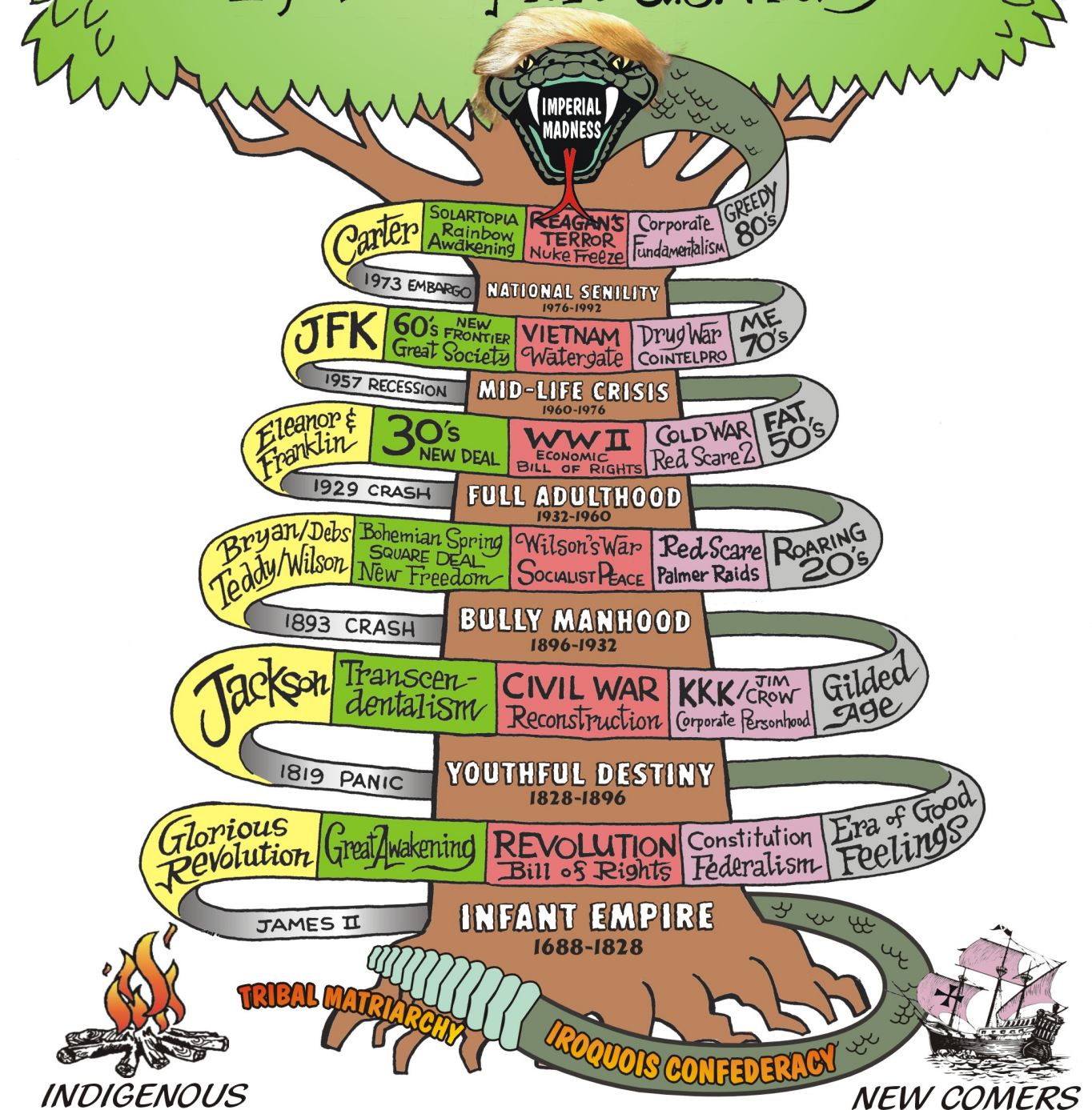


# Harvey "Sluggo" Wasserman's Life & Death Spiral of U.S. History



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Artwork by John Bailey @ funnyheadz.com

# ***Awaiting the TrumpExit***

*We were conceived when the Puritan Elect raped our Indigenous Mother.*

*Boston's patriarchy seized her organic matriarchal DNA. Together they forged our tortured, double-helix.*

*Its fierce genetic contractions then shot us through six shortening cycles, which became a spiral.*

*We were born in Revolution, 1776.*

*In 1992, the Clintons buried us in an end-of-empire coma.*

*Then Trump bounced the rubble.*

*But in 2018, a new generation began us anew.*

*So I've held off finishing this book until the actual TrumpExit.*

*It's like passing a kidney stone the size of Mount Denali.*

*But until he leaves, consider this a "rough cut/author's proof."*

*Your kudos, comments, critiques and condemnations are more than welcome at [www.solartopia.org](http://www.solartopia.org).*

*For now, let's see how we got here....*

*Harvey “Sluggo” Wasserman’s*

# ***Life & Death Spiral of US History***

***From Deganawidah  
to Trump  
to Solartopia***

*Special Pre-TrumpExit Rough Cut/Author’s Proof  
[draft for comment only: not yet for circulation]*

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# MITAKUYE OYASIN

*“This is the Eighth Sign: You will see many youth, who wear their hair long like my people, come and join the tribal nations, to learn their ways and wisdom.”*

*— -From Frank Waters, Book of the Hopi*

*“Harvey Wasserman constantly provokes us and educates us, sometimes outrages us, often inspires us...He is always delightfully readable.”*

*—Howard Zinn*

*A People’s History of the US*

*“You can’t put it down....flows like a thrilling novel...the best history book I’ve ever read.”*

*—Lila Garrett*

*Connect the Dots, KPFK-Pacifica*

*“Genius!...a magnificent piece...I’m blown away by it.”*

*—Eric Roberts, Actor*

*“Harvey shows history as a living organism...The graphics alone, showing Indigenous and Puritan contributions to American DNA, are a better education than I ever got at school, where history was just a boring dateline of wars and rulers.*

*—Mimi Kennedy, Actor/Activist*

*Progressive Democrats of America*

*“...lively, engaging, original, zany, psychedelic, feisty, opinionated...”*

*—Eric Foner, Pulitzer Prize Winner*

*Gateway to Freedom*

*Harvey shows us so many things we've forgotten, didn't know, or didn't realize we knew. His stories are brilliant, and his worldview expands us all...*

*—Thom Hartmann*

*Syndicated Radio Host, Author*

*"Hey, Sluggo—well, now, you've finally gotten off your solar ass—and yep, here's a true Yippie history of the dang USA."*

*—Paul Krassner*

*Yippie Godfather*

*"...an easy but deep read by one of the greatest historians of our generation...a great story, even poetic...as always, optimistic."*

*—Ken Wachsberger*

*Voices from the Underground*

*"...changes my entire view of US history."*

*—Joel Segal*

*Citizens Climate Solutions*

*"Harvey Wasserman is truly an original"*

*—Studs Terkel*

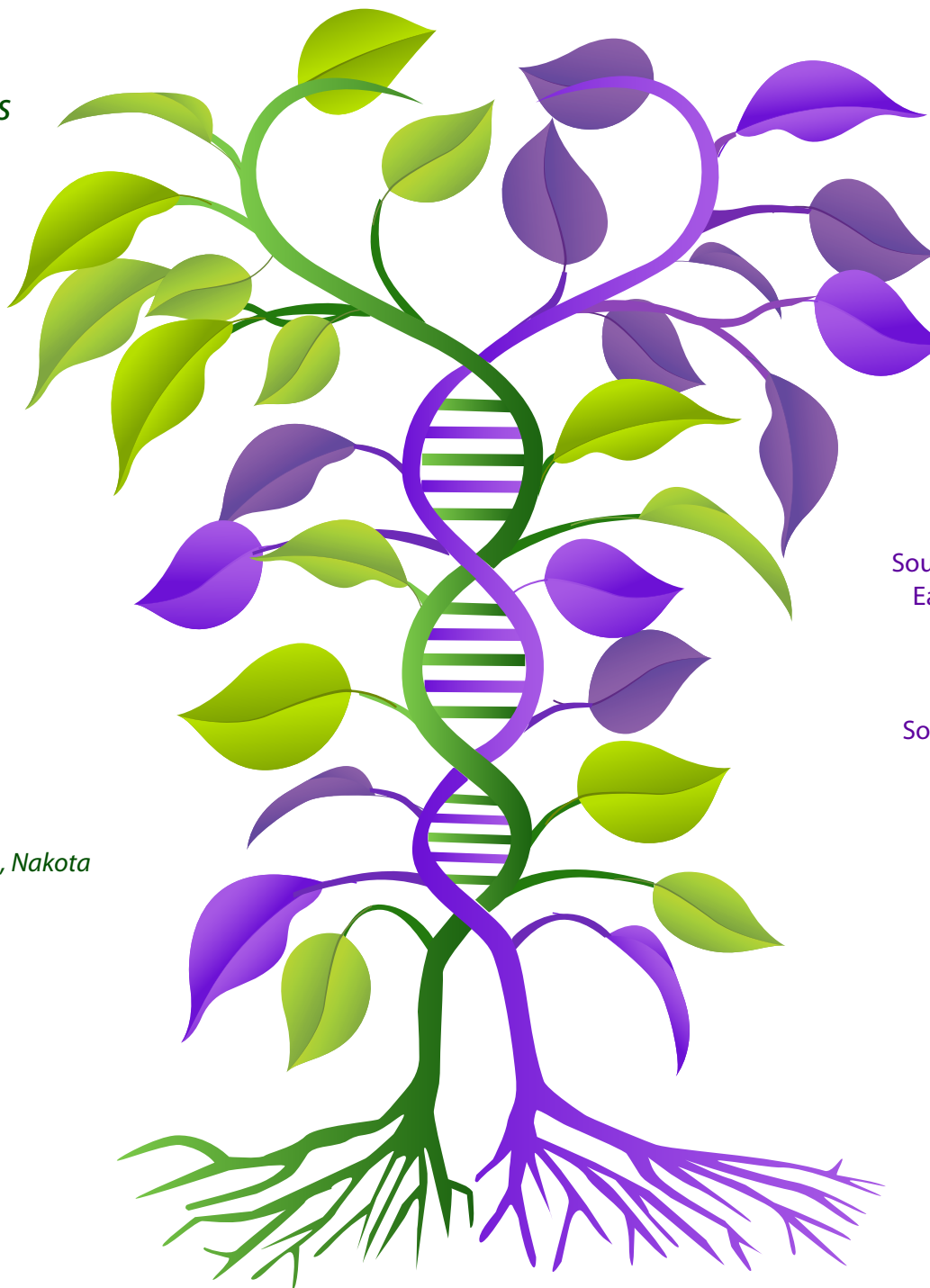
Harvey Wasserman's  
Early American DNA

*Indigenous*

Penobscot  
Narragansett  
Wampanoag  
Pequot  
Powhatan  
Hodenosaunee  
Tuscarora  
Shawnee  
Erie  
Miami  
Lumbee  
Cherokee  
Choctaw  
Chickasaw  
Creek  
Seminole  
Blackfoot  
Kiowa  
Crow  
Paiute  
Anishnabe  
Dakota, Lakota, Nakota  
Mandan  
Arapahoe  
Shoshone  
Nez Perce  
Dine  
Hopi  
Apache  
Squamish  
Eskimo  
Cree  
Hawai'ian  
... many more

Newcomers

Vikings  
Chinese  
Spaniards  
Africans  
French  
British  
Dutch  
Scots  
Irish  
Scotch-Irish  
Cavaliers  
Germans  
Southern Europeans  
Eastern Europeans  
East Asians  
South Asians  
Hispanics  
South Sea Islanders  
Catholics  
Protestants  
Pilgrims  
Puritans  
Unitarians  
Prisoners  
Deists  
Pagans  
Jews  
Quakers  
Buddhists  
Mennonites  
Muslims  
Hindus  
... many more



Tribal Matriarchy

Techno-Patriarchy

Columbian Exchange

*Companion planting, crop rotation, controlled burn, sustainable food ...  
Agave, amaranth, avocado, beans, bell pepper, black raspberry, blueberry,  
cashew, chicle, chili peppers, cocoa, cotton, cranberries, guava, Jerusalem  
artichoke, maize, manioc, papaya, peanut, pecan, pineapple, potato,  
pumpkin, quinoa, rubber, squash strawberry, sweet potato, sunflower,  
tomato, wild rice, turkeys ...  
Syphilis, tobacco ...*

Clear cutting, cash farming, monoculture, agribusiness ...  
Wheat, rice, barley, sugar, coffee, dandelions ...  
Cattle, horses, goats, sheep, pigs, donkeys, mules,  
honeybees, black rats, cockroaches ...  
Smallpox, typhus, scarlet fever, yellow fever, diphtheria,  
influenza, measles, typhoid fever, plague (Black Death) ...

# MENU

## *Conception*

*Our Indigenous DNA:*

*Mother Earth's Matriarchs Nurture our Nation*

***Our Puritan DNA:***

*The Cult of God the Father & His City on the Hill*

## ***The Life & Death Spiral of US History***

|                          |              |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| <i>"Infant Empire"</i>   | 1688 to 1828 |
| <i>Youthful Destiny</i>  | 1828 to 1896 |
| <i>"Bully Manhood"</i>   | 1896 to 1932 |
| <i>Full Adulthood</i>    | 1932 to 1960 |
| <i>Mid-Life Crisis</i>   | 1960 to 1976 |
| <i>Imperial Senility</i> | 1976 to 1992 |



*Flatline:*

**OUR END-OF-EMPIRE ZOMBIE COMA**

*Clinton, Bush2, Obama*

**TRUMPOCALYPSE**

*Our Imperial Vultures Come Home to Roost*

*America Being Reborn*

**OUR DESPERATE RACE TO SOLARTOPIA**

**TRUMPEXIT (in progress)**

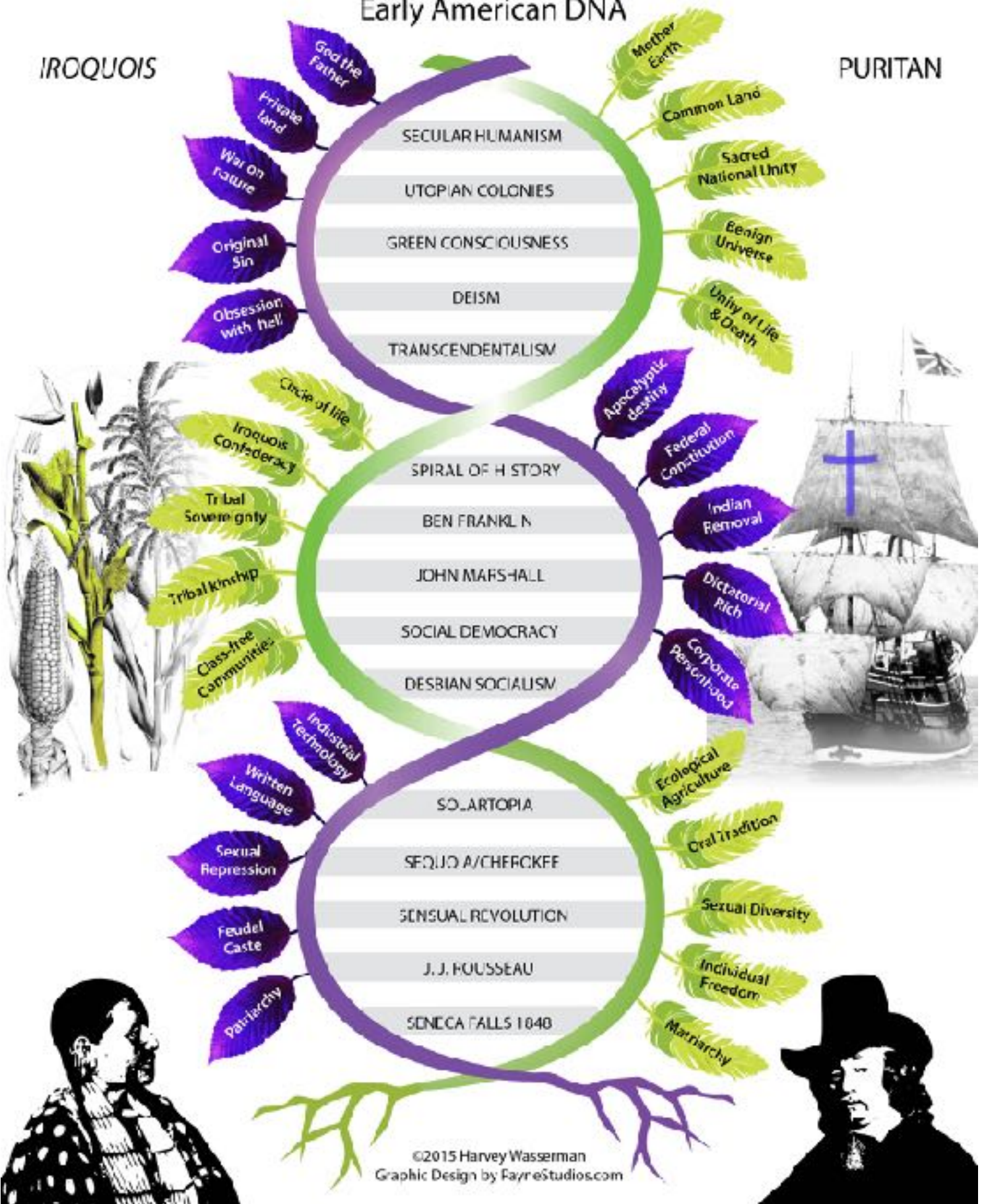
*REBIRTH*

**A Note on Notes**

# Harvey Wasserman's Early American DNA

IROQUOIS

PURITAN



# CONCEPTION

*Every culture passes through the age-phases of the individual [person].*

*Each has its childhood, youth, [adult]hood and old age...its determined phases, which invariably occur.*

– Oswald Spengler, *Decline of the West*

# *Our Indigenous DNA*

## *Mother Earth's Matriarchs Nurture Our Nation*

In the womb of Indigenous America, our nation was conceived.

Our Mother is a tribal matriarch.

Her beloved son *Deganawidah* was the true father of American democracy...and of our federal union.

Everything American is rooted amongst the countless hugely diverse societies that were here so long before Columbus.

Now a revived matriarchy is poised for rebirth. And not a moment too soon!

Women ran native North America. They raised the kids, chose the chiefs, shaped our Indigenous DNA. Said the Hopi...

*...the family, the dwelling house and the field are inseparable, because the woman is the heart of these, and they rest with her. Among us the family traces its kin from the mother, hence all its possessions are hers.*

*The man builds the house but the woman is the owner, because she repairs and preserves it; the man cultivates the field, but he renders its harvest into the woman's keeping, because upon her it rests to prepare the food and the surplus of stores for barter depends upon her thrift.*

Formed as early as 1140AD, the matriarchal "Iroquois Confederacy" was the cradle of our civilization.

Its spiritual founder was *Deganawidah*, the *Haudenosaunee* Peacemaker. Amidst a terrible war, he found the great orator *Ayawentha* mourning in the woods. Legend says this exalted Onondaga chief was grieving his wife and three daughters.

Their death in battle was rare. Much Indigenous warfare was mere ritual that stopped with first blood. Victorious tribes usually adopted captured women and children. Reports of indigenous rape are virtually nonexistent. White prisoners often chose to “go native.”

But for eons, across what’s now upstate New York, the Mohawk, Oneida, Onandaga, Cayuga, and Seneca were constantly at war. These *Haudenosaunee* (People of the Long House) often tortured their male captives, then ate the hearts of the bravest.

Their *guerrilla* tactics changed the world. They shot from behind trees, struck as the spirit moved them, then slipped away to regroup and return.

They improvised in tune with Mother Nature. Had the Indigenous been immune to European disease, the whites could NEVER have marched across the continent as they did.

Had the Europeans opened their minds to the wisdom of the Indigenous culture, this would be a far healthier planet. Had they cooperated instead of conquered, learned instead of slaughtered, we would be an infinitely greater nation.

While Europe emerged from the Dark Ages, *Deganawidah* quieted the wars that plagued the Five Nations.

The Peacemaker was a stutterer. *Ayawentha* spoke his heart.

Together they travelled the Finger Lakes in a stone canoe and convened America's first congress, the model for our own.

The French called the *Haudenosaunee* "Iroquois"...a serpentine slur. Except as fierce opponents in battle, they have been studiously ignored by our mainstream historians.

But the *Haudenosaunee* formed humankind's purest democracy. While the emerging states of Europe suffered through countless tyrannies of absolute, inbred, often idiotic monarchs, the Iroquois Union was based on consensual harmony.

The Five Nations sent fifty chiefs to the central council *Deganawidah* established. Representation was based on tribal head counts. The many tribes kept their traditional structures, but collaborated under the *Kaianerekvova* (Great Law of Peace). Individual liberties were sacred, carefully spelled out in the 117 codicils that set the precedent for our own first Ten Amendments.

While the males hunted, fished and pontificated, the tribal matriarchs prepared the food, kept the fires, raised the kids. They chose the chiefs...and could remove them whenever. Letting the men blab away "makes them feel important," smiles one Onondaga matriarch. "It gives them something to do."

The whole thing, said Ben Franklin, "runs better than the British Parliament."

Maybe 15 million Indigenous inhabited North America before Columbus, maybe 100 million peopled the western hemisphere.

In what's now the US, more than a thousand bands, tribes, clans, nations, confederacies spoke more than 500 languages. Amidst

an incomprehensible diversity, each had its own culture, traditions, belief systems, worldview.

Extended Indigenous families shared feast and famine in unison. In all of North America, only the town of Cahokia (near today's St. Louis) approached a population of 20,000. The mysterious mounds that surround it speak to ancient civilizations long since vanished for reasons we may never know.

Many tribal names mean “the people.” Until the whites came, the Indigenous had no sense of a broader unified identity. Most had legends referring to a migration from Asia. Some ancestors certainly crossed a “Land Bridge” from Siberia. But most also contend their core has *always* been here, that at least some of the human species originated in the western hemisphere.

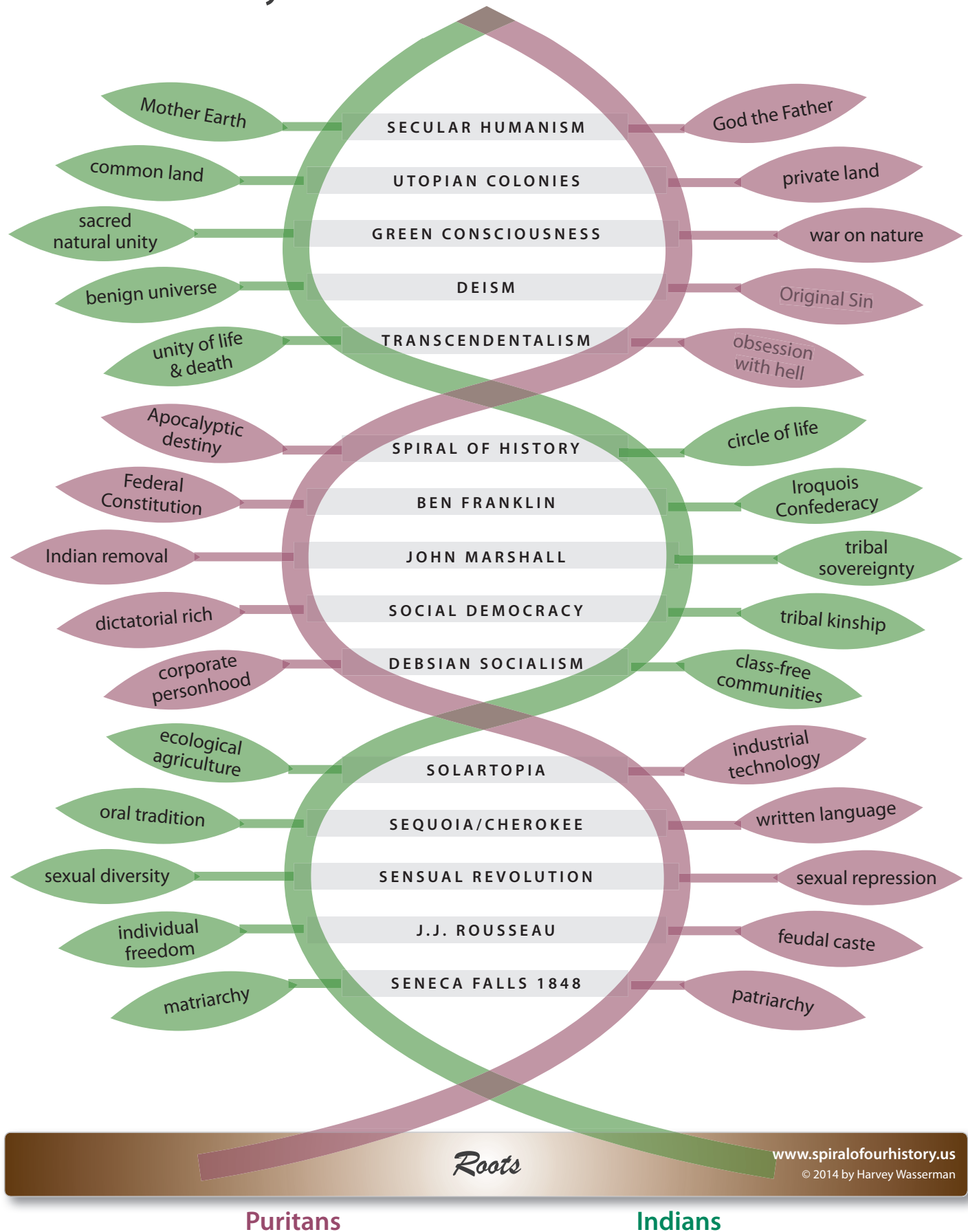
There were chiefs and shamans, warriors and captives, but no Original Sin or Hellish afterlife. Death is still inseparable from life. The Indigenous favor burial amidst the bones of their ancestors, whose spirits they still embrace in both life and passing.

Every rock, plant, river, cloud, forest, insect, animal (including the human) walks with a universal consciousness named *Orenda*, *Wakan*, *Manitou*, *Huaca*, and more.

Indigenous oral histories reflect ceaseless cycles of natural seasons, reproductive rhythms, rhymes of generations, free from fear of a hateful God or terminal Apocalypse.

Many of the Indigenous societies (like the *Haudenosaunee*) were essentially matriarchies, run by the women who raised the kids, sustained the houses and gardens, ran the show. A woman's right to choose was guaranteed with roots and herbs and centuries of knowing just how to use them. Sexual diversity was often seen as just another strand in the web of life.

*Harvey Wasserman's*  
Some Early American DNA: Indians & Puritans





The Indigenous generally sustained a level of physical health long lost to urban Europe. Pristine lakes, streams and ocean beaches were their everyday companions, accompanied by ritual sweat baths. They made their clothes from what nature provided.

For the Indigenous core, land was a living organism, everywhere revered...and often shaped to meet their needs. Charles C. Mann's *1491* says most tribes regularly scorched the forest understory into fertile char. They nurtured chosen trees for fruits, nuts, medicine, syrup, vines, building materials, weapons, firewood. With sophisticated skills (perfected over the eons) they shaped the "forest primeval" into what appeared to those newcomers with eyes to see as an evolutionary parkland, burnt free of underbrush, fertilized with char, filled with productive trees, purposely balanced for a constant supply of wild game.

In tandem came advanced techniques to breed, cross-pollinate and rotate the crops that fed them.

In places like the Ohio Valley, fertile topsoil nine feet deep nurtured the holy protein-rich trinity of corn, beans and squash (the cornstalks usually anchored the beans and squash). Tomatoes and basil thrived in harmony. Nuts, roots, herbs, berries, and a cornucopia of fruits and vegetables beautifully fed a thriving civilization. Some villages were known to run six square miles and more of corn fields alone.

Rather than domesticating animals, the Indigenous managed waters, field and forest to sustain a constant "crop" of fish and game. They treated disease with herbs, potions, poultices, teas. "Above all," writes Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz in *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*...

*...the majority of the Indigenous peoples of the Americas had healthy, mostly vegetarian diets based on the staple of corn and supplanted by wild fish, fowl, and four-legged animals. People lived long and well with abundant ceremonial and recreational periods.*

Trade flourished among the societies “with a complex system of roads and paths which became the roadways adopted by the early settlers.”

In the *Haudenosaunee Kaianerekvova (Sacred Law)*, says Onondaga Faithkeeper Oren Lyons...

*The first principle is peace.  
The second principle, equity...justice for the people.  
And third, the power of the good minds, of the collective powers to be of one mind: unity. And health...  
And the process of discussion, putting aside warfare as a method of reaching decisions, now using intellect.*

Through all Indigenous societies ran the mystique of a “natural paradise,” a diverse natural/human ecology at one with the Earth, largely free of spiritual angst and physical want.

Among Newcomers who could see it, Indigenous America inspired a transcendent ideal that has powerfully resurfaced again and again throughout the spiral of our history. It is the vibrant aquifer of our creative core, the nature-based strand of our organic DNA.

“Man is born free,” wrote the romantic visionary Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “but everywhere lives in chains.”

The free were Indigenous. Europe was imprisoned.

At birth, US revolutionaries used their guerrilla tactics to beat the Redcoats. The transcendent “Indian loving” genius Ben Franklin helped blend the *Kaianerekvova* with a federal Congress, presidency, judiciary and Bill of Rights.

Our corporate elite still can’t handle the tribal mystique. As individuals, the Indigenous have been as flawed and full of contradiction as the rest of us, with societies and nations replete with imperfections.

But these advanced societies lived on this land for countless centuries. They created civilizations as complex and advanced as any...anywhere...ever.

Their eco-matriarchal ways stay rooted deep in our soil...and our souls.

Historians still howl over the Indigenous influence, with the mainstreamers denying it—often with savage vehemence. But in 1988 (with Nancy Reagan running the White House) a Concurrent Resolution of Congress pledged our “utmost good faith” to the treaties the US has so often broken, and had this to say...

*...the original framers of the Constitution, including most notably, George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, are known to have greatly admired the concepts, principles and government practices of the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy...*

*...the Confederation of the original thirteen colonies into one Republic was explicitly modeled upon the Iroquois*

*Confederacy as were many of the democratic principles  
which were incorporated into the Constitution itself.*

At places like Standing Rock, Wounded Knee, Winona LaDuke's Hemp & Heritage Farm and on-going communal councils...with their resistance to eco-suicide, respect for the Earth, belief in equity...the Indigenous still hold the key to human survival.

Forever embedded in the American DNA is their Awakened sense of natural unity, reverence for life, embrace of diversity, space for democracy, respect for women, love of justice, eternal laughter.

"We like being called Indians," an Indigenous attorney once told me. "It reminds us that Columbus was lost."

"Freedom," says Oren Lyons. "That's what the whites found here."

# Our Puritan DNA

## ***The Cult of God the Father & His “City on the Hill”***

Countless immigrants have come here seeking that freedom. All have spliced their unique beliefs, customs, and cultures into our DNA.

But the English Puritans hated that diversity (still do!). In 1630, thousands of these black-robed “Visible Saints” founded Boston. Their “exceptional” strain of corporate-imperial white supremacy has repeatedly driven us to the brink of dictatorship, leading us to Donald Trump.

They brought passions for literacy, limited democracy, and advanced technology. They saw themselves as racially and spiritually superior (“exceptional”), destined to dominate all Nature and non-Puritans. Their dour, obsessive paranoia, intolerance, arrogance and greed still drive our global empire.

They were driven mad, said H.L. Mencken, by “the haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy.”

Hating both “uppity” women and diversity of opinion, Europe’s Calvinists burned witches and dissidents in droves. Boston’s Cotton Mather said he...

*...was once emptying the Cistern of Nature, and making Water at the Wall. At the same Time, there came a Dog, who did so too, before me. Thought I; "What mean, and vile Things are the Children of Men, in this mortal State! How much do our natural Necessities abase us, and place us in some regard, on the same Level with the very Dogs!"*

To the Puritans of yesterday, today and tomorrow, the Indigenous are “heathen savages...agents of Satan” to be converted or killed, their culture crushed, their spirit exorcised, their wisdom scorned. America was a “hideous wilderness,” a purgatory of testing and torment, a hellish “Valley of the Shadow of Death,” of “Briars and Thorns, of Trouble and Sorrows.”

Throughout Europe, "civilization" was defined by sprawling, hideous cities... filthy, disease-ridden, unjust, violent. With an air of divine superiority, the newcomers meant to bring all that here.

That included introducing payments for men, women and childrens' scalps, as did Cromwell's Puritan armies in Ireland and other Euro conquerors elsewhere around the globe.

It was an "exceptional" mission, a manifest destiny. Boston would be a “Shining City on the Hill,” God's own beacon. Its dictatorial theocracy was a corporate union of church and state. Elected by the proven faithful, Puritan magistrate-priests ruled with a divinely ordained iron fist.

They called themselves Christians. But the Puritan elite scorned the compassion of the *Sermon on the Mount*. The non-white, dissident and less-than-wealthy were all “unfit” except to labor in the fields, toil in the factories, die in battle. Had Jesus dared preach on a Boston street corner, he'd've been jailed, expelled and/or hanged.

The Calvinist Elect came to conquer, multiply, and impose the wrath of an angry God. Humans were “mean and vile things,” guilty at birth, inherently doomed. Even the most apparently righteous went to Hell with His slightest whim.

To escape this curse, every Puritan male had to read the Bible. Harvard was founded to teach them how.

Women (of course) were scorned. But the Calvinist fathers worried they might have souls. So they let them read. But not vote. And females who dared speak out (like Anne Hutchinson and her Quaker sisters) were expelled or hung.

A Puritan could eat, but not enjoy it. Drink alcohol, but only as a sacrament. Have sex, but only within marriage, and NOT for fun. Any variance from the missionary position was deemed criminal, even in wedlock (self-anointed sex police peeked in windows to make sure; no warrant was required).

Visible lust was a mortal sin. Being gay was beyond discussion. Hymnals were for church. Dancing was for the Devil.

(So, apparently, was bathing. Many Indigenous began their days with a dip in a nearby lake or stream. Europeans immersed themselves rarely, kept to the same clothes, and, in the vernacular of the day, “stank to High Heaven”).

Sabbath “entertainment” was an endless Biblical horror show. Black-robed priests raged on for hours. You came or else. Forget about leaving early (though George Washington later got away with it).

Getting filthy rich meant you were probably (but not definitely) headed for Heaven. That article of faith metastasized into an insatiable obsession for which no amount of money can ever be enough, no matter what the cost to people and the planet.

The Calvinist ethic was the spirit of capitalism. The rage for riches was “God’s Anointed Way”. Technology was beloved as His tool to conquer and consume a hellish Earth and its damnable sinners.

So the Bay Colony soon stripped nearly all the fish from Cape Cod Bay. It raped hillsides bare. It poisoned streams and extirpated game, all in the desperate pursuit of Divine favor.

The Puritan corporate-imperial elite was God's Elect, duty-bound for ready cash and Christian empire.

But it came with a psychotic twist: predestination.

God's plan was immutable. Free will was meaningless. The purest believer could still be scorched at death. This "horrible decree" tainted our paranoid "Visible Saints" with totalitarian intolerance. Doubt itself was the ultimate Calvinist terror.

A bad dream, a weak moment, an errant thought, a glimpse of lust, a breath of joy...these were Satan's calling cards. The Puritan psyche could not bear personal uncertainty – or public dissent. Said Nathaniel Ward...

*He that is willing to tolerate any Religion ... besides his own either doubts his own ... or is not sincere in it.*

The Puritan Trinity was God, gold, Glory. History's straight line led to Empire... or damnation. Calvinism, wrote Tawney, is like a "coiled spring that shatters every obstacle by its rebound."

In six stages, from 1688 to 1992, that Puritan fury spun the placid cycles of Indigenous harmony up an evolutionary axis, a techno-imperial spiral.

Like the seasons of the year, alternating pulses of evolving consciousness move from materialistic winter... to crash and thaw... a springtime awakening...a hot summer of war... an autumn reaction...and then another winter's decay.



These shortening seasons, whirling like a sea spout, have twirled our American organism to an end-of-empire Apocalypse.

They've driven our species to unimaginable imperial wealth and technological mastery...metastasized with greed, intolerance, injustice, racism, misogyny, ecological suicide and a dark, depressing view of life itself.

But they're beautifully balanced with awakened, Indigenous outbursts for grassroots democracy, peace, social justice, ecological sanity, raucous humor, spiritual transcendence (including sex, drugs, rock & roll).

Human survival demands we somehow fuse this back/forth, life/death feud between our sustainable Mother Earth and imperious God the Father.

A working synthesis is our ultimate imperative.

So let's go find it...

# ***The Life & Death Spiral of US History***

## ***Our Six Shortening Cycles, 1688-1992***

*“History doesn’t repeat itself, but it does rhyme.” —  
— -Mark Twain*

# Harvey Wasserman's Spiral of Our History

## Our Desperate Race To Solartopia

|   |                                |                              |   |                 |  |  |  |
|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---|-----------------|--|--|--|
| 6   | Imperial Senility<br>1976-1992 | Carter                       | Solartopia<br>Rainbow Awakening                   | COUNTER-CULTURE | ATOMIC TERROR<br><i>Nuke Fears</i>             | Corporate<br>Fundamentalism            | Greedy '80s  |
| 5   | Midlife Crisis<br>1960-1976    | JFK                          | The '60s<br><i>New Frontier/Great Society</i>     |                 | VIETNAM<br><i>Watergate</i>                    | Drug War<br>Conspiracy                 | Me '70s  |
| <div>The Baby Boom is Born<br/>1946-1964</div>                    |                                |                              |   |                 |  |  |  |
| 4   | World Empire<br>1932-1960      | Eleanor & Franklin           | The '30s<br><i>New Deal</i>                       |                 | WORLD WAR II<br><i>Economic Bill of Rights</i> | Cold War<br>Red Scare 2                | Fat '50s   |
| 3   | "Bully Manhood"<br>1896-1932   | Bryan/Debs<br>Teddy / Wilson | Bohemian Spring<br><i>Square Deal/New Freedom</i> |                 | WILSON'S WAR<br><i>Socialist Peace</i>         | Red Scare<br>Palmer Raids              | Roaring<br>'20s  |
| 2   | Youthful Destiny<br>1828-1896  | Jackson                      | Transcendentalists                                |                 | CIVIL WAR<br><i>Reconstruction</i>             | KKK   Jim Crow<br>Corporate Personhood | Gilded Age   |
| 1   | "Infant Empire"<br>1688-1828   | Glorious Revolution          | Great Awakening                                   |                 | REVOLUTION<br><i>Bill of Rights</i>            | Constitution<br>Federalism             | Era of Good<br>Feelings  |
| CYCLES > BURST OF ENERGY > AWAKENING > WAR > REACTION > AFTERMATH |                                |                              |   |                 |  |  |  |
| INDIGENOUS NA. NAKOCHY<br>HAUCENOSALNEE CONFEDERACY               |                                |                              | <i>Roots: Natives &amp; Newcomers</i>             |                 |  |  | <a href="http://www.solartopia.org">www.solartopia.org</a><br>© 2016 by Harvey Wasserman |

# *Cycle One: “Infant Empire”*

## *INSERT GRAPH LINE 1*

*(Glorious Revolution-Great Awakening-Revolution-Consitution-Era of Good Feelings)*

# A BURST OF ENERGY

## *The Glorious Revolution*

European seed impregnated our Indigenous mother.

We took embryonic shape in 1688. At birth we turned the world upside down.

First came the Vikings. Their sleek seminal schooners crossed oceans, sailed up our rivers, penetrated Greenland and Canada, as they had Ireland and the continent.

Then (maybe!) came the Chinese. Gavin Mendes says two of their very big boats landed on our west coast in 1421. It's an intriguing assertion in search of hard evidence.

In 1492, Columbus brought greed and torture. Spain raped Florida for her youth and treasure, then pillaged the Great Southwest long before the Pilgrims did it to Plymouth. Spanish horses transformed the prairie.

Conquistadors gutted the great Aztec, Mayan, and Incan civilizations. They torched "heathen" libraries superior to any in Europe, a blasphemous loss of priceless Indigenous wisdom that still cripples our soul.

In 1588, Spain's Catholic Philip II tried to crush his feminist sister-in-law, Elizabeth I. For his "Holy" Armada, Philip ate Iberia's forests and drank the Indigenous blood of the innocents he sacrificed in the mines, foundries, fields, and forests.

In a single night (July 29) God's own "Protestant Wind" sank that ugly wealth, plus some 15,000 soldiers and sailors. Philip (thankfully) never recovered.

Good Queen Bess's first American colony, Roanoke, disappeared around then. But starting in 1607 Virginia, much of our newcomer DNA was shaped by rich white Cavaliers.

Jamestown was a hellish swamp, poisoned by war, pestilence, and the birth of American racism. The Virginia Corporation poured in a steady stream of human filler. Half died yearly, until the population stabilized.

The Cavaliers were the younger sons of southern English Lords. British law reserved their fathers' estates for the firstborn males. The next got cash, which they bet on history's deadliest drug ("the curse of the red man") tobacco. And they infected early Virginia with the medieval brutality of their cushy childhoods.

In 1619, Africans deepened our DNA. The first score were cruelly traded for supplies at Port Comfort, Virginia. Millions more were soon stripped from ancient civilizations as rich, wise, and diverse as any on Earth. Yet the white *massas* denied their humanity and ignored their wisdom.

Chained to ship bottoms and whipping posts, these tragic innocents died by the millions. As the Spaniards burned the Mayan libraries, and the English scorned the gifts of America's Indigenous, New World slave-masters shredded African genius into menial labor. They crippled our growth and impoverished our souls with cruel contempt for a universe of knowledge in agriculture, medicine, science, government, the arts.

Most Africans dragged to earliest Virginia served out their indenture and gained their freedom. Some built their own

plantations. Blacks and whites freely associated, worked side-by-side, intermarried, raised rainbow children.

But in 1676, Nathaniel Bacon, a ruthless Cavalier, led black and white workers in a violent uprising aimed at taking native land. A thousand multiracial rebels drove royal Gov. William Berkeley from Jamestown, then torched it. They slaughtered peaceful tribes and took their ancestral homes.

Berkeley and Bacon soon died. So did the rebellion. But for Virginia's white planters, mixed-race insurrection became the ultimate nightmare.

So they turned the colonial working class against itself. The tool was chattel slavery.

Economic historians still debate whether the “peculiar institution” of American slavery was financially superior to indentured servitude.

But virtually alone in the world, American blacks were crushed into an “untouchable” sub-human caste. Their white masters beat, raped, tortured and sold them at will. The children were born enslaved, deemed legally, spiritually, genetically inferior.

So the poor whites (no matter how destitute) could still think themselves better than any black.

This vicious strategy split the American soul. As Lyndon Johnson said three centuries later...

*If you can convince the lowest white man he's better than the best colored man, he won't notice you're picking his pocket. Hell, give him somebody to look down on, and he'll empty his pockets for you.*

Chattel slavery's "race bribe" became a lethal obsession, the divide-and-conquer weapon of mass distraction used by corporate elites to rule American politics... right up to the 2016 selection that put Donald Trump in the White House.

From Cavalier Virginia to Trump Tower, from Bacon's Rebellion to the Drug War, America's race card has been reliably deployed to divide the working/middle class and divert the public. As a weapon of caste warfare, an excuse for conquest, a method of mass manipulation...the illusion of white supremacy has been America's ultimate birth defect, its core cancer.

A year after the first Africans arrived in Virginia, the *Mayflower* set sail from Plymouth with 102 whites. They were headed for contract labor in the Virginia Company's tobacco fields.

Some were religious refugees. Others were impoverished "strangers" desperate for a new life.

But a "Pilgrim Wind" blew them to Cape Cod. Anchored offshore, 41 men drew up the *Mayflower Compact*. It was our first *Declaration of Independence*. It proclaimed our freedom from corporate overlords. No women were allowed to sign.

On the beach, Squanto greeted the Pilgrims in English, which he'd learned in London (he'd been shanghaied three years earlier and put on display).

The newcomers moved into tribal homes whose owners were newly dead from diseases brought by trappers and traders.

Their first Thanksgiving (celebrated in 1621) was certified as a national holiday by Abe Lincoln just after Gettysburg.



In the 1630s, some 30,000 Puritans came to make Boston their “City on the Hill,” the dystopian paradise of a hateful God.

The Visible Saints never quite perpetrated Divine perfection. Like Satan himself, Boston’s rebellious outliers were relentless.... through all our historic cycles to come.

Roger Morton danced around a Maypole with the Indigenous. Samuel Maverick mocked God’s Elect.

Then the rebel priest Roger Williams dared to preach love and compassion for all God’s offspring. In 1636, the Puritan Elect pitched him into the winter woods. But local Narragansetts took Roger to Providence, where he built a haven for Quakers, Jews, runaway slaves and servants, endangered Indigenous, free thinkers, uppity women.

That included Anne Hutchinson, our first white feminist. A highly literate Puritan pioneer, her freewheeling salons infuriated the Boston elite. They threw her out for claiming direct communion with God (and for knowing Scripture better than they did).

For the next hundred years, Bay Colony Puritans ran a totalitarian tyranny, hanging witches, deporting dissidents, desperately seeking a “pure” totality that will forever escape them.

Down the coast, Manhattan was a rich hunting ground, shared by regional tribes for countless centuries.

Europeans also enjoyed the bounty. In 1624, Dutch traders gifted the locals sixty guilders’ (\$24) worth of junk jewelry. The tribes saw it as a gesture of appreciation. But the Dutch then said they’d “bought” the island, which made zero sense to people with no concept of private land. Divided and fenced, the

game went elsewhere. New Amsterdam became a bustling hub of trade and commerce.

In 1664, the Duke of York (later James II) claimed it for England without firing a shot.

Unlike Boston, New York had no dress code or sex police. A free-wheeling haven for sailors and merchants, printers and populists, dissidents and democrats, it became (and still is!) the ultimate port town. Three centuries later, Mohawk skywalkers danced atop its tallest buildings.

To the southwest, the Scotch-Irish poured into the Alleghenies. Many fled England's awful Puritan dictator Oliver Cromwell, who conquered Scotland then Ireland, igniting a ghastly civil war that only ended when Bill Clinton charmed them down.

