of Obama was one more triumph of illusion over substance. It was a skillful manipulation and betrayal of the public by a corporate power elite. We mistook style and ethnicity for progressive politics and genuine change (p198).

The goal of a branded Obama, as with all brands, was to make passive consumers mistake a brand for an experience. And that is why Obama was named Advertising Age's marketer of the year for 2008, beating out Apple and Zappos (p199).

Obama had almost no experience besides two years in the Senate, where his voting record was a dismal capitulation to corporate power. But once again, the electronic hallucinations that assault us rendered most voters incapable of thought and response (p199).

The superficial, the trivial, and the sensational mask our deep cultural, economic, political and environmental disintegration as well as the newest political diversion approved by the corporate state. We remain hypnotized by flickering images we mistake for reality (p199).

The belief that we can make things happen through positive thoughts, by visualizing, by wanting them, by tapping into our inner strength, or by understanding that we are truly exceptional is peddled to us by all aspects of the culture, from Oprah to the Christian Right (p200).

It is magical thinking. This magical thinking, this idea that human and personal progress is somehow inevitable, leads us into political passivity. It permits societies to transfer their emotional allegiance to the absurd - whether embodied in professional sports or celebrity culture - and ignore real problems (p200).

It exacerbates despair. It keeps us in a state of mass self-delusion. Once we are drawn into this form of magical thinking, the purpose, structure and goals of the corporate state are not questioned. To question, to engage in criticism of the corporate collective, is to be seen as obstructive and negative (p200).

And these cultural illusions have grossly perverted the way we view ourselves, our nation, and the natural world. This magical thinking coupled with its bizarre ideology of limitless progress holds out the promise of an impossible, unachievable happiness (p200).

It has turned whole nations, such as the United States, into self-consuming machines of death. We can vote for Obama and chant, "Yes We Can", but the corporate power elite is no longer concerned with our aspirations. Appealing to their better nature, or seeking to influence the internal levers of power, will no longer work (p200).

We are living through one of civilization's seismic reversals. The ideology of globalization, like all "inevitable" utopian visions, has imploded. The power elite, perplexed and confused, clings to the utopian dreams and outdated language of globalization to mask the political and economic vacuum (p201).

Massive bailouts, stimulus packages, giveaways, and short-term borrowing, along with imperial wars we can no longer afford, will leave the United States struggling with trillions in debt. Once China and the oil-rich states begin to walk away from our debt, which one day has to happen, interest rates will skyrocket (p201).

Forcing the Fed to buy this much new debt will see it, in effect, print trillions more dollars. This is when inflation, most likely hyperinflation, will turn the dollar into junk. And at that point the entire system, beset as well by environmental chaos, breaks down (p201).

Cruder, more violent forms of repression will be employed as the softer mechanisms of control favored by inverted totalitarianism prove useless. And, as with collapsed civilizations in the past, the huge bureaucracy that sustained empire will cease to function as communities collapse into localized enclaves (p201).

In the past, when civilizations went belly-up through greed, mismanagement, and the exhaustion of natural resources, human beings migrated somewhere else to pillage anew. But this time the game is over. There is nowhere else to go (p202).

The industrialized nations spent the last century seizing half the planet and dominating most of the other half. We giddily exhausted our natural resources, especially fossil fuels, to engage in an orgy of consumption and waste that poisoned the Earth and degraded the ecosystem on which human life depends (p202).

Collapse this time around will be global. We will disintegrate together. The ten-thousand-year experiment of settled life is about to come to a crashing halt. And human kind, which thought it was given dominion over the Earth and all living things, will be taught a painful lesson about the necessity of balance, restraint, and humility (p202).

Civilization occupies a mere 0.2 percent of the two and a half million years since our first ancestor sharpened stone (p202).

It is too late to prevent profound climate change. But why allow our ruling elite, driven by the lust for profits, to accelerate the death spiral? Why continue to obey the laws and dictates of our executioners (p202).

We face a terrible political truth. Those that hold power will not act with the urgency required to protect human life and the ecosystem. Decisions about the fate of the planet and human civilization are in the hands of moral and intellectual trolls such as BP's former chairman Tony Hayward (p204).

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These political and corporate masters are driven by a craven desire to accumulate wealth at the expense of human life. They do this in the Gulf of Mexico. They do this in the factories in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong (p204).