These tough, resourceful "hillbilly" highlanders married into the Cherokee nation, loved their freedom, hated the British. Their frontier farms formed the mountainous backbone of our yeoman culture and the fiery heart of the upcoming Revolution.

At the colonies' core was the City of Brotherly Love. Its Quaker founders preached equality and justice, civility and peace. Their Society of Friends was born in defiance of Cromwell's Puritans, who jailed them without mercy.

The Quakers' relentless godfather George Fox preached nonviolent resistance. His "Inner Light" embraced all humans, black and white, male and female, rich and poor, prince and pauper. His American Friends planted the early roots of democratic socialism (which flowed into our DNA through Thomas Paine, a Quaker's son, and Ben Franklin, our transcendent genius).

Unique in all the world, Philadelphia was a haven for dissidents and dreamers, rebels and utopians. The Quakers were austere and prosperous, open and loving. They sat silent in their meeting houses until the “spirit moved them.” They lived simply, worked hard, made honest money, honored the Indigenous and resisted slavery, racism, poverty, and misogyny. They embedded in our DNA an indelible love for peace, social justice, and human dignity drawn straight from the *Sermon on the Mount*. Their pushy, pacifist activism still heats our American soul.

Neighboring Quaker New Jersey gave women (until 1808) their first right to vote. Maryland bounced between the Churches of Rome and England, but at last embraced religious tolerance.

In Virginia, the Cavalier slaveocracy that spread after Bacon's rebellion fused the poisons of British feudalism into a race-based tyranny, one of history's most brutal totalitarian regimes. It spawned the three-fifths bonus, the Confederacy, Civil War, Jim Crow segregation, Nixon's Southern Strategy, Drug War, race card and more. Its foul legacy of caste and hate still harms us all.

In Georgia, Sir James Oglethorpe hoped to establish a utopian colony for the prisoners sent here by the British Crown. Instead, the lethal weed of chattel slavery took root, as it did in the Carolinas and wherever else cotton and tobacco were grown.

As a whole our embryonic nation became an astounding mosaic. Into Indigenous America's countless clans and confederacies, tribes and nations, religions and ethnicities, poured a turbulent tsunami of transcendent diversity, first from Europe and Africa, then from all corners of the globe.

From moderate Plymouth and the rock-ribbed New England hill country, to totalitarian Boston, benign Providence, raucous New

York, the Scotch-Irish hill country, peace-loving Quaker Philadelphia, moderate New Jersey, the slave-owning south... British America in the 1600s was a human hodgepodge unlike any other.

Nor was it unified. Near century's end, five pesky Quakers invaded Boston to protest its Puritan pathology. Marching through town stark naked, hippie-style, on the Sabbath, they lit up a mass nervous breakdown, and were quickly hung.

News of their death was not well received. But the colonies had little to do with each other beyond trade and gossip. Overall, the new Americans saw themselves as British citizens living in distinct communities under imperial protection.

For Cromwell and the Kings, America's only purpose was to enrich England, whose colonial governors were mostly vile, violent, corrupt, and stupid.

In 1688, James 2 repeated Philip 2's fatal error of exactly a century before...he tried to make England Catholic again.

Elizabeth's Anglican progeny said NO! Scottish rebels swarmed down from the highlands for James' daughter Mary and her liberal spouse, William of Orange. These "Hill Billies" helped win a nonviolent Glorious Revolution that came with a Bill of Rights, a Toleration Act, an empowered Parliament.

In America, we dumped James' lackeys, and even locked up Edmund Andros, Boston's insufferable royal governor.

But disguised in a dress, Andros escaped. He thus birthed an epic chorus line of official crossdressers, including Confederate President Jefferson Davis, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani.

From Maine to Florida, the uprising's Glorious fire engulfed our Indigenous, Puritans, Pilgrims, Quakers, Anglicans, Catholics, Jews, Deists, Unitarians, English, Dutch, Scots, Irish, Africans, Cavaliers, Hispanics, Asians, prisoners, agnostics, atheists, hillbillies, urban merchants, yeoman farmers, city workers, swashbuckling sailors, poor whites, drifters, grifters, dissidents, and other unruly human upstarts who surged into the gorgeous hodgepodge that would soon enough become the United States of America.

In 1689, Good King Billy told Boston's Puritans to stop hanging Quakers (who still, thankfully, Question Authority).

Our American embryo danced in frontier freedom. Our awakened DNA was primed to twirl the world upside down.

# SPRINGTIME

## *The First Great Awakening*

In 1692-93, something drove Salem mad. Maybe it was ergot, a brain-bending fungus.

Ergot grows on damp, badly stored grain. Some say it shattered the Puritan mystique and awakened the American mind to democracy and freedom (as *cannabis*, psilocybin and LSD would do three centuries later).

The Glorious Revolution had already destabilized colonial authority. And then there was the usual greed.

When Salem's hysterical adolescents began pointing fingers in 1692, the accused "witches" were often women of means. The sheriff gladly grabbed their property.

A score were hung. Cheering crowds embraced the ritual slaughter like an early Super Bowl. They crushed to death a defiant Giles Corey, whose last demand was for "more weight."

Much of America was horrified. Colony-wide outrage undercut the Puritan death grip. Our later demands for separation of church and state, the right to a lawyer, protection from self-incrimination, credibility of evidence...all flowed from Salem's madness into history's greatest document, our truest birth certificate, the Bill of Rights.

In the 1730s and '40s, a new spirituality exploded across the land. Jonathan Edwards lit the fuse.

He didn't mean to.

Edwards was a twenty-something spellbinder in the Massachusetts river town of Northampton. He mixed Calvinist hellfire-and-damnation with a frontier passion for love and nature. The impossible contradictions shattered his parish and awakened our first cycle of spiritual transcendence.

Young Jonathan began by terrorizing his flock. Each of them, he shouted, was a “sinner in the hands of an Angry God...

*The God that holds you over the Pit of Hell, much as one holds a Spider, or some loathsome Insect, over the Fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; his Wrath towards you burns like Fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the Fire; he is of purer Eyes than to bear to have you in his Sight; you are ten thousand Times so abominable in his Eyes as the most hateful venomous Serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn Rebel did his Prince: and yet 'tis nothing but his Hand that holds you from falling into the Fire every Moment.*

Aflame with such rants, terrified congregants begged for salvation. Edwards tortured them for hours, dragged them through Hell, demanded obedience while they writhed in agony.

But Jonathan was young and passionate. In a heartbeat he could whiplash his sheep from their hellish purgatory to ecstatic transcendence. They once were lost, but now were found...

*And now you have an extraordinary Opportunity, a Day wherein Christ has flung the Door of Mercy wide open, and stands in the Door calling and crying with a loud Voice to poor Sinners; a Day wherein many are flocking to him, and pressing into the Kingdom of God; many are daily coming*

*from the East, West, North and South; many that were very lately in the same miserable Condition that you are in, are in now an happy State, with their Hearts filled with Love to Him that has loved them and washed them for their Sins in his own Blood.*

From there Edwards somehow leapt into the glorious bosom of a loving Mother Earth. Born to a Puritan cult that saw nature as Satan's playground, he soared to a "new birth" like a stoned tree-hugging hippie, tripping his brains out on Indigenous rapture...

*I walked abroad alone, in a solitary place in my father's pasture, for contemplation... And as I was walking there, and looking up on the sky and the clouds, there came into my mind so sweet a sense of the glorious majesty and grace of God that I know not how to express. I seemed to see them both in a sweet conjunction: majesty and meekness joined together; it was a sweet, and gentle, and holy majesty... God's excellency, his wisdom, his purity and love, seemed to appear in every thing; in the sun, moon and stars; in the clouds and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water, and all nature.*

With his right brain in Hell and his left in paradise, like some psychedelic prophet on scriptural mushrooms, Jonathan Edwards drove his congregation to white America's first stoned-out wave of transcendent madness.

Via ergot or otherwise, Northampton in 1735-36 flipped into a primeval group hug, a nine-month "Summer of Love". Feuds were settled, debts forgiven, insults forgotten, laughter embraced.

Tales of raucous music, group euphoria, and sexual daring filled the air. The pews filled with the "conversion of many souls."



Then they emptied. Souls on fire flocked to outdoor revivals to find God, Nature, and enraptured joy with maverick Holy Rollers a world apart from the Old Line Calvinists.

The Puritan Elect quaked in horror at these frontier Woodstocks. Blacks and women freely preached. African drums turned hymnals into spiritual and gospel music that later evolved into jazz, swing, bebop, R&B, rock, rap, hip hop. Ben Franklin's pal George Whitefield, a cross-eyed English spellbinder, boomed with a voice that could be heard by 10,000 seekers long before the age of electric amplifiers.

Evangelizing Methodists and Baptists, Presbyterians and pagans conjured up a cycle of transcendent energy that would fiercely pulsate again and again throughout our history.

The Great Awakening's grassroots spirituality pulverized the Puritans' rump rigidity. It blew open the arteries of social democracy. Its joyous transcendence smashed the stale death grip of Puritan "exceptionalism."

Again and again this would happen, with ascending power, up the axis of our history, forming a spiral.

Freedom of the press was at the apex. As the Great Awakening shredded Northampton, New York's awful royal governor William Cosby jailed John Peter Zenger (a German immigrant) for printing defamatory pamphlets.

But Zenger's wife Anna kept the papers coming. An angry mob surrounded the courthouse. On August 5, 1735, after just ten minutes of deliberations, a grassroots jury set Zenger free. The Truth, they said, was protected speech. Freedom of the press was enshrined in our national DNA. So was the power of a great woman to lead a social movement.

In the ensuing cycles of our history, each awakened springtime would shatter a winter of Puritan paralysis. New England's Transcendentalists (1830s-50s), farm-labor Populist-Socialist-Bohemian revolutionaries (1870s-1910s), grassroots radicals and New Deal social democrats (1930s), New Left civil rights/black power/feminist/LGBTQ/antiwar/yippie/eco-counterculture activists (1960s), Solartopian ecologists (1970s and beyond) have all built on the best of the upheavals before.

Grassroots democracy, social justice, racial equality, feminist ascendance, sexual freedom, ecological harmony, spiritual experimentation, digital utopianism, artistic liberation...new art, thought, writing, speech, song, dance, sex...these form the lifeblood of our Indigenous spirituality, our relentless, pulsating demand for egalitarian liberation and spiritual transcendence...the next stage of our human evolution.

Sparked by the Calvinist rantings of an accidental instigator, sustained by a feminist media maven, this first Great Awakening aimed us like a flaming arrow at our imperial overlords.

# SUMMER

## *Revolution*

In 1776, it became our exceptional fate to show all humankind that the universal curse of Empire (including our own) must eventually end.

At birth we were a perfect storm.

Indigenous freedom and Puritan ferocity were embedded in our embryo. We were literate, armed, organized, obstinate, and endowed with a visceral vision of inalienable rights.

Our grassroots muscle came from a fierce farm community rooted in the gorgeous soil of an unspoiled continent (being taken from the Indigenous). And from a nascent urban working class tired of being trashed by an imperial elite.

We came with four “Visible Saints” who embodied much of our genius and many of our contradictions: Ben Franklin, Tom Paine, George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson.

Their brilliant inner orbit was lit by the likes of Abigail, John and Samuel Adams, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, Patrick Henry, Ethan Allen. They rode a grassroots wave of angry artisans and agrarians willing to fight and die for land, freedom, democracy, independence....Revolution!

Indigenous harmony, abolition of slavery, women’s rights, universal suffrage, social democracy, cultural tolerance, ecological sanity...all these would take more time.

But in 1776, we made an epic leap away from monarchy and a titled aristocracy, toward a post-imperial world.

In the early days of our birthing process, the Mahatma of the moment was Ben Franklin, master of the middle path, utterly unique in all of human history.

Ben was born in Boston, 1706. He and his younger co-conspirator, Thomas Paine, were our transcendent secular humanists. In an Age of Reason they taught that an enlightened mind and compassionate soul could turn the world upside down.

Ben was the 16th of his Puritan father's 17 children. He had virtually no formal education. How he became our greatest civic and scientific genius remains a glorious mystery.

As an ambitious teenager, Ben sought out Cotton Mather, Boston's leading Puritan, who told him to "stoop" with humility.

The endlessly curious Franklin discovered, codified, quantified, organized, and made useful our initial understanding of electricity. The term "battery" is his. So is the lightning rod which he refused to patent. He had all the money he needed, he said, and gifted this breakthrough device free to all.

Ben also invented bifocals, swim fins, wind surfing, a flexible urinary catheter, an odometer. He created the glass armonica, for which both Mozart and Beethoven composed original music.

He did NOT patent his eco-green Franklin Stove, which moved centuries of wasteful flames from open fireplaces into efficient metal boxes. It has conserved countless forests and saved millions of homes and lungs from cancerous ash. Like today's photovoltaic cells and LED lighting (see our finale on *Solartopia*)

the Franklin Stove synthesized Puritan technology with our Indigenous passion for natural harmony.

Ben also became the first to chart the Atlantic Gulf Stream. Sailing home from London in 1774, he made oceanographic readings still being used to gauge our current climate crisis.

In 1777, Franklin was the western world's #1 celebrity. Congress sent him to France to seduce King Louis for our Revolution. A cheering crowd greeted his arrival. They just HAD to have a coonskin cap like the one Ben happened to be wearing. So he ordered a shipload. His funky visage soon graced plates and cups throughout the continent.

Ben also pioneered the lending library, fire department, and public sanitation service, which did the first cleansing of Philadelphia's toxic streets. The mail service he ran – a precursor to the internet – networked the new nation.

Franklin originated the arts of political cartooning and media syndication. Rich at age 42, he “retired” to devote himself to public service, maintaining (unlike Jefferson) a lifetime of reasonable solvency.

Franklin revered Indigenous wisdom. When he convened a conference in Albany to plot a union of the colonies in 1754, he chose a *Haudenosaunee* chief to preside. He embedded the *Kaianerekvova* template into our federal Constitution.

Above all, he endowed our DNA with a love of reason, moderation, humor, humility...and women. In innumerable ways, Franklin was the true Father of Our Country.

Like most Founders, Ben was a Deist. He embraced a divine Creator who fired up the universe, gave us the power of reason,

then left us to navigate on our own. No angry God judged our lives. No eternal Hell threatened our sanity.

Like most whites at the time, the young Franklin believed that blacks were inferior. He even owned two slaves.

But at a multi-racial (probably Quaker) school, he saw the black kids learning just as well as the whites. He freed his own slaves and demanded Abolition. His last essay (in 1790) mocked our nation's Covenant with Hell.

Ben's "adopted son," Thomas Paine, was our literary lion, the 18th Century's best-selling author. Born to a British Quaker, Tom's riveting *Common Sense* demanded independence, social justice, an end to monarchy. It was read, sung, heard and praised by virtually all Americans. It lit our Revolutionary fuse. No other agitator's screed has ever done more.

Paine and Franklin were early social democrats. They hated chattel slavery...and the kind that comes when a greedy elite hordes more property than it really needs.

Paine mocked the death penalty and war as immoral tools of a callous ruling caste. He wanted the vote for all regardless of race, gender or class. He pushed free public education, a guaranteed minimum income, support for our elders (like the Social Security System won by a later Franklin).

Such radicalism was rooted in a screaming core of new-born Americans demanding land, justice and freedom. They hated the King's obscene wealth, his smug imperial overlords, and the corrupt East India Tea Company.

George2 was a madman who ran naked through the streets of London breaking windows. George3 barely spoke until age 11.

In 1763, the Brits beat the French in America and India. The sun didn't set on their global empire for nearly two centuries.

But the King didn't want his imperial troops back in London. And he was too cheap to build barracks for them here. So he demanded we feed and house them while they took our jobs and hit on our daughters. We kicked in the womb.

In Boston, 1770, we broke water. We flung ice balls at the remnant Redcoats. In March, they shot five of us dead. Crispus Attucks, a black man, died first.

In 1773, our Supreme Agitator used that Massacre to rouse the rabble for an anti-corporate assault. Dressed as Mohawks, Samuel Adams and his Sons of Liberty pitched the East India Company's tea into Boston Harbor. Nobody was harmed. (They did bust a captain's lock, which they replaced the next day).

Then the Brits made Franklin a revolutionary.

Ben was in London on business. He supported the King and had nothing to do with the Tea Party. But in January 1774, some pompous Lords (the scum of England's idle rich) summoned him to a public hearing for a torrent of verbal abuse.

Ben stood silent. Then he sailed home (charting the Gulf Stream along the way) and hurled his exceptional genius into an earth-shattering overthrow that could never have won without him.

In April 1775, the Redcoats marched to Concord, meaning to hang Sam Adams and John Hancock, his favorite smuggler. Instead they killed eight farmers. It was the Imperial thing to do.

But they still had to get back to Boston. From dozens of nearby farms, we swarmed through the forests, Indigenous-style. We

took potshots from behind rocks and trees, slipped away, then did it again...and yet again.

Some 250 Redcoats fell. It was the first white anti-Imperial bloodbath. Our guerrilla tactics fed a mighty stream of global rebellion that led straight to Vietnam, whose stealth fighters decimated our own imperial army two centuries later.

Soon after Concord, George Washington took charge. A lousy open field tactician, he was a brutal warrior. During the French-Indian War, the Indigenous almost killed him. In response, he used their tactics to defeat the British.

Among the Iroquois themselves, like his great-grandfather before him, George Washington was called *Conotocarious*, (Destroyer of Towns). “When that name is heard,” wrote the Seneca...

*our women look behind them and turn pale, and our children cling close to the neck of their mothers.*

In 1779, an expedition under his command (led by John Sullivan) destroyed 40 Iroquois villages, burning homes and crops so the natives would starve in winter. Sullivan’s troops used the flesh of the dead for leggings. Washington later denounced such barbarity, and warned that breaking the treaties he signed with the tribes would destroy our nation’s “honor.” All (of course) were eventually broken.

Martha had made George our richest slaveowner. The Father of Our Country was probably sterile from a childhood fever. He had lousy teeth and no biological children (but he did have great hair, and never wore a wig).



Our biggest brewer, George named his dogs Topsy and Drunkard. Master of the barnyard curse, he was infamous for walking out of Sunday services early. His Bible came with a flask.

The man who "could not tell a lie" loved espionage. His secret network of citizen-spies dizzied the Brits with strategic feints and fake intelligence. On Christmas Eve, 1776, his daring race across the freezing Delaware to attack Trenton saved the Revolution.

To train our ragtag army, Washington recruited his Prussian friend Baron von Steuben, who was openly gay. At Valley Forge, George's *aide-de-camp*, Alexander Hamilton, lived in public bliss with his lover John Laurens. George later wrote a community of Rhode Island Jews to assure their place in the new republic.

When his troops were in despair, our richest slaveowner asked our most radical scribe (Tom Paine) to evoke the "times that try men's souls" and rally our "winter soldiers."

About a fifth of them may have been African-American. Britain's Lord Dunsmore had offered slaves their freedom in exchange for military service.

Like Lincoln in the Civil War, Washington quickly learned he could not win without black soldiers. They stayed in uniform longer than whites, and may have contributed a quarter of the Revolutionary army's overall service time. An all-black regiment arose from Rhode Island.

Amidst the chaos, as many as 50,000 slaves went free. Twenty of Washington's ran away (including Hercules, his very large personal body guard). In 1799, George freed (pending Martha's death) his remaining human property.

As a drinking buddy, George was pretty cold (he hated to be touched, even on the shoulder). He later split with Tom Paine. But our Independence was won by Common Folk using Indigenous tactics, led by an infamous Indian-killer who later decried their slaughter and warned against breaking their treaties. His last will and testament called for his slaves' freedom as he confirmed a basic faith in the grassroots citizenry...

*The great mass of our Citizens require only to understand matters rightly, to form right decisions.*

Hit with a common cold after a winter's ride around Mount Vernon 1799, George's doctors bled him to death, leaving us to wonder who he might have become had he lived longer.

While Washington led our infant army, America's actual birth certificate was drafted by our most infuriating Visible Saint.

Tom Jefferson proclaimed "all men are created equal." His first Declaration draft included a rant against slavery (which was deleted by Congress). But he bought and sold slaves throughout his life. At death, Tom freed only a tiny handful (two were his children) of the many he owned.

Jefferson sang of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." He praised the Common Man. He sanctified ceaseless Revolution. But he scorned Indigenous culture, had little concept of women's rights, feared urban "mobs" and "masses," and ran our first imperial presidency.

Jefferson's first wife (Martha Wayles) was the daughter of a slaveowner. She died in 1782.

Five years later, Tom fathered the first of as many as eight children with Sally Hemings, our third First Lady.

Sally was the enslaved daughter of Tom's first wife's father (she was thus his half-sister-in-law). Sally was a teenager and Tom a forty-something when their first son (who may have looked *just* like his father) was born. Their de facto marriage spanned nearly four decades. Their bedroom was just off his study at Monticello.

Tom and Sally had three kids while he was President, more than any other First Couple. One was named for James Madison, his closest friend, at the request of our fourth First Lady, Dolley.

(In 1918, that child's grandson, Frederick Madison Roberts, a Los Angeles Republican, became the first African-American elected to the California Assembly. He was a close friend of Chief Justice Earl Warren.)

Many scores of Jefferson-Hemings progeny survive and thrive throughout the US. Tom's white descendants, born of daughters Patsy and Polly, for two centuries denied their relationship to those borne by Sally. But DNA testing has confirmed paternity. A public embrace came (of course) on the Oprah Winfrey show, followed by a group dinner and a jointly published book.

Tom and Sally's union first formed in Paris, where Franklin had seduced King Louis into our Revolution. The French hated the British. America's most charming genius converted that rivalry into the troops and ships that helped us win.

That an absolute monarch would help arm a revolutionary mob that hated absolute monarchy seems absurd. But Ben pulled it off. It later cost Louis a trip to the guillotine.

Before the beheading, the French King gave Franklin a bejeweled snuff box, prompting Congress to ban such gifts from foreign leaders. Meant to prevent corruption among our highest officials, this "emoluments clause" was most thoroughly trashed by Andrew Jackson, Richard Nixon and Donald Trump.

In 1781, the French fleet Franklin had finagled turned the tide at Yorktown. Ignoring the local tribes, the Brits ceded us the continent all the way to the Mississippi. When he signed the deal, Ben made a point of donning the same suit he wore when those pompous lords made him a Revolutionary back in 1774.

Meanwhile, Washington gave up power.

He'd kept our ragtag regulars and agrarian guerrillas fighting the Brits for seven impossible years. He might have made himself dictator. Instead, he went home in 1783 when he quit the army... and did it again in 1797, refusing a third term as president.

George wanted to farm, especially his beloved hemp. So unlike so many other revolutionary leaders who made themselves dictators, Washington plowed under the idea that our newborn nation needed an absolute ruler.

Today we try to make sense of historic icons as complex, contradictory and prone to change over time as we are. It can be a useful game to play. But in the long run, it's the hard facts of how they affected the flow of history that matter most.

We deify the Indian-killing/slave-owning non-King George most of all for his military stamina, and for his tolerance, vision, walks away from power, and denunciations of onarchy and a titled aristocracy (but not of a moneyed oligarchy).

We love Tom Jefferson for the magic pen that sang of all men being “created equal”...but can’t deny the women he disrespected, the slaves he did not free, the Indigenous he deceived and planned to ethnic cleanse.

Likewise, our Revolution, a shrine to human evolution.

Against all odds, we won our freedom from the era’s most powerful empire. We were humankind's first post-imperial newborn, fiercely opposed to central authority. Our Articles of Confederation (1781-89) allowed no official religion, no king, no titled aristocrats, no president, no taxes, no spies, no unified currency, no standing army.

In their moments of transcendence, our wealthy Founding elite (as continually pushed by our grassroots Revolutionaries) endowed the new nation with an inalienable sense of civic responsibility. They profited personally from our Independence. But they had the wisdom and character to embrace the greater good as the ultimate goal.

We were, said Ben, “a Republic, if you can keep it.”

But have we?

At birth we embraced an earth-shattering independence and took that giant step toward true democracy....but we somehow stayed with slavery, racism, injustice, intolerance, greed...contempt for women, gays and nature...and an "exceptional" addiction to conquest and empire. True to our Puritan heritage, wrote Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz...

*the United States has been at war every day since its founding, often covertly and often in several parts of the world at once.*

In his later days Washington decried the slaughter of the Indigenous that had first made his reputation. He solemnly negotiated treaties with the tribes, warning that to lie to them would soil our nation's "honor." Yet the country that calls him "Father" has trashed every one of more than eight hundred such signed agreements, including four hundred ratified treaties.

We are, all these years later, still a mighty onion whose epic peeling makes us cry.

Through the cycles of our history, each of these layered flaws has tested our ability to learn and grow. They force us up an evolutionary spiral.

They remind us that we are born (and reborn) in successive revolutions. And that after this first hot summer of Indigenous birth, five more cycles would unfold, followed by a tragic coma whose end-game remains hugely unresolved...

# **FALL**

## ***The Constitution/Federalism***

Summer passions do spend themselves.

Our first Revolution was born of hope and promise.

Then the brilliant summer of our newborn ideals gave way to an autumn chill.

The grassroots farmers and urban workers who beat the British demanded freedom. They also wanted social justice. They confiscated property belonging to rich tories and distributed it among the community.

We'd overthrown the world's most powerful king. We wanted no return to tyranny, even at the hands of our fellow Americans.

Our Articles of Confederation (1781-89) were deliberately weak. The states ran the show. The towns and counties kept their militias. The farmers kept their distance.

But there was a fatal flaw: amending the Articles required a unanimous vote of all the states. The structure was too rigid to adapt to changing times.

On the home front, vulture bankers and tax collectors swooped down on our heroic winter soldiers. As in every American war to come, our veterans were lionized while fighting and dying. But when they came home, after the obligatory parades and accolades, they were abused and abandoned.

Many Revolutionary heroes were never paid for their service.

Their wounds (financial, physical, mental, spiritual) were poorly treated, if at all. Along the frontier, the heroic Minutemen and their Continental cohorts began to lose their farms. Said "Plough Jogger," in terms that spoke for all working people...

*I have been greatly abused, have been obliged to do more than my part in the war, been loaded with class rates, town rates, province rates, Continental rates and all rates ... been pulled and hauled by sheriffs, constables and collectors, and had my cattle sold for less than they were worth ... The great men are going to get all we have and I think it is time for us to rise and put a stop to it, and have no more courts, nor sheriffs, nor collectors nor lawyers.*

In August 1786, a Revolutionary captain named Daniel Shays gathered a yeoman brigade to stop the foreclosures. Some 1500 armed "regulators" swarmed through the hills of western Massachusetts. They stuck twigs of hemlock in their hats.

On January 25, 1787, things came to a head. As would John Brown 72 years later, the angry vets marched on an armory (this one at Springfield) to get guns.

Boston sent an army of reaction. Many were Harvard students. Sam Adams – once our supreme agitator, now a corrupt servant of urban money – screamed for blood.

Under General Benjamin Lincoln, Boston's armed rich got there first, and opened fire. Grape shot from two cannons poured into the farmers' ranks. Four died. A score were wounded. The rebels regrouped but were too weak. Shays fled to Vermont.



The new American elite took Shays' Rebellion as a wake-up call. They demanded a strong central government to serve as a fortress against renewed local resistance.

From May 25 to September 17, 1787, up to fifty-five bankers, lawyers, merchants, plantation owners, military men, legislators, business barons, and one genius media maven convened in Philadelphia. In a spacious high-ceilinged room with large windows (and armed guards at the doors) the Constitution was written in secret.

In attendance were no Indigenous (except as channelled by Franklin), no yeoman farmers, no women, no non-whites (slave or free), no sailors, no low-ranking soldiers, no urban workers, no artisans, no unpropertied artisans or mid-level entrepreneurs.

There was no official transcript. Decked out in full uniform, George Washington presided in the chieftain's chair for four months and said...nothing.

Finally, 39 wealthy white men signed the document that chilled the hot passions of anti-authoritarian revolution into the cold realities of a powerful central government.

The new Constitution would serve "the general welfare." It rid our soil of royal families and titled aristocracy. That much was a major evolutionary leap beyond our European DNA.

But the Declaration's guarantee of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" had morphed to "life, liberty and property."

Would the new nation be run by Alexander Hamilton's wealthy elite? By Thomas Jefferson's "aristocracy of merit"? Or by the People, as demanded in Paine's *Common Sense* (he was not there) but who were left with no say in writing the Constitution?

More than two centuries later, that remains a defining question, the ultimate challenge to our desperately needed organic rebirth.

Like the *Haudenosaunee* Confederacy, the new government centered on sovereign states sending representatives to a general council. Divided between House and Senate, the Congress was balanced with an elected executive and an appointed judiciary. There was not a hint of matriarchy.

The new elite got a national army, taxation, tariffs, courts, currency, and stable commerce amongst ourselves and other nations. Property qualifications for voting (decided by the states) would linger until the 1860s. Free blacks could vote in five states. Women could vote (until 1808) only in New Jersey.

An Electoral College was meant to balance the small states against the big ones. It let slaveowners count each of their chattel for three-fifths of a vote, and dominated the House and the White House until 1861. It also selected six men (in 1800, 1824, 1876, 1888, 2000 and 2016) who'd lost the popular vote.

Grassroots farmers mostly hated the new government. In a straight-up nationwide democratic tally, it would have been roundly rejected.

To seal the *coup d'état*, the new American elite arbitrarily announced the need for nine (of twelve) states to approve. (The Democratic Republic of Vermont stayed independent until 1793).

Then they birthed an American tradition by rigging the state conventions to put them over the top.

Activist/historian Staughton Lynd says key New York delegates were explicitly elected by the anti-Federalist grassroots to oppose the new Constitution. But at the state convention, they voted to approve. Some who flipped emerged with unexplained new wealth.

The new Constitution could be amended with two-thirds of Congress, a presidential signature, and then three-quarters of the states. Tough, but doable. The new national organism could change and grow. It was also meant to serve “the general welfare.” But first it served the new (untitled) elite.

In reaction, our Revolutionary populace demanded a Bill of Rights. The *Haudenosaunee* had one. Virginia's was drafted by Madison and Jefferson.

Now an angry populace, still seething over the attack on Shays' rebels, threatened a new Revolution. So Madison (who'd initially dismissed the idea) compiled a Bill of Rights for the new nation.

Our First Amendment became human history's most important paragraph. High-flying pronouncements like the *Declaration of Independence* (1776), the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* (1789), and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) have enshrined our highest philosophical principles.

But the Bill of Rights is the *law*. It *guarantees* our most basic freedoms – religion, speech, media, assembly, petition. It outlines due process. It bans torture (*remember that!!*), self-incrimination, double-jeopardy, spying, unwarranted search and seizure, arbitrary imprisonment, excessive bail and much more.

Our complex, demanding balance between human rights and official tyranny has see-sawed ever since. Through the cycles of

our history, our worth as a nation has directly rhymed with our effective commitment to those first ten codicils.

In 1791, Washington and his Treasury Secretary, Alexander Hamilton, slapped frontier farmers with a hated whiskey tax. The angry agrarians grabbed the guns they'd used to beat the British, and marched toward Philadelphia.

But George had a new army. His ambitious Jamaica-born aide gladly used it to crush the rebels who'd won the Revolution, but now lost the peace.

Two years later Washington again walked away from power, declining a third term. Neither generals nor presidents, he said, should rule for life. It was his finest hour.

George's eternally grouchy Vice President John Adams took over. With his sensible, feminist wife Abigail (who might've made a better president) he fought to maintain a stable post-war equilibrium.

But he couldn't resist shaking the slaveowners by having to dinner a representative of the Haitian Revolution, the first free black man to dine with an American president. It would be a long time before that happened again.

In 1800, John ran for re-election against his charming, devious Vice President, Tom Jefferson.

The Founders had somehow convinced themselves that in their gentlemanly new republic, the man who'd just lost the presidency would serve the winner as a faithful vice president.

So Jefferson (who lost to Adams in 1796) became his VP. It did not go well.

John saw their electoral re-run as a gracious affair between two "good friends." He never suspected that Tom had secretly hired the scandal-monger James Callender to smear him in newspapers throughout the nation.

Utterly enraged by Callender's scurrilous trash, the absurdly thin-skinned Adams assaulted the First Amendment with the Sedition Act, which is still dangerously on the books.

For daring to criticize a president, John fined and jailed Callender and others, including the illegitimate son of Franklin's illegitimate son. Abigail (who should've known better) went along.

When Tom took the White House, Adams left town before the inauguration. When he learned that his "great friend" had hired the guy who'd smeared him, John punched his hand into a door, breaking both. (Callender later broke the stories that introduced us all to Sally Hemings).

A lover of all things French, our third president was identified with a Revolution that (after ours bankrupted him) beheaded Louis and ran wild in the streets. The Great Fear that gripped Europe spread to America's authoritarian elite.

Yale's Puritan President Timothy Dwight (a grandson of Jonathan Edwards) demanded new witch trials. Rev. Jedidiah Morse screamed about a crazy "illuminati" conspiracy that somehow involved the composer Beethoven.

Like so many other tyrannical fanatics throughout our history, Morse promised to name Satan's insidious agents, but never did. These early McCarthyites howled that Godless rape, pillage, terror, and madness were on the march.

Above all, they screamed that the incoming president, Thomas Jefferson, was a satanic revolutionary.

In fact, he was an imperial moderate, an early Eisenhower. In the chilly fall of our first organic cycle, while he fathered Sally's final three children, our third president plunged the new nation into an industrial winter of material excess...and global empire.

# ***Indigenous Revenge? Tecumseh's Curse***

*Around the time Francis Scott Key stuck us with the Star Spangled Banner, we absorbed a "curse" that tracks the death and maiming of seven presidents.*

*The great Shawnee Tecumseh was our quintessential war chief. A charismatic genius, he was born under a shooting star in what's now southern Ohio. He spoke five languages and wanted the whites out of his homeland.*

*During the War of 1812, Tecumseh bitterly renounced his British allies for their brutality and torture. His vision was of an all-Indigenous union to re-establish control over their vast homeland.*

*Reviving the role of Deganawidah, Tecumseh travelled throughout the Indigenous East, trying to unite the tribes.*

*To start, Tecumseh established a base at Tippecanoe. He left his brother Tenskwatimah ("the Prophet") to maintain peace while he went off to recruit the southern nations for a unified council of resistance. As Deganawidah had visited the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca, Tecumseh now sought out the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Creek, Choctaw and others.*

*But while he was gone, Tenskwatimah foolishly attacked the US forces commanded by General William Henry Harrison. Harrison jumped at the opportunity to wipe out the encampment, leaving the returning Tecumseh without a solid base. Isolated and over-extended, the resistance faltered.*

*In 1813, at Thames River, Harrison may have killed Tecumseh. But he never got the great chief's body.*

*In 1840 Harrison was elected president as a Whig. As he made clear in his Inaugural speech, he was a strong advocate of expansion into Indian lands.*

*But during his VERY long rant (by some accounts it went on for three hours) Harrison caught pneumonia. Many blamed his demise a month later on "Tecumseh's Curse."*

*The next six presidents elected on a "zero year" (Lincoln, Garfield, McKinley, Harding, FDR, JFK) died in office. Reagan was shot, but lived...sortof.*

*George W. Bush has since survived after 2000. But he wasn't really elected (Al Gore, who won the popular vote, also survived).*

*We'll see what happens after 2020....if there's actually an election.....*



# WINTER

## *The Era of Good Feelings*

Amidst a furor of fierce reaction, John Adams was re-elected by popular acclaim.

In 1800, straight up, Adams could have claimed 65 Electoral votes, Jefferson just 62.

But like the Constitution's ratification, the 1800 election was rigged.

The Founders gave slaveowners three-fifths of a vote for each slave. Not one of them got an actual ballot.

But the “bonus” gave Jefferson enough ill-got electors to give him a White House built by slaves who couldn't live in it. Nor could their descendants (until Michelle Obama).

Adams' Federalist allies portrayed the soft-spoken Virginian as a screaming radical. Blood would be boiled, children raped, heads posted on spikes, buildings burned, order destroyed, the country bankrupted.

But the terminally shy Tom (who never spoke in public) preferred consensus. “We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists,” he said. Then he ushered in a chill winter's hibernation of industrial consolidation and imperial expansion.

The new capital's seeds were sown at a dinner party Tom had hosted in 1790. He and Madison dined with Alexander Hamilton, whom they both disliked (the feeling was mutual).

But they had an issue. The slaveowners hated coming to the Congress in Philadelphia. While the *massas* were off doing the country's business, those pesky Quakers kept talking the slaves into running north to freedom.

Hamilton was an abolitionist. His Continental lover, John Laurens, was dead. Married into a wealthy New York family, he fathered eight children.

He also fathered the corporate state. He wanted America run by a modern industrial oligarchy, not a medieval slaveocracy. He liked hard money and a clean balance sheet. The feds, he said, should pay off the debts the states had run up during the Revolution, then help fund a commercial-manufacturing empire.

The Virginia agrarians were not inclined. But lubricated by Tom's fine wines (which he could not afford), the trio cut a deal. Jefferson and Madison would let Congress bail out the states.

In exchange, Hamilton would let the slaveowners move the nation's capital to a dismal southern swamp, far away from those annoying Quakers.

Ten years later, in 1800, the slave-built White House opened its doors (briefly) to John and Abigail Adams of Massachusetts. Then came Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe, all Virginia slaveowners.

They were accompanied by Hamilton's dream of a corporate empire.

In his seminal 1791 *Report on Manufactures* and other writings, Alex demanded that taxpayers fund our commercial/industrial jumpstart. The rich would use our public money for a national bank and a manufacturing infrastructure.

The new industrial elite would preach the gospel of the “free market.” Their Bible, Adam Smith’s 1776 *Wealth of Nations*, worshipped the “invisible hand” of open competition.

But Adam was a humanist. Those who actually read his books knew he feared that unregulated monopolies would clog the markets and game the system.

He predicted that without public vigilance, an iron oligarchy of corrupted wealth could arise, driving us without pity to radical inequality and imperial overreach.

John Adams helped it happen. He knew Jefferson intensely disliked the staid jurist John Marshall (Tom’s cousin).

So, as he exited the White House, Adams anointed him Chief Justice. From 1801 to 1835, Marshall made the Supreme Court a mighty fortress for the rising corporate-imperial economy.

His timing was perfect. We were exhausted by war and reaction. We were ready to get rich. So Jefferson kicked open the door between our quaint post-colonial preserve and an imperial juggernaut that by 1991 would rule the world.

In 1803, Tom sent American ships to what’s now Libya (“the shores of Tripoli”) to crush Barbary pirates who were messing with our trade. As in our 2011 Obama-Clinton assault 208 years later, innumerable innocents died needlessly.

Meanwhile Tom borrowed \$15 million from a British businessman to buy Louisiana. The Purchase doubled our size...and violated Jefferson’s alleged belief in limited government.

But never mind.

This was the portal to Manifest Destiny. Tom knew little of the western lands he'd bought. But he wanted a place to send the eastern tribes, and he knew a steal when he saw one.

Ironically, the Purchase was made possible by Haiti's slave revolution, which terrified Tom and his fellow plantation owners.

Napoleon owned New Orleans. He was using it to squeeze our commerce. War seemed inevitable. So Bonaparte sent troops to tighten his grip.

But his sugar-growing colony of Hispaniola was on the way. The legendary Toussaint L'Ouverture was leading 500,000 self-proclaimed Haitians in a war for freedom and independence.

Napoleon's plan was simple: his white troops would crush the black rebels, then sail on to crush us in Louisiana.

But Toussaint beat the French. Hispaniola became Bonaparte's Vietnam. His troops never saw New Orleans. The white world has yet to recover...or to forgive the Haitians (like the Vietnamese) for daring to win their freedom.

As Jefferson's early imperial legions fought pirates and slaughtered civilians in North Africa, Napoleon grimly sold him Louisiana. Our race to global empire was on.

Haiti's revolution was hated by all slaveowners. Ten US presidents never recognized the new nation or sent an ambassador (Lincoln finally did both in 1863).

Meanwhile, the Brits messed with our trade, our sailors, our newborn national pride.

After our 1783 truce with Britain, our newborn nation wisely avoided war. Except for Tom's North African adventure and the on-going slaughter of the Indigenous, we stayed at peace.

Under Jefferson, Madison and Monroe, the "Infant Empire" took shape. Proclaiming "we are all Republicans, we are all Federalists," Jefferson adopted Hamilton's commercial-manufacturing vision. Abandoning their agrarian dreams, the end-of-ideology Virginians used the federal government to fund the infrastructure for a rising corporate-industrial state. Having won the "argument," the Federalist Party faded away.

But in 1812, imperial War Hawks captured Congress. With an infantile idea of conquering Canada, our little army torched York (later Toronto). The Brits reciprocated by burning the White House. "Little Jemmie" barely escaped.

At the ensuing battle of Fort McHenry, a slave-owning lawyer stuck war-loving lyrics (some blatantly racist) on an old drinking song. The un-singable mess morphed into a "Star-Spangled Banner" for which unwilling athletes are forced to stand, in violation of the First Amendment. Jimi Hendrix played it best at Woodstock in 1969. With no words.

The Era of Good Feelings was built around three consecutive two-term presidencies (Jefferson, Madison, Monroe) which didn't happen again until our Clinton-Bush2-Obama national coma two centuries later.

Meanwhile, this first winter of our material content demanded normalcy, not turmoil. Like the Gilded 1890s, Roaring '20s, Fat '50s, "Me" '70s, and Greedy '80s to come, there was money to be made and land to be conquered. Few Americans bothered to

vote. Wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson of Massachusetts:

*From 1790 to 1820, there was not a book, a speech, a conversation, or a thought in the state.*

Living with Sally and their many children at Monticello, Jefferson was unhappy with the nation whose birth certificate he'd drafted.

As president he'd taken the first steps toward global empire. He, Madison and then Monroe used much of Hamilton's Federalism to fund infrastructure for a commercial-industrial juggernaut. In 1816, in his usual timeless, self-contradictory rhetoric, Tom warned against exactly what he'd helped create...

*I hope we shall... crush in its birth the aristocracy of our moneyed corporations, which dare already to challenge our government to a trial of strength and bid defiance to the laws of our country.*

In 1819 (as always) there came a crack where the light got in. An irrationally exuberant stock market panicked and crashed. Monroe's second term plunged into chaos. Depression raged. Landlords went broke. Factories sold for pennies. Angry organizers birthed the first industrial unions.

In 1824, JQ Adams, as Secretary of State, proclaimed the Monroe Doctrine. It claimed sovereignty over the entire western hemisphere, telling European powers to forget about any involvement in any country on "our side of the ocean."

It was an astonishing imperial decree, totally at odds with the engine of our birth. For at least two centuries to come, it would make us the "massa" of Latin America..with devastating consequences for all concerned.

Then Andy Jackson trounced Adams in the popular vote. But JQ stole the White House by gaming the Electoral College. Karma was instant: Quincy's presidency (like his dad's) was an unruly disaster.

By 1828, America's first cycle of conception, birth, awakening, war, reaction, and early material growth was done. We were what Washington had called an "Infant Empire"... fully formed, twice our birth size.

Our postnatal nap got us stable. Despite our 1812 tantrum, we solidified our frontier security, amassed great wealth, nurtured a nascent commercial-industrial state.

And then we got woke by a Tennessee wild man.

***CYCLE 2:***  
***MANIFEST ADOLESCENCE***

***INSERT LINE 2 FROM CHART***



# **A Burst of Energy**

## ***Andrew Jackson***

In 1824, amidst the chaos of economic depression, four men ran for president as Democrat-Republicans.

Andrew Jackson of Tennessee beat them all, trouncing John Quincy by about 150,000 votes to just over 100,000.

Adams<sup>2</sup> then hijacked the White House. He disliked slavery, but cut backroom deals with slaveowners Henry Clay of Kentucky and South Carolina's John Calhoun. Like his dad's, it was a tortured presidency.

The infuriated Jackson had fought at least fourteen duels. One left a bullet permanently lodged about an inch from his heart.

To crush Quincy in 1828, Jackson formed the Democratic Party, a pillar of slavery, racism, and imperial assault for the next nineteen decades. State-by-state abolition of property requirements for voting sent the overall national vote count soaring from around 350,000 in 1824 to more than a million four years later. This time, Jackson held on.

Now our second one-term, John Quincy served 17 years in Congress. He became a fierce abolitionist...and our greatest ex-president.

But for a generation of farmers and workers born after the Revolution, Andrew Jackson was the Common Man's messiah. A wild mob made a drunken brawl of his inauguration. With hair as good as Washington's (and much better teeth) he never wore the wig of the old plantation elite.

Jackson was the orphaned son of Irish immigrants. The rising industrial working/middle class (much of it also Irish) gave him a white urban base that stayed Democrat right through the New Deal and New Frontier.

But for Old Hickory, money both talked and swore. An alleged "labor man," he crushed a union revolt on the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal. He hated Hamilton's National Bank, but slipped hard cash to cronies at the "pet banks" that replaced it.

Jackson's violent contempt for women, blacks, Hispanics, the Indigenous, ethical business practices and the law itself defined our adolescent frontier individualism (and set a low bar for the later coming of Donald Trump).

Our Jacksonian adolescence came with a "Manifest Destiny" to conquer the continent. "Free" western land meant any white male elected by God (or Ayn Rand) could get rich by working hard, running slaves, killing Indians, gouging the ecology, and bending the rules whenever money was to be made.

Much started with Jefferson. In 1806, Tom promised sanctuary to the Delaware Indigenous if they would adopt white ways and give up common ownership of tribal lands. But he'd already bought Louisiana, and meant to ethnic cleanse them out there.

In 1814, Jackson slaughtered some 800 Red Stick Creek men, women and children at Horseshoe Bend. Jackson sliced their corpses to make reins for his horses. But some 200 escaped to join the Seminoles in the Florida Everglades, where they were never defeated.

Then he turned on the Cherokee who'd fought for him. Many later became successful farmers, merchants, bankers, and

business managers. They devised and adopted a written language, established a constitution, published a newspaper, built a state capital (Echota), ran seven lumber mills. Their principle chief, the blue-eyed John Ross, owned a large plantation and many slaves near Chattanooga.

Andy didn't care. His cronies robbed, raped, murdered and took whatever gold, timber and land they wanted. .

When the Cherokee asked for protection, Jackson replied with the 1830 Indian Removal Act, demanding they move across the Mississippi into Jefferson's Louisiana.

When the Cherokee petitioned for statehood, Chief Justice Marshall ruled no new state could be created out of an existing one (which Lincoln would do for West Virginia in 1863).

But he did rule the Removal Act to be unconstitutional. He confirmed the tribe's sovereignty, meaning they enforce their own laws on their own land (and later build their own casinos).

Jackson told the Court and the Cherokee to drop dead. He would remove his former allies at gunpoint, and to hell with the Constitution. He would also personally reserve major chunks of their land for himself and his cronies.

In May, 1838, Martin Van Buren sent in the troops. Separating children from their families, they drove 14,000 Cherokee out of their homes and into an open field (essentially a concentration camp). Without shelter, food or recourse, about a thousand ran into the hills, where there's still a town called "Cherokee".

In the fall, troops forced the tribe onto the "Trail of Tears," an 800-mile death march to Oklahoma. A quarter died. The gash still festers in our nation's soul.

The 10,000 who made it built a capital (New Echota), a school system, a reborn society. Now more than 730,000 strong, many Cherokee still refuse the \$20 bill, disgraced by Andrew's face, hopefully soon to be replaced with Harriet Tubman's.

In the Everglades, the renegade Seminoles embraced runaway slaves and beat the US in a ten-year guerrilla war. Masters of the dismal swamp, they ran rings around the regular army. They remain a formidable power in Florida politics.

In 1821, the revolutionary Republic of Mexico abolished slavery. It then invited Tennessee frontiersmen into the province of Texas, where they re-introduced slavery.

In 1836, the "Texicans" rebelled. They lost the Alamo, but soon won their independence and demanded statehood. For nine years Mexico's threat of war, and fierce abolitionist opposition to a new slave state kept them out of the Union.

Then came Jackson's truest disciple, James K. Polk. Elected in 1844, the young Tennessee Democrat set out to conquer the continent.

He offered the Mexicans cash for their lands north of the Rio Grande. They refused.

So he proclaimed Texas a state and used a murky skirmish near the Nueces River to howl for war. With loud Congressional approval, Polk sent US troops pouring into Mexico City's "Halls of Montezuma."

Abolitionists denounced the attack as an imperial ruse to spread slavery. Transcendentalists branded it barbaric. Henry Thoreau refused to pay his taxes. Ralph Emerson preached nonviolence.

Congressman Abe Lincoln of Illinois spoke passionately for peace, then did not run again.

Neither did Polk. In his single term (1845-49), James K. grabbed the rest of what's now Texas, plus New Mexico, Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, plus parts of Oklahoma and Wyoming. He got Oregon and Washington from the British. And he laid claim to Cuba.

After all that conquest, Polk quit the presidency in March, 1849. He dropped dead (at 53) in June.

In their Conquistador bursts of energy, Jackson and Polk obliterated our post-Revolutionary winter slumber. They retired the Founders to the realm of passed gods. Their imperial drive and Manifest individualism sent a conquering stream of armed white families raging into the frontier.

We were a hyper-energized adolescent, full of radical ideas and greedy aggression, racially bipolar, hellbent for war, Civil and Imperial.

But in literature, spirit, and the arts...in feminism, abolitionism, and communalism.... a gorgeous creative spring, a second Great Awakening...burned a transcendent hole in our hot young soul.

# SPRINGTIME

## *The Transcendentalists*

As our youthful nation conquered the continent, our better angels soared again with the springtime thrill of humanist passion. They took to a new level the reborn Transcendent spirit that had aroused the American embryo in our first Great Awakening.

In the 1830s, they roared to life in the arts...pouring from the souls of blacks and the Indigenous, feminists and abolitionists, writers and poets, workers and activists, seekers and utopians, musicians and artisans. Throughout the cycles of our history, these ever-present upstarts awaken again and again, with ascending force, in the transcendent springs of our ingrained left/green dreams of social democracy and Indigenous spirituality.

As always in America, it begins with race. From the start, the south spewed a surreal *Gone with the Wind* mythology of “happy blacks” swooning in awe of their beloved *Massas*.

But the slaveocracy knew otherwise. It lived in constant terror of violent revolt. To own angry humans meant keeping both feet on on their necks. It was no accident that in the “paradise” of the agrarian south, brutal Slave Codes banned blacks from marrying, owning property, traveling freely, meeting together, talking back to whites, learning to read.

The ceaseless torture, rape, and murder imposed on chained chattel were the ultimate admission of white terror. No matter what they said, the southern elite knew perfectly well that black resistance was a seething volcano forever set to explode.

Brilliant black writers and activists like Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, David Walker, Sojourner Truth, Robert Smalls, Mary Ann Shad Cary, Solomon Northup and so many more never stopped resisting.

Douglass' autobiography, Northup's *Twelve Years a Slave*, Walker's *Appeal* made the horrors of slavery all too clear...and the inevitable payback utterly terrifying to southern whites.

In the Civil War, more than 200,000 blacks staged their own war of liberation. At least 40,000 died fighting for freedom in Union uniforms.

They had powerful white allies. Tom Paine demanded it. Ben Franklin petitioned Congress for it. Much of Latin America embraced it in the 1820s, as did England in 1833.

But white middle-class women (many of them Quakers) who demanded abolition were blindsided by an ugly sexist ambush.

During the Revolution, Abigail Adams' 1776 letter to husband John demanded he "remember the ladies" when it came to equal rights. His snarky response set the tone for a pathetic strain of misogynist denial that still plagues us all.

Abigail and other war wives ran the farms, fields, and families during the fight for Independence. A half-century later, when their "uppity" daughters dared to speak in public against slavery, insecure men with small hands showered them with abuse....and vegetables.

In 1840, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott sailed to London for a global Abolitionist gathering. But the "movement" men (including Elizabeth's husband, whom she quickly left) treated them with contempt. With righteous fury, in the heart of

*Haudenosaunee* country, a new generation of feminists convened the first women's rights convention, and proclaimed...

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men and women are created equal.*

Composed at Seneca Falls, New York, the 1848 *Declaration of Sentiments* proclaimed a reborn drive to matriarchy. Paulina Wright Davis published *Una*, our first feminist magazine. Lucy Stone kept her name after marriage, birthing a new generation of "Lucy Stoners." Amelia Bloomer started wearing pants.

In concert with an amazing spring planting of artistic genius, they planted the seeds of a reborn matriarchy.

Louisa May Alcott, Herman Melville, Emily Dickinson, Edgar Allen Poe, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Sojourner Truth, Margaret Fuller, Henry Longfellow and a holy host of rebel writers and thinkers, poets and songwriters, artists and activists, turned our frontier culture into a vibrant field of exceptional creativity.

Walt Whitman, our first gay laureate poet, sang the "Body Electric." His seminal *Leaves of Grass* arose with our first gay president, James Buchanan. I know, wrote Whitman...

*...that all men ever born are also my brothers...  
and the women my sisters and lovers.*

The era's creative treasures included *Moby Dick*, *Little Women*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *Summer on the Lakes*, *Fall of the House of Usher*, *Song of Hiawatha*. Said Emily Dickinson...

*Trade all you have or might have been for one small breath  
of ecstasy.*



The Hudson River School birthed the gorgeous nature-based visuals of Albert Bierstadt, Frederic Church, Asher Durand. Thomas Cole's huge five-phased paintings of the cycles of history still grace the Museum of the City of New York.

Transcendentalist fire burned in dozens of utopian communities, (which eventually sailed the slipstream to the hippie 1960s). The Shakers, a Quaker offshoot formed by Mother Ann Lee, worked off their sexual energies with elaborate dances (and some really great furniture). The Mormon Church of the Latter Day Saints accepted polygamy and fled to a quirky, straight-laced life in Utah.

The Oneida Community embraced "complex marriage" and renounced "exclusive affections." Their sensual mating rituals were elaborate and entertaining. Founder John Humphrey Noyes kept written records (!!!) of Oneidan sexual adventures, then fled to Vermont to avoid charges of adultery.

Simple systems of pre-industrial socialism and communal farming erupted everywhere. West of Boston, Brook Farm was home to an "awakened literati". The Owenites ran big, modern factories based on a communal feminism that opposed "false notions" of male dominance.

At Utopia, Ohio, and Modern Times, New York, communities founded by Joseph Warren were open and anarchistic.

In Concord, Ralph Waldo Emerson's amiable Unitarianism transcended the Puritans' Hellish obsessions. His gentle spirituality embraced a natural kinship with Hindu and Buddhist laws of empathy and karma. Cut loose, he could sound like a latter-day Jonathon Edwards, or an early Yippie on LSD....

*Standing on the bare ground, — my head bathed by the  
blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, — all mean  
egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball. I am  
nothing. I see all. The currents of the Universal Being  
circulate through me; I am part or particle of God.*

Henry David Thoreau dove even deeper into the spiritual woods. Ralph said his bearded naturalist buddy was like “a bird or a fox,” an Indigenous soul in a white man’s body. Henry spent endless hours watching ant colonies and bird’s nests. His tripped-out musings on Mother Nature are gorgeous, loving, luminescent.

Thoreau was also a pushy pacifist. He and Emerson had mixed feelings about industrial technology. They embraced its wonders but feared its power. They warned that “improved means” without “improved ends” could be a curse.

But when it came to war, they were perfectly clear. Thoreau hated Polk’s attack on Mexico. He went to jail rather than pay taxes for it (his aunt bailed him out the next morning).

Then he wrote the era’s transcendent masterpiece on peaceful resistance. Individualist to the core, *Civil Disobedience* asks simply that people of conscience resist evil...but without violence. That their rebellion be firm but civil. That they throw themselves into the cogs of a life-crushing machine and disobey until evil surrenders.

Thoreau transcribed the core of Quaker principles into a sleek, secular shout. His *Civil Disobedience* remains an indelible monument to social change. Nearly two centuries later, it still epitomizes the transcendent belief in a universal human spirit poised to overcome armed injustice using only the ethereal force of moral suasion. It says above all that our species can survive and evolve through the steady willingness of committed

individuals to stand peaceably but firmly for amity, equality, and ecological harmony.

The inexplicable, pulsating force of that transcendent ideal, locked into our Indigenous DNA, is what bends our historic arc inevitably toward justice.

*Civil Disobedience* was joined in 1848 by another pamphlet that shook the world. Writing in England, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' *Communist Manifesto* gave voice to a newborn labor movement's collective howl amidst a factory system gone mad.

The Industrial Revolution consumed human lives like chunks of coal. It fused exploited, impoverished workers into organized resistance. They demanded higher wages, better working conditions, social justice, democratic rights, an end to imperial wars in which they were expected to fight and die.

Workers versus owners, unions versus corporations, labor versus capital, immigrants versus the established, rich countries versus developing ones, humans with empathy and compassion versus those without...they all squared off in a life-and-death struggle whose final outcome remains in doubt.

But in 1861, our rising industrial machine...and the imperial drive into the Indigenous west....turned our sweet Transcendental Spring into the hellish hot summer of a ghastly slaughter.

# SUMMER

## *Civil War*

George Washington and Thomas Jefferson were great growers. They loved their craft. They understood the art and science of crop rotation and contour plowing.

Tom and George wrote each other with glowing praise for their favorite plant: *cannabis*. If you told them it would someday be illegal, they wouldn't have believed you. It was good for rope, sails, clothing, paper, food, building materials, food, and more. Washington imported special hemp seeds from India. Jefferson exulted in his farm journal how much simpler it was to raise than that demon weed, tobacco.

For many American farmers, hemp was a cash cow. Had it been the core crop of the deep south, chattel slavery might never have taken root.

But the region was ruled by a terrible tyrant: King Cotton. Its debt-ridden growers were enslaved by a lethal addiction to a river of cash. As with tobacco, they grew cotton on the same land year after year. They lacked fertilizer, a willing labor force, an understanding of the need to rotate crops. They wore out their soil, then moved west.

It could not last.

Starting at Jamestown in 1619, European slavers dragged anguished humans from a hugely diverse continent. The priceless agricultural skills that sustained Africa's deep, rich civilizations for countless millennia came with them.

But the slaveowners scorned the Africans' ancient wisdom. Their medieval south was a seething Hell, ruled by smug totalitarians, traumatized by ceaseless resistance.

Racism was the primary poison, meant to justify African enslavement and the slaughter of the Indigenous. White Europeans calling themselves Christians used it to brand themselves somehow superior to fellow humans of color. Biblical passages were duly found to deify the unholy delusion.

Free Europeans pouring across the Atlantic avoided the slave south. So by 1860, the north counted some 21 million residents, versus 9.5 million in the south, nearly half of them black. Even with the three-fifths bonus, the slaveowners could not keep up in Congress or the Electoral College.

But still they wanted Kansas and Nebraska. That's where the war really began.

After a murderous 1859 rampage through "Bleeding Kansas," the abolitionist John Brown and his sons attacked a federal armory at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, seeking guns for a slave uprising. Brown was hung by General Robert E. Lee, who made a name for himself in the Mexican War, then turned traitor.

In 1860, the Democratic Party split. Angry southerners wanted independence, the mouth of the Mississippi, the west. Four million slaves were their biggest capital asset.

But northern bankers, factory owners, and farmers would never let the Confederacy control New Orleans...or the west.

Black and white Abolitionists, south and north, feminist and otherwise, wanted slavery sent to oblivion. Abraham Lincoln became their intended (if imperfect) instrument.

From the moment of his murder, analyzing Abraham has been (rightfully) a national obsession.

Like Andrew Jackson, he was a frontier individualist, a rail-splitting wrestler and a self-taught lawyer.

Born dirt-poor, home-schooled, Abe's rough-hewn father hired him out in a frontier form of child servitude. But unlike so many Jacksonians, Lincoln was not defined by the quest for riches.

Early in life, he indulged in race jokes, talked of sending blacks to Africa, spoke of saving the union while preserving slavery.

But having clawed his way to Congress, Lincoln denounced Polk's Mexican War, knowing it might cost him his career. His bipolar "melancholia" darkened with a tough marriage cursed by the death of three young sons.

Like FDR's polio and JFK's war wounds, Lincoln's personal demons forced him onto what historian William Appleman Williams called "a quest for immortality and transcendence."

Raised in nature, Lincoln willed parts of Yosemite to the new state of California for our first public land preserve. And in the era's greatest single sentence, he forever enshrined our national *karma* on slavery and war. The slaughter of Civil War would rage, he said at his second inaugural...

*...until all the wealth piled by the bond-men's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid by another drawn by the sword.*

The south was a feudal relic. Its slaveocracy set white peasants at the throats of black slaves with a race-based caste system

that plagues us still. The Confederacy was the bastard spawn of a ruthless, medieval, eco-suicidal elite. It could not last.

The north was an emerging industrial superpower. An early techno-freak, Abe was our first “wired” president, the only one to hold a patent (for a flotation device). In 1863 he established the National Academy of Sciences. He pushed hard for the trans-continental railway (and dreamed of riding it to California).

Lincoln telegraphed in real time directly to battlefields like Gettysburg, deploying observation balloons, ships, trains, arms, troops. He also investigated a prototype machine gun still (thankfully!) unready for mass slaughter.

As our Civil War erupted, Russia’s liberal Tsar Alexander2 freed more than 20,000,000 serfs. In 1861 they got full rights as citizens, including the ability to marry and run a business. Many also got the houses they lived in and at least some of the land they’d worked so long without pay. The aristocracy hated it. But this towering landmark was won largely without violence.

We were cursed with a much harsher form of slavery.

The northerners were of multiple mindsets. Transcendental Abolitionists raged against an inhumane machine. White workers wanted western land for small farms and freedom. The rising Robber Barons wanted the southerners out of Congress, control of the Mississippi and the liberty to eat the immense resources of the south and west.

But in 1863, mostly Irish street gangs torched much of Manhattan. They wanted nothing to do with this “rich man’s war.” Fighting blacks for jobs and status, their Jim Crow Democrat machines ran the Celtic barrios of the urban north.

It was a perfect class/caste chasm for the rising industrial rich. Like Washington during the first Revolution, Lincoln hesitated... but then realized the Union couldn't win without African-American soldiers.

The black abolitionist Frederick Douglass criticized Abe's slow pace, but agreed that...

*Though Mr. Lincoln shared the prejudices of his white fellow-countrymen against the Negro, it is hardly necessary to say that in his heart of hearts he loathed and hated slavery....*

In 1863, Abe's *Emancipation Proclamation* armed a black liberation force, fulfilling John Brown's dream. Said Douglass...

*Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letter, U.S., let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pocket, there is no power on earth that can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship.*

In the south, just one of every twenty white families owned more than a hundred slaves. They were the pompous descendants of the original Cavaliers...entitled, arrogant, obsolete.

Eight of ten white southerners owned no slaves at all. As the slaughter dragged on, these "po' white" Johnny Rebs deserted in droves. In Mississippi (the belly of the Confederacy) they celebrated the "Free State of Jones," a multi-racial zone of tolerance and liberation.

In a single day, Lee's command executed 22 deserters, and marched their sullen grey grunts past the corpses. It didn't work.



Nor did the continued assault on Indigenous America. Amidst a war to abolish slavery, white Minnesotans meant to hang 303 Mandan who rose up over desperately needed supplies owed them under the usual broken treaty. Lincoln cut the kill list and paid Minnesota \$2 million, far more than the tribes were owed. But on December 26, 1862, thirty-eight Indigenous died in US history's biggest mass execution. It was a terrible, senseless outrage. Their families were ethnic cleansed further west.

That year, absent the slaveowners, Congress passed a Homestead Act, granting western tribal lands to white settlers. In 1863, Lincoln finally recognized the Haitian Revolution, 60 years after Toussaint L'Ouverture's black rebels proved they could beat a white man's army.

On January 31, 1865, Lincoln pushed the Thirteenth Amendment (by just two votes) through a divided House. He prolonged the conflict (and the killing) to get it passed. Had he not, the Civil War could have ended with the peculiar institution in tact.

(The 13th's fatal flaw let Jim Crow racists reboot forced, unpaid labor through a hideous prison system still very much with us).

As Civil War raged Lincoln thought to send freed blacks "back" to Africa. But his friend Frederick Douglass forced him to rethink that, as perhaps (like Ben Franklin) he might one day have rethought white supremacy.

Most importantly, we wonder (as with JFK and Vietnam) about southern land. Young Abe was raised in abject poverty. How would he have governed 1865-9 with four million freed slaves left prostrate and powerless in a resurgent Jim Crow south? Might he have justly carved from the old plantations a vital land base,

sparing us the specter of a destitute, defenseless and disenfranchised black population for so many decades to come?

While marching through Georgia, Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman (his Ohio parents knew the great chief) saw thousands of freed slaves following his army.

Sherman promised them each 40 acres and a mule. Some occupied the plantations where they'd been born and enslaved. The general was fine with that. They were just repeating what our first revolutionaries had done to Tory land, confiscating and dividing it, making it their own.

Pennsylvania Rep. Thaddeus Stevens demanded more...

*We especially insist that the property of the chief rebels should be seized and [used for] the payment of the national debt, caused by the unjust and wicked war they instigated...*

*The whole fabric of southern society must be changed and never can it be done if this opportunity is lost.*

Russia's freed serfs got land and houses. America's new black citizens deserved no less than forty acres and a mule...

*Nothing will so multiply the production of the South as to divide it into small farms. Nothing will make [citizens] so industrious and moral as to let them feel that they are above want and are the owners of the soil which they till....*

*No people will ever be republican in spirit and practice where a few own immense manors and the masses are*

*landless. Small and independent landholders are the support and guardians of republican liberty.*

The ex-slaves must not be left destitute, Stevens warned...

*If we refuse [compensation] to this downtrodden and oppressed race the rights which Heaven decreed them, and the remuneration which they have earned through long years of hopeless oppression, how can we hope to escape still further punishment if God is just?*

Lincoln was said to oppose distributing the plantations to the ex-slaves. But he owed them victory, and knew the brutality of a landed elite. Says Eric Foner...

*Lincoln was certainly not in favor of redistributing southern property but he liked to allow different projects to go forward and see what happened. At Davis Bend, Grant divided the land among the slaves. Sherman did something similar. Lincoln said nothing pro or con. Congress in the Freedmen's Bureau Act envisioned blacks renting and then buying land. The idea was in the air but [Andrew] Johnson killed it.*

Lincoln was first and foremost a pragmatic evolutionary. The messianic textbook embrace is hardly universal. Southerners hate him as a violent conquistador. For the Indigenous, there was the slaughter and removal of the Mandan, and an industrial view of their land. Abe's wartime civil liberties abuses were legend. As a railroad lawyer, he warned against the rise of corporate power, but became an agent of its continental expansion. Quakers and other pacifists still wonder about ways to abolish slavery shy of killing 620,000 humans.

But only a peacetime presidency could have told us who Honest Abe really might have been. What we do know (and what really matters) is what actually happened.

With Lincoln's death, we got Andrew Johnson, who came drunk to the second inaugural. This coarse, inept, empathy-free bigot is the one error for which Abe is universally faulted. He made the Tennessee Jacksonian his VP to win re-election in 1864. The price (as with a later Johnson) is still being paid.

Andrew's nasty, brutish, and short presidency set the Trumpian tone for another fifteen decades of racial madness. He killed the idea of redistributing plantations to the humans who'd worked them for 250 years. The ex-slaves' hope for a long-term economic and political base died along with possibility of a just and balanced New South.

But in the hot summer of our "Second American Revolution" the 13th Amendment abolished chattel slavery (outside the prison system). The 14th meant to guarantee southern blacks their basic human rights (soon hijacked by the corporations). The 15th pledged the right to vote "regardless of race" (a promise largely broken, even today). A Civil Rights Act confirmed a solemn promise for racial justice, paid for in blood, then killed by the Supreme Court.

In 1869, the iron-fisted U.S. Grant divided the south into five military districts. He sent troops to guarantee the right to vote. Poor whites and blacks shared public offices. Their kids went to school together. Businesses thrived. Some of the south sang of multi-racial hope.

Then came another post-war fall.

A Jim Crow swarm of KKK supremacists raged through the Bible Belt, dressed like beds, burning crosses, raping innocents, lynching their own mixed-blood cousins, freezing the future.

# FALL

## ***Jim Crow Democrats & their KKK Terror***

At Appomattox (April 9, 1865) Lincoln's victorious Union responded to four years of horrific carnage with one of history's most magnanimous gestures.

Robert E. Lee rode in on his horse Traveler to surrender his Army of Northern Virginia. Scion of the slaveocracy, he wore his finest Cavalier grays.

U.S. Grant came late. His shabby private's uniform was a muddy mess. But he was the victor.

For a surreal moment they chatted amiably about the Mexican War, where they'd briefly met.

Then it was down to business. Quanah Parker, a Comanche war chief, kept the official record.

Lee was a traitor. Lincoln had offered him command of the Union Army. Instead, he led a carnal crusade for history's most vicious form of human bondage. Many of the 620,000 Americans who died now rotted at Lee's plantation (which became Arlington National Cemetery).

By law, Grant could have executed Lee, as Lee had hanged John Brown six years prior. Instead, Grant asked how much food Lee's men needed. He offered 25,000 rations. He let Lee keep his sword. He said rebel soldiers could keep their sidearms and horses for spring planting. He took no prisoners, issued no indictments, staged no executions.

It was an exceptional moment. It recalled Washington walking away from command of the victorious Revolutionary Army, and then again from the presidency when he could have been king. It signaled a time to clear the wreckage, heal the wounds, and move into a new American life, free at last of chattel slavery.

Lincoln and Grant were of course well aware of what it meant to fight a Rebel force on its own soil. Had angry grey guerrillas fanned out into the hills and hollers, fields and forests, the slaughter could have dragged on for years. It was a lesson we learned in our own Revolution, then forgot in the Everglades, Great Plains, Philippines, Korea, Vietnam, central America, Iraq, Afghanistan, and wherever else our imperial incarnation has insisted on assaulting Indigenous peoples.

Two days after peace, Lincoln and his son Tad walked Richmond's streets like ordinary citizens. They brought no military escort. They were mobbed by grateful freed slaves and curious poor whites. Abe asked a band to play "Dixie," then horrified the former slaveowners by having a casual conversation with a free black man.

On April 14, a deranged actor (working with at least six conspirators) put a bullet in the back of Abe's head. It was a ghastly plunge into eternal psychosis.

Within months of Appomattox, as Abraham moldered in his grave, Robert E. Lee became president of Washington College (later Washington and Lee). He lived until 1870 and oversaw the first US college courses in business and journalism. "We have but one rule here," he wrote, "and it is that every student be a gentleman."

The KKK had no such concerns. Immediately it launched a bloody Jim Crow rampage for caste, power and property.

Though they would deny it with violent outrage, many Klan terrorists were themselves at least part black.

Consider the progeny of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings. Sally's grandmother was an African who was raped by the white captain of the ship that brought her to Virginia. Their daughter, Betty, was then raped by her white owner (Thomas Wayles) with whom she bore as many as six children.

The youngest was Sally Hemings. Thomas Wayles was thus father to both of the women (white and black) with whom the third president of the United States sired offspring.

Five of Tom and Sally's children survived to adulthood. Three were officially deemed black. But like countless other products of the slave system, two passed for white. So did scores of their progeny for two centuries to come.

The Hemings-Jefferson pattern of mixed-race parenting was common throughout the south.

So let's ask the obvious question: how many of those white supremacist KKK fanatics have in fact been part black? How many were blood cousins to the "n\*\*\*\*rs" they lynched?

As of late 1865, more than 4 million American slaves were technically free. But this monumental leap in our organic evolution gave the Democratic Party a political imperative.

Freed blacks comprised more than 35% of many deep south states. If they voted in concert with liberal white Republicans (there were a few) they could rule the former Confederacy.



The Party of Jackson responded with systematic murder. Over the next century, its KKK terrorists assassinated at least 4,000 African-Americans.

Some of the killings were random. But most were intensely political, the targeted slaughter of black women and men who dared to organize their communities. The lynch mob was in fact the Democrats' key weapon for keeping power throughout the South...and with their cohorts in Congress.

Meanwhile the Thirteenth Amendment still allowed for "involuntary servitude" as a punishment for even minor crimes. So for fifteen decades, millions of African-Americans have been imprisoned on fake charges, stripped of their rights, plunged into virtual slavery on chain gangs and worse throughout a newly terrorized south.

Andrew Johnson pitched in by pardoning the slaveocrats as if the war had never happened. He was a nasty, arrogant, bigoted drunk. The Republican House impeached him on a technicality. But the Senate sadly failed (by one vote) to remove him.

(In light of many future presidents' illegal wars and dictatorial impulses, it would've set good precedent for the Congress to oust an out-of-control Chief Executive).

In September, 1868, in Opelousas, Louisiana white supremacists murdered some 200 black children, women and men to stop the election of an integrated post-Jim Crow government.

In 1869, Grant took the White House. He hated the Klan. He sent down troops to Reconstruct the south and advance the rights of both freed slaves and poor whites.

For eight years the black/white center held. Under federal protection, African-Americans voted alongside poor whites. Together they elected some 2,000 mayors and governors, Reps and Senators, sheriffs and dog catchers. In the Carolinas, Mississippi, Louisiana, the inconceivable happened...for the first time since Bacon's Rebellion, the races worked in concert for education, business, government, life.

And then it all crashed. In 1876, Grant thought to run for a third term, but could not pull it off. (He then wrote one of history's best-selling autobiographies, and died of cancer).

In the general election, New York Democrat Samuel Tilden beat Ohio's Rutherford B. Hayes by 250,000 ballots. But the Republicans stole enough Electoral College votes to get a tie.

For five months the nation stood on the brink of a new Civil War. Then came the deal. The Dems offered Hayes the White House if he'd pull US troops out of the South. Reconstruction would end.

So would any hope of southern equity. The Klan ran wild. With mass incarceration, targeted murder...beatings, rape, house and cross burnings and more, the KKK/Democrat terror retook Dixie.

Facing literacy tests, the poll tax, the whites-only primary, and a cowardly new world of violent intimidation, the black vote disappeared. Buried under a rigged legal system and a brutal prison gulag, freed blacks were essentially re-enslaved.

In March 1881 (as the Klan ran wild) Tsar Alexander<sup>2</sup> was killed by youthful idiots claiming to be revolutionaries. "Russia's Lincoln" had a repressive side. But he was the last decent Tsar until Gorbachev a century later.

On July 2, an unhinged office seeker shot our own newly elected President James A. Garfield. The much-loved Ohioan was a gentle genius who could simultaneously write in Greek and Latin.

Had he survived, Garfield might well have become a great president. To help save him, Alexander Graham Bell invented a device to find the bullet. But the president's bumbling Dr. Willard Bliss prevented its proper use, fed him a terrible diet, and turned Garfield into Tecumseh's third presidential victim.

As the new century dawned, Jim Crow ran the industrializing "New South" with an iron fist. Legal segregation kept blacks and whites segregated in unequal castes.

Supreme Court decisions like *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) and *Williams v. Mississippi* (1898) cemented the new American *apartheid*. It banned whites and blacks from playing sports, board games, cards, or music together. It segregated public schools, transportation, hotels, restaurants...you name it.

In 1898, a white supremacist mob crushed Wilmington, North Carolina's duly elected mixed-race government. Some 60 people were slaughtered. More than 2,000 fled town. It was Reconstruction's fall freeze.

The north and west were now Republican. Chattel slavery was gone. But the freed slaves were destitute.

Andy Jackson's KKK/Jim Crow Democrats retook the former Confederacy. And the rich white north had a party.

# WINTER

## *The Gilded Age*

While abolishing chattel slavery, the lethal inferno of Civil War forged America's modern corporate industrial state.

John D. Rockefeller, J.P. Morgan, Philip Armour, Jay Cooke, George Pullman, Jay Gould, James Fisk, Collis P. Huntington, Andrew Carnegie and all their super-rich cronies stayed home and got rich. They paid \$300 each to avoid the draft. They made fortunes selling guns, ammo, uniforms, food, boats, rail and telegraph services, medical supplies, and more to both sides.

Whether for or against slavery, war was still a racket.

The new industrial Robber Barons also built themselves a mighty legal fortress. Like the name of Jesus, the word "corporation" does not appear in the Constitution. According to Richard Grossman, there were six here in 1776. Like the East India Tea Company, their primary legal function was to protect wealthy owners from personal responsibility when their businesses failed.

But America's early state-chartered entities were strictly limited in what they could do and where. Many had to heed the welfare of their workers, guard the environment, benefit the public. Adam Smith warned in *Wealth of Nations* that if monopolies got too big, they could destroy the free market and decimate the public good. The Gilded Age proved him a prophet.

Our first big corporate-owned factories made textiles along the New England rivers that turned their water wheels. In Lawrence and Lowell, countless bobbins spun slave-raised cotton into global gold. Most were worked by women who came from

farms, lived in dormitories and (like their future sister, Rosie the Riveter) loved their freedom.

But after Appomattox, as America's industrial revolution hit critical mass, the shop floors morphed into hellholes. Their owners became monsters.

From 1848 to 1921, millions came here from Ireland and Germany...then from Greece and Italy, Poland and Russia, China and Japan. Andrew Carnegie reckoned that based on the price of African slaves at pre-war auction, the inflow brought billions in human capital. The "wage slaves," he crowed, were the life force of America's bully industrial manhood.

Our cities were crowded far beyond the worst slums of India or China. Rampant disease and slaughterhouse conditions killed millions in filthy factories, stockyards, mines, ships, trains, tenements. Like early Jamestown, newcomers poured in as the maimed and dead were carted away.

As in southern Africa, Australia and other "wilderness" regions around the imperial planet, "settler colonialism" spilled into the American Great Plains, filling the places Jefferson and Jackson had sent the Indigenous with promises of peace "as long as the grass grows and the rivers flow." Running out of space, ethnic cleansing morphed definitively into the "final solution" of outright genocide. In 1873, William T. Sherman recycled the Puritan curse that carried from the City on the Hill through Washington and Jackson to Teddy Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson and beyond...

*We must act with vindictive earnestness against the Sioux, even to their extermination, men, women and children.*

In Australia, New Zealand, Canada and here, countless native kids were literally ripped from their parents. In ghastly boarding schools, in a horrifying century-long saga of sadism, they suffered physical, psychological, cultural and sexual abuse.

At Little Bighorn (1876) Lakota war chiefs Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse wiped out 250 US cavalymen under George Custer. His superior, General Nelson A. Miles linked the slaughter of striking American workers in Chicago to killing Puerto Rican and Filipino rebels at the outskirts of the new American Empire.

During a sacred Ghost Dance (1890) machine guns at Wounded Knee murdered some 300 starving Lakota in what Miles called "a horrible massacre of women and children."

Historians say there the frontier died (but the Indigenous did not).

Now the prairie swarmed with white settlers Homesteads. With them came trains, towns, trade, taxes and corporate tyrants. To grow corn, wheat, barley, and cattle, they virtually exterminated the buffalo, then stripped the sod and bared the soil, sowing the seeds of a Dust Bowl eco-catastrophe.

Meanwhile, a bought Congress handed the Barons huge swaths of Indigenous land, over which they laid shoddy rail lines that forever broke at public expense.

At Promontory Point, Utah (1869) Irishmen working west from Missouri met Chinese coming east from California to link the oceans. When Baron Leland Stanford tried to set a ceremonial gold spike, he couldn't lift the hammer. So an Irish worker got it done (and corporate flunkies quickly retrieved the spike).

Historians still say Barons like Stanford “built” the American industrial machine. But what they really did was shuffle papers and buy politicians. They scarfed up the mines, fields, plantations, and forests of the west and the south. They bought outright a graft-riddled Congress that handed them Hamiltonian tariffs, public subsidies, obscene land grants for a national rail system...and so much more.

It was the farmers and workers (their names don’t make the history books) who toiled long, ploughed the fields, cut the forests, swung the hammers, died early. Their rising spirits define our ability to evolve and survive...

*It is WE who plowed the prairies  
built the cities where they trade  
Dug the mines and built the workshops  
endless miles of railroad laid...*

*They have taken untold millions  
that they never toiled to earn  
But without our brain and muscle  
not a single wheel can turn.*

From rolling passenger rail windows, “sportsmen” shot countless buffalo, driving the precious animals (and the tribes they supported) to the brink of extinction.

Wall Street sharks did the same to small investors...and the president. In 1869, Jay Gould made a killing in gold by single-handedly crashing the stock market.

Tough-guy Grant was out of his league. When it came to finance he was still an Ohio horse-whisperer... honest, but naive...and no match for the frenzy-feeding Barons who tore him to pieces.

Grant's scandal-wracked "Great Barbecue" opened the lethal chasm that still divides the American working/middle class from the thieves on high. Protected by a legal fortress that relieved them of both fiscal and human responsibility, America's corporate elite made itself rich beyond Croesus.

The "Gilded Age" (Mark Twain's term) was run by 400 families, based mostly in midtown Manhattan. They groped the our assets, trumped our government, towered above the law.

Working families starved and died at their doorsteps while the elite lit cigars with \$100 bills, staged banquets for pet dogs, put diamonds in their teeth, gouged out gargantuan estates, lived as if civic responsibility (and common decency) had no meaning.

At the dawn of the "American Century," these were both the Elect of God and the Select of Nature. Puritan theocracy and Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* somehow morphed into a "Social Darwinist" disease.

Darwin hated slavery and admired John Brown. But riches now signified both Puritan divinity AND genetic superiority. The new industrial 1% was now the Elect of God and the select of nature. No amount of money was ever enough, no contempt for compassion was ever condemned.

As in the sick, cynical eyes of the later Ayn Rand, helping the poor became a sin...and a crime against nature. It defiled God's creation and weakened the "supreme" white race.



Our new imperial juggernaut completed the Manifest Destiny of its Jacksonian adolescence. We pillaged the continent, groped Latin America, raped Hawaii.

We colonized Puerto Rico and Cuba, Guam and the Philippines. We poured through China's "Open Door," an imperial gang bang shared with England, France, Italy, Germany, Russia and Japan.

As the City on the Hill took center stage, US corporations became our global species' dominant organ.

From 1893 to 1897, the US hosted both a "Gay Nineties" for the rich and a "Great Depression" for the rest of us.

Our "Bully Manhood" (as Theodore Roosevelt called it) soon peaked. Sadly, it brought not a third American Revolution, but a First World War.

CYCLE 3:

***“BULLY MANHOOD”***

***INSERT LINE 3 FROM  
CHART***

# **A Burst of Energy**

## ***Bryan, Debs, Teddy, Wilson***

In 1848, a human tsunami hit our shores.

It poured in first from Ireland and Germany. Then from southern and eastern Europe...and later from Latin America, Asia, the Pacific, Africa, the Middle East.

The "American Century's" 1900 head count of 76,212,168 nearly doubled the 38,558,371 of 1870, just three decades prior.

Parts of Boston, New York, Newark, Philadelphia, Baltimore, DC, Chicago joined Europe and Asia's most diseased and depressed urban hellholes. Tenements teemed with penniless newcomers.

As in early Jamestown, they flowed in like filler, worked like dogs, dropped dead, got carted off and were quickly replaced.

They powered hellish fossil-fired factories, mills, railroads, shipyards, slaughterhouses, packing plants. They suffered *en masse* from inhuman living conditions, relentless exploitation, on-the-job slaughter, desperate poverty, rampant disease.

On a continent bursting with natural resources, riding those waves of cheap labor, we entered our young adulthood (TR's "Bully Manhood") as the world's #1 industrial power.

A technological revolution set the stage. Conceived by Thomas Edison and Nikola Tesla, utility power lines spider-webbed our cities. They carried electrons from coal-burners that heated the ecosphere and blackened our air, land, water and lungs.

The phonograph, wireless radio, motion picture, automobile, and airplane all arrived between 1877 and 1905. So did Sigmund Freud's new psychology, Friedrich Nietzsche's "Superman," and Albert Einstein's four epic breakthroughs (including  $E=MC^2$ ) that changed everything.

Our body politic shattered into four social classes: the Robber Barons, family farmers, factory workers, and an educated middle class that managed the new industrial machine.

At the countercultural vanguard were the Bohemians. Their freewheeling Indigenous souls rode history's magic bus from Awakened Northampton and Thoreau's Transcendentalism to 1930s radicalism and the '60s hippie farms... deep into the diverse eco-activism of the 1970s and beyond.

In rebellious joy, they lit up our third Great Awakening.

At the era's core was a monumental struggle for control of the industrial machine. Each contender had its own Messiah.

For southern and western farmers, things went downhill right after Appomattox. Jefferson's ideal of a yeoman utopia, self-sufficient on the land, growing its own food, fell into the death maw of an industrial cash economy.

As homesteading families poured into the prairie, they stripped away the sod for grain and cattle. Their ultimate crops were fiscal failure and ecological ruin.

Forever strapped for cash, the new pioneers fell immediate prey to heartless monopolies. The seed, machinery, rail lines, homes, loans, and tax payments the farmers needed to survive in the dawning age of corporate agribusiness were all controlled by

Baronial bean counters in faraway Manhattan whose lethal pencils sketched their doom. In the south, po' white "Johnny Rebs" and destitute ex-slaves were crushed between the old plantations and "New South" factory farms.

It was more than even those macho Jacksonian "rugged individualists" could handle alone.

In 1867, the Patrons of Husbandry arose for good farming, civic virtue, and mutual aid. Their Grange meeting halls were safe haven for desperate agrarians under corporate attack.

After 1876, the Greenbacker Party demanded freely coined silver and more paper money. Inflation would water down farm mortgages and raise crop prices.

The Hearst family liked that. Their silver mines funded a mass-circulated "yellow journalism" that screamed of imperial war and corporate greed.

In the late 1880s, Grangers and Greenbackers formed Farmers Alliances to dodge the monopolies. They birthed co-op market exchanges, credit unions, community banks, and a grassroots infrastructure.

It all fed in to the People's Party.

Against all odds, these dirt-poor down-home "Populists" forged a transcendent coalition of southern and western, black and white, ex-Democrat and ex-Republican, former Yank and Johnny Reb farmers. They revived the Leveller spirit of Tom Paine's *Agrarian Democracy* and Ben Franklin's civic virtue. They rebirthed the Minutemen who took Tory land for the greater good. They saw an economy where human need trumped corporate greed. Said Pop firebrand "Sockless" Jerry Simpson...

*It is a struggle between the robbers and the robbed!*

In Omaha they leapt toward social democracy. Their 1892 People's Party platform demanded votes for women, direct election of US Senators, the initiative, referendum and recall, a reformed judiciary, a strengthened Bill of Rights, a currency based on crops, popular control of the banks and electric utilities, railroads, steamships, telecommunications networks, and an end to war and empire (though some wanted both for overseas markets).

For president they nominated former Iowa Greenbacker Gen. James B. Weaver. Virginia's Gen. Benjamin Fields was his VP.

So with blue/grey brass topping the ticket, the Pops meant to unite mostly white Republican veterans in the west with mostly white Democrats in the south...and black ex-slaves who joined in from the party of Lincoln.

It was a fragile coalition. But Populist candidates counted more than a million votes in 1892. They seemed ready to do the unthinkable: unite white westerners with black/white southerners in a brave new biracial Reconstruction.

When the economy crashed in 1893, the People's Party was set to repeat history. The GOP was born in 1854 and six years later elected Lincoln. Why not the Populists?

But history threw them a screwball. His name was William Jennings Bryan.

At their 1896 convention, grassroots Democrats blamed incumbent President Grover Cleveland and his conservative "Gold Bugs" for the raging Great Depression.

Amidst the chaos, a young (35) Nebraska Congressman grabbed nomination. A born spellbinder, Bryan was raised evangelical. He preached Hope and Change...

*Food and clothes for the thousands of hungry and ill-clad women and children...the reopening of closed factories, the relighting of fires in darkened furnaces...hope instead of despair; comfort in place of suffering; life instead of death.*

But his actual policies were fake. He was a fitting model for the cowardly lion in Frank Baum's Populist screed *The Wizard of Oz* (published in 1900). His one hard demand was for free silver. His contempt for grassroots populism was tangible. His Democrat running mate was a Maine banker.

GOP kingmaker Mark Hanna said that if Bryan won, they'd just shoot him. Nobody thought he was kidding. But why bother?

The Populists were trapped. Bryan shattered the People's Party. The westerners Populists joyfully endorsed him. But the southerners were divided and confused.

Opposing him would invite blame for making McKinley president. But supporting him meant becoming Democrats, a virtual death sentence in Dixie.

It was the dawn of the duopoly's signature death trap. It returns forever to trash grassroots movements and sabotage social change.

If they stuck to their principles, and supported their third party, the Populists would be blamed for the Democrats' defeat.

But if they supported the Democrat, their movement would shatter, he (and later she) would betray them...and then (like Humphrey in 1968 and Hillary in 2016) lose anyway.

It was the modern corporate two-party system's ritual quagmire, the "evil of two lessers" disease, perfectly designed to destroy radical grassroots movements.

In virtually every crisis election since 1896, the corporate Democratic Party has devised the same divide-and-conquer circular firing squad for America's grassroots left.

In that spirit, Bryan dug the American farmer's political grave.

The western Populists had few qualms about leaving the corporate GOP to support a Nebraskan. Out in the prairie, his being a Democrat was tough to swallow...but bearable.

For the southerners (black and white alike) backing any Democrat was like swallowing Jim Crow/KKK poison. Many did. But they all (rightly) feared the worst.

Bryan sent his flunkies to the People's Party Convention. They passionately promised to honor the Populist platform if only the farmers would endorse their man.

That silver tongue was hard to resist. And (of course) he lied.

About a third of the Populists supported Eugene V. Debs, the charismatic founder of the American Railway Union. Debs became a labor icon in 1895 when President Cleveland (yet another Democrat happy to crush the unions that supported him) jailed Gene for leading a national rail strike.



Debs was tall, thin, amiable, incorruptible...a transcendent writer and speaker, limitlessly loved as “the American Saint” by the working/middle class masses.

Their world first erupted during the 1877 Great Railway Strike.

Tom Scott of the Pennsylvania Railroad lit the fuse. Without warning, he slashed workers’ wages (but not his own) by ten percent. Furious trainmen commandeered engines, torched rail yards, shot supervisors, shut the system from St. Louis eastward. Dozens died alongside the troops called in to crush them.

The strike lasted 45 days and spanned four states. It paralleled the populist uprising just then spreading through the farms and fields of the west and south.

But Scott (and his young aide, Andrew Carnegie) were baronial masters of divide and conquer. America's immigrant working class was atomized by language, race, gender, ethnicity, geography, trade. When strikes threatened to succeed, the Barons poured in scabs and had their “elected” mayors and governors send in troops for tax-funded slaughter.

Straight as an arrow, Debs had opposed the Great Railway Strike. He’d worked a year on the rails, then began rising through the union ranks. Known for his unshakeable honesty and devotion, Gene organized the National Railway Union, meant to unify all rail workers into one big industrial family.

Busted and imprisoned by President Cleveland (whom he’d supported in 1892) Debs became Labor's new Honest Abe. Pops and unionists saw Gene leading a farm-labor/rural-urban alliance to crush the Barons and take national power.

They hoped he’d run with Tom Watson, a firebrand Georgia lawyer who embraced a multi-racial alliance in the south. In

coalition, the west/south/black/white/urban/rural/immigrant/Indigenous/farm/labor/feminist/Bohemian alliance would transcend the two-party system. The new American Century would dawn as a social democracy, not a corporate empire.

But at that crucial moment, Debs was behind bars in Woodstock, Illinois, jailed by Cleveland for "conspiring" to shut down the national rail system.

Cautious by nature, Gene stuck with Bryan. With nowhere else to turn, the Populists meekly asked the young Nebraskan to carry their banner and to accept Tom Watson as his VP. He did neither.

Without a unifying leader, the farm-labor ships passed in the night. The critical alliance between rural agrarians and urban workers did not materialize. In our annals of "what ifs," this was among America's biggest.

Had the St. Louis Convention nominated Debs, and ran him with a southern Populist like Watson, could they have forged the urban-rural multi-racial anti-capitalist national party needed to stare down the Baronial elite? Could they have elected Gene in 1896 (or maybe 1900) as the Republicans had elected Lincoln in 1860? Could they have at least carried a farm-labor alliance far enough into the new century to force real, lasting change?

We'll never know.

Once he got the Populists' nomination, Bryan blew them off. He ran with a Maine banker. He ignored Watson and the local People's Party candidates. Except for free silver, he endorsed virtually nothing of substance from its platform.