The leaders of these corporations now determine our fate. They are not endowed with human decency or compassion. Yet their lobbyists make the laws. The public relations firms craft the propaganda and trivia pumped out through systems of mass communication (p204).

Their money determines elections. Their greed turns workers into global serfs and our planet into a wasteland. The climate crisis is a political crisis. We will either defy the corporate elite, which will mean civil disobedience, a rejection of traditional politics for a new radicalism, and the systematic breaking of laws, or see ourselves consumed (p205).

Time is not on our side. The longer we wait, the more assured our destruction becomes. The future, if we remain passive, will be wrested from us. If we build small, self-contained structures, ones that do as little harm as possible to the environment, we can perhaps weather the collapse (p205).

This task will be accomplished through the creation of communities with access to sustainable agriculture, able to sever themselves as much as possible from commercial culture and be largely self-sufficient (p205).

These communities will have to build walls against the electronic propaganda and fear that will be pumped out over the airwaves. Canada will probably be a more hospitable place to do this than the United States, especially given America's undercurrent of violence (p205).

But in any country those who survive will need isolated areas of farmland distant from urban areas, which will see food deserts in the inner cities, as well as savage violence, spread outward across the urban landscape as produce and goods become prohibitively expensive and state repression becomes harsher and harsher (p205).

Acts of resistance are moral acts. They take place because people of conscience understand the moral, rather than the practical, imperative of rebellion. They should be carried out not because they are effective, but because they are right (p205).

Those who begin these acts are always few. They are dismissed by those in the liberal class, who hide their cowardice behind their cynicism. Resistance, however marginal, affirms the sanctity of individual life in a world awash with death (p205).

Those who have carried out great acts of resistance in the past sacrificed their security and comfort, often spent time in jail, and in some cases were killed. They understood that to live in the fullest sense of the word, to exist as free and independent human beings, even under the darkest night of state repression, means to defy injustice (p205).

Any act of resistance is its own justification. It cannot be measured by its utilitarian effect. And the acts of resistance that sustain us morally are those that disrupt systems of power but do not violate the sanctity of human life - even, finally, the lives of those who enslave us (p206).

Significant structural change will not occur in our lifetime. This makes resistance harder. It shifts resistance from the tangible, the immediate, the practical, to the amorphous and the indeterminate. But to stop resisting is spiritual and intellectual death (p206).

It is to surrender to the dehumanizing ideology of totalitarian capitalism. Acts of resistance keep alive another way of being. They sustain our integrity and empower others, whom we may never meet, to stand up and carry the flame we pass to them (p206).

No act of resistance is useless, whether it is refusing to pay taxes, fighting for a Tobin tax, working to shift the neoclassical economics paradigm, revoking a corporate charter, holding global Internet votes, or using Twitter to catalyze a chain reaction of refusal against the neoliberal order (p206).

We must resist and trust that resistance is worthwhile. Our communities will sustain us, emotionally and materially. They will be the key to a life of defiance. Those who resist, who continue to practice moral autonomy, will become members of the underclass (p206).

The remnants of traditional liberal institutions, including the media, labour, the church, the universities, the arts, and political parties will merge with the instruments of corporate oppression. As long as they collaborate with the power elite, liberal institutions will continue to offer a few collaborators positions of comfort and privilege (p206).

But all those who seek to work as artists, journalists, professors, labour organizers, dissident politicians, or clergy will increasingly struggle without adequate health insurance or reliable incomes. They will be unable to send their children to elite colleges (p206).

Their mortgages will be foreclosed. They will be denied credit cards. Their salaries, if they get any, will be miserable. They will no longer be members of the liberal class. The death of the liberal class has been accompanied by a shift from a print-based culture to an image-based culture (p207).

The demise of newspapers - along with that of book publishing - coupled with the degradation of our educational system for all but the elites, has created a culture in which verifiable fact, which is rooted in the complexity and discipline of print, no longer forms the basis of public discourse or our collective memory (p207).

It has been supplanted by the blogosphere, the social media universe, and cable television. Print-based culture, in which fact and assertion could be traced and distinguished, has ceded to a culture of emotionally driven narratives where facts and opinions are interchangeable (p207).

This is a decline and a degeneration that has crippled the reality-based culture, in which fact was the foundation for opinion and debate, and ushered in a culture in which facts, opinions, lies and fantasy are interchangeable (p207).

This shift has denied many citizens the intellectual tools for critical thought and civic dialogue - the discourse that creates informed citizens. Images and words defy the complex structures of print when isolated from context (p207).