But "Billy Bryan" (like the later Bill Clinton) had his charisma. He ran a legendary whistle-stop campaign, the first modern grassroots evangelical crusade.

He trekked thousands of miles, delivering up to 36 spellbinders a day from the back of his train. Some 5 million fans came to hear the new agrarian messiah. Passionate crowds hung on his every word. A set of triplets was named William, Jennings, and Bryan. To the frenzied masses, he seemed sure to win (with a fair vote count, maybe he did).

The corporate candidate was Ohio's Republican Sen. William McKinley, as dull as a doctored vote count. His campaign manager, Cleveland steel baron Mark Hanna (the original Karl Rove) taxed the corporations for a staggering \$15 million. He deployed scores of dirty tricksters, dispatched hundreds of speakers, planted thousands of newspaper articles, spewed out millions of pamphlets, and did whatever he needed to win. It was the ultimate corporate blitzkrieg, the real precursor to mass twentieth century election theft.

Along the way, Hanna bragged that he could hire half the working class to shoot the other half (including Bryan, if he'd won).

But there was no need.

The official vote count gave McKinley a six million margin. Hanna's henchmen explained (with perfectly straight faces) that all those Bryan ballots were eaten by farm animals. Or got destroyed by natural disasters. Or were lost and then found at the precise moment when they miraculously morphed into votes for McKinley..

Bryan's defeat shattered the fragile Populist coalition. Westerners blamed southerners. Southern whites (including Tom

Watson) blamed their black allies. Jim Crow retook Dixie. Lynch mobs ran wild. Democrat bigots (often calling themselves "populists") rode the KKK back to absolute power.

Except in the upper Midwest, agrarian radicals lost their voice. Once America's backbone, the family farm was disenfranchised, decapitated, doomed. Jefferson's yeoman and Jackson's frontiersmen fell into a spiral abyss that ate our small-town democracies and bared the land to corporate rape.

Now the face of the Democratic Party, Bryan launched a lifelong career as a vacuous windbag. He loudly opposed our imperial plunge...but helped conquer Cuba. He quit as Secretary of State to protest Wilson's awful plunge into World War I...but got nothing of substance for our dying agrarian community.

Since the 1896 fiasco, countless fake populists have betrayed the promise of social democracy....trashing the public trust to serve the corporate elite. Divide, confuse and conquer has been the mantra. Our tragic death spiral has been the consequence.

But still we had Debs. After his jail time in Woodstock (Illinois) Gene took the plunge.

The Great Railway Strike lit the fuse in 1877. The Knights of Labor (our first national union) accepted women, blacks, and the unskilled. It demanded social change. But it would not strike.

The Barons wanted all unions dead. The workers who made them obscenely rich were useful idiots. Union organizers (and peaceful demonstrators) were fired, beaten, jailed, shot.

But step by bloody step, they gained a foothold...

*Now we stand outcast and starving  
mid the wonders we have made  
But the Union makes us strong.*

*We can break their haughty power  
gain our freedom when we learn  
That the Union makes us strong.*

And from this great rebellion arose the “American Saint.”

Gene Debs’ American Railway Union was a radical sanctuary, open to all. Born in Terre Haute to French immigrants, he rode the rails, worked the switch yards, clerked for the union. At 22 (Victorian at heart, he denounced the Great Railway Strike). At 30, he married the straight-laced Kate Metzel, who built him a “House Divided” in Terre Haute. When Gene came out as a Socialist, she fainted. While he travelled ceaselessly, they stayed married (and childless) for the rest of their days.

In 1894, in solidarity with a small contingent of Pullman workers, the ARU launched the second Great Railway Strike and shut down the national system. In response, Grover Cleveland’s federal troops killed at least thirty strikers.

Hearst and the corporate media called Debs a “dictator...an enemy of America.” They jailed him for “conspiracy.” From his Woostock cell, he supported Bryan.

But a steady flow of radical writers and organizers turned his head. With time to read and think, he denounced capitalism. Puritan greed could never sustain a just or sane society...

*I am for Socialism because I am for humanity.  
We have been cursed with the reign of gold long enough.*

*Money constitutes no proper basis of civilization.*

Gene's shocking conversion electrified the working class. He became our rock star labor leader. His epic leap to a whole new way of thinking thrilled our toiling masses. At last we could *SEE* an economy answering to human need, not corporate greed or phony flag-waving...

*Every robber or oppressor in history has wrapped himself in a cloak of patriotism or religion, or both.*

Like the Quakers and Owenites, Oneidans and Abolitionists, American Socialists sang of the Indigenous. They embraced our common humanity and demanded food, clothing, housing, education, medical care, dignity...a fair share for all.

The means of production would be owned by the public, run by the workers. Debs rejected Marx's call for a "dictatorship of the proletariat." Throughout Gene's career, the American Socialist Party remained far more deeply committed to the freedoms of speech and press than the Democrats or Republicans.

Debs embraced Abigail's feminism, Paine's *Agrarian Democracy*, Franklin's civic virtue, Madison's Bill of Rights, Thoreau's civil resistance, Douglass's abolitionism, Harriet Tubman's dogged persistence, Emerson's hatred of war, Lincoln's lyric genius.

Racism, empire, and war were our Original Sins. Real democracy meant sharing the wealth. It was a human right to be fed, housed, clothed, educated, employed, medically secure.

Fueled by tens of millions of immigrants, the union movement's natural divisions ran even deeper than the Populists'. Its ethnic diversity was staggering, its language barriers impossible. The

eternal infighting of its fragile coalitions drove even the toughest organizers mad.

But as the new century dawned, Socialist ideas and ideals melded into our political mainstream. Millions assumed (as long as Gene was around) that the Socialist working/middle class would soon take national power.

Debs ran for president in 1900, 1904, and 1908. Huge, frenzied crowds cheered his relentless attacks on the obscene rich. He drew a million official votes (likely a vast understatement) in 1912's epic four-way race. Socialists won seats all over the US.

In 1916, Gene ran for Congress from Terre Haute. Surrounded by devoted family, lifelong friends and impassioned supporters, his "official" ballot tally was zero.

While Debs struggled for a fair vote count, Progressive technocrats seized the new century's burst of energy. Their first Messiah was Teddy Roosevelt, the Bull Moose.

TR hailed from old Long Island Dutch aristocracy. Endowed with patrician wealth, astounding intellect, and volcanic energy, Theodore Roosevelt was a Force of Nature.

Teddy was New York City police commissioner, then mayor, then governor of the Empire State. When he led the imperial assault on Cuba, he gloated...

*I killed a Spaniard with my own hands.  
Look at those damned Spanish dead!*

He scorned "uppity" blacks and suffragette women, radical farmers and organized labor. But he also swore to bust the Baronial monopolies.

TR's Progressive phalanx was a new technocratic class. They were middle managers, corporate lawyers, financial experts, professional researchers, government regulators, factory supervisors, industrial farmers, military strategists, teachers, politicians, librarians, skilled workers...the literate, reformist shock troops of the American Century's ruling bureaucracy.

Proudly puritanical, almost exclusively white, the new technoscientific elect would rule the planet and remake the race.

TR was their Andy Jackson. Asthmatic as a child, he ranged the western wilds with the passionate persistence of a biblical fanatic. His manic energy seemed to border on the superhuman. He read as many as four books a day and wrote countless screeds, including a history of the frontier whose natural beauty he loved, but whose Indigenous he scorned....

*I don't go so far as to think that the only good Indians are the dead Indians, but I believe nine out of every 10 are. And I shouldn't like to inquire too closely into the case of the tenth.*

TR's contempt for women and labor unions were also legend. The "health of the race demanded that white females bear as many children as possible. He met with the African-American leader Booker T. Washington, but made it clear he felt humans of color were inferior.

As for his love of battle...

*No triumph of peace is quite so great as the supreme triumphs of war.*



Armed struggle, he said, thinned the masses, selected the superior, boiled the blood, forged a master race.

Comfortably rich, he had zero tolerance for cloakroom crooks. The Republican machine wanted him out of New York. In 1900, they conspired to bury him in the Vice Presidency. Mark Hanna frantically warned them it was a bad idea.

Sure enough, to the horror of the party hacks, Tecumseh's curse struck McKinley dead. His accidental successor quickly set out to bust the trusts, bury the unions, conquer a global empire.

TR preached a half-way covenant. Corporate capitalism would rule the roost. But it would bend to government intervention.

So his "national socialism" would combine a "Square Deal" with Progressive regulation. Already on the books were the Interstate Commerce Act (1887), Sherman Anti-Trust Act (1890), and other legislation meant to curb the Barons while leaving their private ownership untouched.

Proclaiming himself a "Trust Buster," Teddy became a popular hero by suing to break up U.S. Steel, Standard Oil, and their sibling monopolies.

But his tangible impact was marginal. Wall Street lawyers captured the regulatory commissions. Multicolored stock certificates hid the "busted" trusts and interlocked directories.

In 1907, Roosevelt did support a federal child labor law and the Tillman Act, meant to ban the direct corporate purchase of federal elections.

But he also seeded a Federal Reserve slush fund to bail out Barons who repeatedly overreached. In the century to come, the

Fed would slip trillions in unearned cash to bankers who were “too big to fail” even for an alleged trustbuster like TR.

Most memorably for the public good, Teddy followed Lincoln and Grant in working to preserve our natural resources. The priceless network of national parks he helped establish is among the greatest legacies of any president...until Ronald Reagan, the Bushes and Donald Trump began to rip it apart.

In 1908, Teddy handpicked a successor, William Howard Taft, and set off on safari, where he and his son killed more than 500 African animals.

Taft weighed 350 pounds and got famously stuck in the White House bathtub. He in turn stuck the public with regulatory agencies that gave public cover to the biggest corporations while doing little to check their epic abuses.

In 1912, Teddy demanded the White House back. But at a rigged convention, Taft dared to deny him the Republican nomination. So TR ran as a “Bull Moose” and split the GOP.

When Teddy was shot by a disgruntled barkeep in Milwaukee, he proceeded to speak for 75 minutes. The bullet (like Andy Jackson’s) never left his chest. It stopped his presidential campaign, but not his advocacy for an astonishing mix of war and empire, regulation and privilege, conservation and exploitation, racism and misogyny.

The four-way 1912 presidential election was (like 1824 and 1860) a sure sign of national crisis. Taken together, TR, Taft, and Debs far outpolled (59-41%) New Jersey Gov. Woodrow Wilson. But Wilson won the Electoral College.

Woodrow was the ultimate technocrat. The former President of Princeton held the first Ph.d. in political science. He married the Federal Reserve and Federal Trade Commission to market and tariff reform, and to a regulatory revolving door leading straight to corporate board rooms. He later jailed peace advocates for quoting from his numerous books, including *The New Freedom*.

Teddy, Taft and Wilson were the Progressive modernizers of a new techno-empire. Their monopoly capitalist revolution would shape history's richest, most powerful machine. The American Century's modern Puritan Elect was ready to remake humanity.

Wrote Henry Adams, the grouchy great-grandson of our grouchy second president...

*The outline of the city became frantic in its effort to explain something that defied meaning.*

*Power seemed to have outgrown its servitude and to have asserted its freedom. The cylinder had exploded and thrown great masses of stone and steam against the sky.*

*The city had the air and movement of hysteria, and the citizens were crying, in every accent of anger and alarm, that the new force must at any cost be brought under control.*

*Prosperity never before imagined, power not yet wielded by man, speed never reached by anything but a meteor had made the world irritable, nervous, querulous, unreasonable, and afraid.*

# *SPRINGTIME*

## *Bohemian Rhapsody*

In those astonishing days of new industrial shock and awe, some of us were young and joyous and knew no fear.

For these the new century was a Bohemian Rhapsody, a glorious springtime born of magical new music, fabulous literature, transcendent art, great sex, utopian community, and all the poetic yearnings for social democracy and communal joy that come with each new awakened wave of Indigenous uproar.

This one got woke by African-Americans who never took slavery lying down and didn't roll over for Jim Crow either.

High atop the food chain, Booker T. Washington established Alabama's Tuskegee Institute to educate black professionals. He embraced the ruling corporate ethos. But he trained African-Americans to fight on their own terms. Racism, he said, was a "cancer gnawing at the heart of this republic."

W.E.B. Du Bois became a Communist. The first black Ph.d. from Harvard wanted a "talented tenth" to reshape the nation. In 1909, he helped form the multi-racial (still-fighting!) National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Marcus Garvey, the flamboyant Jamaica-born firebrand, preached black power.

They all danced to a transcendent new music that rolled out of the Big Easy and changed the world: Jazz.

Its roots were in the first Great Awakening, when blacks brought their drums to those raucous outdoor revivals. The shocking impact of African rhythms on European hymns electrified the flock to dance and shout (while it terrified Calvin's clergy).

Over the next 150 years, America's musical gumbo simmered and stirred. Cotton belt slaves invented three-chord blues for the beat-up guitars they strummed on rickety porches after endless hours of unpaid toil. Sheet music materialized for pop tunes and ragtime. Minstrel shows took the latest hits on the road.

New Orleans was the root of it all. America's diverse mecca of a quarter-million souls somehow supported three classical orchestras and two opera companies. Its best musicians were often mixed-race "Creoles of Color" (like Homer Plessy of *Plessy v. Ferguson*) whose genetic ancestry defied description.

And in one of history's great mash-ups, racist bigots midwived the new century's transcendent soundtrack.

As the Populists lost their bearings, Jim Crow ruled that Creoles were colored. In an age of white supremacy, a single drop of black blood somehow trumped the race card.

So the Big Easy's mixed-race musicians migrated from the opera and concert halls to the bars and dance halls, where their high-blown virtuosity met the blues.

But the blues were slow, and ragtime was scripted. When Jim Crow jammed them together, the unintended consequence was an explosive fusion that blew a musical crack where the light (free form improvisation) shone in.

African rhythms transformed the Lord's hymnals into "spiritual music" then Gospel. In Congo Square, the gumbo still rises.

Ancestral drumming, call-and-response, and raucous free-styling fuse into a joyous Delta symphony.

NOLA also jammed, sang and danced to Cajun, folk, hillbilly, Indigenous, African, Caribbean, military, klezmer, Yiddish, spiritual, slave songs, European folk, arias, tone poems...you name it. Amidst the city's exceptional diversity, a pre-teen (Louis Armstrong) picked a trumpet out of the trash and wailed on it from the back of a Jewish family's junk wagon.

Early jazz soon morphed into swing, bebop, rhythm & blues, rock & roll, rap, hip hop and whatever comes next in the musical mystery tour that still frees us all in such mysterious ways.

To that beat marched the new matriarchs. Despite their allegedly hallowed perch on the family pedestal, activist women were regularly beaten and abused by random misogynists (often in uniform) calling themselves Christians.

But with its 1848 Seneca Falls *Declaration of Sentiments*, the nascent feminist movement demanded equal rights, including the vote, property ownership, reproductive freedom, and more.

In 1872, New York's Quaker-raised Susan B. Anthony was busted for trying to vote. But Wyoming had already (in 1869) granted female suffrage. So did other Populist western states like Montana, which sent Jeanette Rankin to Congress in 1917, where she voted against US entry into World War (then did it again in 1941).

Uppity women were at the core of Populist and Socialist movements that demanded their equal rights and public franchise. Quaker-led demonstrations upped the ante. In 1919, Alice Paul and her suffragette sisters hunger-struck after being

jailed for marching at the White House. Their jailers abused them...a BIG mistake.

The lurid headlines tipped the balance. In 1920, women became our voting majority (the Nineteenth Amendment more than doubled the eligible electorate).

Then Alice wrote the Equal Rights Amendment, demanding (simple enough!) that women be treated on a legal par with men. A century later, it remains unratified.

Out on the prairie, the Populist Mary Ellen Lease demanded her fellow farmers raise “less corn and more hell.” Union organizers like Mother Mary Jones and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn fought to abolish wage slavery. The radical feminist Emma Goldman pioneered gay rights (she was deported). Margaret Sanger founded Planned Parenthood to win birth control and reproductive freedom (she was jailed for “pornography”).

The bisexual Mabel Dodge hosted Bohemian love-fests for the new century’s first hippies. She was a rich *avant-garde* literary maven. Mabel's lower Manhattan mansion was a salon of choice for hot young *artistes* like her sometime lover Jack Reed.

They swayed to ragtime, grooved to jazz, lived great poetry, painted crazy pictures, made random love with reckless abandon, danced for joy on the cultural corpse of Puritan prudery. Max Eastman’s witty *Masses* merged leftist politics with urbane writing and flip satire...

*In the summer, I’m a nudist.  
In the winter, I’m a Buddhist.*

The festivities were fueled in part by *cannabis* and peyote that seeped in from an Indigenous culture being driven near extinction along with the frontier. Dodge later moved to Taos, married a Pueblo holy man, and dove deep into the slipstream of Indigenous spirituality. Her autobiography shines with nature-based vision-questing, soon to ignite a psychedelic whirlwind.

Chicago's 1893 World Council on Religion stirred Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Jain, Christian Scientist, Bahai, Zen, theosophist and others into an early Woodstock of spiritual ferment. It moved Nikola Tesla (whose genius helped electrify the nearby World Exposition) and the world itself.

In 1902, Harvard's William James (Ralph Emerson's godson) compiled *Varieties of Religious Experience, a Whole Earth Catalog* that opened the doors of diverse perception and spiritual wisdom. Life forbids, he said...

*...a premature closing of our accounts with reality.*

Reborn transcendentalism electrified the arts. Brilliant creatives like Mary Ellen Key, Mark Twain, Charlotte Gilman, Randolph Bourne, Amy Lowell, Carl Sandberg, Louise Bryant, Lincoln Steffens remade writing for a radical era.

Upton Sinclair's *Jungle* (1906) aspired to be the new *Common Sense*, to ignite a third American Revolution. But the nauseating filth it exposed in the meat packing industry spawned a new generation of vegetarians. "I aimed at the public's heart," Upton mourned, "and by accident I hit it in the stomach."

Ida Tarbell's *History of the Standard Oil Company* muckraked John D. Rockefeller for all his hard-knuckle brutality. Jack



London's *Call of the Wild* evoked nature at its crystalline peak. His *Iron Heel* warned of a coming American fascism.

The stark photo images of Jacob Riis and Lewis Hine opened the public eye to our urban slums. So did Alfred Stieglitz, German-born spouse of the naturalist painter Georgia O'Keefe.

The Ashcan School of Socialist painters like Robert Henri and George Bellows, sparked a revolution in oil and canvas. Their feisty 1908 New York Armory exhibit featured a pine tree emblem from the first American Revolution. Teddy denounced them as "degenerate." The *New York Times* called them "cousins to the anarchists." They liked that.

Futuristic fantasies like Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, Ignatius Donnelly's *Caesar's Column* and H.G. Wells' *Modern Utopia* opened our eyes to a world of possibility. Frank Baum's *Oz* paved the road to a yellow brick century.

Utopian colonies and socialist collectives again lit up the landscape with Indigenous spiritualism, tribal sharing, and sexual adventure. Helicon Hall in New Jersey, Georgia's Christian Commonwealth, collectives at Cave Mills, Tennessee and Kaweah River, California...all fed the reborn tides of a youthful transcendentalism.

As the frontier disappeared, our Indigenous DNA evoked its timeless love for Mother Nature. In 1872, Grant followed Lincoln's preservation of Yosemite with humankind's first national park (at Yellowstone). John Muir fought to save California's Hetch Hetchy Valley from being dammed. Preservationist pioneers rose up everywhere to save our Earth from corporate rape.

Then Teddy left us an exceptional national park system. He soiled the deed with racist blathering against the Indigenous. But

he preserved their spirit in millions of acres of land and water essential to our survival...and STILL under attack from relentless corporatists trashing our Earth for private greed.

The Biltmore Estate of G.W. Vanderbilt (a third generation Baron) launched western North Carolina's Pisgah National Forest. Gifford Pinchot and George W. Schenk pioneered the green science of sustainable forestry. Scotsman John Muir founded the Sierra Club, spawning a century of organized eco-activism.

At the grassroots of this epic Bohemian Spring, millions marched for workers' rights. An 1886 national strike (for the 8-hour day) ended when a bomb killed eight people in Chicago's Haymarket Square. Nobody knows who threw it. But eight anarchists were arrested, four were hanged.

In 1889, the hated steel baron Henry Frick ordered the South Fork Dam lowered to accommodate his carriage. Then it broke, causing the infamous Johnstown Flood, killing 2,209 people.

In 1892, Frick's private thugs slaughtered some thirty strikers at Carnegie's Homestead steel mills, near Pittsburgh. He was never prosecuted for either mass killing. (He was shot, but lived...then died of syphilis in 1919).

Among the working millions, the humanist spirit of Tom Paine's *Common Sense* and Ben Franklin's *Poor Richard* were reborn in mass-circulation newspapers like *The Appeal to Reason* of Girard, Kansas. In 1905, the IWW erupted in Chicago. The one-eyed "Big Bill" Hayward inspired guerrilla *Wobblies* who came in boxcars, slept in hobo camps, wore red and black overalls, ignited strikes, then slipped away into the night.

Angry legions of American workers raged, organized, marched and struck for equality, freedom, survival, dignity. Black, white,

Asian, Hispanic, Indigenous, female, gay, immigrant, unskilled, homeless, destitute...the IWW took them all.

In 1912, they struck the original mills in Lawrence, Massachusetts, still mostly worked by women. With immigrants who spoke a dozen languages and hailed from everywhere, the *Wobblies* sparked a feminist crusade for life that embraced both “Bread and Roses”: decent pay, social justice, a chance to escape poverty and oppression, to love and laugh. Sang the anarchist Emma Goldman...

*If I can't dance, I don't want to be in your revolution.*

When the mothers of Lawrence sent their kids away from a local train station, crazed police attacked them, outraging the nation.

In the silk mills of Patterson, immigrant workers joined Bohemian *artistes* in a transcendent series of plays and pageants. Millions marched in unison. Still more flocked to hear Debs, Haywood and their awakened unionists proclaim a new humanist dawn.

On April 20, 1914, federal machine guns raked a strikers' camp at Rockefeller's coal mines in Ludlow, Colorado. Two dozen died, mostly women and children.

In upstate New York, Cleveland, Columbus, Memphis, Nashville, the Tennessee Valley, Jacksonville, San Antonio, Nebraska, Los Angeles, Colorado Springs, Sacramento, Seattle, and elsewhere, socialist activists seized control of newborn electric utilities.

These public-owned “munies” still produce cheaper, cleaner, safer, more reliable juice than the Baronial monopolies that plague the planet.

From this Awakened vision of shared sustainability sprang Social Security, Medicare, the New Deal, Civil Rights, New Frontier,

Great Society, No Nukes, Solartopia, Occupy, Black Lives Matter, Sandernista and so much more in the ever-evolving stream of the peace, justice and eco-Indigenous movements of the new century...and beyond.

America was moved by its radical creatives in the Awakened 1730s and Transcendentalist 1840s. It arose again in this turn-of-the-century Bohemian Spring. It would be reborn in the radical upwellings of the Great Depression, the Yippie '60s, the Solartopian '70s and beyond.

From the volcanic core of these epic upheavals springs an evergreen tribal force, the cyclical rising of our Indigenous DNA.

At its heart, Debs demanded (then, as now) that all humans be fed, housed, educated, cared for. That monopolies be owned by the public, and made to serve people before profit. That poverty be abolished, democracy enhanced, empire ended, the planet preserved, war forever banned. Thus, Gene said...

*We shall have a literature and an art such as the troubled heart and brain of man never before conceived.*

*We shall have beautiful thoughts and sentiments, and a divinity in religion, such as man weighted down by the machine could never have imagined.*

*The time has come to regenerate society. We are on the eve of a universal change.*

# SUMMER

## ***Woodrow Wilson's War***

The demand for that universal change defined the new  
“American Century.”

But our springtime of hope was soon incinerated in a hot summer  
of imperial war and illegal repression.

Its goal was to crush the Socialist Awakening and enshrine the  
rule of corporate white supremacy. Led by TR and Wilson, the  
Calvinist Elect of our City on the Hill made a manifest leap to  
global empire.

They brought mass murder, eco-suicide, and an iron fist.

In 1914, as American soldiers gunned down striking workers, the  
madness of war engulfed Europe. Our Populists, Socialists, and  
Bohemians wanted no part of it.

Instead they demanded public control of our major institutions.  
Preserve our farms. Pay our workers fairly. Provide food,  
housing, clothing, and education for all.

There was no security-based imperative for us to conquer other  
countries. We were never in danger of being invaded or  
occupied by anyone. A phalanx of fierce anti-imperialists, led by  
Mark Twain, demanded an end to both war and empire....

*It was impossible to save the Great Republic. She was  
rotten to the heart. Lust of conquest had long ago done its  
work; trampling upon the helpless abroad had taught her, by  
a natural process, to endure with apathy the like at home.*

But the Progressives had another vision. For the “Young Giant of the West,” wrote TR...

*No triumph of peace is quite so great as the supreme triumphs of war.*

Indiana Senator Albert Beveridge howled for global conquest. The “March of the Flag” would bring us the riches of empire, the cheap labor, natural resources, and bottomless markets of Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. We were...

*on the threshold of our career as the first power of Earth.*

We’d transcend the Brits, become richer than Rome, put the Persians to shame.

It began with Hawaii. Christian missionaries came to “save” islanders who’d been pretty *mahalo* happy for a very long time.

The Bible thumpers actually imported beach thorns to end going barefoot. They even sent for a rain barrel full of larvae to introduce mosquitoes where before there’d been none (CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT??!!!).

In 1893, Pineapple Baron Sanford Dole conquered the islands, then asked President Cleveland for annexation.

Grover hesitated. But in 1898 William McKinley “went down on my knees” and got the *aloha* straight from God. The US, he said, had “no choice” but to “civilize” a “backward” nation.

Hawaii was in fact peaceful and literate. Following on centuries of sophisticated governance, it embraced a written constitution and a much-loved multi-lingual songwriting Queen (Lili'uokalani).

But never mind.

McKinley also sent the battleship *Maine* to Havana harbor. It was allegedly to support Cuban rebels fighting to oust a Spanish empire that dated to Columbus. But then it blew up, killing 266 Americans. The yellow Hearst press ran pornographic drawings of naked white women being molested by dark, bearded Spaniards. It was a primal scream for imperial war.

“Conspiracy theorists” suggested what Navy divers later confirmed: that the *Maine* blew up from the inside, probably from coal dust. Spain did NOT sink that boat.

But never mind.

Roosevelt’s “Rough Riders” rampaged through Cuba, firing their pistols, killing random locals, conquering the island for the new American empire.

In the Philippines we “liberated” the natives. Twain called the jungle war “a mess, a quagmire.” Our soldiers became “uniformed assassins.” Some 4,000 of them died. So did a quarter-million Filipinos in guerrilla resistance, in concentration camps, and in gratuitous mass slaughter that echoed Wounded Knee and foreshadowed Vietnam.

Since the US was born in anti-imperial revolution, we’ve always denied being an empire. Instead we conquer to “instill democracy” and “teach them a lesson.” We let the locals “elect their own leaders.” If we dislike who they choose, they get to try again, “for their own good.”

Thus, our taxpayer-funded military makes the world safe for corporate plunder. It's all "a racket," wrote General Smedley Butler, who said his troops pillaged Latin America for "the boys on Wall Street."

In 1900, Britain, France, Germany, and the US kicked in China's "Open Door," creating "spheres of interest" for corporate commerce.

In 1903, TR fomented a "revolution" in Colombia, concocted the country of Panama, and had its constitution written in a New York hotel room. The canal we dug across the isthmus came with a 99-year lease.

In 1905, Japan shocked the white world by beating the Russians, the first non-white nation to defeat a European power since the Haitians beat the French a century before.

In 1907, TR sent our Great White Fleet, our "Big Stick," to circle the globe. We've since invaded most of Earth's non-white nations at least once.

We claimed dominance over the western hemisphere, the Pacific, much of Asia and Africa. With imperial Europe and Japan we've carved out chunks of Africa, the Balkans, East Asia.

In the 1910s, in Europe, Japan, and the US, the upper crust somehow longed for larger war. Forty years had passed since the brief Franco-Prussian slaughter. Somehow all those years of peace, progress, and prosperity were more than the elite could bear. It was time to KILL again.

Reading the literature of the day can be mind-bending. In our "bully manhood," peace had become "stale." Society was "soft."



It was time for guns and gas. Mass slaughter would get the white blood flowing again.

Agrarian democrats, Socialist unionists, anti-imperial intellectuals, Quakers, and otherwise sane humans were aghast. But as Adam Hochschild writes in his superb *To End All Wars*, the belief that war would be wonderful spread like a cancer.

In 1914, in Sarajevo, a nationalist nut murdered Austria's Archduke Ferdinand and his pregnant wife. Lunacy erupted. For no rational reason, the Serbs, Russians, British, French, and Italians lined up against the Germans, Austrians, and Turks.

With apparently nothing better to do, Prussia's idiot Kaiser sent his army screaming toward Paris, basically for the Hell of it. The French raced out in taxis, on horseback, bicycles, by foot. Baguettes in hand, they met *Le Boche* about 70 miles shy of the Eiffel Tower.

Trenches were dug. Poison gas spewed. Machine guns blazed. Bombs were dropped. Satan was unleashed.

Over the next four years, at least ten million humans died in battle. Countless more perished in the plagues that followed. To this day nobody can make sense of exactly how or why peaceful, prosperous Europe turned itself into an apocalyptic killing field. But it did.

Woodrow Wilson found a Hades closer to home. The infamous *bandido* Pancho Villa wreaked havoc along the Mexican border.

With all the panache of an Hispanic Charlie Chaplin, Villa was (literally!) making a feature film about himself taunting the gringo colossus. More serious revolutionaries like Emiliano Zapata fought for social justice.

*El Presidente* was not amused. Like Polk before him, Wilson sent our troops crashing into Mexico City, killing the usual innocents.

“Our little brown brothers,” Woodrow sermonized, must be “taught a lesson.”

Then war broke out in Europe. Wilson quickly recalled US troops from their second tour through the Halls of Montezuma. He touted himself as the man who “kept us out of war.” He won a second term.

And then he jumped in with both bloody jackboots.

The groundwork was carefully laid. In 1915, the British passenger ship *Lusitania* sailed for London from New York. The Germans said she illegally carried weapons. They said they’d sink her under the rules of war. Full-page newspaper ads warned Americans not to take passage.

Wilson ignored all that. So did 1,959 passengers and crew.

When two German torpedoes hit the *Lusitania* in the Irish Sea, she sank in 20 minutes, killing 1,198 passengers, including 128 Americans. “Conspiracy theorists” yelled that the torpedoes must’ve hit those illegal munitions the president said were not on board. They dropped her like a rock.

Like the *Maine*, divers later found the *Lusitania*. And, yes, she was indeed loaded with munitions which had blown through the side of the boat, sinking her in an instant.

But never mind. A “horrified” Wilson dispatched a horde of high-paid shills to assault all things Teutonic. Germans became “barbaric Huns.” Sauerkraut was now Liberty Cabbage. Streets named for Beethoven and Mozart, Schiller and Goethe, got

scrubbed of their music and were stuck with numbers. Our largest immigrant group became an evil army of disloyal devils.

In 1916, Wilson's re-election deeply divided the Progressive and Socialist movements.

Wilson's image as an enlightened reformer hid his bigoted nature. Born in Virginia, Woodrow's father was a Confederate chaplain. (as a boy he briefly met Robert E. Lee).

As President he pushed Jim Crow segregation. He staged a White House viewing of D.W. Griffith's grotesquely racist *Birth of a Nation*, which made heroes of the KKK and degraded African-Americans. Woodrow loudly loved it.

Wilson's Progressive leap ensnared the American Federation of Labor, led by Samuel Gompers (a cigar-maker who'd come here from England). Most Barons wanted unions obliterated. Wilson chose to co-opt their elite. His 1914 Clayton Antitrust Act (he called it labor's *Magna Carta*) gave unions official standing...until the Supreme Court gutted it.

As Wilson's pet unionist, Gompers' AFofL became the "business organization" of the skilled elite. It struck for better wages and working conditions. But it shunned women, blacks, immigrants, the unskilled, the overtly radical. The corporate bulwark of the upper working class, it broke the strikes of other unions and embraced the axioms of the capitalist state.

For Gompers, business was business. In trade for White House access, Sam cheered the empire...and its plunge into World War.

On March 1, 1917, the Brits published a "Zimmermann telegram" allegedly revealing a German plot to help Mexico retake the

southwest James K. Polk had so righteously annexed. On Hearst's front pages, raping, pillaging, *Lusitania*-sinking Huns replaced those *Maine*-sinking Spaniards.

In April, ditching that "he kept us out of war" shtick, Wilson demanded Congress declare war. He would "make the world safe for democracy." Six Senators and fifty Representatives (including Jeannette Rankin) voted NO.

Millions marched in opposition. The farm/labor/Socialist/Bohemian majority saw the European slaughter as yet another "rich man's war" and poor man's death sentence.

But Rockefeller, Morgan and their fellow Barons had lent the Brits and French more money than the Germans. Debs, the Wobblies, the social democrats, the *artistes* shouted that our troops were being sent to kill and be killed for corporate profits.

As in the Civil War, the draft ravaged America's working families. Radical organizers resisted. Quakers went to prison. Farmers and workers chopped off fingers and toes. Thousands deserted their units and fled to Mexico and Canada.

Amidst the antiwar upheaval, Socialists captured some 1,200 public offices in 340 American cities, including 79 mayors in 24 states. New York's Meyer London, and Wisconsin's Victor Berger, won seats in Congress. Millions signed calls for non-cooperation. "A mighty tide of Socialism," said The Akron *Beacon-Journal*, was about to "inundate" the country.

The empire struck back. Wilson's Espionage Act revived John Adams' Sedition Act, aimed at the press. Congress purged Berger and denied London his seat. Peace advocates were fired, jailed, beaten, shot. Criticizing Wilson in private became a ten-year felony. So did carrying placards quoting his own books.

The US Supreme Court (in *Schenk*) absurdly equated draft resistance with “shouting fire in a crowded theater.”

(In fact, said the 1960s resister Abbie Hoffman, they were “shouting 'theater' in a crowded fire.”)

In 1917, Russian workers overthrew the Tsar. Their revolution terrified the corporate elites. In the mind of Teddy, Wilson and their ilk, radical activism (like the witches of Salem) posed a lethal threat to Christian civilization.

In June 1918, the Feds took Debs. Now in his sixties, Gene fought fearlessly for peace. At a rally in Canton, government stenographers (thankfully) recorded his magnificent stump speech. He was charged with a ten-year felony.

In a legendary trial, closely watched by the entire nation, Gene refused to mount a formal defense. But on September 11 (exactly two months before the war ended) he delivered a monumental two-hour oratorio for peace. The corporate rich, he said, have “always declared the wars; the subject class has always fought the battles...”

*The master class has had all to gain and nothing to lose, while the subject class has had nothing to gain and all to lose—especially their lives.*

Resisting capitalism’s greedy carnage, said Debs, united humankind with a common bond, a shared spirit, timeless and immutable...

*Years ago I recognized my kinship with all living beings, and I made up my mind that I was not one bit better than the meanest on earth.*

*I said then, and I say now, that while there is a lower class,  
I am in it, and while there is a criminal element I am of it,  
and while there is a soul in prison, I am not free.*

Europe reeled toward bankruptcy. Russia exploded with Revolution. Exhaustion reigned. A truce had to come.

But in barged the doughboys. With fresh grunts and guns, Wilson tipped the balance to the Brits and French. Morgan and Rockefeller got their money.

Then the "tin Jesus" descended on Paris to proclaim victory in his "war to end all wars."

More than 116,000 Americans lay dead. So did 10,000,000 Europeans. Starvation, plague, and the Spanish Influenza piled up corpses by the million.

As peace talks opened at Versailles, Wilson demanded an imperial League of Nations...and leniency for a German people he'd trashed for years as Barbarians and Huns.

As he rode in an open car through the streets of Paris, waving his hat, frenzied mobs cheered the conquering white supremacist as a prophet of peace. Thanks to he himself, Wilson said, these hellish hot summers of war and mass death would end forever.

It was an apocalyptic delusion.

# FALL

## ***Red Scare/The Palmer Raids***

During the Great War, a “Great Migration” brought millions of blacks to northern industrial cities, primarily to work in the arms industry. Deadly riots over the usual bigoted madness (political power, social status, racial caste, jobs, housing, access to beaches, sexual innuendo, alleged insults) left dozens dead.

In Houston, August 1917, white police assaulted black soldiers guarding a new military base. Sixteen people died. The army indicted 118 black soldiers, convicted 110, hanged 19, sentenced 63 to life. No whites were convicted of anything.

Wilson had already pumped Jim Crow deep into the federal blood stream. His military thoroughly abused its segregated units. (Many fled to serve under French command, where they won countless medals for bravery and valor). When they came home, Woodrow’s KKK brethren made sure they could not vote... or live in peace.

After Armistice (as usual after a war) the global economy collapsed. General strikes paralyzed America's steel industry, the city of Seattle, mines, railroads, factories. The fall reaction turned ugly, deadly, fascistic

(coined in Italy around that time by Benito Mussolini, the term *fascism* had a simple definition: “corporate control of the state”).

In Matewan, West Virginia, ten died (including the mayor) in a May 1920, gun battle between union miners and Baldwin-Felts corporate thugs. A Felts family member was shot by Matewan’s pro-union Sheriff Sid Hatfield.

A jury later cleared Hatfield of murder charges. In 1921 he came unarmed to another court, where he was executed in broad daylight by Felts men who were never convicted of anything.

Afflicted with lethal working conditions and grinding poverty, coal country exploded. Some 13,000 underpaid, overworked miners grabbed their guns and wrapped bandanas around their throats. Their “Red Neck Army” marched on the mines at Blair Mountain (since decapitated by mountaintop removal).

President Harding ordered army war planes to drop poison gas on our own American workers. At least a hundred died. Nearly a thousand were indicted for daring to march for their rights. Many rotted in prison for years.

Nationwide, our diverse working class (now including millions of war vets) seethed with rage. Gompers' AFL got a seat at many bargaining tables. They won better wages and working conditions, and the right to organize in many battleground industries.

But in the cold fall of post-war fascism, corporate power crushed the Socialists and Wobblies.

With the Espionage and Sedition Acts in his arsenal and Sam Gompers by his side, Wilson staged a new round of witch trials and repression. He shredded the Constitution with a “Red Scare” *putsch* meant to kill all resistance to corporate capitalism.

From November 1919 through January 1920, Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer (who called himself a Quaker) launched a vicious onslaught of gestapo-style raids aiming to destroy American Socialism and radical unionism. Often without warrants, Palmer’s agents smashed into countless Socialist Party and IWW



offices, movement meeting centers, public rallies and the private homes of suspected advocates of social democracy and peace.

Mocking due process, the Administration forcibly deported countless citizens of Russian descent, including the gay rights pioneer Emma Goldman.

Radical unionism became a life-threatening dare. The deep-rooted Populist/Socialist belief that the public should own society's major industries and operate them for the community's benefit was now assaulted as a "foreign ideology."

For the next hundred years, no independent party demanding social democracy, ecological protection or an end to empire would pose a serious threat to America's corporate duopoly.

For those who would make meaningful social change, the system demanded an impossible leap between the rock of the corporate Democrats and the hard place of third party politics (complete with both an internal circular firing squad and an actual one run by the government).

Wilson's *putsch* enthroned imperial corporate capitalism atop an unassailable fortress, far removed from the periodic waves of a divided, impoverished, terrorized public.

While crushing democracy at home, Wilson descended on Europe to celebrate a world now "safe for democracy."

Wilson knew full well his intervention turned what might have been a negotiable stalemate into a crushing victory the Allies were happy to exploit. At the Versailles peace talks, he proposed an explicitly racist, pan-imperial League of Nations. It meant to

unite Europe's conquering Caucasians (plus Japan) in the orderly gouging of Africa, Asia, the Balkans, Latin America.

The Allies loved the League. But without a hint of irony, Wilson now begged mercy for all those "Huns" and "Barbarians" he'd so senselessly slaughtered.

The Brits and French were incensed. Woodrow was a "Tin Jesus". Completely ignoring him, their Versailles Treaty stripped Germany bare and mocked its tortured soul.

Soon enough, a bankrupt, humiliated Fatherland puked up Adolf Hitler. His apocalyptic firestorm of bigotry and slaughter should have surprised no one. Wilson's imperial "war to end all wars" (STILL bitterly resented by so many Americans) had predictably paved the way to the next one.

In 1919, Woodrow suffered a debilitating stroke. As Nancy Reagan would do some 65 years later, Wilson's second wife (Edith) hid the president's true derangement. She became our first *de facto* female chief executive.

Without Woodrow to push it, the Senate nixed the League. Like the social democracy he crushed, like the Constitution he shredded, like the millions he doomed, Wilson's shining vision for world peace died in the post-war ice storm of fascist reaction.

The American Century's techno-messiah ended his presidency in a virtual coma.

He'd perpetrated a fraudulent intervention, illegally smashed the Socialist Party and radical labor movement, enshrined Jim Crow, enthroned for a century to come a two-party machine dedicated to imperial conquest and corporate dominion.

As dementia claimed the Great Peacemaker, Spanish Flu killed some fifty million Europeans and more than 500,000 Americans.

“Madness,” he mourned, “has entered everything.”

# WINTER

## *The Roaring Twenties*

On November 11, 1918, the Great War ended. The hopes of a generation were buried with the dead. In Europe's blood-soaked soil, the seeds of the next war were already taking root.

Among the victims was Quentin Roosevelt. Teddy's youngest son (of four) was shot out of French skies at age 20. His "blessed rogue" was the family favorite. Just two months after Armistice, our most vigorous imperial advocate died at 60 of a broken heart (and maybe from the lead bullet lodged next to it).

Teddy's transcendent niece Eleanor soon revived his boundless energy and formidable intellect, but with very different values. In the decades to come, this magnificent American matriarch helped bend the arc of history toward the global peace and social justice her uncle had so violently denied.

Wilson's intervention lasted 18 months. Some 4,700,000 American men and women were deployed. After Armistice, with no declaration of war, some 7,000 troops were sent into Russia to crush the Revolution and restore the Tsar. Seventy died.

Long after the war ended, Wilson left hundreds of non-violent peace activists to rot in prison. For the "crime" of preaching peace five months before Armistice, Debs was condemned to twenty years in prison. Born in Indiana, he was stripped of his citizenship (which was restored on July 4, 1976).

In 1920, Gene ran for president from a federal cell in Atlanta. The near-million ballots counted for him included countless women voting for the first time.

Many had suffered outrageous abuse. In 1918, police arrested Alice Paul and her Suffragette sisters for peacefully marching at the White House, and for carrying a sign quoting the president.

When Alice hunger-struck, jailers rammed a tube down her throat. Amidst a major media storm, the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified in time for the 1920 election.

By then, Edith Wilson was running the country. America was exhausted from its third cycle of upheaval, war, and reaction. Warren G. Harding, an amiable small-town Ohio newspaper editor, inaugurated another winter's hibernation. We need "normalcy," he said, "an end to uproar."

Harding's newspaper delivery boy, Norman Thomas (a rising young Socialist) convinced the affable Ohioan to free Debs.

Warren G. brought the "American Saint" straight from prison to the Oval Office, shook his hand, then sent him home to Terre Haute where a cheering crowd of 50,000 (not one of whom, apparently, had voted for him for Congress five years earlier) greeted their prodigal son.

Gene died in 1926 (at age 70). He'd evolved directly from Indigenous America through Ben Franklin and Tom Paine and agrarian Populism. The first phase of America's industrial grassroots democratic Socialism died with him.

Two years earlier, Wisconsin Senator Robert "Fighting Bob" LaFollette formed the Progressive Party to run for president. He supported Wilson in 1912, but vehemently opposed his imperial intervention (being a US Senator protected him from arrest, as being a Congressman might have protected Debs).

In the tradition of America's left third parties, Bob supported universal health care, public ownership of the railroads, fair wages, women's rights, environmental protection and more. In 1924, he carried 17% of the national vote, and Wisconsin's Electors. But when he died in 1925, the party dispersed.

He and Debs had married Madison's Bill of Rights with mass movements for grassroots social democracy. They advocated racial, gender and ethnic equality. Debs' Socialists wanted the means of production owned by the public. The economy would serve human needs, not corporate profits.

The Indigenous power of these eternal ideals never left the American Century. Six times Norman Thomas ran for president on their unquenchable alchemy. A hundred years later, they still ignite our cyclical fires.

William Jennings Bryan also kept his oratorical flare. His finest moment came in 1915, when he quit as Secretary of State after Wilson went nuts over the *Lusitania*.

In his dotage, Bryan blamed the World War on "Godlessness." At the 1925 Scopes Monkey Trial in Dayton, Tennessee (in our first live courtroom radio broadcast) he confronted labor lawyer Clarence Darrow. Darrow suggested that teaching both evolution *and* the Bible would let students make up their own minds.

At trial's end, Bryan fell too ill to give a summation. But the jury took just eight minutes to ban evolution from Tennessee schools. He died in triumph five days later.

Billy Bryan's final anti-modern assault spoke volumes to our aftermath conservatism. In the wake of war and reaction, with

our farms failing in a corporatizing world, small-town America arose in anguish. Like the Indigenous shamans of the dying frontier's Ghost Dance, 1920s Bible thumpers like Billy Sunday preached the Old Time Religion to bewildered congregations bidding adieu to their way of life.

The Ku Klux Klan ramped up the hate. In November 1915, KKK leaders revived their racist terror at Stone Mountain, Georgia. Wilson's ugly embrace of D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* helped spark a white supremacist surge.

Until the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, our doors were open to the world. In 1908, TR's Gentleman's Agreement stopped immigration from Japan. In 1917, Wilson okayed a literacy test meant to kill the surge from Europe. In the early twenties, Congress imposed a nation-based quota system choking the human flow that helped shaped us for three centuries.

In May 1921, a white mob torched the prosperous "Black Wall Street" section of Tulsa. At least 55 citizens died (maybe more than 300). A.C. Jackson, a prominent black surgeon, was murdered while being hauled to jail for no good reason. White police locked up 6,000 of the district's 10,000 black residents. Some 35 blocks of hotels, hospitals, businesses, libraries, newspapers, and homes were obliterated. At least 9,000 people were made homeless.