The Internet, held out by many as a new panacea, is accelerating the cultural decline. Internet traffic is dominated by a few principal corporate sites, Yahoo, Bing and Google, which aggregate and reproduce existing journalism and creative work (p208).

The goal, of course, is profit. The Web efficiently disseminates content, but it does not protect intellectual property rights. And this means financial ruin for journalists, academics, musicians and artists. Creative work is released for free by Web providers who use it as bait for corporate advertising (p208).

And those who create reap little or nothing. The great promise of the internet - to open up dialogue, break down cultural barriers, promote democracy, and unleash innovation and creativity - is yet another utopian dream (p208).

The Internet is only accelerating our division into antagonistic clans, where we are sucked into virtual tribal groups that chant the same slogans and hate the same enemies. The Web, like the cable news outlets, forms anonymous crowds to vent collective rage, intolerance, and bigotry. These virtual slums do not seek communication or dialogue (p208).

They speak in a new absurdist language. They do not enrich culture. They create a herd mentality in which those who express empathy for some perceived "enemy" - whether left or right - are denounced by their fellow travellers for their impurity (p208).

And the liberal class has become as corrupted by the Web as the right wing. The kind of truths, that acknowledge human complexity, are what the liberal class once sought to protect. Social scientists have a name for this retreat into ideologically pure and intolerant ghettos: cyberbalkanization (p209).

Twenty music tracks are downloaded illegally for every one bought online. It is a similar story for films and photographs. Pirated versions of newly released movies are available along with last week's New York Times bestsellers (p209).

Journalists once able to sell articles to publications overseas, now see their work flash around the globe without hope of compensation. We are starving our professional critics and artists. We are turning culture and art over to part-time amateurs (p209).

And as creative artists and journalists vanish, so do the editors and producers who distill and give focus to creative and journalistic expression. The only journalism and art that will endure will be that which draws advertising (p209).

Cultural and artistic expression will be replaced by the tawdry, banal, and often idiotic distractions that draw huge numbers of YouTube hits or public-relations-created propaganda. And any work that cannot gain corporate sponsorship or attract advertising dollars will be ignored (p210).

While disregard of intellectual property rights denies those who create the capacity to make a living from their work, aggregators such as Google make profits by collecting and distributing content to lure advertisers. Original work on the Internet is almost always cut and mutilated (p210).

It is copied, mashed up, anonymized, analyzed, and turned into bricks in someone else's fortress to support an advertising scheme. If this trend is not halted, it will create a formula that leaves no way for our nation to earn a living in the long term (p210).

The Internet has begun the final and perhaps the deadliest assault on the arts and intellectual inquiry. All of a sudden people have lost sight of the fact that people need to be paid for their work. Digital collectivism is destroying the dwindling vestiges of authentic journalism, creativity, and innovation that require time, investment and self-reflection (p210).

The only income left for most of those who create is earned through self-promotion and the orchestration of celebrity. This turns all culture into a form of advertising. It fosters a social ethic in which the capacity for crowd manipulation, for the art of seduction, is valued more than truth, beauty or intellect (p211).

Writers, musicians, artists, journalists and filmmakers must transform themselves into celebrities to earn money, or vanish from public consciousness. If we fall into an economic tailspin, the Internet, like other

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innovative systems of mass communication such as television, will be used to exacerbate social enmity (p211).

The utopian promoters of the Internet insist that the “hive mind”, the vast virtual collective, will propel us toward a brave new world. Humans, like many other species have a cognitive switch that permits us to be individuals or members of a mob (p212).

Once we enter the confines of a clan, even a virtual clan, we revert to the basest instincts within us. Technology evolves, but human nature remains constant. The twentieth century was the bloodiest in human history because human beings married the newly minted tools of efficient state bureaucracies, mass propaganda, and industrial slaughter with dark impulses that have existed since the dawn of the human species (p213).

We are seduced and then enslaved by technology, from the combustion engine to computers and robotics. human ingenuity is always hijacked by slave masters. They use the newest technologies to keep us impoverished, confused about our identities, and passive (p214).

The Internet, designed by defense strategists to communicate after a nuclear attack, has become the latest technological instrument of control. Technology is morally neutral. It serves the interests of those who control it (p214).

And those who control it today are destroying journalism, culture, and art while they herd the population into clans that fuel isolation, self-delusion, intolerance, and hatred (p214).