Throughout the post-war era, Jim Crow lynchings and violent vote theft fed the Democrats' death grip on Dixie. In Chicago and Detroit, race riots killed dozens.

In August 1922, Irish resistance leader Michael Collins was assassinated. The charismatic guerrilla fighter led armed IRA anti-Brit resistance. But after the War he advocated a peace

treaty. It got him killed. Seven more decades of unhinged killing ended only in the 1990s with help from Bill Clinton (in his sole moment of true greatness).

In August 1925, as Bryan's Monkey Trial ended, organized racism surged. Some 40,000 Klansmen showed their sheets in DC. (The national KKK was soon gutted by internal corruption).

Official bigotry peaked with the 1927 murder trial of Italian-born anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti. Their ritual electrocution sparked global outrage. (A half-century later, Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis issued an apt apology).

Meanwhile, Prohibition set rural fundamentalists at war with city slickers. (Historian Dan Okrent says women also aimed it at menfolk who drank their pay and beat them up).

True to the law of unintended consequences, Prohibition actually made alcohol easier to get. The old saloons banned most females and were shut on Sunday.

Now illegal speakeasies ran 24/7. With a secret knock and some ready cash, women were welcome. Many dressed like "flappers," smoked cigarettes, drank like fish. The family car's back seat was ground zero for a post-Puritan sexual explosion.

For many Bohemians, the "Tedious Twenties" were as void and boring as the Era of Good Feelings and Gilded Age. *Artistes* like Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway, Cole Porter, Zelda and F. Scott Fitzgerald, took their "movable feast" to urbane Paris.

But some went to Harlem, where genius band leaders like Duke Ellington and Count Basie played divine music. Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Bennett, James Weldon Johnson, Jessie



Redmon Fauset inspired a “Black Renaissance” that gave the Roaring Twenties its most brilliant literature and art. In another winter of material mindlessness, the brilliant “New Negro” was alive and well, even if the best and brightest could not eat or sleep where they performed.

But Jazz's wild improvisations also spread through Edison's phonograph and Pittsburgh's KDKA, which in 1924 began broadcasting through parlor radios that changed everything.

Telecommunications boomed. So did the Morgan-Edison-Tesla electric power business. Airliners linked the cities. Autos created a new suburban frontier.

Like Grant before him, Harding's “friends” stole billions. Then Tecumseh poisoned him (or maybe it was “the Dutchess,” his formidable First Lady, livid over his sexual escapades).

For a no-longer-so-progressive middle class, it was time for another winter's gorge. A strong residual union movement protected wages. Millions bought (on margin) bogus stock certificates while their bankers bet their unregulated, uninsured deposits at the Wall Street casino. At least six million families would soon lose their life savings.

Our imperial legions also ran wild.

Throughout the “Dollar Diplomacy” Twenties, nary a Latin American neighbor was left un-invaded. Naval bases in Hawaii, Guam, and the Philippines made the Pacific our new corporate-imperial back yard.

But on August 27, 1928, the US, Germany, and France (joined eventually by another 59 nations) signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact pledging never to attack each other.

Humankind seemed ready at last to end all major wars.

In early 1929, President Herbert Hoover (the “Great Engineer”) proclaimed a “permanent dawn of peace and prosperity.”

Like many of the era's best jazz improvisations, our booming young adulthood ended on a High C.

But like the war to end all wars, it hid a coming catastrophe.

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# **A BURST OF ENERGY**

## ***Eleanor & Franklin***

The 1929 Great Crash set the grassroots on fire.

Countless Middle Americans who “played by the rules” went broke, jobless, homeless, destitute. Barons with cash snapped up bankrupt farms, homes, factories, futures....and ignited a grassroots class hatred that threatened a new Revolution.

Our fourth cycle of history again conjured up the chieftains to guide its latest burst of energy. Then they were Good King Billy, Andy Jackson, Bryan/Debs/Teddy/Wilson...

Now it was a (tenuously) married couple.

He was in a wheelchair. She was Eleanor.

As usual, not much real value anchored all that crazed Roaring Twenties end-of-cycle casino madness. As in 1819, 1837, 1857 and 1893, first came panic, then the crash. In 1907 the Big Banks got the feds to bail them out (as they did again a century later).

But after 1929, our second Great Depression ate us all.

Germany had pulled itself back up from war and reparations. Now it utterly collapsed, opening the door for Adolf Hitler.

Here we'd been fat, happy, and almost fully employed. Then we were cold, hungry, and jobless. A string of “Hooverville” tent

colonies stretched from sea to sea. We were dazed, depressed...desperate for a beer.

Hamilton's corporate aristocracy had conquered America. Progressive regulation was a near-total failure.

The 1888 Sherman Anti-Trust Act (meant to restore competition) was used to crush labor unions. The Clayton Act (labor's "Magna Carta") was weak, then dead. Corporate flunkies turned oversight boards into Baronial lap dogs.

But now, amidst terrible poverty, the unions fought back. Farm-labor campaigns raged through the upper Midwest. Norman Thomas sustained the spirit of social democracy.

With it came the Bonus Army. The vets who fought Woodrow Wilson's war were promised a pension, payable in 1945. But they needed it NOW. Thousands marched on the White House, expecting to get bailed out as the bankers had been in 1907 (and would be again a century later).

With some small exceptions, Herbert Hoover, the GOP's "Great Engineer," would not let the people's government help its desperate citizens. Hobo camps ("Hoovervilles") erupted with angry Americans who deserved better and knew it.

When the Bonus Army swarmed into DC, they camped in the Anacostia Flats, the very swamp Madison and Jefferson had dickered over with Alexander Hamilton in 1790.

Hoover (raised a Quaker) refused to meet. Generals Douglas MacArthur, George Patton, and Dwight Eisenhower torched the camp...then opened fire. Two vets died. The Great Engineer and his GOP were now dead political meat.

As the grassroots raged, a charismatic New York Democrat came to power alongside the American Century's most powerful matriarch, the better angel of our feminist soul. Their 1932 landslide said "do something!...anything!" to end the Depression.

Except for legalizing booze and singing *Happy Days Are Here Again*, the Roosevelts had scant idea what that would be.

FDR had already been to the mountaintop. Handsome, clever, and rich, Franklin's domineering mother prepped him for the presidency from birth. Cousin Teddy gifted him a celebrity name, and (more importantly) the "ugly duckling" niece who became his best attribute. Wilson made him Under-Secretary of the Navy. The 1920 Dems ran him for VP.

But in the summer of 1921, Franklin swam in cold Canadian waters, then ran off to fight a fire. Chilled to the bone, he awoke the next morning and never walked again.

Like Lincoln's melancholia, like JFK's war wounds, polio tested the deepest chords of FDR's soul. Somehow, through depression, war, and worse, he exuded a relentless healing spirit that transcended his well-hidden depths of personal despair.

At Warm Springs, Georgia, he built a pioneering polio treatment center where thousands sought healing. Had he never been president, Franklin Roosevelt would still be justly revered for his boundless compassion and relentless optimism in the face of terrible personal suffering.

With a heavily pumped upper body, FDR learned to use railings, banisters, and his son's arm to give the illusion of being able to walk. He sat behind a desk for Oval Office press conferences, spoke from podiums with hidden supports, referred in public to his leg braces only at the very end.

But it was Eleanor who made him. Working New York's back channels, she engineered Franklin's governorship, then presidency (when really it should have been her).

Though not exactly passionate in private, they were the ultimate power couple. Franklin's radio-broadcast "fireside chats" enhanced Eleanor's daily newspaper column, which ran virtually everywhere.

The "First Lady of the World" (and America's second-richest) traveled where her husband could not. She visited farms, factories, mines, mills, slums and tenements, poorhouses and hospitals...even the California concentration camps where Franklin jailed 10,000 Japanese-Americans for no good reason.

Race, class, religion, ethnicity, sexual preference – none slowed Eleanor's gritty resolve to touch and inspire her fellow humans.

Alice Paul's Equal Rights Amendment languished through the decades. But Eleanor birthed a new sense of matriarchy, of an America that could (should!) again be run by women. Frances Perkins became our first female cabinet secretary (of Labor).

Policy-wise, the Roosevelts made another “half-way covenant” between corporate capitalism and American Socialism.

Had Debs' Socialist Party survived Wilson's *putsch*, public ownership of our major financial and industrial institutions might have been central to the national dialogue. Norman Thomas and a small but vocal Communist Party still demanded it.

The Roosevelts didn't go there. Often branded a Socialist, FDR was (like Bernie Sanders) a social democrat. He advocated not that the public should own the corporations, but that they

“should be carefully restrained creatures of the law and the servants of the people.”

Like the greatest Franklin before him, FDR loved to experiment. Tom Paine said all humans deserved the basics of life. Lincoln said we could not survive half slave and half free. Now the Roosevelts would not abide "one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished."

The Roosevelts used scattershot agencies and executive orders to do what Hoover's GOP would not: make the government tend to the "general welfare" as the *Haudenosaunee* and US Founders envisioned our government doing.

Their key agencies had initials like CCC, PWA, WPA, NRA, AAA. Their barrage of band-aids created millions of jobs and helped countless Americans in desperate need.

Social Security, food stamps, child labor laws, the right to organize...all major social programs of the New Deal (and later the New Frontier and Great Society) flowed straight from the wellspring of an angry populace, demanding the government act like a tribe, and do its part to help everyone.

That also meant restraints on corporate greed. The FDIC would guarantee bank deposits. The SEC would regulate the stock market. Glass-Steagall would curb bank speculations.

While reining in the Barons, the New Deal created millions of jobs, enhanced our relationship with Mother Earth, breathed life back into our body politic, offered the vision of a nation free from poverty, defused what might have become a violent revolution. As FDR and even his fiercest critics well knew...it saved corporate capitalism.



From 1933 when he proclaimed that “Happy Days Are Here Again,” until 1937, when Franklin seemed to lose his nerve, the Roosevelts’ New Deal was a spectacular success.

It all hinged on an improbable coalition of industrial unions, racial minorities, southern racists, urban intellectuals, angry farmers, populist poets, and millions more with little in common beyond a desperate need to get our tribe back on track.

Franklin’s fellow rich hated it (and him). They were “Economic Royalists,” sons of Barons who could never get enough money. When Franklin suggested they might consider sharing their wealth, their sociopathic rage turned literally murderous.

In 1933, General Smedley Butler told Congress that members of the Rockefeller, Mellon, Morgan, DuPont, and Remington clans had offered him \$3 million to arm 500,000 fascists, overthrow the government and kill the president.

Butler spent the “Dollar Diplomacy” 1920s as a "racketeer for Wall Street," using the US military to pillage Latin America for corporate profit. But his shocking revelations of the “Business Plotters” plan to assassinate FDR was suppressed.

Where nonviolent peace activists were imprisoned long after Armistice, not a single murderous millionaire was jailed for this armed conspiracy to gut our government.

Their European cohorts won Spain, Germany and Italy, where Mussolini defined his “fascism” as “corporate control of the state.” Rich Americans like Joseph P. Kennedy (father of president #36), Prescott Bush (father and grandfather of #41 and #43), Henry Ford and Charles Lindbergh supported Hitler.

*Der Fuhrer's* "National Socialism" (a term fondly used by TR) transformed the Fatherland into a corporate Hell. Hitler's pledge to "Make Germany Great Again" demanded its "silent majority" conquer the world.

Adolf's fascism was all about fear: fear of Jews, Bolsheviks, Slavs, Jehovah's Witnesses, Muslims, heretics, trade unions, gays, the disabled, the past, the future, and (most of all) the present.

But the Roosevelts preached a gospel of optimistic good will...

*The only thing we have to fear is fear itself!*

Their miracle was holding together a bitterly divided society while trying whatever to restore prosperity. Some of it actually worked.

Overseas, their "Good Neighbor" policy brought a rare stretch of imperial restraint. Petty much alone among modern American presidents, FDR mostly refrained from invading smaller countries.

That got major support from Senator Gerald Nye, a North Dakota Republican. In high-profile 1935-36 hearings, Nye confirmed what America already knew: Woodrow Wilson misled us into war; millions fought to protect the Robber Barons' loans; still more died to save rich Russians from Revolution.

America, Nye said, was suckered into insane mass slaughter and a fascist Red Scare aimed at killing social democracy.

Still loyal to Woodrow, corporate Democrats were furious.

But Nye's hearings surprised no one. Nor did the fierce spring storm of another great grassroots Awakening.



# SPRINGTIME

## *"This Land is Your Land"*

Throughout the 1930s Depression, armed agrarian mobs, angry urban workers, and young cultural rebels again awakened our Indigenous spirit.

New Deal social programs confirmed British economist John Maynard Keynes' theory that government spending would create both jobs and long-term economic stability.

FDR and Keynes met...and did not hit it off. But the New Deal's alphabet agencies created income for working people and a future for the American economy.

The New Deal also kicked in money for murals, music, books, plays, photos, reportage, and much more. The PWA, WPA, Federal One, and other cultural projects helped another Awakened wave of transcendent creatives survive and thrive.

It all came with a strong strain of desperation. While the New Dealers sang of "Happy Days" the Roosevelts rode a cyclical storm surge of radical resistance that forced them to continually tack left. FDR knew full well his social programs needed to stay a step ahead of the class Revolution sweeping the nation. If he didn't succeed as president, he said, he'd be "the last one."

In the Great Plains, armed agrarians stopped farm foreclosures and put their human needs over corporate greed. In the south, a Sharecroppers Union rose up among our most downtrodden dirt workers.

On the rails and highways, mines and mills, docks and slaughterhouses, foundries and factories, militant labor was reborn with a vengeance. Thousands of strikes raged through the decade. Dozens died confronting troops, cops, company goons, corporate thugs, private armies and worse.

Working-class anger shot blacks, women, immigrants, and radical organizers far beyond the stuffy AFL. The gruff, tough John L. Lewis and his Congress of Industrial Organizations followed Debs and the Wobblies by organizing whole industries at once, rather than just by craft. Hard core rank-and-filers demanded radicalism at every turn.

In a “strike heard ‘round the world,” the newborn United Auto Workers seized Fisher Body Plant #1 in Flint. From December 1936 through February 1937, some 2,000 occupiers held the factory while 5,000 supporters circled the building. They camped, cooked, staged classes, produced newspapers, and turned the world upside down until GM finally signed a contract.

Beyond the union framework, countless wildcat sit-down strikes, occupations, walk-outs, picket lines, insider sabotage, stealth violence, open defiance, and much more spread across the land.

In service to the “Malefactors of Great Weath,” the empire struck back. In South Chicago, cops shot ten picketing workers in the back at a 1937 Republic Steel Memorial Day rally. But Ford, Republic, and other rubber, steel, automobile, electric power, and meat packing factories were unionized anyway.

Most corporate barons were outraged by the New Deal’s willingness to legitimize the labor movement. FDR said he “welcomed their hate.” And the smarter ones preferred to deal union leaders rather than the wildcat strikes that could rip them apart without warning.

First Lady Eleanor and Labor Secretary Perkins put feminism and unionism hand-in-hand. Frances helped make the 1935 Wagner Act a landmark for labor organizing. Unlike Wilson's failed Clayton Act, which was killed by the courts, the New Deal's National Labor Relations Board made a real difference for American workers.

Many were African-Americans. Jim Crow stole their votes in the south. But in 1936, northern blacks began leaving the party of Lincoln.

They got little in return. Roosevelt needed racist "good ol' boy" southerners to push the New Deal, which couldn't even pass an anti-lynching law.

Finally, in 1941, with war raging in Europe, A. Philip Randolph called FDR's bluff. Head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (our biggest black union) he threatened a mass march. After a tense Oval Office session, Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8802 creating the Fair Employment Practices Committee to monitor federal hiring and kill Jim Crow in the war industry.

Throughout the Depression black activists got heard through the American Communist Party. Its 100,000 members included artists and intellectuals like W.E.B. Du Bois, Paul Robeson, Richard Wright, Langston Hughes. CP lawyers stopped Alabama from executing nine "Scottsboro Boys" falsely accused of rape. They made the case a global symbol of American racism. (Not one of them was ever executed).

Most American Communists supported the New Deal, and liked the Soviet Union's planned economy, which avoided many of the Depression's worst impacts.

But they found the actual place (and the dictatorial Joe Stalin) pretty grim. When idealistic young activists joined the Abraham Lincoln Brigade to save Spain from fascism, Stalin sold them out. His gruesome 1934-35 show trials doomed countless innocents to work camps and death. In 1939, his “non-aggression pact” with Hitler let him share in the rape of Poland. But when Adolf turned on him, Stalin became “Uncle Joe,” as *Life Magazine* lovingly portrayed him on a 1943 cover.

Beneath the Red veneer, Stalin was just an exceptionally brutal Tsar. He enslaved millions in a ghastly “gulag” exceeded in size only by the Nazi concentration camps (and then nearly matched by the US prison system during the Drug War).

In Detroit, the Catholic radio preacher Father Charles Coughlin supported the Roosevelts, then plunged into anti-Semitic hate speech. Coughlin's hate mongering twisted Jesus' peaceful preachings into the vile blasphemy of racist evangelical fascism, stretching through the Fat '50s and Reagan '80s all the way to the Trumpocalypse.

Sinclair Lewis mocked such small-minded bigotry in *Main Street* and *Babbitt*. Like Jack London's earlier *Iron Heel*, Lewis' *It Can't Happen Here* warned of a fascist coup.

Louisiana's frenetic Governor Huey “Kingfish” Long's “Share the Wealth” movement demanded \$5,000 grants for all Americans. He rammed “Every Man a King” into the upstart lexicon. Then he was assassinated.

Reborn prairie populism was put to song by the likes of Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger and the Weavers. *This Land is Your Land*, *If I Had a Hammer* and other grassroots anthems poured from a banjo that read...

*This machine surrounds hate and forces it to surrender.*

"Okies" sang such songs as they fled the Dustbowl eco-disaster for California, which became an epicenter of upheaval.

In 1934, Socialist Upton Sinclair ran for governor pledging to End Poverty in California. Author of a hundred books, Upton aimed his muckraking magic at corporate greed making it clear that....

*It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon his not understanding it.*

FDR betrayed Sinclair, who lost in a huge corporate assault. But in 1939, Populist Culbert Levy Olson became governor, paving the way for four years of populist uproar.

In Long Beach, Frances Townshend's massive network of angry elders paved the way for Social Security. This godparent of all social programs still saves from poverty millions of elders and the children who must otherwise support them. It remained largely immune from corporate counter-attacks (until the Randish nightmare of Paul Ryan and the Trumpocalypse).

The New Deal's Awakened ode was John Steinbeck's 1939 *Grapes of Wrath*. As a novel and then a Hollywood movie, the springtime odyssey of battered class and climate refugees became the era's *Common Sense*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and *Jungle*, all rolled into one.

"I'll be everywhere," says our heroic Tom Joad...

*Wherever you can look – wherever there's a fight, so hungry people can eat, I'll be there. Wherever there's a cop beatin' up a guy, I'll be there. I'll be in the way guys yell*



*when they're mad. I'll be in the way kids laugh when they're hungry and they know supper's ready, and when the people are eatin' the stuff they raise and livin' in the houses they build – I'll be there, too.*

*Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* became populist classics. So did the return of Frank Baum's *Wizard of Oz* as a major motion picture.

Charlie Chaplain's *Modern Times* (1936) trashed corporate greed. His *Great Dictator* mocked Hitler and Mussolini.

But our greatest “Marxists” were the madcap brothers Groucho, Harpo, Chico, and Zeppo. Their lunatic anarchy in *Night at the Opera*, *Day at the Races*, and *Duck Soup* was reborn in the '60s for a rebel generation that saw them stoned.

In music, the color line finally broke. On June 15, 1933, the Chicago Symphony played Florence Price's gorgeous Symphony #1 in E Minor. In '36, William Grant Still conducted the LA Philharmonic in his own (in A-Flat) at the Hollywood Bowl.

Then Benny Goodman brought Teddy Wilson on stage to play piano with him and drummer Gene Krupa (who did prison time for *cannabis*). The Jewish clarinet *meister* was warned of riots. But all that happened was a truly great concert. Later the "King of Swing" brought on Lionel Hampton (the black vibes genius) to escalate the Awakened assault on Jim Crow in show biz.

Meanwhile, an epic struggle erupted over energy and the environment.

The electric utility industry was born of Morgan, Edison, Tesla and Westinghouse in the 1880s. Mostly it was corporate-owned. But dozens of community-based “munis” reliably shipped

“socialist juice” cheaper, cleaner, safer and more reliably than the Barons' Investor Owned Utilities (IOUs).

In the 1920s, utility stocks soared, then crashed. But electric demand grew (profitably) throughout the Depression.

FDR's Rural Electrification Administration lit up countless remote farmhouses. But it undercut thousands of legendary Jacobs wind turbines that pumped water, crushed grain, and generated electricity throughout the Great Plains.

The New Deal's Tennessee Valley Authority and Bonneville Power Administration built massive dams meant to prevent flooding and produce cheap juice. But they morphed into Soviet-style bureaucracies that later built nuke reactors, sparked huge defaults, and treated their customers like serfs.

The New Deal also built a giant aqueduct to bring water to southern California's megacities.

But the prairies were stripped bare. When the rains stopped, the topsoil baked. Mile-high walls of apocalyptic dust killed crops, turned fields to deserts, made day into night. Homes and lungs filled with soil. Whole cities darkened.

So FDR became a “tree farmer.” His Civilian Conservation Corps planted more than 220 million saplings along the Rockies' front range, slowing dust storms, holding moisture. New parks, dams, schools, playgrounds, pools, streets, highways, public housing promised hope for ecological survival.

FDR's “Indian New Deal” also gave the hated Bureau of Indian Affairs a chief (John Collier) who respected the Indigenous. The 1934 Indian Reorganization Act got very mixed reviews. It and may have done the Indigenous more harm than good. But the

New Deal spoke with respect, and restored some tribal sovereignty for the first time since Wounded Knee.

Then FDR stumbled. His National Industrial Recovery Act, demanded that corporations cooperate with unions and the public. But the Supreme Court killed it.

Flush from his 1936 landslide re-election, Franklin demanded an age limit for Justices and more seats for him to stuff.

It didn't fly. Dictatorships had come to Germany, Russia, Italy, Spain, Japan. We didn't want one here.

But as with much else in his life, FDR got lucky. Two conservative Justices swung left. Seven seats opened. Liberals like William O. Douglas and Hugo Black got robes.

So from the late '30s to the early '70s (when Nixon dragged it right) the Supreme Court certified some of our greatest leaps for human rights, civil liberties, ecological survival, and more.

In 1937, Roosevelt got cold feet over federal deficits. When he slashed key New Deal programs, the economy slumped, proving Keynes right yet again.

But the Depression Era's turbulent spring had revived our Indigenous commitment to the well-being of every member of the human tribe. Franklin later certified that part of our DNA with an *Economic Bill of Rights*. So did Eleanor, on a global scale, with the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

Unfortunately, the high sentiments of both those magnificent documents never became actual law.

But amidst the hot summer of yet another war, facing an Axis Devil Woodrow Wilson helped create, our awakened humanism and Good Neighbor legacy gave us the moral high ground...and essential allies we would (at the peak of our adulthood) desperately need.

# **SUMMER**

## ***World War 2***

As the Great Crash morphed and surged across the globe, it led us straight to war.

When Hitler (with Stalin's help) invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, America still seethed over Woodrow Wilson's disastrous intervention. We did not want another one.

FDR saw the larger danger. He used a "lend-lease" subterfuge to send the British arms and ammunition. He did all he could to get the Germans to attack us.

On December 7, 1941, infamy struck from Japan. There's a case still to be made that he let it happen. FDR was an infamous dissembler and a shameless gambler.

But he wasn't stupid. A second front in the Pacific with our fleet in ruins was a hell of a stretch, even for him. Had Tokyo nailed our aircraft carriers, the Pacific might still be theirs.

Pearl Harbor did, for once in our history, unite America in war.

The Revolution, 1812, Mexican, Civil, Spanish-American, First World, Korean, Vietnam, Contra, Iraq, and Afghan wars have all deeply divided us.

Against Japan, Americans rallied to beat a common foe as never before. It was High Noon for the City on the Hill.

In our most critical industries, FDR went Socialist. All that wonky rhetoric about the "wonders of the free market" disappeared when it came to the Arsenal of Democracy.

“Dr. Win-the-War” commandeered the auto, airline, agricultural, telecommunications, and other key industries. In the spirit of Gene Debs (but for war rather than peace) America chose a planned economy based on command and control, aimed consciously at the common good. In time of crisis, private profit and corporate greed would not save us. The Invisible Hand picked up a planner’s pen.

The outcome was full employment and a winning military effort. From 1943-45, with fifteen million soldiers overseas, pretty much any American could get a decent job.

At least 2,200,000 women (including Rosie the Riveter) worked the assembly lines. About 400,000 served in the armed forces. The American war machine would indeed (as Abigail wrote John in 1776) “remember the ladies.”

Women were paid half what men got for doing exactly the same work. But polls said they generally loved their independence and “did not miss their husbands.” The crisis that erupted when they were flung back to the kitchen and bedroom rages still.

Meanwhile, Jim Crow still ruled the south...and most key Congressional committees. Blacks were helped by the New Deal. But even during the war, Eleanor couldn't get racist southern Democrats to pass an anti-lynching law.

In 1941, at A. Philip Randolph’s insistence, Roosevelt did desegregate the booming arms industry. But even after Pearl Harbor, race riots erupted. In 1943, six whites and twenty-five black died amidst a single 24-hour Detroit uprising.

Overseas, African-Americans still served in segregated units. But war provoked what Martin Luther King later called “a marvelous new militancy” that would turn the nation upside down.

Navajo code talkers used their Indigenous tongues to speak in codes that were never broken. They were universally honored until 2017, when Donald Trump (of course) insulted them under a White House portrait of Indian killer Andrew Jackson.

Citizens of Japanese descent from California and Hawaii comprised the legendary 442d Infantry which tore through Europe and became one of America’s most decorated units.

But FDR’s infamous Executive Order 9066 forced some 10,000 Japanese-Americans into concentration camps. Most were second- and third-generation Californians. They lost their health, families, homes, businesses. Many killed themselves. Eleanor had the amazing grace to visit one of these horrible hovels. But like the crimes of the reservations, this race-based incarceration still curses us all.

So, too, the Jewish question. Bitter dispute still rages over how many of the six million Hitler incinerated could have been saved (along with *Roma*, gays, Jehovah’s Witnesses, East Europeans, physically and mentally handicapped, and countless others).

Most infamous are the 900 refugees sent back to Europe from Cuba and Miami on the ship *St. Louis*. Nearly all died in death camps. Late in the war, our military failed to bomb rail lines that delivered millions into the gas chambers.

The US denied visas for the family of Dutch diarist Anne Frank, who later died (at age 15) in Bergen-Belsen. “I believe that all

Germany's Jews are looking around the world, but can find nowhere to go," mourned her mother in 1939.

Yet on a single astonishing night (October 1, 1943) the Danish people evacuated some 7,220 of Denmark's 7,800 Jews, plus nearly 700 non-Jewish spouses, over treacherous waters to Sweden. French villagers saved hundreds of children from Nazi slaughter. The Holocaust is filled with tales of "righteous gentiles" who made all the difference for thousands of innocents.

Individual valor (often at great risk) among so many wonderful people whose names we don't know meant life itself for countless refugees, loved and treasured. It was rarely matched by compromised governments, even those that still loudly claim the highest moral ground.

For America's white majority, war brought a hot summer's sense of social revolution. The New Deal's hybrid mix of democratic socialism with corporate capitalism did succeed...at least until FDR began pulling the plug.

Then on January 11, 1944, Franklin proposed an *Economic Bill of Rights*. Part of his annual State of the Union address, it was mostly read over the radio. Congress approved it as a resolution.

In sentiment, this was America's most revolutionary official document since the abolition of slavery and the Amendments granting black and female suffrage. In principle, it confirmed every human's right to life's essentials.

It was framed as a logical corollary to the Constitution, which promised to protect "the general welfare." And to the original Bill



of Rights, which guaranteed our religious, intellectual and physical freedoms.

Now FDR promised all Americans liberation from want.

“Necessitous” people are not free, he said. The human community (through a government “of, by and for the people”) must guarantee all its citizens a decent living.

All Americans had a right to a “useful and remunerative job” that would provide “adequate food and clothing and recreation.” Farmers and entrepreneurs deserved liberation from monopoly control. Adequate food, housing, medical care, education, “protection from the economic fears of old age, sickness, accident and unemployment”...these were universal human rights, to be guaranteed by the community, acting through the Congress, the executive, the courts.

This humanist vision is rooted deep in our Indigenous DNA, carried by tribal activists who repeatedly Awaken to push the arc of history toward unity and justice.

In 1944, Congress affirmed these rights as a resolution. But unlike Madison’s original, they’ve yet to become law. In an age dominated by all-powerful corporations, we remain hostage to poverty, ignorance, bigotry, empire.

At the end of World War 2, at the peak of our powers, we faced two unGodly horrors: Nazi Death Camps, and the Atomic Bomb.

Marching toward Berlin in the spring of ‘45, the Allies found an unspeakable abyss.

The first victims of Hitler's camps were his political opponents: unionists, leftists, dissidents, social democrats, communists.

Then came the scapegoats: Jews, Gypsies, Jehovah Witnesses, slavs, gays, humans with physical or mental challenges.

Worked and beaten to death, starved, decimated by disease, they died by the millions. In US history, only the Confederate prison camp at Andersonville and the worst of the Indian Reservations approached their utter inhumanity.

Hitler loudly admired how the US handled its “Indian Problem.” In his own “reservations,” millions starved and died. At Bergen-Belsen, Allied troops found some 30,000 corpses and barely living “human skeletons.”

At death camps in Poland, the Nazis operated history's only industrial-scale factories for the systematic elimination of human multitudes. Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belżec, Chełmno, Majdanek, Sobibór, and Treblinka embodied new levels of insanity for which the term barbaric is insufficient. These awful charnel houses say something so deeply disturbing about our own species that we still struggle to make sense of it.

Likewise the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Supreme Allied Commander Dwight Eisenhower opposed them...

*on the basis of my belief that Japan was already defeated  
and that dropping the bomb was completely unnecessary.*

To this day the US military refers to the Hiroshima/Nagasaki bombings as “announced nuclear tests.”

At first, we denied the very existence of the radioactive horror we now know spans the generations, and assaults our biological essence at its genetic core.

In war's wake came the suicidal madness of some 2,000 above-ground explosions, filling our ecosphere with deadly radiation.

From 1946 to 1963, from the South Pacific to Siberia and our own desert southwest, aboveground tests proved one thing: we humans do have the power to wipe ourselves off this planet... in an instant...or longer-term by assaulting our ecological support systems...and our very genome.

A bang or a whimper....doom either way.

At the peak of our powers, while learning just that, we had a larger choice.

We could reawaken the vision of our Indigenous origins, form a global tribal union, live in harmony with our Mother Earth...and each other.

Or we could proclaim ourselves the Elect of God, and plunge doubt-free into the ultimate crusade for total dominion...and human extinction.

# FALL

## ***Cold War/Red Scare 2***

As the World War ended, FDR died (at 63). Eleanor did not.

In her matriarchal humanism, she helped establish the United Nations.

Wilson's macho League of Nations was an imperial alliance, fundamentally racist.

Eleanor's UN was meant be a tribal forum, a global rebirth of the *Haudenosaunee* Confederacy, gathering warring nations into a circle of peace. Her 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* exalted the commonality of all humankind.

China, Singapore, Indonesia, Congo, the Philippines, Vietnam, and a host of newly independent nations now had a place to assert their post-imperial identity.

Influenced in part by Thoreau and the Quakers, Mohandas Gandhi's huge non-violent campaigns finally bore fruit. His *satyagraha* (bearing peaceful witness to the power of Truth) forced Britain to Quit India.

When Muslims and Hindus started killing each other after independence, Gandhi refused all food and water. In tribute to the force of peaceful action, the civil war ended so the Mahatma (*Great Soul*) would live.

Gandhi was soon assassinated, with catastrophic consequences that plague us still. But activists seeking peace, justice and post-

imperial independence now had a non-violent beacon to light their way. In 1948, Costa Rica voted to shed its military.

The US also took an apparent leap toward lasting peace. Like Grant at Appomattox, our conciliatory Marshall Plan extended a gracious hand to the Germans and Japanese. Despite the carnage they caused, we gave them billions in aid for food, trade...whatever they needed to again become world powers.

Had we extended the Marshall Plan to Stalin, and avoided the Cold War, it might have been (dollar for dollar/rouble for rouble) the best investment in human history.

But like the Puritan Elect of 1630s Boston waging permanent war on mavericks and heathens alike, the corporate elite of 1940s America was hell-bent on purifying the Earth of any economic system other than monopoly capitalism. For America's magistrate priests to tolerate any economic or belief system other than their own (anywhere on God's Earth) was to admit that their entry to heaven might not be guaranteed.

The cosmic conflict also had a more mundane function. It enshrined a totalitarian master class while forever burying the rest of us in want and fear. In 1948, George Orwell described it in his classic dystopian *1984*...

*The war is not meant to be won, it is meant to be continuous. Hierarchical society is only possible on the basis of poverty and ignorance. This new version is the past and no different past can ever have existed. In principle the war effort is always planned to keep society on the brink of starvation. The war is waged by the ruling*

*group against its own subjects and its object is not the victory...but to keep the very structure of society intact.*

So Mother Russia got nothing.

Most Europeans credited the Soviets for having won the war. They lost a staggering 60,000,000 (that's NOT a typo) soldiers and civilians. More than a hundred of their biggest cities and towns were devastated.

Unlike a later, truly globalistic Russian dictator (Putin), Joe Stalin was of peasant origins. A traditional Tsar (wearing a Red disguise) he feared another attack from the west. His barrier was built of eastern satellites. As in the American empire, these captive dominoes could “elect” their own leaders. The ones Stalin (like Ike) didn’t like soon died or disappeared.

But a world in revolutionary flames was not Joe’s thing. As in 1930s Spain, Stalin deceitfully abandoned Greek Communist rebels. Outside eastern Europe, the Soviet presence was marginal, ineffective, unhinged. The idea that it threatened the American homeland was beyond absurd.

But it was excuse enough for Winston Churchill. Speaking in Fulton, Missouri, the ousted perpetual warrior shrieked that Stalin’s “Iron Curtain” threatened all humankind.

In 1949, China's Communist Revolution upped the ante. On America's schoolroom walls, the Asian landmass became a big sea of scary Red.

In 1950, Harry Truman sent some 55,000 Americans (and countless Koreans and Chinese) to meaningless deaths in a sea of bloodshed that ended where it began .

In 1953, TR's CIA grandson Kermit Roosevelt disposed of Iran's duly elected Mohammed Mosaddegh, a social democrat. The ghastly Shah (an infamous torturer) paid us back in cheap oil, moral filth and Persian rage.

For the rest of the decade, our nonstop imperial invasions ravaged the Third World. In 1961 (with just three days left in Ike's second term) the Agency murdered Patrice Lumumba, a postal worker democratically elected to lead the Congo. Our hand-picked dictator, Joseph Mobutu, joined our other imperial puppets by looting the country and terrorizing its people.

Soon enough, our imperial vultures would come home to roost.

Some radioactive payback arrived immediately. In 1949, Stalin exploded his first nuke. Scores more followed.

Some 700 "tests" in the South Pacific and Nevada destroyed countless downwind islanders and ranchers. A quarter-million soldiers were irradiated. Many were sent right through seething Ground Zeros. They died in droves.

So did John Wayne, Rita Hayworth, and much of the cast of "The Conqueror" which was filmed in St. George, Utah, downwind from some of the dirtiest tests. Tons of radioactive sand were carted back to Hollywood for further filming.

As with radiation sickness at Hiroshima/Nagasaki, and again with Agent Orange and Gulf War Syndrome, our military denied any possible health impacts on that film crew, the "Atomic Soldiers," or the millions worldwide whose lungs and ecosystems were poisoned with radioactive fallout.

Those who questioned the madness paid a price. To protect us from “godless communists” out to destroy our freedom and liberty, corporate fundamentalists set out to destroy our freedom and liberty. The 1940 McCarran and 1950 Smith Acts joined the old Sedition and Espionage Acts in yet another Red Scare.

As always, the “army of devils” was led by the unionized left. Postwar labor uprisings (including a powerful general strike in Seattle) tore through the mines, steel mills, railroads, and city streets. The Baronial Elect shuddered in terror.

So Congress passed the anti-labor Taft-Hartley Act. Truman vetoed it. But mostly he did the Democrat thing of attacking the unions that supported him.

Harry also faced black vets returning more militant than ever. Racial tensions seethed over jobs, housing, rights, power. Another round of riots erupted. Threatened again by A. Philip Randolph, in 1947 Truman desegregated the Army.

In 1948, in bitter response, South Carolina’s Democratic Sen. Strom Thurmond ran a “States’ Rights” presidential campaign. He won Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina and Georgia, where Jim Crow still kept blacks from voting.

(All the while, Strom secretly supported Essie Mae, his own mixed-race daughter, who kept their secret until after he died).

From the left, former-Vice President Wallace ran as a Progressive. Henry wanted to end the Cold War, abolish nuke weapons, stop the Red Scare, win social democracy. His grassroots fervor surged toward Populist/Socialist ideals.



But his quirky theosophist spiritualism and the usual-Red baiting helped undermine his campaign. The party's 1948 vote count came in under 3%.

Meanwhile the legendary athlete-singer-actor activist-attorney Paul Robeson was burnt at the media stake by a new round of witch-hunters. The proudly bigoted Ohio Congressman Gordon Scherer of the House UnAmerican Activities Committee told Paul to go live in the Soviet Union. Robeson replied...

*My father was a slave, and my people died to build this country, and I'm going to stay right here and have a part of it just like you. And no fascist-minded people like you will drive me from it. Is that clear?*

*You are the non-patriots, and you are the un-Americans, and you ought to be ashamed of yourselves.*

The Committee quickly summoned Jackie Robinson, who termed some of Robeson's statements as "silly" (which he later regretted). He then reminded them that of 400 players in the major leagues, only seven were African-American...

*The white public should start toward real understanding by appreciating that every single Negro who is worth his salt is going to resent any kind of slurs and discrimination because of his race, and he is going to use every bit of intelligence such as he has to stop it. This has got absolutely nothing to do with what Communists may or may not be trying to do. And white people must realize that the more a Negro hates communism because it opposes democracy, the more he is going to hate any other influence that kills off democracy in this country-and that goes for racial discrimination in the Army, and segregation on trains and buses, and job*

*discrimination because of religious beliefs or color or place of birth.*

In 1949, KKK bigots attacked Robeson's concert at Peekskill, NY, essentially killing his once-booming stage career. Paul's fierce defiance came with costly wounds, but made a mockery of the Cold War and helped inspire the 1950s Civil Rights uprising.

In 1953, two Jews (Julius and Ethel Rosenberg) were electrocuted for allegedly sending A-bomb secrets to the Soviets. Like Sacco and Vanzetti, their guilt is still debated. Their killings still reek of ritual murder.

In Congress, the new Grand Inquisitor was Joseph McCarthy, a drug-addicted Wisconsin Senator who lied about his war record (and most everything else).

Like a hysterical Salem adolescent, "Tailgunner Joe" saw spectral commies everywhere. He got teachers fired, books banned, activists jailed, artists driven to suicide, gays (like his vicious lawyer Roy Cohn) closeted. TV was rigidly controlled, newspapers were censored, civil liberties shredded.

B-movie journeyman Ronald Reagan led the attack in Hollywood. As President of the Screen Actors Guild, he and his second wife Nancy spied for the FBI. They joined Walt Disney, John Wayne, Hedda Hopper, and other fellow Cold Warriors to ruin rival careers while pushing their own.

Throughout the Red Scare fifties, such intolerance and repression hung in the autumn air like an icy pall.

The arms industry strategically stuck at least one factory in every Congressional district. A reactionary elite chilled free speech. Ike's blue-blood Secretary of State (John Foster Dulles) and CIA Chief (his brother Allen) deployed our imperial legions to crush social democracy wherever it reared its heathen head.

In all we blew enough Cold War cash to feed, house, clothe, educate, medicate and fund a dignified life for all of humankind.

We bought into a "military Keynesianism" that shifted the social spending of the New Deal to a permanent war economy that still threatens our Earthly existence.

We also indulged in yet another winter orgy of Gilded excess.

# WINTER

## *The Fat Fifties*

In 1945, we spread chocolates and nylons all over Europe, dropped the Big Ones on Asia, got fully employed at home. No flu epidemic plagued our soldiers. But millions would die from the addictive cigarettes "gifted" by Big Tobacco during the war.

Some 15 million vets returned to a free college education, easy home ownership, ardent parenthood. At the peak of our powers, we were richer, more powerful, more secure, more globally-loved, self-confident, stable, sound, and technologically advanced than any other nation in history.

In 1952 Dwight Eisenhower did something unheard-of in US politics. He ran for president promising to "go to Korea" and end a war. When he won, he actually did both!

Then, amidst domestic peace, we built a great university system, cured polio, bought houses, drove cars, had tons of kids, played golf, watched color TVs.

We saw ourselves as absolutely the greatest, freest, most powerful, most blessed, most down-home-righteous-tell-everybody-else-how-to-live nation the world ever saw.

Adlai Stevenson (his victim in both 1962 and 1956) quipped that Ike had replaced the New Dealers with car dealers. As under Jefferson, Madison and Monroe; Grant, Hayes and Cleveland; Harding, Coolidge and Hoover...the business of America was once again business.

Though elected as a Republican, Eisenhower preserved the New Deal's core social programs and much of its regulatory infrastructure. For Wall Street, the Fat Fifties meant another wild ride for stock speculators. Predictably, the economy slipped into recession in 1957.

But thanks to the New Deal, the capitalist casino did not implode as so often before. Regulatory safeguards made us far more secure than in cycles gone by. Ike was fine with that.

Above all, he enforced a 91% tax on the highest incomes, limiting the power of the Baronial elite, now expected to pay at least some of their fair share (imagine that!). In 1956, as he cancelled elections in Vietnam, Ike balanced the federal budget (and spent much of his time reading westerns).

The Supreme Commander also honored FDR's GI Bill, funding a university system that yielded history's best-educated workforce. We were at the global epicenter of modern learning and research. Until Nixon's Vietnam-era assault, our public education system was among humankind's most treasured assets.

As in the Era of Good Feelings, Gilded Age and Roaring '20s, prosperity in the Fat '50s was limited by class, race, and gender. For blacks, farmers, women, and the structurally poor, things were neither fair or just. About a quarter of us (the "Other America") still lived in poverty, a reality studiously ignored by the corporate mainstream.

The AFL's very imperial George Meaney helped keep things that way. Reprising the role of Sam Gompers, he purged labor's social democratic left. But unions still guaranteed some of history's highest wages, drove the decade's prosperity, and safeguarded the remnants of modern industrial democracy.

For the corporate man in the grey flannel suit, income soared. When the first credit card (Diner's Club) rolled out in 1950, Middle America entered a consumerist paradise.

Formerly Progressive middle managers and bureaucrats toed the corporate line. Rosie the Riveter was pitched back into the kitchen and bedroom...and told to shut up. Suburban wives were cursed with boredom, denial and what Betty Friedan called "the problem nobody knows." The explosion soon came.

Ike bemoaned nuking Japan, but would not end the Bomb tests. Like the abolitionist movement against slavery a century before, No Nukers dug in for the long haul.

Stevenson made it an issue in 1956. In 1958, American scientist Linus Pauling and the Russian Andrei Sakharov ignited huge public marches. Ike finally agreed to stop.

But A-Bombs had a mutant twin: commercial atomic power.

In 1952, Truman's blue ribbon Paley Commission predicted 15 million solar-heated US homes by 1975.

In '53, Bell Labs' first photovoltaic cell converted sunlight to electricity. With a rising wind industry, PV birthed a mighty engine for cheap, clean, job-rich energy production.

But that December, Eisenhower pitched the "Peaceful Atom" to the UN. Nuke reactor backers promised electricity "too cheap to meter." But the technology proved too complex, expensive, dangerous and ecologically destructive. By 1985, *Forbes* proclaimed atomic energy "the largest managerial disaster in US history." Catastrophes at Fermi, Three Mile Island, Chernobyl

and Fukushima (plus untold tons of radioactive waste) have made atomic energy humankind's most expensive techno-failure.

Meanwhile, Ike's interstate highway system (with 41,000 miles of pavement) became history's biggest public works project.

In the 1920s General Motors Chair Alfred Sloan (who later fought the UAW at Flint, then made vehicles for Hitler) birthed the "Great Streetcar Conspiracy." At the time, just one American in ten owned a car. To boost sales, GM destroyed at least 80 urban mass transit systems.

More Americans have since died in cars than in all our wars combined. The health and ecological toll (especially before the ban on leaded gasoline) has been apocalyptic. On March 12, 1949, GM was found guilty of conspiring to destroy the nation's mass transit system...and was fined \$5,000.

But the interstates transformed the nation. They let millions move to the suburbs...and then get to the ballparks, where we worshipped the national religion: baseball.

When Don Larson pitched a perfect game in the 1956 World Series, countless school principals (like mine) interrupted classes to play it over the intercom. When Roger Maris hit 61 home runs, the earth wobbled.

Jackie Robinson's 1947 Rookie-of-the-Year season with the Brooklyn Dodgers also broke America's most visible color line. Pro basketball and football soon followed. In tennis, Althea Gibson won eleven Grand Slams.

In 1954, the Supreme Court's 9-0 *Brown* decision said Jim Crow must finally go. On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks refused to

give up her seat on a segregated Montgomery bus. Martin Luther King (then a newbie preacher) helped win a year-long boycott that changed everything.

Meanwhile, Eisenhower revived U.S. Grant's iron Reconstruction fist. Federal troops faced down southern racist resistance.

On CBS-TV, Edward R. Murrow let McCarthy self-destruct by televising his witch trials. After watching Joe's deranged rantings, the country (like Ike) had enough.

In Chicago, 1953, Hugh Hefner (with a \$1k loan from his uptight mother) birthed *Playboy Magazine*. Naked as an *Arawak*, lusty Marilyn Monroe celebrated sex as good, clean fun.

This wild new sexuality accompanied beat poetry, steamy novels, radical art, hot jazz. Rhythm and blues gave us Little Richard, Chuck Berry, Fats Domino, Ray Charles, and then....Elvis, another white guy with a black sound. TV blacked out his gyrating hips. But Rock & Roll was here to stay.

The GNP grew through the 1950s by more than 30%. Recession came in 1957, but the New Deal's safeguards prevented a Crash. By decade's end Ike was just as loved as when he went to Korea.

In 1960, Jack Kennedy crossed a right-wing picket line to see *Spartacus*, lionizing an anti-Roman slave revolt. Howard Fast, an outspoken Communist and fan of Tom Paine, wrote the book. The blacklisted Dalton Trumbo did the screenplay.



Kirk Douglas played the lead. He demanded Trumbo get public credit. When the president-elect gave *Spartacus* a thumbs-up, *Red Scare: The Sequel* was done.

As a nation in 1960 (at the end of our fourth cycle, at the peak of our powers) we were amazingly prosperous, but tainted by poverty. Democratic in spirit, but cursed by sexism, racism and inequality. Endowed with cultural freedom, but haunted by Puritan arrogance. Vastly loved, but rulers of a cruel empire. Gifted with amazing riches, but addicted to dominion.

In our upcoming mid-life crisis...with so many killer contradictions...our *koyaanisqatsi* organism blew out of balance...and rocketed toward a new way of being.

**CYCLE 5:**  
***MID-LIFE CRISIS***

***INSERT LINE 5 FROM  
CHART***

# **A Burst of Energy**

## ***JFK***

Jack Kennedy was America's first rock star president.

Our telegenic Irish prince took the White House with a blinding smile and a hot young wife, born to wealth and power, preternaturally intelligent, reeking of sex.

In 1960, he was the reincarnation of King Billy and Old Hickory, TR and Wilson, Franklin and Eleanor, all rolled into a transcendent burst of electric vigor. He came as a conservative Cold Warrior, full of caution and contradiction, corporate dominion and imperial arrogance.

But for a new generation (history's pre-millennial biggest) he promised a thrilling leap to a brilliant new way of being. When he hyper-evolved through his short time in office, he left us wondering what might have been....

Black votes put JFK in the White House. Amidst the 1960 campaign, Martin Luther King was jailed in Georgia. His family asked Vice President Nixon to help him out. Dick was a friend of Martin's father, who was a staunch Republican. But the White House wouldn't free him, and Nixon never called the family.

But Jack did. On the spur of a moment, prodded by an aide (Harris Wofford) JFK phoned King's wife Coretta. The Kennedy record on civil rights was thin. But younger brother Bobby, Jack's campaign manager, called a judge. Martin went free.

Saved from a dangerous work farm, MLK was openly grateful. With the King family's blessing, the Kennedy mystique sparked a critical mutation in our national DNA.

After emancipation, most African-Americans embraced the Party of Lincoln. That began to change in 1936. Jim Crow was a southern Democrat. But many blacks who came north liked the New Deal and voted for FDR.

In 1960, with the King family's blessing, black votes probably swung Illinois, New Jersey, Texas. Many Chicago ballots were infamously bought by Jack's rich dad, whose underworld ties ran deep. But Kennedy could've won the Electoral College without Illinois. And those mafia favors came with a steep price.

As the young president-elect waited in the wings, Ike's farewell bent history's arc toward justice.

He'd mourned the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings. In 1953, he warned that military spending could drain our prosperity. In 1958, he joined the Soviets in a *de facto* ban on atmospheric nuclear testing.

As a Cold Warrior, Eisenhower maintained the atomic arsenal, backed military spending, and revived Dollar Diplomacy with the usual imperial invasions.

But in 1953, as he ended the carnage in Korea, the avuncular general made a statement for the ages. In war, he said...

*Every gun that is made. every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are old and not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It*

*is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.*

The amiable Kansan's 1961 Farewell Address echoed Washington's 1797 warning against "Entangling Alliances." He cautioned against a "military-industrial complex" that had metastasized during his years in office.

It was, he said "new in the American experience." Its...

*total influence – economic, political, even spiritual – is felt in every city, every Statehouse, every office of the Federal government...*

*The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.*

Ike's misgivings resonated worldwide, from our European allies to rising Third World nations to American blacks as well as women, the young, the beats, the poor, the powerless, the peaceniks.

So too JFK. In his 1961 Inaugural address he warned that...

*If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.*

In March, at the University of Michigan, JFK introduced the Peace Corps. An idealistic new generation of young Americans would become the better angels of our global soul. Thousands were changed forever.

The excitement carried into outer space. The Soviets shot Sputnik into orbit in 1957. Now Kennedy promised to put a man on the moon by 1970 (Neil Armstrong landed July 20, 1969).

So too the arts. The First Lady's breathless televised White House tours exuded glamour and grace. A new Jeffersonian elite (the "best and the brightest") exalted education, sports, the outdoors, literacy, humor and the arts in a burst of enlightened exuberance. The Kennedy seduction was a golden "Camelot" of post-puritan ease, a rising electronic wave to be surfed by awakened creatives.

Beneath there lay dark secrets, hidden from the public like Lincoln's melancholia and FDR's wheelchair. Jack was seriously wounded in the war. Constant back pain and Addison's Disease, a rare endocrine disorder, filled him with a steady stream of major drugs, prescription and otherwise.

So did a serial sex drive, implanted in the Kennedy DNA by Joe, Sr., the clan's randy patriarch. Among the many, Jack bedded actresses Marilyn Monroe and Marlena Dietrich (who may also have done his dad) and Judith Exner, whose mobster lover (Sam Giancana) may have helped kill both JFK and his brother Bobby.

The early Kennedys were Cold Warriors. In 1960 Jack he faulted Nixon for a (nonexistent) missile-gap and rattled sabers over two tiny islands off China. At Ike's urging, he sent troops and counterinsurgent Green Berets into Vietnam.

Imperial Priority One was Cuba. Fidel Castro overthrew the mobbed-up dictator Fulgencio Batista in 1959. Ike sent Nixon to feel him out. But Dick was thick with the mafiosi whose casinos Castro confiscated. It was not a happy talk.

Soon Fidel turned toward Communism. Candidate Kennedy demanded an invasion. Ike and the CIA gave it to him.

Just after launching the Peace Corps, the new president approved an attack at the Bay of Pigs. The CIA said the Cuban people would rebel *en masse*.

But then Kennedy withheld air cover. Cuba rose up no further than Iraq and Afghanistan when it was their turn to be invaded.

Most of the Cuban counter-revolutionaries were killed or captured. The enraged young president fired CIA chief Allen Dulles and vowed to scatter the Agency to the winds. Neither "the Company" nor its patrician godfather were likely to forget.

Nikita Khrushchev then tested Kennedy at a hostile June summit in Vienna. The Soviet premier had divided Berlin with a toxic wall. An insane spasm of radioactive chest thumping ensued as both sides resumed blowing up A-bombs. Lethal fallout spewed into the bodies of all living things.

Amidst the chaos, Khrushchev gave Castro nuke-tipped missiles to protect Cuba from another invasion. American spy planes spotted them. Kennedy set a quarantine.

For thirteen days (in October 1962) we shuddered at the abyss. America's Joint Chiefs voted unanimously for all-out annihilation.

But the Kennedys kept their cool. Jack promised not to invade Cuba. Nikita pulled his missiles. We took ours out of Turkey.

The Bay of Pigs, Berlin and Cuban missile debacles shook the young president. While sliding into Vietnam's quagmire he rebooted. On June 10, 1963, at American University, he called for an end to the Cold War.

He honored the Soviets' immense WW2 losses. He embraced our common humanity. He pledged to "make the world safe for diversity." He remade our City on the Hill.

Like Lincoln's Second Inaugural and FDR's Economic Bill of Rights, JFK's American University speech took an evolutionary leap. In 29 minutes, he linked to the Kremlin with a hot line, pledged to abolish atomic weapons...and to stop exploding them in the air, saving millions of lives (maybe YOURS).

Above all, Jack called for "general and complete disarmament," a renunciation of war, an embrace of our common humanity. Peace and freedom must...

*...walk together...*

*No government or social system is so evil that its people must be considered as lacking in virtue....*

*If we cannot end now our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity.*

*For, in the final analysis, our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal.*

Jack's plea for peace filled global front pages...but not here. Later rumblings weren't quite so pacific.

But in October, 1963, Kennedy and Khrushchev ended all above-ground blasts (they continued underground until 1991). Kennedy's October 11 National Security Action Memorandum #263 said all US troops would leave Vietnam by 1965.

JFK also quietly reached out to Fidel. His revived Good Neighbor Policy and sent cash to Latin America's Alliance for Progress (much of it stolen by corrupt dictatorships we supported).



By November 21, 1963, what began as a militant Cold War presidency had shape-shifted toward toward a transcendent quest for permanent peace.

Meanwhile, the Civil Rights movement bent the administration toward social justice. A voracious speed reader (and an exceptional listener) Kennedy embraced *The Other America*, Debsian Socialist Michael Harrington's searing exposé of our multi-racial plague of poverty and desperation.

Rallies, marches, sit-ins, boycotts, voter registration campaigns, Freedom Rides, civil disobedience, and much more forced Jim Crow to the brink at restaurants, hotels, public buses, housing, and schools throughout the south.

Thousands of arrests in scores of US cities took on the aspect of a Gandhian civil war. An enraged KKK lashed back with shootings, lynchings, cross burnings, arson, and bombings of black homes and churches.

Much focused on Birmingham, where Dr. King again went to jail. Attack dogs, fire hoses, and beaten schoolchildren were Police Chief "Bull" Connor's calling cards. The televised images went global...and into the White House.

On June 11, 1963, the day after his American University speech, Kennedy faced down racist Governor George Wallace and got the first blacks safely into the University of Alabama. That night, NAACP organizer Medgar Evers (a WW2 vet) was shot in Jackson, Mississippi. Covered in blood, he crawled into his living room and died in his family's arms.

Racial turmoil escalated through the summer, then peaked at Dr. King's transcendent "I Have a Dream" March for Jobs and Justice on August 28 at the Lincoln Memorial.

It was organized largely by A. Philip Randolph, who'd already stared down FDR and Truman. His deputy was the openly gay Bayard Rustin, who'd spent three years in prison for his Quaker opposition to WW2. A quarter-million marchers (about 60,000 were white) demanded a transformed America.

Two weeks later, a bomb killed four young black women at Birmingham's 16th Street Baptist Church. A massive new multi-racial abolitionism demanded that an awakening president bury both Jim Crow and the Cold War.

On November 2, Kennedy was told the CIA had assassinated Ngo Dinh Diem, our puppet dictator in South Vietnam. Twenty days later, he, too, was dead.

America has never recovered from the public execution of John F. Kennedy. As with Lincoln, debate still rages about who these two men really were, and what they might have done. But we sure did see what happened after they died.

The bullets that ripped through Jack Kennedy's throat and brain still afflict us with a form of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Like those of Lincoln being shot from behind, the endlessly re-run images of that smiling young man's head being blown apart are deeply embedded in our national DNA.

That each man sat with his wife, in a moment of tranquility, is hard to bear. That the political impacts of their passing have

been so intense has magnified the trauma in ways for which we can never quite account.

The Kennedy psychosis also wonders who did the deed.

The officially accused assassin said he was a "patsy." His police interview transcripts are "missing." He was shot dead amidst absurdly implausible circumstances.

Most of us don't buy the idea that Lee Oswald acted alone or even shot Jack at all. Congressional 1976-78 hearings agreed that we don't really know who pulled the trigger(s).

Was it the mafia, avenging JFK's ingratitude for 1960 Chicago's graveyard votes? The FBI and its darkly obsessed Director? CIA Founder Allen Dulles, still livid over the Bay of Pigs, the Vietnam pullback and his own firing?

How about Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, and George H.W. Bush, all in Dallas that day, and all with agendas of their own?

The Warren Commission's rich white inner circle included Dulles, who hated with unbridled fury the upstart who'd dumped him, and whose murder he was now empowered to investigate. Today the official story is more widely scorned than ever.

Whoever killed his predecessor, Lyndon Johnson did follow with a resounding triumph...and then a schizoid tragedy.

On civil rights and social justice, LBJ's Great Society was a reborn New Deal. It aided the needy (and thus all of us). Its War on Poverty expanded Social Security for the elderly, disabled, veterans, students. Medicare and Medicaid brought health care to millions. Head Start served our toddlers with early education and improved nutrition.

New Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban echoed the New Deal's creation of the Department of Labor. An expanded Food Stamps program, the Job Corps, VISTA, the Office of Economic Opportunity revived the spirit of FDR's alphabet agencies. So did the National Endowment for the Arts, National Public Radio, the Public Broadcasting Service. Federal money poured into public education and infrastructure.

The long-term effects were tangible and just. We didn't get close to defeating poverty. But millions benefited. Incomes rose at the grassroots. The gap between rich and poor shrank. So did the prison system (until Nixon's Drug War).

As historian Eric Foner has shown, unlike the New Deal, the Great Society arose amidst widespread prosperity. And unlike FDR or JFK, LBJ attacked Jim Crow head-on. Born dirt-poor in the populist east Texas hill country, Lyndon embraced social justice, and knew the value of a black constituency.

In the late 1950s, just one in five African-Americans voted (far fewer in the south). As Senate Majority Leader (1953-61), Johnson played a mixed role in passing Eisenhower's 1957 and 1960 civil rights acts.

Though JFK did call for an end to public segregation, his civil rights agenda was tepid and stalled.

As we mourned the assassination, and while the Civil Rights movement raged, LBJ won a landslide 1964 election. To the horror of his fellow southern Democrats, he helped win a Voting Rights Act meant to guarantee "one man, one vote."

Gone were the literacy test and racist hypocrisies barring blacks from the ballot box. In came a reborn Reconstruction. The 24th

Amendment (ratified in '64) ended the poll tax. Black voter registration soared.

That year, Mississippi Freedom Summer brought south thousands of students to organize for voting rights and political power. Black/white activists marched arm-in-arm. Racial barriers dating to the dawn of chattel slavery began to bend.

The 1965 Civil Rights Act banned public discrimination and let the races mix in ways unseen since the 1670s. The flow of newcomers shifted from Europe to Latin America and then Asia. America's demographic was on the brink of radical change.

A heartbroken nation rode JFK's vibrant life and tragic death toward a new Emancipation. His successor was a Shakespearean diva, reeking of hubris, with blood on his hands.

But LBJ also helped restart the reconciliation that John Wilkes Booth and Andrew Johnson had so cruelly ruptured. As Jack Kennedy moldered in his freshly dug grave, Lyndon Johnson shot us onto a transcendent ride up the arc of justice.

But then he blew it in Vietnam. And he *knew* better!

# *SPRINGTIME*

## *The Greatest Awakening*

Back in the Bohemian 1910s, Mabel Dodge said free sex was “like splitting the atom.”

In the 1960s, so were R&B, rock & roll, Motown, pot, LSD... women’s, gay and civil rights...black, student and green power... the explosive vision of a whole new post-Puritan Indigenous-inspired Solartopian way of life.

A rising generation came of age. We demanded a cultural revolution...and an end to empire.

So far, we’re one-for-two.

In the arts, academia, muckraking, music, fashion, food, race, gender, sexual adventurism, ethnicity, mass media, the New Left, hippies, yippies, the environment, lifestyle, spirituality, psychedelics...and then with the personal computer and world wide web...the Awakened 1960s counterculture changed EVERYTHING.

It surged again and again through the springtime awakenings of our historic cycles. Its indigenous roots fed the eternally evolving demands for peace, justice, freedom, joy, beauty, liberation, love.

And for youthful, naked, defiant, exploratory, irresponsible, unrestrained, down-home SEX...be it straight, gay, whatever.

Love-making has (of course) always been integral to American life. It's not clear Sixties rebels *did it* any more frequently than any other generation.

Hippies changed things not necessarily by “doing it” more than any other generation....but by being absurdly open...loudly flaunting once-taboo sexuality in all its post-Puritan glory.

Like the rest of the Sixties’ countercultural upheaval, the so-called Sexual Revolution had been spiraling up toward critical mass through all the previous cycles of our history. Each round hosted an escalated assault on the sexual repression so deeply rooted in the Puritan side of our national DNA.

This latest, greatest explosion came with all the insane twists, unintended consequences and unfathomable fallout one might expect from a thermo-nuclear explosion at the core of humankind’s most powerful biological imperative.

Whatever remnant tongue clucking the 1950s Puritan Anti-Sex League (George Orwell’s term) could muster sank with a whimper beneath a hormone-fueled youth culture demanding freedom in sacred realms that mere words could not penetrate.

But psychotropics could...and did. *Cannabis*, *peyote*, hallucinogenic mushrooms, psychedelic chemicals (LSD, DMT, MDMA)...all linked an emerging youth culture to the ancient vision-questing of Indigenous America.

By the 1930s, the libertine Bohemian Mabel Dodge was married to a Navajo holy man. Immersed in the Taos desert, she sailed into the mind-altered slipstream of herbal exploration that fueled the Bohemian Rhapsody she helped conduct.

Right from the start, European Christians tried to stamp that stuff out. White crusaders just HAD to ban tribal *peyote*. Likewise the ancient herb *cannabis*, embraced for millennia as a miracle healer

among pagans and others, from China to Arabia, India to Indiana.

Emphasizing the slur *marijuana* for its Hispanic vibe, a career cop named Harry J. Anslinger (Woodrow Wilson's son-in-law) meant to imprison every pot head. Unemployed after the epic bust of alcohol prohibition, Harry's global crusade exempted his morphine-addicted fellow witch-hunter Joe McCarthy.

More than 40,000,000 (forty MILLION!) others have been forced into humankind's biggest gulag since Stalin's Siberia.

But through the 1950s *cannabis* still spread like a magic weed. The Beat underground flowed into the youthful '60s mainstream and beyond. Countless rebels with many good causes used pot as a healing alternative to demon alcohol, killer cancer sticks and addictive anti-depressants.

Zen-bred poets like Allan Ginsberg and Gary Snyder regularly imbibed. So did the freewheeling Jack Kerouac (who preferred booze). Beat writers, artists, and musicians stayed stoned throughout the Eisenhower and Kennedy eras. They made clear that (for some) *cannabis* could both heal and liberate.

Dr. Lester Grinspoon agreed. Amidst a chaotic campus upheaval, the prestigious Harvard medical professor deeply feared that pot was harming an impressionable young generation. But after intense medical research, Grinspoon flipped. *Cannabis*, he concluded, was in fact a miracle drug. He wrote *Marihuana Reconsidered* to prove it.

Grinspoon's Harvard colleagues Richard Alpert and Timothy Leary took on the more serious psychedelics, especially LSD, which the CIA somehow seized upon as a potential weapon for Cold War mind control. The Agency ran some extremely



disturbing secret tests, often not telling its subjects what was happening to them, causing at least one suicide.

But history has a way of conjuring up unintended consequences ... like, say, having an Agency of imperial espionage helping to midwife an entire counterculture.

At Stanford, a young writer named Ken Kesey answered a notice on a bulletin board. Promised a few bucks, he took the CIA's LSD. Then he took a transcendent carpet ride. Counter to everything the Agency imagined, he LOVED it.

So then (of course) he just HAD to tell a few million of his closest friends.

Kesey's awakened novels included *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Sometimes a Great Notion*. His magic bus *Further* took a guerrilla band of *Merry Pranksters* tripping across the continent, spreading the psychedelic gospel like tie-dyed Paul Reveres (inspiring Tom Wolfe's legendary *Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*).

Kesey swam a hallucinogenic stream. Mabel Dodge's southwestern journeys with Indigenous *peyote* had been followed by Albert Hoffman's discovery of LSD at Sandoz in 1943. Gordon Wasson, a New York banker and amateur mushroom hound, began eating *teonanacatl*, an Aztec term for "flesh of the gods." A very stoned Aldous Huxley birthed his best-selling classic *Brave New World*. Actor Cary Grant tripped repeatedly, and loudly advocated LSD for treating fear of death and other obsessions. Conservative publishers Henry and Claire Booth Luce warmly featured Wasson and other psychedelic explorers in *Time* and *Life* Magazines.

As documented in Michael Pollan's 2018 *How to Change Your Mind*, scores of health researchers, universities and government agencies began serious, well-funded explorations into the ancient Indigenous-based "country of the mind." Early research showed promising results for using LSD in controlled therapy to treat alcoholism, drug addiction, anxiety, depression and more.

At Harvard, Professors Richard Alpert and Timothy Leary were fired for allegedly giving acid to an undergraduate, a breach of official protocol. The fiery, charismatic Leary then summoned the whirlwind, using the mass media to urge countless millions to "Turn On, Tune In, Drop Out."

(LSD is a uniquely powerful substance that for most people should never be taken without an understanding presence. Its potential damage to the unwary and unready should never be underestimated. Nor should its ability to dissolve inner barriers).

Commanding a massive public presence, Leary and Kesey terrified the puritan establishment. LSD was outlawed. The scientific research stopped. Tim was soon denounced by Dick Nixon (then pillaging Southeast Asia) as "the most dangerous man in America."

Always with an Irish grin, Leary sailed through some 300 acid trips and countless adventures with very hostile law enforcement. It would be a half-century before serious scientific research could again explore the healing future Albert Hoffman had promised....

*If people would learn to use LSD's vision-inducing capability more wisely, under suitable conditions, in medical practice and in conjunction with meditation, then in the future this problem child could become a wonder child.*

In today's desperate search for Solartopia, medical, scientific, artistic and spiritual research into LSD and other psychedelics has been reborn, while *cannabis* is finally being legalized (and not a moment too soon!)

Richard Alpert, Leary's Harvard buddy, became Baba Ram Dass and took a spiritualist path to India. His *Be Here Now* rebirthed the Eastern excursions pioneered by Emerson and Thoreau, Willam James and Nikola Tesla....

*We're talking about metamorphosis  
We're talking about going from a caterpillar to a butterfly  
We're talking about how to become a butterfly.*

The Beatles brief romance with Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, a teacher of Transcendental Meditation, opened the door to Ravi Shankar, Ali Akbar Khan, and the exotic universe of the Indian raga.

Through the '60s and beyond, the ancient Oriental quest for inner peace has penetrated deep into the American mindset.

Meditation, tai chi, shiatsu, yoga and the Tao spread like magic mushrooms in a rainy cow pasture...

*Turn off your mind relax and float downstream...*

The doors of perception blew open to embrace mystic Theosophist, Taoist, Celtic, Druid, Norse, Sufi, Essene, Cabalistic, Huna, Runic and other exotic teachings of the global Indigenous reality.

It's the quintessential Calvinist nightmare...which is partly why so many Boomers (and their millennial progeny) love it so much.

The Solartopian movement, computer revolution and world wide web were all birthed in the process. LSD (said Albert Hoffman) would help render the human consciousness “as if newly created.” We shall see.

That brave new world moved to the musical beat of another springtime symphony.

The woke rhythmic seeds planted in the first cycle of our history by newcomer Africans gushed up through exhausted slaves who extemporized on their rickety front porches. Three-chord blues resonated through countless old beat-up guitars, forming the “underground aquifer” of all our pop music.

In the Jim Crow 1890s, they fused with ragtime and tribal drumming in New Orleans’ Congo Square, where jazz was born. Revolutionary in its pounding freedom and visceral power, the beat rode up the Mississippi and into the new century, morphing into swing, bebop, rhythm and blues, then rock, punk, grunge, hip hop (let’s not discuss disco).

In the 1950s, it crossed the racial membrane into the gyrating pelvis of the very white Elvis. King Presley became the latest white guy (after Benny Goodman, before the Beatles and Eminem) who could really sell black music. Hordes of teens exploded with the pubescent force of a hormonal apocalypse. Where once they swooned for *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*, now they fainted for *Love Me Tender*.

Babatunde Olatunji’s Nigerian *Drums of Passion* sold 5 million albums and gave the ‘60s a pounding Indigenous backbeat.

But rock also rode the electric guitar. Possibly invented in the 1930s by a black bluesman named Charlie Christian, the very white Les Paul played it on a new level for mostly country audiences with his melodious wife, Mary Ford.

Blacks like Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Muddy Waters, Son House, Mississippi Fred McDowell, and Fats Domino rocked hard with whites like Buddy Holly, The Big Bopper, the Everly Brothers. The Hispanic Ritchie Valens opened the door for Carlos Santana, whose guitar genius has spanned five decades.

Ray Charles begat the first black-sung #1, the damn-near-lewd *What'd I Say?* R&B and gospel crossed into rock with Motown's Aretha Franklin, Diana Ross and the Supremes, Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, Marvin Gaye, Otis Redding.

Folk singers Woody Guthrie, Joan Baez, Pete Seeger and the Weavers, Phil Ochs, Peter, Paul, and Mary, and The Byrds gave pop political content. So did Bob Dylan, who bridged folk to rock, got the Beatles stoned, and later got a Nobel Prize (which he didn't bother to personally pick up).

When the Fab Four played the Ed Sullivan Show, the Earth wobbled. Clean-cut mop-tops in '64, they were totally transformed three years later (compare the photographs!) when they stopped touring.

With them came the transcendent Jimi Hendrix, who kissed the sky. Before he died at 27 (like Brian Jones, Janis Joplin, Jim Morrison, Amy Winehouse, Kurt Cobain...all victims of demon alcohol) Jimi at Woodstock took our national anthem where it needed to go. Once condemned as "unpatriotic," it now lights up July 4 celebrations all over America.

*Sergeant Pepper* and the Summer of Love, bra burnings and Be-ins, perennial pot parties and rural hippie communes, anti-imperial civil disobedience, back-to-the-land eco-activism, Bohemian Buddhist rapture all rolled into the “up-yours” Yippie anarchism of the IWW/anti-imperial/eco-Socialist New Left.

The totality of the 1960s uprising wrapped the Great Awakening, Transcendentalist, Bohemian, and rebel 1930s upheaval into an electronic shock wave that blew the Puritan death grip clean off the mainstream culture. The arc of creative history bent loud and clear toward a whole new way of being.

With all that, the demand for racial equality exploded in the south and drifted north.

Embracing Jesus’ preachments of nonviolence, Thoreau’s embrace of civil disobedience, and Gandhi’s genius for mass organizing, Rev. M.L. King, Jr. channeled the rage against racial injustice into a nonviolent crusade for peace and freedom.

His arms-length cohort was Malcolm X, the charismatic ex-con turned radical Muslim who at first preached an angry separatist creed. But a pilgrimage to Mecca softened Malcolm’s heart. He embraced Martin personally and turned toward a broader multi-racial activism. In ’65 he was (of course) gunned down.

In 1966, James Meredith, the first black to attend Ole Miss, was shot while marching alone toward Jackson for voter rights. Dr. King rushed down to speak at a tiny black church in Grenada (where I met him)...hostile terrain surrounded by the FBI and Klan. The next night, the young Stokely Carmichael (later Kwame Ture) proclaimed what King called “that marvelous new militancy” by shouting “BLACK POWER!!” at a rally in Greenwood.

But Carmichael had a special talent for insulting America's re-emerging matriarchs (he once quipped that their proper position was "prone").

. Movement men were forever infuriating activist women...with the usual unintended consequences. In 1840, they insulted Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Stanton at a global abolitionist conference, sparking the 1848 Women's Rights Conference. In the Populist-Socialist-Bohemian 1910s, and in the radical unionist '30s, women forever fought male domination. After WW2, men pushed more than two million "Rosie the Riveters" out of the factories and into the 'burbs to raise their 2.5 Boomer kids. Mostly they were bored out of their minds.

At their feminist core was the demand for reproductive rights, the power of a woman to control her own body. Abortion was an herbally-induced assumption of the Indigenous matriarchy.

Margaret Sanger's Planned Parenthood became the fountainhead of a transformed post-Puritan sexual landscape. In 1960, the "split atom" of the child-free orgasm put the birth control pill on *Time's* cover as the invention of the century.

In 1962 Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* explained the "problem nobody knows"...the anger of American women demanding meaningful work and personal freedom.

In '66 (when Sanger died) the National Organization of Women, joined protests against the Miss America Pageant. Their reborn radical feminism meant to turn the world upside down. By decade's end, half the nation's college students were female (soon to become nearly two-thirds, plus half the law students).

With them came a revived campaign for the Equal Rights Amendment, first drafted in 1923 by Alice Paul (who lived until '77). Women poured into the House, Senate, state legislatures, and governors' mansions, onto the bench, into police, fire, and university academic departments, and much more.

Our reborn surge toward a restored matriarchy came with demands for legal homosexuality (Puritanism's ultimate dark secret). Punishable by death in 1600s Boston, being gay was still illegal in much of the US three centuries later. Only the Bohemian radical Emma Goldman had dared to speak of it in public. The tiny Mattachine Society finally came out after WW2.

The counterculture promised an evolving embrace. But even in the Sixties, to be gay in America was to be shunned, jobless, jailed, beaten, abused, outcast.

Then came Stonewall. Like so many other gay bars around the country, Stonewall was a grungy little hangout in Lower Manhattan. Police routinely barged in to beat up the clientele. But for three hot nights in June/July 1969, with cameras rolling, the LGBTQ community fought back...and came out forever.

Stonewall Unions rose up on campuses everywhere. Gay rights joined the social justice agenda. Queer sexual and political power flowed deep into the cultural mainstream in ways that have amazed even its most optimistic advocates.

In August came Woodstock. At a farm in upstate New York, more than 300,000 music fans converged for a torrential interlude of joy and song. For three days they sustained the world's biggest intentional community, nonviolent in practice, pure in spirit, iconic in celebration. For those who claim to remember being there, it was a commencement, an exclamation point on a decade that transformed forever how a new generation would view the world.



On October 15, 1969, millions marched worldwide for a Vietnam moratorium. More than 100,000 gathered in Boston alone. A month later, 100,000 more marched in DC.

Meanwhile 89 heavily armed Indians of All Nations (most of them women) seized Alcatraz. The abandoned former federal prison was ripe to be an Indigenous cultural center. Various treaties certified their right to possession. The activists sent \$24 in junk jewelry to San Francisco's mayor to seal the deal.

With them came a reborn sense of nature. As in the Transcendental and Bohemian Eras, young artists and activists fled the cities. We formed communal farms, went organic, re-connected with our Indigenous DNA. Newly on the land, seasoned young civil rights/antiwar activists came raging at corporate polluters right in their rural backyards. It was an unexpected synthesis with epic impact.

Rachel Carson drafted the Solartopian movement's green rebirth certificate. In the conservationist spirit of Henry Thoreau and John Muir, Brook Farm and the *Haudenosaunee*, Carson's *Silent Spring* warned that DDT was decimating the bird population and unbalancing our global eco-system.

Cancer killed Rachel far too early. But the pesticide ban she helped inspire saved countless millions. It rebooted our mindset on how to manage human life in harmony with our Mother Earth.

In 1965, the young muckraker Ralph Nader published *Unsafe at Any Speed*, warning against the lethal Corvair. Over an astounding half-century, Nader inspired, educated, and employed countless muckrakers, activists, organizers. His "Nader Raiders" fought for justice, safety, and sanity on issues

ranging from consumer price gouging and Congressional corruption to auto safety and atomic energy.

In early 1970, Ralph's "children" joined the tens of millions who marched for the first Earth Day. They became the vital white blood cells of our species' survival mechanism.

The first Boomer cohort had entered the 1960s at age 15. Prospects were thrilling, horizons limitless. We soared through a spectacular springtime Awakening that fused all those previous into a uniquely transformative human upheaval.

The rhythms of racism and injustice, assassination and war, beat on our heads like hammers from hell. But in a culture being turned upside down, amidst the myriad strains of our diverse DNA, the connection to our Indigenous Mother was at last remade.

Said Rachel Carson...

*Those who contemplate the beauty of the Earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.*

We would soon enough need every joule of that energy.

# SUMMER

## *Vietnam*

There are countless tortured explanations for why Lyndon Johnson blew his mind, his soul, his presidency, and our future in the quagmire of Vietnam. All are angrily disputed. None make any sense...except in the broader context of that Puritan-corporate-imperial strand of our DNA.

America's assault on Southeast Asia was the deadly darkness at the end of the imperial tunnel, the inevitable expression of what Arkansas Senator J. William Fulbright famously branded our "Arrogance of Power".

It was also the ultimate proof that no nation (not even the "exceptional" US) can exist half empire and half democracy. And that all empires eventually fall.

As Martin Luther King warned on April 4, 1967, exactly one year before he was assassinated...

*If America's soul becomes totally poisoned, part of the autopsy must read: **Vietnam**.*

The Calvinist imperative, ingrained in our double helix since 1630, said we had not merely the right but the *duty* to dominate the globe and cleanse it of "others".

Such Luciferian rebels (geopolitical heathens!) are usually non-white. Their very existence poses an unGodly threat to the City on the Hill, no matter how far from our shores, how absurd the idea that they might militarily threaten us. It has *never* been about physical security.

After WW2, "Communists" became an amorphous swarm of Indigenous anti-capitalists who may or may not have read Karl Marx or signed on with the Soviets or Chinese. Most have been social democrats and nationalist patriots, refusing to bow before the Elect of God and His corporate minions.

To allow such heretics to even exist was to admit complicity. God forbid the world should witness a lack of spotless Divinity, a refusal to do America's bidding by even a tiny, distant dissident nation. Such defiance might topple the single domino that would bring down all others.

As God's Elect we claimed the right (for "democracy" and "freedom") to invade anywhere, everywhere.

Ignoring the Seminoles' victory in the Everglades, and the muddles in 1812 and Korea, defeat was unthinkable. For a macho man like Lyndon Johnson, being "the first president to ever lose a war" was an unbearable cross.

Jack Kennedy seemed to have gotten beyond that. Vietnam was an un-winnable fight with no clear purpose in a jungle nation 8,000 miles distant. Secure in his intellectual and personal identity, the pullout (see NSAM 263, October, 1963) made sense.

Those who bothered to study Vietnamese history knew its legendary chess-master, Ho Chi Minh, had washed dishes in New York, studied history in Paris and Moscow, mastered Indigenous warfare. He was nobody's puppet. The Puritan/corporate/Imperial/Dulles/CIA Elect meant to crush him

But after the Bay of Pigs, Berlin and missile crisis, JFK had other ideas. In a post-imperial world, diversity made sense. He (quietly) began bringing the troops home.

Then somebody killed him. And Lyndon broke bad.

Three days after the assassination, LBJ leaped into the quagmire. The body bags, the lies, the angst, the war at home, the twisted madness, the horror, the defeat....he seemed a man with a key body part clamped in a trap...

*I knew from the start that I was bound to be crucified either way I moved. If I left the woman I really loved — the Great Society — in order to get involved with that bitch of a war on the other side of the world, then I would lose everything at home. All my programs. All my hopes to feed the hungry and shelter the homeless. All my dreams to provide education and medical care to the browns and the blacks and the lame and the poor.*

*But if I left that war and let the Communists take over South Vietnam, then I would be seen as a coward and my nation would be seen as an appeaser and we would find it impossible to accomplish anything for anybody anywhere on the entire globe.*

By 1967, he had 550,000 troops over there. More than 300 a WEEK were coming home in body bags.

By '68 LBJ was a broken man. His presidency was a shambles, his legacy a graveyard, his party in ruins. There was no light at the end of the tunnel.

Why'd he do it? Take your pick...

X The military brass said the enemy was weak, victory in sight;

X There was money to be made, like \$2 billion for Brown & Root (later Halliburton) to build that huge base at Cam Ranh Bay;

X There was that endless Big Muddy of corporate cash that always flows from a bloated military;

X There was race, as LBJ explained in 1948: “Without superior air power America is a bound and throttled giant, impotent and easy prey to any yellow dwarf with a pocket knife”;

X There was macho pride, like when he lifted an advisor (David Comey), loff the ground, and spat...

*Son, Ho Chi Minh is over there saying f\*\*k you to Lyndon Johnson. And NOBODY says f\*\*k you to Lyndon Johnson;*

X There was the Big Lie that we were... saving them from communism...and protecting them from the Soviets and/or Chinese... all "for their own good"...while we destroyed villages "to save them" while "bringing them democracy";

X There was geo-politics, as as when Commander William Westmoreland told me (at a 1984 debate) that we had NOT “lost” in Vietnam, but had "bought time for the ASEAN nations" and our pet dictators Suharto (Indonesia), Marcos (Philippines), Lee Kuan Yew (Singapore);

But above all, there was that Divinely ordained Manifest Destiny of Calvinist America's global dominion...infallible, unbeatable, inevitable, exceptional, insane.

In the end, as America’s magistrate-priest, LBJ (and then Nixon) simply could not allow any nation, no matter how tiny or distant, to soil God’s Plan for a pure and spotless capitalist Earth.

In August 1964, Lyndon pitched a fit over an alleged North Vietnamese attack on two US ships in the Gulf of Tonkin. (Then-Defense Secretary Robert McNamara later admitted it never actually happened).

Like the Mexicans who did *not* attack us, the *Maine* that was *not* sunk by Spain, the *Lusitania* that *did* carry munitions, the WMDs that did *not* exist in Iraq...we got lied into another war.

This never-happened “attack” by tiny non-existent gunboats on our gargantuan Navy somehow became a dire threat to US security. Next thing you know, said Lyndon, they'll be marching into Santa Monica.

Of a hundred US Senators, just two (Wayne Morse and Ernest Gruening) said NO.

Like Wilson in 1916 and FDR in 1940, LBJ ran in 1964 to keep us out of the war he'd just stolen the power to wage.

The double-cross came in March '65. Wearied by centuries of war, the beleaguered Vietnamese were ready to settle. LBJ replied with the biggest bombing campaign in human history.

Amidst the madness (in a classic Dollar Diplomacy escapade) he replaced an elected social democrat in Santo Domingo with the usual corporate-imperial dictator.

In Indonesia, the CIA killed more than a half-million citizens to install the kleptocrat Suharto (who personally stole at least \$2 billion from the public trust).

Then we drenched Vietnam with the herbicide Agent Orange. Meant to strip the jungle of guerilla-friendly foliage, it poisoned millions...including our own soldiers (who were denied treatment along with their birth-defected children).

By then we had a civil war at home.

At the dawn of the decade, former U. of Michigan *Daily* editor Tom Hayden and a band of youthful activists gathered at Port Huron to demand “participatory democracy.” Their Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) echoed the Intercollegiate Socialist Society, crushed by Wilson in WW1.

In March 1965, a hundred yards from the Peace Corps' birthplace, Ann Arbor's first Vietnam teach-in set the syllabus for dozens more. As LBJ escalated, the Great Sixties Awakening became another abolitionist crusade. Amidst the era's reborn transcendent upheaval, the organized demands for peace and civil rights rolled down like a mighty stream.

On October 21, 1967, 100,000 of us rallied at the Lincoln Memorial, then crossed the Potomac. We overran the Pentagon grounds for a night and day. The legendary Jeanette Rankin (by then with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom) helped lead one of the hundreds of marches that raged through the nation. Yet again the cyclic demand for peace and justice poured deep into the mainstream.

In January '68, guerrilla fighters poured through the countryside and into Saigon. Their Tet Offensive prompted our Voice of Reason (CBS News' Walter Cronkite) to say “LEAVE!”

Amidst the chaos, Commander William Westmoreland tried to add nuke weapons to the US arsenal in Vietnam. Johnson nixed it. The incident remained secret for fifty years.

On March 12, Wisconsin Senator Gene McCarthy challenged LBJ in conservative New Hampshire. His peace candidacy claimed



42% of the primary vote. Our depressed president, former hero of the Great Society, now, wherever he went, heard...

*Hey! Hey! LBJ! How many kids you kill today?*

New York's junior Senator (Bobby Kennedy) quickly promised peace. On March 31, a broken LBJ declined reelection.

On April 4, Martin was murdered. He was tireless, charismatic, incorruptible...an operatic virtuoso who seemed to channel transcendent lyrics straight from a loving God.

At a landmark New York speech exactly a year before he died, King linked the issues of poverty, race, and empire. The master stroke of unifying the black/white/urban/rural/middle/working-class movements for civil rights, economic justice and an end to empire drew down Death.

Riots engulfed a shattered nation. Cities burned. Tanks rolled through our streets. Whole neighborhoods collapsed. In our urban heartland, three centuries of imperial bigotry came home to roost. Said the immortal James Baldwin...

*All of the institutions of this nation, from the schools to the courts to the unions to the prisons, and not forgetting the police, are in the hands of that white majority which has been promising for generations to ameliorate the black condition...*

*Slaveholders do not allow their slaves to compare notes: American slavery, until this hour, prevents any meaningful dialogue between the poor white and the black, in order to prevent the poor white from recognizing that he, too, is a slave.*

In Indianapolis, Bobby Kennedy made a heartbreaking plea. He compared Martin's murder with his brother Jack's. He begged for calm. Nearly alone, the Indiana capital escaped chaos.

A month later (as he won the California primary) RFK was shot in the back of the head. Yet again (as confirmed by his son and others) we really don't know who did it.

A guttural gasp of betrayal, rage, psychosis, and despair tore through our collective soul. The killings of Medgar, Malcolm, Jack, Martin and Bobby...with the later murder of John Lennon...sent a clear message. Said Baldwin...

*The American republic has always done everything in its power to destroy our children's heroes, with the clear (and sometimes clearly stated) intention of destroying our children's hope. This endeavor has doomed the American nation: mark my words.*

Seething with rage, torn by the birth pains of a new way of Being, a draft-age generation blew the summer of '68 into total bedlam, a tragic maelstrom of terrible torment.

Its unintended handmaiden was Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley.

Like LBJ, Hizzoner just HAD to show the world who was BOSS. For reasons known only to him, the master of the Windy City machine provoked an absurdly avoidable confrontation that shocked the world, shattered his party, and rammed the Vietnam dagger even deeper into the American soul.

Some 15,000 "Yippies" came to Chicago to protest at the Democratic National Convention. Coined by Paul Krassner, the term fused left activism with hippie theatrics. We were young, headstrong, draft eligible, enraged. The Constitution guaranteed

our right to peaceably assemble, and to petition the Democratic Party for a redress of grievances.

But Big Dick denied us permits to march and camp. What the HELL did he think would happen next?

Daley hated the war and loved the Democrats. But his affections did not extend to the First Amendment. Televised images of furious Chicago police beating unarmed demonstrators went global (my friend Lissa and I were among those clubbed for no good reason at the corner of Michigan and Balboa).

The uproar rocked Europe, where young Czech, French, and Irish rebels defied their own political bosses.

Here, something snapped. Behind in the polls, Vice President Hubert Humphrey limped out of Chicago looking like a loser.

But his GOP opponent was deeply loathed. The images from Chicago were awful. But contempt for Tricky Dick ran deep. As Hubert promised peace, a weary, wary nation began to shift.

In October, Mexican police mowed down protestors as Tommy Smith and John Carlos raised clenched fists at the Olympics.

Meanwhile LBJ desperately sought a Vietnam ceasefire. But as he agreed to stop the bombing, someone on his own team (Henry Kissinger) secretly slipped the news to Nixon.

FBI/CIA wiretaps (released in 2014) confirm that Tricky Dick ordered his liaison Anne Chennault to tell the South Vietnamese to trash the truce. “Keep the war going,” she said. Nixon would take the White House and give them “a better deal.”

The Agencies told LBJ, who screamed at GOP Senator Everett Dirksen...

*THIS IS TREASON!!!*

Nixon denied it all. Johnson knew he was lying. But he said nothing in public...then...or for the rest of his tortured days.

With this traitorous betrayal, the criminal sociopath Richard Nixon took the White House. He promised his “secret plan” would end the war...which instead raged on for seven more psychotic years.

Countless Vietnamese and more than 20,000 additional Americans died. Southeast Asia’s human and natural ecology were ravaged. So was the American soul. A virus of abject cruelty, cynicism and Randian contempt for democracy, the truth and human compassion infected our body politic. It has metastasized through the decades, bringing us to the ghastly end-of-empire sickness that still afflicts us all.

At the American grassroots, public outrage soared to levels unseen since Wilson’s war. Resistance went viral. Draft cards, boards, and personnel files went up in flames.

Military desertion rates echoed those of poor whites fleeing the Confederate Army. Racial violence ripped through the ranks. Rampant alienation, bitter despair, lethal drug addiction, widespread suicide shredded our imperial army.

Enlisted men began shooting their brass and “fragging” them with grenades. The Army reported 209 US officers murdered by their own men in 1970 alone.

At My Lai, as more than 500 innocents were being slaughtered, heroic helicopter pilot Hugh Thompson turned his guns on his fellow soldiers. He threatened to open fire unless they stopped killing Vietnamese civilians (including scores of women and small children). Later observers estimated one such mass murder was being perpetrated by US troops every month of the war.

With his military in shambles, Nixon was ready to nuke Southeast Asia and invite a global holocaust. In public, he swore those “damn peace marches” had “no impact” on his decisions.

But privately he told military analyst Daniel Ellsberg he couldn’t face the public uproar his atomic attack would ignite.

(Those who marched for peace can take pride in knowing we helped stop an insane act of apocalyptic terror whose fallout would have been incalculable...even final).

As the 1972 elections approached, the Cold War took a back seat to political expediency. Nixon and Kissinger kissed the ring of Mao Zedong, China’s Red Emperor. They shipped wheat to Leonid Brezhnev, Russia’s hardline tsar. After a lifetime of fevered rantings against the “international communist conspiracy,” Nixon made it our primary trading partner.

Dick’s enemies were never really the Red superpowers. It was always the populist upstarts he hated... the maddening mavericks, Indigenous guerrillas, multiracial rebels, social democrats, radical unionists, heathen women.

To buy us off, Nixon abolished the draft and brought our unhinged army mostly home. Then poured crater and cluster bombs, Agent Orange and napalm...Hell itself... to smite a tiny, distant nation that never did us harm.

By 1975, our drug-dealing South Vietnamese “allies” went running for cover. On April 30, the North Vietnamese rolled into Saigon. US advisors scrambled off our embassy rooftop. Overloaded helicopters fled in terminal panic (to then be dumped into the ocean like multi-million-dollar trash).

Untold years of senseless slaughter shredded our American soul. Toxic poisoning, unemployment, homelessness, racial division, drug addiction, bad medical care, traumatic despair, bitter polarization, shattered families, lingering psychosis, official betrayal, heartbroken suicide, and too much more still torture our countless heroes and their beleaguered loved ones.

Nobody abused our veterans worse than the government that forever lied to them. Told they were fighting for “democracy,” they died for a corporate-imperial agenda meant to kill it.