A common rationalization in the fledgling world of digital cultures back then was that we were entering a transitional lull before a creative storm. But we were not passing through a momentary calm. We had, rather, entered a persistent somnolence, and have come to believe that we will escape it only when we kill the hive (p214).

A culture, once it no longer values truth and beauty, condemns its most creative and moral people to poverty and obscurity. And this is our destiny (p214).

The rebel stands with the oppressed - the unemployed workers thrust into impoverishment and misery by the corporate state, the Palestinians in Gaza, the civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan, the disappeared who are held in our global black sites, the poor in our inner cities and depressed rural communities, immigrants, and those locked away in our prison system (p215).

The elites and their courtiers in the liberal class always condemn the rebel as impractical. They dismiss the stance of the rebel as counterproductive. They chastise the rebel for being angry. The elites and their apologists call for calm, reason and patience (p215).

They use the hypocritical language of compromise, generosity, and understanding to argue that we must accept and work with the systems of power. The rebel, however, is beholden to a moral commitment that makes it impossible to compromise (p215).

The rebel refuses to be bought off with foundation grants, invitations to the White House, television appearances, book contracts, academic appointments, or empty rhetoric. The rebel is not concerned with self-promotion or public opinion. The rebel knows that hope has two beautiful daughters, anger and courage - anger at the way things are and the courage to change them (p215).

The rebel knows that virtue is not rewarded. The act of rebellion justifies itself. You are thrown into life as a dissident by your personal sense of responsibility, combined with a complex set of external

circumstances. You are cast out of the existing structures and placed in a position of conflict with them (p215).

It begins as an attempt to do your work well, and ends up being branded an enemy of society. The dissident does not operate in the realm of genuine power at all. The dissident is not seeking real power. The dissident has no desire for office and does not gather votes. He does not attempt to charm the public (p215).

He offers nothing and promises nothing. He can offer, if anything, only his own skin - and he offers it solely because he has no other way of affirming the truth he stands for. His actions simply articulate his dignity as a citizen, regardless of the cost (p215).

The corporate elite does not argue that the current system is just or good, because it cannot, but it has convinced the majority of citizens that there is no alternative. But we are not slaves. We have a choice. We can refuse to be either a victim or an executioner (p216).

We have the moral capacity to say no, to refuse to cooperate. Any boycott or demonstration, any occupation or sit-in, any strike, any act of obstruction or sabotage, any refusal to pay taxes, any fast, any popular movement, and any act of civil disobedience ignites the soul of the rebel and exposes the dead hand of authority (p216).

There is a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can't take part; you can't even passively take part, and you've got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon the apparatus, and you've got to make it stop (p216).

And you've got to indicate to the people who run it, to the people who own it, that unless you're free, the machine will be prevented from working at all. The capacity to refuse to cooperate offers us the only route left to personal freedom and a life of meaning (p216).

Acts of rebellion permit us to be free and independent human beings. Rebellion chips away, however imperceptibly, at the edifice of the oppressor. Rebellion sustains the capacity for human solidarity. Rebellion, in moments of profound human despair and misery, keeps alive the capacity to be human (p216).

Rebellion is not the same as revolution. Revolution works towards the establishment of a new power structure. Rebellion is about perpetual revolt and permanent alienation from power. And it is only in a state of rebellion that we can hold fast to moral imperatives that prevent a descent into tyranny (p216).

Empathy must be our primary attribute. Those who retreat into cynicism and despair, like Dostoyevsky's *Underground Man*, die spiritually and morally. If we are to be extinguished, let it be on our own terms. There is often no public outcry against tyranny. The rebel must, for this reason, also expect to become the enemy, even of those he or she is attempting to protect (p217).

The indifference to the plight of others and the cult of the self is what corporate power seeks to instill in us. That state appeals to pleasure, as well as fear, to crush compassion. We will have to continue to fight the mechanisms of that dominant culture, if for no other reason than to preserve, through small, even tiny acts, our common humanity (p217).

We will have to resist the temptation to fold in on ourselves and to ignore the injustice visited upon others, especially those we do not know. As distinct and moral beings, we will endure only through these small, sometimes imperceptible acts of defiance (p217).

This defiance, this capacity to say no, is what mass culture and mass propaganda seeks to eradicate. As long as we are willing to defy these forces, we have a chance, if not for ourselves, then at least for those who follow. As long as we defy these forces, we remain alive. And, for now, this is the only victory possible (p217).