As they’d lied about radiation sickness at Hiroshima/Nagasaki and our other atomic tests, officials now hid Agent Orange poisoning. They ignored PTSD, withheld human services, busted addicted vets for drugs sold by our “allies,” trashed their desperate pleas for help, dignity and respect.

In health, human services, education, infrastructure, social justice, economic wellbeing, ecological sustainability, mental instability, spiritual turmoil, and so much more...our national organism has never recovered from that useless, worthless, costly, illegal, unconscionable war.

In the hot summer of our late middle age, Vietnam should have taught us that our imperial destiny had come to an end.

That for invasive overseas wars: NEVER AGAIN!!!

And yet....

# FALL

## ***COINTELPRO & the Drug War***

J. Edgar Hoover was America's ultimate crossdresser. The dictatorial head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation favored evening gowns for formal dinners. His bottomless arsenal of intimate dirt made him America's top character assassin.

Hoover got his start busting peaceniks and progressives, feminists and Socialists during Wilson's Red Scare. He grew the FBI through Prohibition, the Depression, WW2, the McCarthy '50s. He hated hippies, activists, people of color, dissent itself. In the Vietnam reaction, he tried to crush us all.

Among the multitudes our former Spook-in-Chief spied on and libeled were Albert Einstein, Jack Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jean Seberg, John Lennon.

In 1965, an FBI agent rode with Alabama Klansmen as they murdered Viola Liuzzo, an activist mother of five from Detroit. Hoover smeared her with baseless sexual innuendo, implying she deserved the violent death his agent did nothing to stop.

J. Edgar wiretapped Dr. King, then urged him to commit suicide. Countless Black Panthers and white activists were libeled, bankrupted, jailed, maimed and killed by Hoover's minions. Far from serving as a legitimate intelligence operation, the Agency became a tax-funded assault weapon for the corporate right.

Under Nixon and Hoover, undercover agents actively sabotaged meetings, turned peaceful demonstrations toward violence, published inflammatory misinformation, subverted the peace and civil rights movements wherever possible.

It was blatantly illegal. The unintended consequences were epic.

In the summer of '68 Hoover's infiltrators secretly disrupted our hippie/radical Liberation News Service, turning routine meetings into rancorous hell. To escape the madness (which included gay baiting) LNS founder Marshall Bloom conspired to move the operation to rural Massachusetts. Copping \$5,000 in ticket sales from a showing of the Beatles' "home movie" *Magical Mystery Tour*, Marshall led a thrilling decamp to a distant dairy farm.

Bloom's shocking pirouette inspired national headlines....and some astounding countercultural leaps.

Back-to-the-land hippie transcendentalism rebirthed a natural food movement that went global. Rooted in rich farm land, we made the *Silent Spring* decision to garden without chemicals. Long-time organic advocates (like the legendary Rodale Family) taught us healthy ways to manage pests, weeds (and *Weed!*).

In 1973, the local utility company announced a giant reactor complex four miles from our organic garden. A farm member (Sam Lovejoy) peacefully toppled a 500-foot weather tower in protest. The grassroots *No Nukes* resistance stopped that project...and scores more worldwide.

In 1975 a *Toward Tomorrow Fair* at UMass featured green visionaries Amory Lovins and William Heronemus. It envisioned a Solartopian future free of fossil and nuclear fuels. Powered by the sun and wind, it would remake the world (all due in part to our FBI-inspired launch into the countryside...*thank you, J. Edgar!*).

In 1969, Nixon commissioned his *Huston Plan* to end American democracy. From electronic surveillance to warrantless



searches, from sabotaging peace groups to mass incarceration, Tricky Dick meant to take America back to 1630s Boston.

When he illegally bombed Cambodia in 1970, huge protests ripped through some 200 campuses.

At Kent State, Ohio Gov. James A. Rhodes, a Nixon crony (and mafia bag man) gave the National Guard live ammunition to “take care of the situation.” On May 4, they were ordered to open fire. Four unarmed students were shot dead, another crippled for life. Two more soon died at Jackson State, Mississippi.

On May 3, 1971 (in America’s single biggest mass incarceration) Nixon locked 15,000 demonstrators into DC’s RFK stadium. His “Enemies List” marked for revenge dozens of regime opponents (somehow including NY Jets quarterback Joe Namath).

Many saw a place on Dick’s list as a badge of honor. But Vice President Spiro Agnew assaulted the “nattering nabobs of negativism” and anyone else who dared question official policy. Like A. Mitchell Palmer before him, Agnew was a fearsome fascist. Amoral dirty tricksters like Karl Rove and Dick Cheney joined a twisted assault on American democracy that would steadily escalate and eventually bring us Donald Trump.

In the 1970 mid-term elections, Nixon called on a “Silent Majority” (a term used by Hitler) to give him full control of the US Congress. He barely missed.

In ’71, Daniel Ellsberg released the *Pentagon Papers*, a secret study showing that the Vietnam War was illegal and un-winnable. Nixon tried to kill it. But the US Supreme Court (nearing the end of its liberal run) ruled that the First Amendment did still exist.

In retaliation, Nixon ordered a team of deep-cover spooks to break into Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office.

Then, on June 17, 1972, five of Dick's "plumbers" got caught breaking into the Democratic National Headquarters at DC's Watergate Hotel (two of them---E. Howard Hunt and Frank Sturgis---may have been shooters at the JFK assassination).

In 1972, Nixon ended the draft, started pulling troops out of Vietnam and established détente with China and the Soviets. Re-elected everywhere except Massachusetts and DC, his path to absolute power seemed perfectly paved.

But as FDR found after his 1936 reelection, LBJ after '64, Reagan after '84, and Clinton after '96, a big electoral victory can open the ultimate snake pit.

The world soon learned that Nixon (against his wife's advice) recorded his Oval Office conversations. The tapes nailed him to Watergate...and to his paranoid, racist, anti-Semitic inner self.

Agnew admitted to tax evasion, and became the first Vice President to resign. Then on August 9, 1974, Nixon ducked impeachment, flashing "V" signs as he fled the White House.

Gerry Ford later pardoned him. But scores of lesser flunkies like Bob Haldeman and John Ehrlichman went to prison.

Along with the pall it cast on our spirit, Nixon's lethal legacy included two body blows against American democracy. He launched the Drug War. And he gutted the Supreme Court.

The War on Drugs was Nixon's revenge against the Civil Rights and antiwar movements...four decades of reborn Palmer Raids with pot as pretext.

In 1972, his high-profile *National Commission on Marihuana and Drug Abuse*, led by Pennsylvania's GOP Governor Richard Schaefer, strongly opposed *cannabis* prohibition. It advised counseling and treatment over arrest and incarceration.

Nixon briefly pushed a network of healing centers. But while drowning in war, racism, poverty, despair and ecological disaster, Dick proclaimed drugs to be “America’s #1 problem.”

Much of the supply came from the heroin dealers he supported in Vietnam. But Nixon’s real agenda was his “Southern Strategy.”

The math was simple. LBJ’s Civil and Voting Rights Acts infuriated Jim Crow Democrats. In 1968 and ’72, Alabama Governor George Wallace picked up where Dixiecrat Strom Thurmond left off and ran for president as an outright racist.

Wallace vowed to never be "out-n\*\*\*\*\*d." Yelling “Segregation Now. Segregation Tomorrow. Segregation Forever,” he blocked blacks from the U. of Alabama. His hateful Trumpian attacks drew big crowds. But in 1972 he was shot (he won Michigan’s Democratic primary the next day).

Trapped in a wheelchair, George later apologized to the black community, advocated integration, and won a fourth term as Alabama governor.

Such redemption was not for Dick Nixon. He wanted Wallace’s Klan constituency. Said strategist Lee Atwater...

*You start out in 1954 by saying, ‘N\*\*\*\*r, n\*\*\*\*r, n\*\*\*\*r’. By 1968 you can't say 'n\*\*\*\*r.’ That hurts you. Backfires. So you say stuff like forced busing, states' rights and all that stuff.*

But racist whites were not enough. Some Deep South states were 25-40% black. Nixon needed to void their votes.

That's where the Drug War came in. Said White House aide John Ehrlichman...

*We knew we couldn't make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities.*

*We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did.*

Nixon's pot busts turned communities of youth and color into virtual police states. More than 41,000,000 (that's NOT a typo) US citizens have since been arrested. The prison culture has poisoned every corner of American life.

The calculus is still satanic.

For a half-century, *cannabis* has been regularly consumed by at least 10% of the US population. That's 30 million-plus people at any given time. With so many using it, police have assaulted the citizenry at will. Our "democracy" bled into a prison population far bigger than under dictatorships in China and Russia.

(Despite decades of hysteria, *cannabis* has been scientifically linked to zero deaths by overdose. But the later legalized plague of addictive opioids killed tens of thousands of Americans, many in their teens).

In her 2010 *New Jim Crow*, professor Michelle Alexander showed how the Drug War disenfranchised a generation of black, Hispanic and young men, decimated their communities, then crammed them into an American gulag run mostly for corporate profit. That victim base has been exceeded in raw size only by the work and death camps of Hitler and Stalin.

As Nixon expected, the Drug War tipped our electoral balance far to the totalitarian right (leading us straight to Donald Trump).

Likewise the Supremes. From FDR to LBJ, the Court was a vital haven for liberty and justice.

Packed with New Deal/New Frontier stalwarts, it was long led by the surprising Chief Justice Earl Warren (Ike assumed the California governor would be conservative, then called his appointment “the biggest damn fool mistake I ever made!”). LBJ added civil rights legend Thurgood Marshall as our first African-American Supreme.

Beginning with a string of pro-civil rights decisions in the late ‘40s, carrying through *Brown* (1954) and beyond, the Court fashioned a humanist legal foundation for the decade’s cultural Awakening. *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) confirmed separation of church and state by limiting school prayer. *Gideon v. Wainwright* (1963) affirmed the right to a lawyer. *Miranda v. Arizona* (1966) expanded the rights of arrestees. *Baker v. Carr* (1962) confirmed the principle of “one man, one vote” in state representation. The *New York Times v. Sullivan* (1964) firmed up freedom of the press. *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965) protected the right to birth control. *Loving v. Virginia* (1965) legalized interracial marriage.

Thus a rebel generation saw our Constitutional liberties protected by an enlightened Court that honored the Bill of Rights and the protections they were meant to enshrine.

Warren retired in 1969. Liberal momentum carried into the '70s with key decisions on the *Pentagon Papers* and reproductive rights (*Roe v. Wade*) among others.

But then came five Nixon appointees. Warren Burger was Chief Justice for 17 years. William Rehnquist sat until 2005 (after an early career preventing blacks from voting). Harry Blackmun and John Paul Stevens both swung to the liberal side.

But Lewis Powell changed everything. The genteel Virginian revived and enshrined Alexander Hamilton's 1791 *Report on Manufactures*, advocating that taxpayer money should fund our industrial infrastructure. Public dollars would enrich private investors and spawn a new corporate oligarchy. For Powell, that was the American Dream.

His infamous 1971 "Powell Memorandum" (written for the US Chamber of Commerce) deified corporate control. It defined his pivotal 1972-87 Court tenure. In *Valeo* (1976), and with his 1978 *Bellotti* majority opinion, Powell helped gut public attempts to regulate money in politics. *Citizens United* (2010) and *McCutcheon* (2014) then sanctified corporate personhood and put our elections completely up for sale.

In the reactionary aftermath of the Vietnam catastrophe, corporate-imperial money overwhelmed what was left of American democracy.

Even worse was yet to come.

# **WINTER**

## ***The “Me Decade”***

### ***& Ayn Rand's Cult of Contempt***

In January-February, 1969, gushers of oil fouled Santa Barbara's beaches. In June, Cleveland's Cuyahoga River caught fire.

In July, Jack Kennedy's dream of putting a man on the moon came partly true. JFK had envisioned a shared effort, meant to bring humankind together. Instead, Nixon left an American flag stuck in the dust (along with a golf club and ball).

On August 9 (just before Woodstock) followers of Charles Manson murdered actress Sharon Tate and five others in Los Angeles. Manson was the mutant spawn of a festering prison system, a predatory bottom feeder lurking at the hippie fringe.

On November 1, LNS founder Marshall Bloom (age 25) died near our communal farm in western Massachusetts. His suicide was partly triggered by a vicious personal attack (called “Who Stole the Cookie Jar”) circulated by Hoover's FBI as a “leftist” critique. Throughout the era COINTELPRO constantly subverted the peace and civil rights movements with polarizing fake documents and internal incitements to violence, discord and stupidity.

On December 6, the Rolling Stones tried to recapture Woodstock's magic with a concert at the Altamont Speedway in California. But the Hells Angels they hired for security stabbed a young fan to death. The event became a tragic mess.

On March 6, 1970, three young “Weather Underground” radicals were killed by bombs they were making.

By July of '71, rock stars Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, and Jim Morrison were all dead. The corporate media blamed "drugs." But the X factor in all their deaths was alcohol.

The next month prison activist George Jackson, author of *Soledad Brother*, was shot in the back at San Quentin. A four-day confrontation at New York's Attica prison soon left 43 dead. Most of the killing followed Governor Nelson Rockefeller's refusal to negotiate a settlement.

In 1973, at Wounded Knee, Indigenous activists confronted corporate goons who ran the tribal government. Despite mountains of evidence for his innocence, AIM co-founder Leonard Peltier was later convicted of killing two FBI agents and imprisoned for nearly a half-century without a meaningful trial.

The entire era was poisoned saturation bombing (surpassing all of WW2) and absurd promises of a Vietnam "victory" that was impossible to define. America's trust in government and faith in our future sank with the rise of a "libertarian" gospel of hyper-individualism and communal contempt. Member of key groups like Young Americans for Freedom and the John Birch Society made Russian immigrant Ayn Rand their cultish icon.

Nasty, brutish, and curt, Ayn's *Fountainhead* (1943) and *Atlas Shrugged* (1957) glorified Social Darwinism (but not Darwin himself, who would have been horrified). Her sociopathic screeds for Jacksonian "rugged individualism" metastasized into a narcissistic war on community itself.

Rand appeared three times in 1967 with top-rated TV talk host Johnny Carson. She attacked altruism, kindness, empathy and compassion as "enemies." Her sneering contempt for civic virtue became the mean-spirited credo of modern conservatism.



Before her 1982 death, Ayn (of course) signed up for Social Security and Medicare, programs she'd forever scorned.

Rand opened her first Carson conversation by advocating nonviolence. Except in self-defense, she said, "no man has the right to initiate physical force, violence, compulsion against another man." (Much of that still seems lost on her followers).

For Rand's "Me-era" conservatives, caring for other humans was a genetic flaw. Greed was great, facts were fake. "Dirty Tricksters" like Dick Cheney and Karl Rove stopped at nothing in pursuit of wealth and power. Henry Kissinger's "realpolitik" stripped foreign policy of all morality. Milton Friedman's "free market" gospel made money all that mattered. Alan Greenspan's Federal Reserve impoverished millions.

Later fanatics Paul Ryan and Scott Walker of Wisconsin devoted their lives to destroying Social Security, Medicare, social justice, grassroots democracy and human civility.

At the Randian core was the American Legislative Exchange Council. Founded in 1973 by billionaires Charles and David Koch, ALEC's Dark Money opposed all taxes, environmental regulations, and anything to aid non-millionaires.

The Kochs opposed the wars on poverty, Vietnam and drugs... plus any restrictions on their filthy fossil fuel empire's apparently limitless gushers of cash. Their hugely funded, highly effective campaigns drove the nation as far from the core of human compassion as money could buy.

But in this down-bound rerun of our Gilded Ages, no lowly hovel was as filled with filth as the Nixon White House.

Starting with his high-roller 1969 inaugural, Dick wallowed in the trappings of morbid wealth. His all-white, all-male cabinet groaned with millionaires and billionaires. Everything official was now for sale. The business of America was once again greed at its worst. Aristocratic contempt and Puritan autocracy were once again the coins of the realm.

The ultra-rich of the Nixon '70s brought what Eric Foner calls "The End of the Golden Age." Dick's refusal to end the Vietnam War was pure bile. Public billions turned to blood and smoke while pouring into the corporate coffers of his crony elite. The flow of body bags slowed, but never stopped. Our mid-life crisis sank to the realm depressive psychosis.

That included a cruel assault on our children. During WW2, the feds funded (through the Lanham Act) universal care for children up to 12 years old. While parents fought overseas or worked the home front, kids were fed, nurtured and taught in centers that also educated a generation of teachers. They served, said Eleanor Roosevelt, "a need that was constantly with us."

That need was shredded during the Cold War reaction. But in 1971, Congress embraced the Comprehensive Child Development Act, meant to provide meals, medical screening and care for tens of millions of American children. Tuition would be set by a family's ability to pay. An annual \$2 billion would bring safe haven to our working parents and their children.

But Dick said NO. Working parents still struggle to find reliable care for their children. Costs have soared. Nixon's heartless veto tore a terrible hole in the lives of tens of millions of American families for decades to come.

War profiteers like Brown & Root (cronies of LBJ, later known as Halliburton, cronies of Dick Cheney) did just fine. But in 1971, for the first time since the 1890s, the US balance of trade went into the red. Nixon took the dollar off gold, and briefly tried wage and price controls.

Unemployment, the national debt and college tuitions all soared. The gap between rich and poor (which had been closing since the New Deal) blew wide open.

Nixon designed White House security uniforms to look like the royal guards of Austria's Prince Metternich, a Kissinger favorite. Said the president...

*Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for yourself.*

Nixon's 1972 Campaign to Re-Elect the President (CREEP) office functioned like a mafia numbers depot. Dwayne Andreas of Archer, Daniels, Midland brought the Oval Office a bag stuffed with \$100,000 in greenbacks.

The President of the United States personally used a forged document to cover public-funded "security" renovations at his California home so he could avoid paying taxes on them.

Until Donald Trump, no other president was so thoroughly immersed in petty theft and official bigotry. A new Great Barbecue let Nixon's corporate/mafia cronies gorge on public assets while gutting the livelihoods of a middle/working class choking on industrial decline and imperial overreach.

Nixon fled on Nagasaki Day, 1974. But for all the focus on Watergate, his treasonous sabotage of the 1968 peace talks went

unpunished. Long before Trump, Tricky Dick enshrined the dictatorial notion that...

*If the President does it, it's legal.*

On April 30, 1975, the absurd epithet of being “the first American president to lose a war” fell to Gerald Ford.

He was the first president who'd never run for national office. The Michigan Congressman was appointed Vice President when Spiro resigned in disgrace. He took the Oval Office when Dick resigned in disgrace.

When Gerry pardoned Nixon for all crimes he “might have committed,” he spoke of letting the nation “heal.”

But like Woodrow Wilson, Ford never pardoned thousands of peace activists, conscientious objectors, draft resisters and deserters victimized by the Vietnam atrocity long after it ended.

Through the post-Watergate '70s, an awakened Congress tried to limit the Barons' ability to buy our elections. But the newly Nixonized Supreme Court gutted public demands for campaign finance controls. *Buckley v. Valeo* (1976), and then *First National Bank of Boston v. Bellotti* (the 1978 decision written by Lewis Powell) embedded deep into our legal code the power of corporations to outright buy our no-longer public elections.

Ironically, in *Bellotti*, Justice William Rehnquist (a hard-right Nixonian) hotly denied that corporations are due human rights.

But the 2010 *Citizens United* and 2014 *McCutcheon* decisions would soon say exactly that, carving in stone the oligarchic capture of our dying body politic.

***CYCLE 6***  
***IMPERIAL SENILITY***

***INSERT LINE 6 FROM  
CHART***

# **A Puff of Energy**

## ***Jimmy Carter***

From the wreckage of Vietnam and Watergate our battered nation picked itself up (barely) for a final cycle of life.

In 1974 a wave of liberal Democrats won sizable congressional majorities.

Two years later, Jimmy Carter and Gerry Ford ran the last of our relatively un-bought elections. At the bicentennial of our birth, the low-key, reasonably civilized campaign featured two uniquely uncharismatic candidates.

Both agreed to limit their spending to \$20 million each. They apparently kept their word. It was (to date) our last presidential election not to drown in cash.

Ford (a former All-American football center) spiced things up by tumbling down various stairways. His pratfalls lit up TV's merciless *Saturday Night Live* and helped cost him the election.

Jimmy (as he asked us all to call him) was an amiable one-term Georgia governor and an evangelical Sunday school teacher. His media-savvy campaign jazzed a folksy image by admitting to "lust in my heart" (an urge amply embraced by the Allman Brothers and other rockers that supported him).

Above all, Jimmy Carter was not Richard Nixon, and had not pardoned him.

At his Jacksonian inauguration, the new "Common Man" ditched the official limo to walk up Pennsylvania Avenue. Some 350,000

celebrants and a stellar horde of rock stars came for a giant square dance.

Jimmy then pardoned some 15,000 Vietnam draft resisters. He sold the White House yacht and dumped Nixon's imperial image. He carried his own bags onto airplanes and actually smiled at working people.

Carter tried to cut the military budget. He killed the useless B-1 Bomber. He cancelled the proposed Clinch River Breeder reactor for fear of an expanded black market in bomb-worthy radioactive materials...and because it wouldn't work.

Jimmy pursued a new détente with the Soviets. He sought openings to Cuba, Vietnam, China, and North Korea. He revived FDR's Good Neighbor policy and cut off aid to Guatemala's brutal military dictatorship, which had been installed in the Dollar Diplomacy '50s by United Fruit and the Dulles Brothers.

In 1977, he returned the Panama Canal to the Panamanians well before its 99-year lease was set to expire (in 2003).

Amidst an Arab embargo, Carter deregulated oil. His windfall profits tax netted more than \$100 billion which he promptly blew on synthetic fuels (had he invested it in green energy the world would be a very different place).

Carter's popularity peaked with Camp David Accords signed by Egypt's Anwar Sadat and Israel's Menachem Begin on March 26, 1979. Jimmy seemed set to cruise to a second term.

But within 36 hours, his future melted at Three Mile Island.

In April 1970, millions rallied to celebrate our first Earth Day. It was a vital upwelling of our Indigenous DNA, a rising of the species to preserve our only home.

Guided by John Ehrlichman, Nixon followed Lincoln, Grant, and the Roosevelts' eco-footsteps by approving the National Environmental Policy Act and Environmental Protection Agency.

Jimmy openly courted the green groundswell. In an FDR-style fireside chat, wearing a homey cardigan, he declared energy conservation to be "the moral equivalent of war."

He urged us to lower our thermostats and keep our freeway speed at a much-hated 55 mph. He put a solar water heater on the White House roof. In Golden, Colorado he launched the Solar Energy Research Institute (later the National Renewable Energy Lab) to push the surge to Solartopia.

He also promised strict nuke reactor safeguards. But as president he approved Three Mile Island Unit 2 and New Hampshire's Seabrook, which met none of them.

On March 28, 1979, hours after signing the Begin-Sadat Rose Garden treaty, TMI-2 melted and spewed out significant radiation. The plant's owner lied about both.

Carter was a former Navy nuclear engineer. He rushed to the reactor control room and downplayed a disaster that killed a \$900 million nuke and threatened the entire northeast with permanent contamination.

The simultaneous release of Hollywood's *China Syndrome* about an eerily parallel reactor disaster dumped the nuke industry into a PR pit from which it (and Jimmy) never escaped.



From there Carter seemed to lose his mind. Infuriating gas lines made him look impotent. Deregulated fuel prices soared. Interest rates shot toward 20%. Tight money devastated millions of American families and small businesses.

In December '79, the Soviets stupidly stumbled into the "graveyard of Empires." The Afghan quagmire had already consumed a dozen imperial invaders, stretching back 2,300 years to Alexander the Great. The Soviets now took the lemming leap (followed soon enough by us Americans) and escalated their long-standing military presence.

Jimmy pitched a fit, absurdly calling this epic error...

*the most dangerous geopolitical betrayal since World War 2.*

He broke off disarmament talks. He stopped grain shipments to the USSR, ruining countless US farmers. He forced our best athletes to boycott the 1980 Moscow Olympics, which should have been a bridge to ending the Cold War (the Soviets replied by skipping the '84 Games in Los Angeles).

His new "Carter Doctrine" claimed the right to grab "our" oil anywhere. He pushed an insane MX rail-based mobile missile system. He sent the military budget soaring.

When Amnesty International won the 1977 Nobel Prize for working to free political prisoners, Carter praised them. He earnestly preached the gospel of human rights.

But then he fell in love with Iran's brutal oil-rich Pahlavi Regime, installed in 1953 by the CIA (which overthrew the popular social democrat Mossadegh). The Shah's SAVAK secret police were infamous for repression and torture. But Carter even supported a lunatic French proposal sell him 36 bomb-ready nuke reactors.

A dramatic 1979 uprising expelled the Shah. When Carter allowed the cancer-stricken ex-dictator into the US, outraged Iranian students grabbed more than 60 US diplomatic personnel and held 52 of them hostage in Tehran.

Amidst a global media frenzy, Jimmy bet his presidency on getting them back. A helicopter rescue mission failed, killing eight. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance quit in protest.

Just before the 1980 balloting, Carter announced a deal to bring the hostages home. Like Lyndon Johnson's subverted 1968 Vietnam peace talks, this last-minute "October Surprise" seemed to guarantee Jimmy's re-election.

Then, somehow, it didn't. The hostages stayed in Tehran. Reagan won.

Jimmy Carter's pale green puff of energy began the sorry sixth cycle of our historic spiral on a promising foot. But it flamed out in a confused, contradictory mess.

By 1981, he was done. The counterculture was not.

# *SPRINGTIME*

## *A Rainbow Solartopian*

### *PV/PC Revolution*

Throughout the 1970s, Puritan pundits penned a ceaseless array of gleeful obituaries for the Hippie/Yippie/New Left.

Altamont, Manson, the Beatles' break-up, the deaths of Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, and Jim Morrison all gave them something to write about. Tired of being invaded by tourists and hard drug dealers, San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury community staged an elaborate funeral for "Hippie".

But last rites for the Awakened counterculture were seriously premature.

Black and female activists accelerated their relentless march toward the restoration of matriarchy and the birth of a colorblind society free of misogyny and homophobia.

Gloria Steinem, Letty Pogrebin, and other feminists turned "a movement into a magazine" called *Ms.* which finally gave women a legal title of their own choosing.

In 1972, Brooklyn Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm became the first African-American woman to run for the White House (she said she got far more push-back as a female than as a black person). The US Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision affirmed a woman's right to reproductive choice.

A nationwide campaign to finally ratify Alice Paul's Equal Rights Amendment fell three states short. But women poured into the

workplace, demanding equal pay and fair treatment. They became the majority of college students, evenly divided the law schools, and began winning elections

Carter's acceptance of civil rights leader Andrew Young as a major advisor symbolized the black community's rise in politics, business, the media, learning, the arts. Following in the footsteps of Althea Gibson, Arthur Ashe won tennis slams at Wimbledon, Australia, and the US Open.

In 1972, Cape Cod's Gerry Studds (descended from Elbridge Gerry, father of Gerrymandering) became the first openly gay member of the US House. Six years later, San Francisco made Supervisor Harvey Milk the symbol of a surging LGBTQ movement.

The Beatles' trek to India opened the door to world music. Paul Simon introduced Ladysmith Black Mambazo from Africa, and a powerful Hispanic dimension to *Graceland*. Gil Scott Heron's anti-nuke *We Almost Lost Detroit* birthed rap.

Child star Stevie Wonder came of age with a string of masterpieces including *Songs in the Key of Life* and *Innervisions*. Michael Jackson still defies description. Bruce Springsteen electrified the working-class angst of his native New Jersey.

And a Goddess chorus of not-to-be denied women shattered music's patriarchal monoculture. Coming of age in the '80s, America's transcendent choir of musical matriarchs brought to center stage the power of Bonnie Raitt, Marian Anderson, Mahalia Jackson, Ma Rainey, Big Mama Thornton, Billie Holliday, Ruth Brown, Clara Schumann, Amy Beach, Amy Grant, Fannie Mendelssohn, Marin Alsop, Beverly Sills, Mary Ford, Loretta Lynn, Kiri Te Kanawa, Queen Liliuokalani, Kathleen Battle, Florence Price, Margaret Bonds, Julie Andrews, Shirley Jones,

Eartha Kitt, Rita Moreno, Lena Horne, Dorothy Dandridge, Doris Day, Ronnie Gilbert, Patti Page, Connie Francis, Giselle MacKenzie, Leslie Gore, Mama Cass, Michelle Phillips, Michelle Williams, Celine Dion, Barbra Streisand, Bette Midler, Cher, Janis Joplin, Joan Baez, Mimi Farina, Donna Summer, Gladys Knight, Tina Turner, Deborah Harry, Patti Smith, Madonna, Annie Lennox, Aretha Franklin, Diana Ross, Whitney Houston, Carly Simon, Chaka Khan, Stevie Nicks, Christine McVie, Grace Slick, Mary Travers, Norah Jones, Joni Mitchell, Martha Reeves, Judy Collins, Cyndi Lauper, Nico, Edith Piaf, Yoko Ono, Mary Black, Carole King, Dar Williams, Rihanna, Adele, Lady Gaga, Christina Aguilera, Sheryl Crowe, Suzanne Vega, Marie Osmond, Neshama Carlebach, Lynette, Melissa Ethridge, Snataum Kaur, Diva Primal, Mariah Carey, Yofiyah, Queen Latifah, Holly Near, Patty Carpenter, Patti Carpenter, Karen Carpenter, Tracy Chapman, Joan Armatrading, Sarah McLaughlin, Sarah Vaughn, Nina Simone, Britney Spears, Alicia Keys, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Katy Perry, Taylor Swift, Sade, Jennifer Hudson, Susan Tedeschi, Amy Winehouse, Loreena McKennitt, Selena Gomez, Miley Cyrus, Jennifer Lopez, Janet Jackson, Dolly Parton, Etta James, Nikki Minaj, Beyonce and too many more to list here (but please send me your passionately loved favorites for future editions).

The “vast wasteland” of network television also caught fire.

Norman Lear’s *All in the Family* portrayed (favorably) an openly gay guy. The absurdly bigoted Archie Bunker took a kiss on the cheek from the black and Jewish Sammy Davis, Jr.

*Mary Tyler Moore* honored a single woman navigating a tough career. Ed Asner’s lovably gruff *Lou Grant* never compromised. *M\*A\*S\*H* turned war into satire. The 16-hour *Roots* exposed chattel slavery’s raw realities to a huge audience. *Mork & Mindy*

launched the transcendent genius of Robin Williams. *Saturday Night Live* began skewering every president from Ford to Trump.

Beyond the tribal issues of race, gender, sexual preference, and the arts, the core awakening of our sixth and final cycle embraced yoga, meditation, and the esoteric philosophies of the East moved our DNA toward a global consciousness. The transcendent explorations of Thoreau and Emerson, Mabel Dodge and Emma Goldman, wandered into the mystic teachings of Alan Watts and Gary Snyder, Joanna Macy and Frances Lappe, Margaret Mead and Bucky Fuller.

With them came a desperate cry for our beleaguered Mother Earth. The Puritan view of a disposable planet was at last deemed obscene. Sustainable agriculture and vegan/vegetarianism moved a nonviolent approach to people and the planet softly toward the mainstream. Aldo Leopold, the Sierra Club's David Brower, photographer Ansel Adams revived the spirit of Thoreau and the *Haudenosaunee*. An ecological mantra, ascribed to the legendary Chief Seattle, permeated the counterculture saying we are not separate from Nature...

*Whatever we do to the web of life, we do to ourselves.*

Starting in 1973, the phase-out of leaded gasoline saved countless lives. The grassroots energy of the peace, civil rights and environmental movements moved to ban nuke weapons, slash industrial emissions, end offshore oil drilling, recycle waste.

In 1976, Quaker elders trained hundreds of *No Nukes* activists to occupy the Seabrook reactor site. Some 550 later occupied New Hampshire's National Guard armories for two weeks, lifting the debate over atomic energy deep into the mainstream. In June

1978, more than 20,000 convened at Seabrook to hear Pete Seeger, Jackson Browne, John Hall sing for a new green day.

After Three Mile Island, some 200,000 No Nukers swarmed over lower Manhattan's Battery Park City for the decade's Woodstockian finale. Some 90,000 more joined Musicians United for Safe Energy for five nights in Madison Square Garden. The triple album went platinum.

The MUSE concerts fed the Solartopian vision of a green-powered Earth. Rooftop photovoltaic cells fused Indigenous naturalism with Puritan technology to produce decentralized green energy free from corporate control.

Atop the world's sixth-largest economy, California Governor Jerry Brown used tax breaks to attract more than 17,500 wind turbines. Geothermal, wave, tidal, ocean thermal, biofuels and increased efficiency deepened the sustainable mix.

Fueled by *cannabis* and psychedelics, an inspired band of California geeks broke through the cloud of information processing. Working out of a garage on a quiet Silicon Valley side street, Steve Wozniak and Steve Jobs cracked into the futuristic universe of the personal computer. On April 1, 1976, they ripped their company's name from the Beatles' music label and launched Apple Inc. Said Jobs...

*We started out to get a computer in the hands of everyday people. We succeeded beyond our wildest dreams.*

The world wide web they surfed came in part from outlier geniuses like Tim Berners-Lee, Glenda Schroeder, Charles Herzfeld and Nicola Pellow...and in part from the military. The PC/internet became the ultimate fusion of Calvinist techno-genius with Indigenous global visioning. It brought (as we'd see

over the decades) the usual unintended consequences and mega-pitfalls.

When the atom was split, Albert Einstein had begged for a “whole new way of being.”

In the post-imperial Awakening of the late ‘70s, photovoltaics and wind turbines seemed to embody a Solartopian end to the fossil and nuclear fuels that were killing the planet.

And the nascent personal computer/world wide web seemed to promise a global mind-meld that might allow our species to finally (in the words of Rodney King) “all get along.”

Then came Ronald Reagan.



# SUMMER

## *Reagan's Terror*

At the bicentennial of our birth, in the wake of the Vietnam catastrophe, we celebrated the End of Empire.

The early Jimmy Carter pardoned draft resisters, cut the military, loved human rights, pursued détente, supported Solartopia, toyed with legal pot, returned the Panama Canal.

Then came the Shah, the hostage crisis, more Cold War, Olympic/wheat embargoes, the anti-ballistic missile system, endless gas lines, soaring interest rates, boring speed limits, a killer rabbit, the October Surprise.

Dazed and confused (having pitched the country into chaos) Carter proclaimed a national state of “malaise.”

That was all Ronald Reagan needed to hear. The B-movie maven proclaimed “Morning in America” and blew Carter away.

Born in Illinois, Ronnie renounced the New Deal, endorsed McCarthy’s Red Scare, pushed the Blacklist, spied for the FBI, shilled for General Electric. As California’s hard-right governor, he assaulted higher education, defamed blacks and hippies, escalated the Drug War, proliferated prisons, drilled for oil everywhere, stuffed the statehouse with the super-rich.

As the 1980 election approached, the incumbent Carter held a heavy lead. He happily announced a done deal to bring the hostages back from Tehran. Then, somehow, there was no deal.

It was a foul replay of Nixon’s sabotage of LBJ’s 1968 Vietnam peace talks. This time’s likely suspects were future and past CIA

Chiefs William Casey and George H.W. Bush, Reagan's running mate. The hostages went free just as Ronnie was inaugurated. Then the arms flowed to Iran.

Our oldest presidential victor fired up a radioactive summer of atomic bombast by threatening all-out nuke war to obliterate the Soviet "Evil Empire"...and most of the planet along with it.

Carter had already jacked up the imperial military. Now Reagan's "Star Wars" would weaponize space, cost billions, shower the ecosphere with apocalyptic radiation, kill all living things. As explained by pop scientist Carl Sagan in terrifying detail, the nuclear winter alone would end us all.

In 1982, Reagan's daughter (Patti Davis) met the Australian anti-nuclear physician Helen Caldicott at Hugh Hefner's Playboy Mansion. Helen had called Reagan "the Pied Piper of Armageddon." On December 6, 1982, after a 90-minute chat in the Oval Office, she emerged "terrified."

On March 8, 1983, Reagan paraphrased for evangelicals a speech by singer Pat Boone, who apparently said he would rather have his daughters...

*...die now believing in God than live to grow up under communism and die one day no longer believing in God.*

With his finger on the button, the president endorsed an evangelical apocalypse that terrified us all.

On September 26, 1983, while Reagan ranted at them for causing "all evil in the world," computers at a Soviet missile base said the US had launched a nuke attack. Military protocol demanded an immediate response.

But the officer on duty, Stanislav Petrov, bravely refused. Under unimaginable personal pressure, he held out for direct radar confirmation that Reagan's missiles were actually in the air.

Thankfully, they weren't. ONE MAN had averted a catastrophe that could have killed us all (the digital glitch is still a mystery).

About three weeks later, more than 100,000,000 Americans watched ABC's *The Day After*, a searing portrayal of the world being destroyed in a nuclear holocaust. Virtually no one knew how close we'd just come to the real thing.

As we teetered at the atomic brink, Carter and then Reagan armed and trained Islamic fundamentalist Mujahideen guerrillas in Afghanistan (among them Osama bin Laden). They decimated the Soviets...as Afghans have done to imperial invaders since Alexander (we came next).

Our CIA and imperial warlords crowed with smug satisfaction as Islamic guerrillas helped topple the USSR.

But we failed to aid the impoverished Afghans. We left troops in Saudi Arabia. We infuriated our extremist allies. We fully greased the slippery slope toward epic blowback.

In an insane Iran-Iraq War that killed at least a million people (many of them teenagers) Reagan fed both sides. In Baghdad, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld gave our CIA-made dictator Saddam Hussein (bin Laden's worst enemy) a very public hug.

In 1983, a suicide bomber killed 241 Americans at a barracks in Lebanon. Reagan pulled out.

Two days later (to allegedly protect some US medical students) he sent 8,000 warriors screaming into the tiny Caribbean Island

of Grenada. A score of Americans died along with a hundred Cuban and Grenadians.

Then came Iran-Contra, a surreal scandal that defies any sane accounting. It married mass slaughter in southwest Asia with drug-dealing terrorism in central America and a crack cocaine epidemic here at home.

Simply put: the White House illegally sold weapons to our alleged blood enemies in Iran. It was done allegedly to win the release of three hostages, something Reagan said he'd never do (it may actually have been payback for the 1980 "October Surprise" hostage release delay that put Reagan in the White House).

Proceeds from those illegal arms sales went illegally to *Contra* rebels in Nicaragua who were trying to illegally destroy the duly elected leftist Sandinista government.

As Nixon had done for Vietnam's drug-smuggling Thieu-Ky *junta*, Reagan compared the *Contras* to George Washington, Tom Jefferson and other American Founders.

The Contras were in fact a random band of coke-dealing thugs. The crack epidemic they spawned decimated our cities, and gave Ron and Nancy a public excuse to take Nixon's "War on Drugs" to a whole new level.

Actually, Reagan's own regime was illegally selling weapons to fund the criminal hitmen who were dealing the cocaine that spurred the crack epidemic he used to justify the Drug War. Early in his second term, the president duly proclaimed his ignorance.

His state of mind was by then dubious. He'd been shot in 1981 by John Hinckley, a Bush family friend who said he did it to prove his love for the (lesbian) actress Jodie Foster. Ronnie barely

escaped the death that would have made him Tecumseh's eighth presidential victim.

But the gunshot trauma and his advanced age may have shattered Ron's mental facilities. Both Ron, Jr. and avid Reaganite Bill O'Reilly say the president was suffering from Alzheimer-related dementia.

With his unsteady hand firmly on the nuclear button, the president terrified our entire species with the prospect of radioactive demise.

We may never know if Ronnie understood Iran-Contra, the apocalypse he courted, or that millions of desperate humans were marching worldwide to freeze nuke weapons and stop him from blowing up the planet.

But an unlikely matriarch apparently did.

# FALL

## ***New Right Corporate Fundamentalism***

On November 18, 1978, some 900 followers of the Reverend Jim Jones died in the jungles of Guyana.

Their San Francisco-based “People’s Temple” had become a dictatorial cult. Some drank cyanide from a vat of Kool-Aid. Some escaped. But others were shot, including US Rep. Leo Ryan, who’d flown to Guyana to investigate.

Just nine days later, San Francisco Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk were murdered in City Hall by Dan White, a deranged conservative. The brilliant, urbane Moscone was one of America’s leading liberals. Milk was our first openly gay elected official. The killer got a lowered sentence by claiming, in his infamous “Twinkie defense,” that he’d gone insane by eating too much sugar (he later committed suicide).

In 1980, Ronald Reagan opened his presidential campaign in Philadelphia, Mississippi, where three civil rights workers had been brutally murdered. His presence conjured up the racist rantings of Strom Thurmond and George Wallace, meant to lure KKK Democrats to the Republican Party.

On December 8, 1980, John Lennon was shot for no apparent reason beyond the whim of a crazy man. The beloved Beatle and his wife Yoko Ono are treasured icons of peace, social justice, and a counterculture come of age.

On May 11, 1981, Bob Marley died of cancer. Like Lennon, the Rastafarian reggae master was transcendent, charismatic, irreplaceable, wholly given to a global vision of organic unity.

Marley's *One Love* lives with Lennon/Ono's *Give Peace a Chance* and *Imagine* atop our transcendent playlist.

Meanwhile, Reagan declared war on organized labor. The Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization was one of the few trade unions to support him for president. In return, Reagan vowed never to endanger the flying public over labor issues.

The everyday safety of millions of airborne Americans depended on PATCO. As highly skilled federal employees, decent wages and working conditions and a 32-hour work week were essential to their precision performance.

But when they struck for all that, Reagan loudly fired and blacklisted 11,325 essential professionals from federal service. Airline safety standards sank for at least a decade, endangering millions of travelers, and killing some (including Libby Gregory, who died in a completely avoidable crash at LAX).

Reagan's thrilled corporate cronies slashed wages, busted strikes, assaulted collective bargaining. Good permanent jobs disappeared. The rich/poor gap exploded. Our aging industrial democracy bled to the core.

"Christian" fundamentalists joined the corporate crusade to kill it dead. Nixon/Reagan's thinly veiled bigotry drew in southern whites. The Drug War helped them incarcerate, disenfranchise and decimate whole communities of youth and color.

As the Powell Court voided campaign finance laws, Robber Baron cash gushed into our elections through ALEC and "think tanks" like the Cato Institute and Heritage Foundation. The Koch Brothers flooded our universities and media with Randian devotion to sanctimony and greed.

A corporate-fundamentalist crusade spewed from megachurch televangelists awash in cash. Coin of the realm was contempt for women, gays, non-millionaires and people of color. The corporate Calvinist Elect worshipped America's imperial "exceptionalism." Divine displeasure poured down on trade unions, Social Security, Medicare, Food Stamps and a heathen herd whose assigned role was to "work hard, get sick, die early."

Fervent Puritan preachers (many of them secretly gay) welcomed the deadly plague of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome as God's righteous revenge. Reagan sneered at the LGBTQ community until AIDS killed his friend, actor Rock Hudson. Ron publicly softened, but never fully funded research or treatment.

Like the later Donald Trump, the choice of Ronald Reagan as a fundamentalist Savior was pretty ironic. Typical of Hollywood, the Reagans were grudging churchgoers. Nancy was pregnant at their wedding (meaning they had "dined before grace").

The First Lady was pro-choice. Obsessed with pagan astrology, she set Ronnie's inauguration as California governor for a deep night moment timed by the stars and planets. Daughter Patti posed nude for Playboy. Ron, Jr., pranced around *Saturday Night Live* in his underwear.

But the Gipper was our new magistrate-priest. The hippie counterculture had inflamed our Puritan dark side. Its new Randian witch-hunters were anti-union, anti-integration, anti-feminist, anti-choice, anti-gay, anti-pot, anti-tax, anti-poor, anti-health care, anti-regulation, anti-environment, anti-woman, anti-empathy, anti-compassion, anti-immigrant, racist, xenophobic, pro-death penalty, pro-gun, pro-Drug War, pro-surveillance, pro-corporate, pro-war, pro-empire and profoundly authoritarian.



How this awful ethos deemed itself Christian or Libertarian or even traditionally American remains a scriptural mystery. Texas Congressman Ron Paul, an Ayn Rand devotee, was anti-government and anti-union while also being anti-empire and pro-pot. Paul's denunciations of the Vietnam and Drug Wars were fierce and convincing.

But most corporate-fundamentalist Barons (like the Kochs) just wanted to slash their taxes, suck the planet dry, end public accountability, and eliminate compassion-based programs that support "inferior beings."

One such profound thinker was Donald Trump, son of a Klan-loving slumlord with deep ties to New York's leading mob families. Biographer David Cay Johnston says that in 1983 Russian gangsters began laundering millions through Trump's casino and hotel operations. With Deutsche Bank as a key conduit, Vladimir Putin and the Russian mob owned The Donald right through reality TV and his six bankruptcies.

While Trump built his Russo-American empire, Televangelists like Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson gathered huge flocks with giant tax-free bank accounts. As Robin Williams explained it through the satirical mouth of a fake fundamentalist preacher...

*The word audit does not appear in the Bible.*

The "Christian Crusade" rolled racism, homophobia, misogyny and greed into a juggernaut of hate. As in Puritan Boston, poverty became a sin, racial diversity a mark of the Devil, loving thy neighbor a bunch of hippie hype.

So too rights for women, sexual diversity, racial justice, ecological preservation, smaller nations that might deny our divine/imperial right to rape and pillage.

Joining the Hallelujah Chorus, a new breed of corporate Democrats abandoned social justice altogether. In the mid 1980s, as Trump began laundering rubles, Bill and Hillary Clinton (with a cynical clique of ambitious centrists) used the new Democratic Leadership Council to launder the party into the asset accounts of Wall Street banking firms like Goldman Sachs.

Scorning New Left, social democrat, Civil Rights, green and peace activists, the “New Democrats” turned the party hard right. The New Deal, New Frontier, and Great Society were old news to *Clintonista* opportunists who worshiped at the Reaganite altar while hiply courting the activist counterculture.

They peddled mandatory sentencing laws, an escalated Drug War, giant welfare cuts, thinly disguised racism. They took the US Senate in 1986. But they ran it in the repressive tradition of Woodrow Wilson and the fake two-party system that had ruled mostly as one since the Palmer Raid Purges of 1918-20.

Senile America’s terrible corporate sword was the electronic media. The Fairness Doctrine had required that any partisan opinion endorsed by a radio/TV magnate required equal time for an opposing point of view.

Reagan dumped that in 1986. His billionaire battalions flooded the airwaves with endless bigotry...and to Hell with fairness or balance. Over the public-licensed frequencies it monopolized, the New Right relentlessly ranted the Randian screed.

Top shock jock Rush Limbaugh fed the hate-mongering likes of Ann Coulter, Bill O'Reilly, Laura Ingraham, Glenn Beck and too many more to sanely mention. The "mainstream media" pushed the imperial mindset as if there were no other.

In the hard autumn of the Reagan Reaction, the drug war raged, the owned media blared, the Russians bought Trump, the Democrats went corporate, the empire hit over-reach.

And the latest crew of billionaire barons saddled up for another Gilded gala.

As Ronnie put it early on...

*You ain't seen nothin' yet.*

# WINTER

## *The Greedy Eighties*

The Reagans' 1981 inauguration proudly exceeded all previous Gilded orgies of aftermath excess...and then some.

The First Lady made the White House an American Versailles. Ronnie's all-male, all-white, all millionaire GOP cabinet proclaimed that (as in the 1890s, 1920s, '50s and Nixon '70s) the Greedy '80s were all about opulent arrogance.

"Reaganomics" deregulated everything Jimmy Carter had missed. The private looting of public assets hit new depths. Reagan left the working/middle class and natural planet to the tender mercies of the latest band of super-rich barbarians (in the dying USSR, much the same was being done by a rising class of Russian mobsters).

Reagan slashed top tier taxes (which had been 90% at the margin under Ike) from 70% in 1981 to 28% by 1988. He raised interest rates to benefit those with money in the banks – and for the baronial few who owned them.

The decade began in a deep chasm, then recovered. In 1987, the stock market suffered its worst crash since '29. Savings & Loan corruption cost taxpayers billions. Ronnie had promised to slash the bureaucracy and balance the budget, then left a bloated federal payroll and a record deficit.

His eco-impact ran parallel. Koch-type New Rightists ravaged our regulatory agencies. Interior Secretary James Watt said not to worry because Jesus "would soon come" and moot our Mother Earth.

While pillaging the park system, Reagan ripped Carter's perfectly functional solar panels off the White House roof. He assaulted green energy and conservation while pushing (unsuccessfully) an atomic reactor renaissance.

In California, GOP Governor George Deukmejian roadblocked (but couldn't kill) Jerry Brown's Solartopian revolution. In 1983: Washington Public Power Supply System ("Whoops") defaulted on more than \$2 billion in municipal bonds fused to five nuke reactors (only one of them ever fired up).

Our food was also assaulted. In 1965, a chemist at G.D. Searle (home of the birth control pill) stumbled on aspartame, a calorie-free artificial sweetener. Congressional hearings showed it to be a deadly neuro-toxin with side-effects like Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, lupus, dementia and more.

But Searle gave Reagan insider Don Rumsfeld a \$15 million bonus to ram it through the Food & Drug Administration...and into more than 6,000 widely consumed "food" products.

On January 28, 1986, the space shuttle *Challenger* blew up. Christa McAuliffe (a New Hampshire mother and school teacher) was an honored passenger. Millions of schoolkids watched the lift-off. Reagan's State of the Union was timed for that evening.

But amidst unseasonably cold weather, frantic engineers warned that critical O-rings might shrink. The NASA brass ignored them. The shuttle exploded. A horrified world watched seven humans die from politicized negligence.

Reagan's speech that night was a Hollywood masterpiece. He praised the dead astronauts but took no direct responsibility.

Absent any real critique of the regime's role in the disaster, the corporate media gushed all over Ronnie's hollow eulogy.

The *Challenger* epitomized the Reagan's Aftermath. Once through his early economic downturn, the Gipper got a Teflon shield that made him seemingly immune to all criticism, even as his mental state declined, and his policies devastated the working/middle class...and the planet.

Amidst the Great '80s Barbecue, the Right Wing Media mythologized a gargantuan military budget that allegedly drove the Soviet Union into bankruptcy. They still give Ronnie credit for ending the Cold War.

But they have the wrong President...and the wrong Reagan.

When Nancy fired White House Chief of Staff Donald Regan in 1987, word spread that in her husband's mental absence, the First Lady was running the Oval Office.

Her most hostile biographers (led by Kitty Kelley and Barbara Ehrenreich) confirm Nancy's desire to leave a legacy of peace. She found a willing partner in an urbane Soviet Tsar.

Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985. Endowed with the soul of a New Deal Democrat, he was the first Russian Tsar to embrace a semblance of constitutional democracy since Alexander2 was assassinated in 1881.

Gorby's *perestroika* restructured the rotted Communist bureaucracy. *Glasnost* opened public dialog.

But on April 26, 1986, Chernobyl Reactor #4 exploded. Deadly radioactive fallout spewed high into the atmosphere. It crossed

the Ukraine, Belarus, and much of western Europe. It killed more than a million people and gutted a USSR already in decline.

Some 600,000 (that's NOT a typo) "liquidators" were forced to clean up the ruined nuke. Many were fatally irradiated. The costs ran into the hundreds of billions.

It's not clear how much Gorbachev actually understood about the scope of the Chernobyl disaster. But his government lied (as ALL governments lie about nuclear power disasters) and much of the downwind populace never forgave him.

Soviet Baby Boomers hated Chernobyl. But they loved the rock music they heard on black market radios. In the Moscow eighties, a pair of western blue jeans could fetch \$200. If any single outside agent brought down the stodgy, obsolete, out-of-touch USSR, it was the Beatles.

The Russian people also came to hate the Afghan quagmire, "Russia's Vietnam." When Mujahideen fundamentalists used CIA Stinger missiles to shoot down 269 helicopters, Soviet imperial solidarity went down with them.

But Pakistan's soon-to-be-assassinated Premier Benazir Bhutto warned that America had created a "Frankenstein," in this case Osama bin Laden. On 9/11/01, another unintended consequence would demand its payback.

On December 8, 1987, as Gorby's home front disintegrated, the First Lady hosted the ultimate Gilded Russo-American dinner. For weeks she obsessed over the tiniest details. The Texan Van Cliburn rendered a stirring rendition of "Moscow Nights" by the dour old-school pianist Sergei Rachmaninoff (whose final works were Hollywood film scores).

Nancy's fabulous *fete* became ground zero for a complex set of tense negotiations. Gorby wanted to abolish all nukes by 2000. Ronnie told him to tear down the Berlin Wall.

A treaty emerged. The Soviet empire soon collapsed...then the USSR itself. The insane 40-year Cold War ended at last.

It will be forever debated how much of President Reagan was mentally present through the process. One could say the Cold War was on its way out, that the Soviet stumble into the graveyard of empires had already doomed it, that the First Lady's "dinner diplomacy" was just glitzy icing on a complex cake.

But at a time when image was just shy of everything, our tribal matriarch (our second female *de facto* president) had clearly helped facilitate a global peace.

In the bigger picture, for two obsolete empires, the time had come. Humankind had somehow survived forty years of insane saber-rattling.

The Cold War impoverished us all. It wasted SO MUCH of our precious time and money. But it was (finally!) over.

And thus we became Earth's sole super-power. It was a time for some to gloat...and for the rest of us to ride a down-bound train. From their gilded imperial perch, Nancy Reagan and George H.W. Bush (a patrician Senator's son, a former Spook-in-Chief) presided over the spiral-ending death of US democracy.

At the grassroots, with our global dominance assured, humankind ached for a "peace dividend" to remake our world.



But imperial senility bore bitter fruit. The Reagan/Bushes epitomized the classic decay of a dying empire.

Among the symptoms: a bloated military, a brain-dead bureaucracy, a gargantuan national debt, a ravaged industrial landscape, a declining foreign trade balance, a terrible gap between rich and poor, rampant poverty, imperial arrogance, technological obsolescence, indifference (even hostility) to the natural ecology, a corporate culture built on “me-first” cynicism, contempt for civic virtue, human compassion, much much more.

Wages, schools, national parks, and our global ecosystem were all in deadly decline. America’s core job market shifted from unionized industrial work to menial burger flipping. Production poured overseas, along with our lead in the Solartopian technologies that would soon remake the world.

Poverty, tuitions, homelessness, and hunger soared. The working/middle class rode a down-bound express to poverty, alienation, anger.

America’s richest 20% owned 80% of our assets (it would soon get much worse). The races were deliberately polarized. Upward mobility disappeared except for the tiniest few. The Drug War raged, AIDS ran rampant, the gulag was packed.

Alexander Hamilton and Lewis Powell’s shared vision of corporate dominion had become a brutal reality. Beneath a dung heap of ill-got cash, the Gilded Barons buried the remains of our original republic. The tombstone read: *Corporate Privilege*.

In 1988, Poppy Bush became our final imperial undertaker. Electronic voting machines were used for the first time in that spring’s New Hampshire primaries. Election day polls showed

Bush losing to Bob Dole But he won with a virtual statistical impossibility, an electoral flip right out of the CIA's third world playbook. It would define the 21st century's key elections, starting with the illicit Florida 2000 crowning of George One's incompetent son, George Two.

In the 1988 general election, Bush smeared Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis with the crimes of a pardoned black prisoner named Willie Horton. The Connecticut blue blood then infected the White House with Nixon dirty tricksters Lee Atwater, Dick Cheney and Karl Rove.

Bush One was our last WW2 president... and last country club Republican, a dying breed of ultra-rich oligarchs who cultivated a veneer of honor and decency that evaporated with his son and Donald Trump.

George H. W. Bush pushed the Americans with Disabilities Act, plus upgrades to the Clean Air Act and some financial regulations. He pardoned the core cadre of Iran-Contra perpetrators (obscuring his own role in it) and escalated the Drug War. Then he waffled on taxes, his ultimate downfall.

In 1989, Eastern Europe erupted, demanding the independence Stalin took from them forty years before. Gorby nixed an iron-fisted Tsarist retaliation. Except for Romania, the former Iron Curtain countries pulled off humankind's most successful nonviolent uprisings since Gandhi made the Brits quit India. Following in Nancy Reagan's footsteps, Bush and Gorby took major steps toward nuclear arms reduction.

In 1991, as the USSR collapsed, Gorbachev fell to the booze-hound Boris Yeltsin. US covert operatives crowed about sticking

Mother Russia with a bumbling idiot. (Payback came in the form of his chief aide, Vladimir Putin).

Bush ended the 24/7 hair-trigger nuke-armed Strategic Air Command overflights. Underground atomic tests (which had persisted since 1963) thankfully stopped. Humankind sighed.

Thus the sixth and final martial summer of our organic spiral ended with a welcome whimper rather than a terminal bang. Reagan's time on the brink had scorched our souls with fear, our media with loathing, our treasury with bankruptcy.

In 1991, Iraq's Rumsfeld-hugged CIA autocrat Saddam Hussein rolled into Kuwait's oil fields. Then Saddam hinted at dumping the petrodollar for the Euro. THAT was a BIG mistake.

Sure enough, Bush launched a 100-hour blitzkrieg. About a hundred Americans died alongside countless Iraqis. Many burned inside Saddam's tanks. Hundreds of innocents died as US aircraft knowingly bombed a civilian shelter...along with power lines, water facilities and other civilian infrastructure. Ensuing sanctions claimed untold numbers of children.

Our "unscathed" vets came home to a Gulf War Syndrome that's never been fully explained. Some 250,000 were eventually disabled. Others fell victim to the usual post-war official denial, neglect and brutality....leading to broken families, homelessness, drug addiction, suicide.

Bush One also brought down the drug-dealing CIA-installed dictator Manuel Noriega in a bizarre, high-profile Dollar Diplomacy re-run. Thousands of Panamanian civilians were killed to clarify that not even a puppet dare stand against us.

Bush One's "kinder/gentler" Dulles/CIA veneer of Global Election made this much perfectly clear: the Heathen Red Empire was gone, our corporate-imperial City on the Hill ruled absolute.

Skin deep, American democracy (as originally conceived) was every bit as dead as Soviet Communism.

We were still at the epicenter of a global cultural revolution. With Awakened attitudes toward sex, drugs, the arts, diversity, religion, attire, women's and minority rights, environmentalism, etc, we'd made an astonishing evolutionary leap beyond our Puritan DNA. We took it all for granted.. But America's culture of 1991 was a literal world apart from that of Puritan New England three centuries earlier.

Linked together by the personal computer and world wide web, we bent forever the arc of human creativity and global potential.

In the styles of our lives and the core of our consciousness, our Indigenous-inspired counterculture had dumped the old Puritan theocracy in the trash bin of history.

But our urge to global dominion remains a whole other story.

George Washington's dream of an "Empire for Liberty" became a global quagmire of entangled alliances and imperial interventions. What Ike called our "military-industrial complex" metastasized into our *nobody-really-knows-how-big* "national security" budget. Our global network of *nobody-knows-how-many-or-what-they're-really-for* bases bled deep into the netherworld.

As of 1992, with some vital exceptions, our republic had become a hollow shell, a fake democracy painted on an iron imperial fist.

Our corporate elite owned both major parties, the electoral process, all branches of government, the mainstream media. The rich/poor abyss crippled our soul. The Drug War gutted our young and non-white communities. Our misogynist class-and-race-based gulag stripped millions of their rights and dignity. Autocratic corporations raped and pillaged our Mother Earth.

As the sixth and final cycle of our national story came to an end, we fell into a terminal coma.

The spiral of our history made it clear that Washington “Empire for Liberty” was a contradiction in terms, that no nation can maintain a global imperium and still claim to be a democracy.

Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama would preside (from 1993 to 2017) over the American republic’s final demise.

Then Donald Trump came to make the rubble bounce.

# FLATLINE

## *Our Imperial Zombie Coma*

### *Clinton, Bush2, Obama, Trump*

At the peak of our powers, we buried the Axis. In our full adulthood, we split the atom, got full employment, hired millions of women, desegregated baseball and the army, penned an Economic Bill of Rights, hosted the United Nations, Marshall Planned our former enemies out of bankruptcy (but not our flattened and broke Soviet ally).

With FDR's social services and financial safeguards, our "Greatest Generation" got free college educations and cheap home loans. It celebrated with the Baby Boom, human history's biggest spawn to date.

We seemed at last on the brink of global harmony, social justice, racial equality, ecological sanity.

But the McCarthyite madness of Puritan paranoia, the curse of racism and misogyny, a senseless Cold War, corporate greed and the arrogance of empire...all conspired to shatter the dream.

In 1991, we buried the Soviet Union. A "peace dividend" was within our grasp. The trillions wasted winning global hegemony could now end poverty and injustice, upgrade education, medicine, ecological protection and so much more.

IBM, Microsoft, Apple, Google and other IT pioneers handed us modern history's most profitable technological revolution. The magic bus of personal computing and the internet should have made us all incredibly rich.

American breakthroughs in wind turbines and photovoltaic cells, advanced batteries and LED efficiency, were set to solve major parts of our ecological crisis (ozone depletion, global warming, petro-pollution), guarantee our energy independence, create endless jobs and further enrich our nation.

In 1992, our first Baby Boom president inherited that trifecta of IT, green and peaceful prosperity. Hip, charming, funny, bright, blest with boundless energy, Bill Clinton and his brilliant First Lady seemed perfectly poised to lead us to the Promised Land.

But at the dawn of the new millennium, things went terribly wrong.

## ***The Clinton Catastrophe***

As Ronald Reagan's successor, George H.W. Bush hosted the Soviet collapse, the end of the Cold War, a halt to nuclear bomb tests (even underground). Our Strategic Air Command bombers came off permanent alert. It was a monumental moment.

In Operation Desert Storm, George crushed Saddam Hussein's feeble army, but was careful to leave him in power (where he'd installed him in the first place). Bush sailed through 1991 with an 89% approval rating. Like Jimmy after Camp David, George seemed on a clear path to re-election.

His 1992 opponent was Bill Clinton, the Baby Boom's penultimate Peter Pan. Born poor, raised by a single mother, the amoral, charismatic pragmatist clawed his way to a Rhodes Scholarship, a law degree, Arkansas' youngest governorship.

He married the equally bright Chicago-born Hillary Rodham, a prestigious product of Wellesley College and Yale Law. Raised a staunch Methodist, she was an early Goldwater girl. Bill believed in whatever worked.

Boomer spawn of the '60s counterculture, the first couple radiated the hip veneer of social democracy, ecological protection and post-imperial peacemaking. They spoke with passion for our working/middle class, for the environment, for diversity, for peace.

As Governor, the Clintons blinked while the CIA ran huge quantities of *Contra* cocaine through the Arkansas town of Mena (see Tom Cruise in *American Made*).



Then they sold the Democratic Party to Wall Street. The ultra-elite Democratic Leadership Council trashed the party's "Democratic Wing" (Paul Wellstone's phrase) and embraced the mega-bankers led by Goldman-Sachs's Robert Rubin.

In the 1992 presidential race, Ross Perot was Bill's magic wand. The quirky Texas billionaire hated federal debt and the North American Free Trade Agreement, warning its "giant sucking sound" would cost millions of heartland jobs. He was twice right.

Perot turned the 1992 televised debates into a three-ring circus. When the obviously bored Blue Blood Bush looked at his watch, it was clear he'd soon have better places to be.

By contrast, Bill used a saxophone to blow his brains out on prime time television. Hipster sunglasses and endless verve matched his long history of apparent sexual predation (including at least one alleged rape).

To look "tough on crime," the "progressive" Arkansas Governor rushed home to execute Ricky Ray Rector, a destitute black man so addled he asked that his last dessert be saved for him to eat after his execution.

Perot's disruptive campaign and Rubin's ace-in-the-hole cash won Bill the White House. The Clintons' 1992 inauguration (like Jimmy's in 1976) was a hip Jacksonian fiesta. The last WW2 president was gone. The Boomers came hot for a rebirth of sex, legal weed and rock-and-roll...plus diversity, freedom, prosperity and a chance to remake the world. .

Our "first black president" appointed the first female Attorney General (Janet Reno) and Secretary of State (Madeleine

Albright). He put the magnificent Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg onto the Supreme Court.

He followed with a genuine global triumph. With Gaelic roots of his own, Clinton dared embrace the Irish Republican Army's Gerry Adams. The masterful George Mitchell used the president's Celtic charisma to calm the Emerald Isle's 350-year civil war. It was a miracle (hopefully) for the ages.

The era's long economic expansion brought drops in poverty and unemployment alongside rises in homeownership and college opportunities. But it did not close the growing abyss between the very rich and the rest of us.

The Clintons connected much of the public school system to the internet, won the Family and Medical Leave Act, got new protections for voter registration, dismantled some 1,700 old Soviet nuke warheads, protected five new national parks along with 60 million acres of roadless areas. In 1998 the administration balanced the federal budget for the first time since Ike did it in 1956 (when he canceled Vietnam's election).

The Clintons reversed the lethal Reagan/Bush inaction on an HIV/AIDS epidemic ravaging the LGBTQ community, saving countless lives and restoring dignity to many of those stricken.

At the grassroots, freewheeling eco-warriors like Greenpeace, Sierra, Friends of the Earth and the Rainforest Action Network helped force 1989's Montreal Protocol Agreements that cut ozone-destroying CFC emissions. They found a sometime ally in the Clintons, who did NOT resume nuclear weapons testing, even underground.

But with classic neo-liberal deceit, the Clintons pioneered the deadly art of “triangulation.” They postured as social democrats... but they ruled as corrupt corporatists.

The “liberal” southern Democrats slashed welfare’s safety net, ravaging millions of American families, while indulging in a racist attack on the black rapper Sister Souljah. Bill’s “three strikes and you’re out” policy destroyed countless lives. He barred one-time pot smokers (like himself) from public housing. He sent 673,000 citizens to the Drug War gulag, doubling Reagan’s haul.

In opposing Yugoslavia’s awful dictator Slobodan Milosevic, Bill ignored local non-violent activists who begged him NOT to bomb their country. He showered the region with deadly depleted uranium, but ignored worldwide pleas to intervene in Rwanda, where at least 800,000 died in ghastly ethnic slaughter.

He waffled on soldiers being openly gay with a half-way “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” meander that made no real sense. He signed the bigoted the Defense of Marriage Act, demeaning LGBTQ vows.

Overall the Clintons trashed the Democratic Party’s engaged, excited grassroots Boomer base for the big corporate money that would make them multi-millionaires. They betrayed the social democrats who elected them, shafting the working/middle class which needed real help and would soon take Trumpist revenge.

The Clintons made a big shout toward health reform, but trashed single-payer Medicare-for-All and got nothing. They railed against polluters but wimped out on plastics, mass transit, fracking and renewables, failing to restore Jimmy’s solar panels to the White House Roof. They perpetrated NAFTA which (as Perot predicted) trashed the Rust Belt, wrecked Mexican agriculture. They set the stage for the fake populism of Donald Trump.

For show, Bill indulged a yell or two at the Big Banks. But he took their money, followed orders, and gutted FDR's Glass-Steagall Act and other financial regulations...leading directly to the *Big Short* crash of 2007-9.

With Robert Rubin running the show, the Peace Dividend and worldwide web windfall disappeared into what Matt Taibbi infamously called "The Great American Bubble Machine." Goldman-Sachs, he wrote, became...

*The world's most powerful investment bank...a great vampire squid wrapped around the face of humanity, relentlessly jamming its blood funnel into anything that smells like money.*

While the Clintons betrayed the working/middle class, a Republican tsunami swept both houses of Congress, enshrining a hate-filled band of reactionary banshees. Newt Gingrich's hard-right 1994 Contract on America rode the Democrats' betrayals to new levels of mean-spirited arrogance and contempt.

The mood was matched in Israel. At Clinton's urging, Prime minister Yitzhak Rabin had signed the 1992 Oslo accords with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. Hugely controversial, the agreement seemed to open a path to conciliation between two of the world's most bitterly alienated peoples.

But in 1995 Rabin was murdered, apparently by a young Orthodox *dybbuk*. Like the killings of Lincoln, Alexander2, Michael Collins, Gandhi, King, the Kennedys, Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto, Egypt's Sadat and too many more, the traumatic loss of this *zaide* peacemaker was devastating. The world, the region, the state of Israel, the Jewish people have yet to recover.

In 1996, House Speaker Gingrich stupidly shut the government. The GOP nominated the dull-as-drying-paint Bob Dole. Lucky Bill got another open door to real change.

His 1996 contribution was the neo-liberal Telecommunications Act. Reagan had killed the Fairness Doctrine. Now Clinton-Gore let corporate radio-TV-print monopolies choke information flow. The quaint customs of equal time, meaningful fact-checking and on-air professionalism became ancient history.

The immediate blowback was an endless howl of racist hate-mongering and manipulation. Truth and civility left our airwaves. FOX “News” burst from Hell, spawning an air-head horde of nasty shock jocks like Ann Coulter, Rush Limbaugh, Laura Ingram, Glenn Beck and worse. The cruel tsunami of hateful invective still pours through the heartland and poisons our soul.

Bill celebrated by having oral sex with a 20-something intern in the Oval Office while talking on the phone to a Florida sugar baron widely accused of poisoning the Everglades. For endless months he chanted his fake mantra...

*I did not have sexual relations with that woman.*

Lacking the grace or common decency to step aside, Clinton indulged the GOP in a debilitating impeachment farce. The legal pretexts were thin. For the GOP, it was a cynical power play. For Clinton it was (as always) all about him.

For the rest of us, it was the costly tragedy of a giant generation’s lost opportunity, the stillborn rebirth of what should have been an epic burst of awakened, revolutionary energy.

Instead of social change, Bills lasting legacy became an X-rated sex saga. The investment of so many social activists in the Clinton Democrats turned to toxic dust.

The party's corporate elite seized on the politics of cultural identity. But in fealty to Wall Street, it disconnected from the tangible advances in green economic justice that so many working/middle class Americans desperately needed. The Clintonistas sabotaged the New Deal/New Frontier coalition, catering to the corporate-professional upper class while alienating those below, especially farming and urban working families (whose unions they shattered).

By 2000 we were ruled by two completely corrupt corporate parties, both unflinching supporters of the empire.

The Clinton Democrats claimed a commitment to the shifting American demographic...but none to the nitty gritty needs of the working/middle class.

As their Eisenhower/Bush country-club core dissolved, the 21st Century GOP lasered into a corporate-imperial fossil/nuke juggernaut...angry, bigoted, misogynist, obsolete...the furious last bastion of the old-rich-white-male Puritan Elect.

With no mainstream voice for the common good, America flatlined into an end-of-empire coma whose social, economic, ecological and spiritual costs devolved far beyond the merely catastrophic.

# ***THE STOLEN ELECTION OF 2000***

As the Clinton miasma evaporated, its boy scout VP finally got the presidential nod. A Senator's son, Al Gore was raised in a DC hotel suite and went to Vietnam as a journalist. He was at least as corporate as the Clintons, but far less cherubic.

In 2000, Al ran with Connecticut's insufferable Sen. Joe Lieberman, as close to a Republican as an alleged Democrat could be (but even more boring).

The GOP chose Texas Gov. George W. Bush, Bush One's son. Dubbed "Shrub" by beloved Austin pundit Molly Ivins, the Bush boy reeked of barroom adolescence and imperial arrogance. As governor he fried a record 152 prisoners (and mocked Christian convert Karla Faye Tucker, who begged for mercy).

W's running mate was Wyoming's Dick Cheney, a Nixon dirty trickster with a permanent sneer. As the designated "adult" for George's Oval playpen, Cheney was utterly corrupt and uncaring. His sidekick Karl Rove was a master manipulator in the mould of Mark Hanna and Dick Daley, Roy Cohn and Lee Atwater.

Consumer activist Ralph Nader ran in the transcendent tradition of the Levellers and Abolitionists, Populists and Socialists, Farm-Labor Progressives and Peace Now pacifists, green eco-warriors and earnest consumer reformers.

Ralph was the left's iconic curmudgeon, rebirthing our awakened Indigenous activism for a new generation and a new millennium. He advocated ending the death penalty, slashing the military, burying the empire, bringing our troops home, dismantling

atomic weapons, shutting nuke reactors, legalizing pot, funding drug treatment, public campaign financing, same-day voter registration, hand cast and counted paper ballots, a guaranteed minimum income, universal health care, affordable housing, expanded Social Security, an empowered labor movement, strong anti-trust and civil rights laws, an “end to corporate welfare as we know it.”

Winona LaDuke became America’s first Indigenous (*Anishnaabe*) candidate for Vice President. She called for a Constitutional amendment requiring environmental impacts to be evaluated in terms of seven generations. She demanded the return of lands wrongly seized from Indigenous tribes, and reparations for the descendants of slaves.

Ralph offered to not campaign in key swing states. He repeatedly asked to meet personally with Gore. Al couldn’t be bothered.

Aided by solid economic numbers (and the widespread belief that Bush2 was not fit to be president) Gore won the popular vote by 540,520 officially counted ballots. Early on election night, the major networks proclaimed him president-elect.

Had he carried Tennessee all would have ended right there. But he lost his home state, the first presidential candidate to do so since McGovern lost South Dakota in 1972.

Then Florida got close. In the “family” tradition of CIA dictatorships, Shrub’s brother Jeb had stripped some 94,000 mostly black and Hispanic citizens off the voter rolls (Nader carried 97,488). *El Jefe* said they were all ex-felons, banned by Jim Crow/KKK laws from voting. (Investigator Greg Palast later proved not one of them was an actual ex-felon).



Then 20,000 electronic votes shifted in Volusia and other counties. John Ellis (a Bush first cousin) shouted at FOX TV that his kin could win.

Things got even darker. “Hanging chads” marred badly designed ballots. Key documents went (of course) somehow missing. An upscale Yuppie “Brooks Brothers Mob” (including future Supreme Brett Kavanaugh) terrorized precinct vote counters.

Amidst the chaos, the High Court (5-4) put Bush in the White House. His alleged margin of victory was 537 votes.

A later state-wide recount showed Gore was the rightful winner. But the corporate Democrats immediately launched a primal howl at Nader, claiming he’d cost Gore Florida and thus the White House. They never peeped about the thousands of citizens Brother Jeb had stripped from the voter rolls, or those flipped electronic vote counts in Volusia and other counties.

In fact, with Jeb in the Statehouse, Brother George was always going to win Florida, no matter how many votes Ralph Nader did or did not get.

In January, 2001, on the floor of the Congress, the Black Caucus argued that Florida’s electoral votes had been stolen. They demanded a constitutional review (which had happened in 1877, and which required the assent of just one Representative and one Senator).

But as VP, Gore still presided over Congress. Exerting all his executive muscle, he strong-armed the Senate into ignoring a challenge that might’ve exposed what really happened in Florida (and might’ve helped prevent it from happening again).

Instead, at the sole decree of Al Gore, the seating of the Florida delegation to the Electoral College went unchallenged. For the fifth time in US history the White House passed to the candidate who came in second in the popular vote.

Corporate Democrats still love to scream at Nader. Like Kerry in 2004 and Hillary in 2016, they seem to consider any vote cast for anyone to their left to be stolen property. The relentless attacks on Ralph's on-going anti-corporate campaigns were an added dividend for their Wall Street backers.

Gore opened his later Oscar-winning *Inconvenient Truth* by "joking" that he was "once the next president of the United States." Despite immense personal resources, for years to come he never seriously challenged the Electoral College or the stripping and flipping that put George W. Bush (and ultimately Donald Trump) into the White House.

## ***BUSH 2 (THE LESSER)***

After losing the 2000 race by a half-million ballots, the Bush-Cheney-Rove triumvirate mixed Nixon's treasonous Dirty Tricks with Gilded excess, corporate greed, Calvinist arrogance, utter incompetence, Imperial over-reach, eco-suicide...and (in Iraq and at Guantanamo) a hideous display of sadistic torture.

Unlike his urbane CIA dad, W was a not-so-bright good-ol'-boy likely get you drunk (or stoned) at a barbecue.

There were some early glimmers of residual humanity. Having campaigned for "Compassionate Conservatism," Team Bush sold the illusion of truly caring about the working/middle class.

First there was a high-profile push for advanced education. As the president put it...

*Rarely is the question asked: is our children learning?*

George saddled up with liberal Senator Edward Kennedy for a "No Child Left Behind" school system defined by a national testing regime. Both proved catastrophic, as Kennedy later regretted.

After years of harsh denial by Reagan and his dad, Bush2 did campaign to fight AIDS/HIV and malaria in Africa.

But mostly the regime assaulted non-millionaires, the poor, women, the non-white, the First, Fourth and Eighth Amendments, the ecosystem, natural parks, renewable energy, organic food and the rest of the humanist pantheon.

Cheney's Snidely Whiplash sneer epitomized the era. An oil man to the core, he secretly gathered his fossil/nuke cronies to burn through the Clean Air Act and frack the Earth in ways guaranteed to accelerate human extinction.

Dick's flagship was the Deepwater Horizon, which began drilling the Gulf of Mexico in 2001 without meeting safety requirements. Just ten years later it (of course) blew up, killing 11 people and poisoning the Gulf for generations to come.

Cheney and Enron's Kenneth ("Kenny-Boy") Lay deregulated and pillaged the electric power industry. With targeted blackouts they extracted billions, then (of course) went bankrupt.

In 2007 Bush/Cheney earmarked \$50 billion in loan guarantees for new nuke reactors. But Nancy Pelosi, Barbara Boxer Harry Reid, Ed Markey and other Congressional Democrats joined with a grassroots "NukeFree" movement to kill them.

Like Reagan (and later Trump) George2 paced himself. He took off one day in five...and maybe the longest single vacation (five weeks) in presidential history. Mostly he seemed ridiculously relaxed about the job...and incapable of handling it.

With no real explanation, George fired nine federal prosecutors and perpetrated massive tax cuts for the rich, pitching what was left of the "peace dividend" into a Reaganesque abyss.

Working/middle class income dropped. So did employment. Poverty and homelessness soared. W had smoked pot but locked up millions who did the same, growing the private prison system. He attacked gay and women's rights, slashed aid for non-millionaires, devastating millions of impoverished children.

Like Reagan, our newest petro-child pre-cursed Trump by denying climate chaos (and by refusing to sign the 100-nation Kyoto Protocol aimed at the carbon emissions that feed it).

Shrub couldn't craft a complete sentence, except to spew contempt for his critics. His ratings plunged.

Then, on 9/11/2001, terror attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon changed everything. Some 3,000 people died in Manhattan, another hundred at the Pentagon, still more as a hijacked airliner crashed into the Pennsylvania countryside.

Prime suspect Osama bin Laden was CIA-trained. His fierce Mujahideen used our stinger missiles to bring down the Soviets. But when we failed to rebuild or leave the region, his Islamic guerrillas became what Pakistan's Bhutto called "a Frankenstein."

In 9/11's wake, President Bush seemed to transcend party/ideological lines and draw most Americans under a Big Tent of mutual aid and compassion. He struck an initial balance between patriotic outrage and a heartfelt sense of human tragedy. The world was with us. America was its most popular since 1945.

Then it all went to Hell.

First came the toxic eco-fallout. The twin towers' lethal cloud was saturated with asbestos, mercury, arsenic, lead, concrete dust and much much more. At very least, lower Manhattan should have been immediately evacuated.

But the Bush regime wouldn't shut Wall Street (which was buried in toxic dust). EPA Chief Christine Whitman later lamented the death and torment her negligence caused.

Countless incredibly selfless first responders poured into the kill zone without respirators or other protective gear. Like victims of Agent Orange and Gulf War Syndrome, they were denied government help as their bodies and lives quickly collapsed.

Bush's brief fling as a "uniter, not a divider" ended in darkness. The 9/11 cloud still divides and poisons us. Only Wisconsin Sen. Russ Feingold voted against W's totalitarian Patriot Act.

And then (of course) came war. Turning quicksand into a quagmire, America's neoconservative cabal did to southwest Asia what Johnson and Nixon did to the southeast. Bullseye was Iraq's Saddam Hussein, the CIA's Rumsfeld-hugged secular thug and serial torturer.

Saddam hated Islamic jihadists. His blood feud with bin Laden was legendary. He had zero to do with the WTC attacks.

But he foolishly flirted with switching from the petro-dollar to the Euro. Team Bush triangulated 9/11's fear and loathing onto an imperial/mafia hit completely removed from the actual attacks.

As our troops poured into Afghanistan (allegedly seeking Osama) Shrub shrugged. He really just wanted to kill Saddam and purge "evil doers" from his "Axis of Evil" (Iraq, Iran, North Korea).

So the regime conjured up non-existent Weapons of Mass Destruction to sell another gratuitous slaughter. Bush2 re-ran our wars for Saigon's heroin dealers and the *Contra* coke pushers. This time the ancillary damage included a tragic flood of refugees that destabilized North Africa, the Middle East, southwest Asia and much of Europe.

Bush-Cheney-Rove (all three dodged military service) lied to the world. They ignored global millions who marched for peace. They illegally intruded on our phones, emails (whatever they felt like) without specific warrants.

The regime opened its holocaust in Baghdad on March 19, 2003. Its “shock and awe” assault meant to kill Saddam outright while stunning Iraq into submission. The grateful populace, said Cheney, would shower our troops with rose petals. A president at war, noted Karl Rove, was likely to be re-elected.

As in southeast Asia and central America, countless humans died from mass slaughter, starvation, thirst, disease, torture.

For our well-meaning soldiers, Iraq became a lethal tar pit, a War for Oil whose homeland loved their service, but ignored their needs for housing and medical care when they came home.

In Afghanistan, fighting the Taliban put us in league with local poppy-growing warlords. Their opioids flowed into our heartland, where Team Bush slashed drug treatment programs and abused addicted vets whose lives were in ruins.

The “Peace Dividend’s” residual crumbs morphed into gargantuan deficits. Divided, disgusted, disheartened, we slouched to another electoral farce.

# ***THE STOLEN ELECTION OF 2004***

Saddam Hussein, our CIA-installed dictator *du jour*, had faithfully pumped oil and butchered the masses. In 2006, the Agency had him hanged.

Nothing in Iraq improved. As in Vietnam (and throughout our Puritan/Imperial history) our empire's enemies were Indigenous.

In Afghanistan, our "allies" were poppy-growing war lords. At home, Bush trashed our electoral system.

After Florida 2000, Al Gore's corporate Democrats wanted no dialogue on stripped voter rolls, flipped vote counts, gerrymandered districts or the Electoral College.

In 2002 the GOP Congress filched public billions for electronic voting machines. They were, said *Texas Observer* Editor Ronnie Dugger, "devices perfectly designed to steal elections."

Passionately promoted by Ohio Congressman Bob Ney (who later went to prison) Direct Recorded Entry (DRE) touchscreen machines spread like cancer. They provided no usable paper trail or public accountability. Courts buried their "proprietary" source codes. "Push & Pray" became the US way of voting.

In 2004, Karl Rove boasted that America had never rejected a war president. Bush won the apparent popular vote by some three million ballots over the corporate Democrat, John Kerry. But the Electoral College all came down to Ohio.



Walden O'Dell (owner of the Canton-based Diebold electronic machine company) had already publicly promised to flip the election to Bush. GOP Secretary of State Ken Blackwell (co-chair of Ohioans to re-elect Bush-Cheney) ran the scam.

Blackwell stripped more than 300,000 likely Democrats from urban registration rolls (with no comparable purges in Republican rural areas). His published fake voting station addresses and eliminated inner city precincts. He shorted others on voting machines, denied them all backup paper ballots. He sent alleged ex-felons letters warning them not to vote, even though few were ex-felons and there was no Ohio law against ex-felons voting).

Election-day lines in African-American precincts and the lefty town of Oberlin stretched to five hours...twelve at Gambier's liberal Kenyon College.

Statewide it took the average white Ohioan less than five minutes to vote. For a black it was more than fifty. Legally-required Spanish-speakers never came to many Toledo-area precincts. Absentee ballots went unsent (many omitted Kerry's name anyway). Hand-marked ballots in Democratic precincts could not be read by their scanners.

Voters pressing Kerry's name on electronic touchscreens saw it disappear...or Bush's light up. Rural precincts counted more votes than voters. One near Cincinnati called a Homeland Security alert, confiscated the ballots, then (with two neighboring counties) gave Bush his margin of victory.

Late election night, CNN showed Kerry winning Ohio (and thus the Electoral College) by 4.2%, a 200,000-plus margin.

Then the count mysteriously stopped. Michael Connell (a Bush family IT expert) had a no-bid contract from Blackwell to count Ohio's votes. His servers were in a Tennessee basement with those of Karl Rove and the Republican National Committee. In the deep night, some 300,000 votes mysteriously migrated from Kerry to Bush, giving him a 2.5% victory...and the White House.

Iowa, Nevada and New Mexico also flashed from blue to red. In NM, thousands of Indigenous ballots somehow lacked a marking for president. Kerry's exit polls exceeded his official tally in ten of eleven swing states.

VP candidate John Edwards demanded Kerry NOT concede. But the next afternoon, with more than 250,000 Ohio ballots still uncounted (Bush's official margin was less than 119,000) Kerry quit. Then he went wind-surfing.

In January 2005, Cleveland Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones and California Senator Barbara Boxer challenged Ohio's Electoral College delegation and forced the first such hearing in more than a century.

Federal Judge Algenon Marbley then ordered that all ballot materials be delivered to a repository in Columbus (I was a plaintiff in this case).

But of Ohio's 88 counties, 56 reported the materials (illegally) missing or destroyed. One election board blamed a spilled coffee urn. Another said ballots were "accidentally" recycled. There was never a comprehensive recount...and no indictments. Some 90,000 ballots were never counted.

In 2008, the Bush Family's prime vote-counter Michael Connell, was put under federal subpoena to explain what happened in

Ohio 2004. In the midst of his testimony, he died in a mysterious private plane crash.

By then Bush2 was deeply submerged beneath New Orleans.

## ***The Katrina/Abu Ghraib Outrage***

In August, 2005, the global-warmed Category Five Hurricane Katrina blasted into New Orleans. Winds topped 170 miles per hour.

Had NOLA's levees been rightly renovated (at a cost of about \$5 billion) some 1800 people might not have died. Some \$100 billion in damages might not have happened. Drowned American corpses floated through NOLA's mostly black wards. Thousands who fled to the Saints' Superdome endured lethal, degrading filth.

Katrina was an infuriating tragedy for the millions who revere the Big Easy's diverse legacy (the president's mother, Barbara gushed that "fortunate" refugees who lost their ancestral homes could now flee to her beloved Texas).

W. Himself "inspected" the devastated community by looking out his window as Air Force One flew over. Then he praised FEMA Director Michael Brown for doing "a heckuva job." He later vetoed Democratic legislation meant to extend health care for children.

But his most lasting legacy was the torture, sexual abuse, religious defamation and random murders at Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib and other imperial prisons.

Seymour Hersh (who broke the My Lai story) and too many watchdog groups confirmed a torture culture explicitly approved by War Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

"Patriot draft dodgers" like VP Cheney and hate-talker Rush Limbaugh embraced torture for its own sake. Fatal beatings of

innocent humans (often never charged or convicted of anything) mocked common decency.

Sadistic *we-can-do-anything* abuse in Iraq and Afghanistan went viral. Hideous photos showed smiling US soldiers dog collaring prisoners, piling them up naked, forcing them into sodomy, clothing them in electrodes, desecrating their religion.

W's brass cited "national defense" and blamed "bad apple" miscreants. But the images of a "Christian" military in deranged decline evoked universal horror, heartbreak, outrage, shame.

Shrub's popularity shriveled. So did an economy reeling from imperial overreach and the Triumverate's Gilded greed..

The Clintons had already shredded Glass-Steagall and FDR's regulatory firewall. Team Bush threw in tax cuts and easements for crony banks now "too big to fail." Free to pillage, the corporate elite gorged at the public trough. Its clown posse of mortgage, pyramid, derivative and other financial scams deepened the chasm between the rich and the rest of us.

In 2008-9 they crashed us into our worst recession since 1929 (see *The Big Short*, *The Smartest Guys in the Room*, *Inside Job*). Shrub departed with modern history's lowest ratings (until Trump).

Our second Boomer president shredded our Constitution and left us a ravaged economy, endless war, a dying eco-sphere, education in chaos, New Orleans in despair, torture, shame, corrupt elections, civil rights/liberties under attack...and more.

Thus frat boy W cleared the path for our first black president, who was expected to clean up his mess.

## ***Obama & the Crash of “Too Big to Fail”***

Reagan-Bush-Clinton-Bush2 wrote a blank check to America’s “too-big-to-fail” elite. Barack Obama sealed the deal.

Executive salaries soared hundreds of times beyond the average working wage. Our national wealth flowed relentlessly to what the Occupy Movement called “the 1%”.

A Midas caste of uncaring corporatists looted our assets. Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan’s “Greed is Good” (enshrined in Oliver Stone’s *Wall Street*) became America’s Ayn Randian mantra. Real regulation virtually disappeared.

In the Reagan ‘80s, casino reptilians like Michael Milken, Ivan Boesky and Donald Trump made (and blew) epic fortunes. The Savings & Loans disintegrated at a public cost of untold billions. Baronial jail time went from slim to none.

Goldman Saks’s Robert Rubin ruled the Clinton ‘90s. Corporate Dems once again trashed the unions and working/middle class that put them in power. Except for a veneer of diversity, the Clintonistas shape-shifted into rich Republicans.

As our national engine leapt to high tech, NAFTA and our gutted industrial core crushed the working/middle class. Malignant neglect drove once-prosperous industrial meccas like Gary, Detroit and Flint to the depths of despair.

In 2008, the concentration of ever more wealth into an ever-smaller insider cabal finally blew us into the abyss.

As Clinton-Bush barbecued regulation, the billionaire Elect used sub-prime mortgages, derivatives and a lethal brew of fake financial gadgets to fry the system.

In 1999-2001, they deregulated electric utilities. Digital thieves like Enron (led by Bush crony “Kenny-boy” Lay) pocketed billions by blacking-out grids and paralyzing whole regions. Then (of course) they conveniently went bankrupt.

Wholly-owned legislatures in California, Ohio and elsewhere “deregulated” nuke reactors already being far outpaced by wind and solar. Some \$100 billion in grafted bailouts dug our aged nuke fleet deeper into decrepitude. In 2003 a tree branch shorted the northeast’s nuke-based grid, blacking out 50 million people.

In 2008-9 came the *coup de grace*. Those trillions in stolen public assets finally tripped the panic button on the worst collapse since ’29. Sub-prime mortgages, empty derivatives, deregulated grids...all those mega-con jobs finally came home to roost.

In the summer/fall of 2008 (as the presidential campaign raged) the Feds put the giant Fannie May and Freddie Mac mortgage agencies into conservatorship. Lehman Brothers went bankrupt. Merrill Lynch was fire-saled to Bank of America for \$50 billion. The Fed handed an \$85 billion loan to the Insurance giant AIG.

The stock market crumbled. Investors fled to Treasury Bills. It was a Great Crash *deja vu* all over again.

On October 3, 2008, Congress approved W’s Emergency Economic Stabilization Act. Its Troubled Asset Relief Program came with \$700 billion to bail out the failing banks....but nothing similar for the millions of working/middle class Americans who lost their jobs, homes, cars, futures.

A month later, Barack Obama was elected president. He was born in Hawaii (August 4, 1961). His mother was from Kansas, his father from Kenya.

Exceptionally charismatic, a brilliant speaker and a consummate showman, Barack was not descended from slaves. But his wife Michelle was...and was suitably proud of it. Their telegenic aplomb lit up our ever-evolving, permanently Awakened social democrat core.

When Obama nailed an in-your-face three-point shot at a live event (in Kuwait) his destiny seemed obvious. He also enshrined the fist bump, maybe the coolest presidential artifact since Martin Van Buren (“Old Kinderhook”) helped immortalize the Choctaw slang “OK.”

Obama got to run against John McCain. The Arizona Senator postured as a “maverick” Republican...and an aging corporate war horse. His choice of Alaska Governor Sarah Palin for a running mate was patently insane.

A female GOP VP should’ve been a stroke of genius. But to even many Republicans, Sarah seemed an incompetent, mean-spirited airhead. Spewing absurdities, she was a shaky backup for the no-spring-chicken McCain.

But Palin did fire up an angry, hateful right-wing that loved her down-home verve. For the likes of Donald Trump, she was a radioactive ice-breaker.

Obama’s diverse, diffuse “Hope and Change” demographics inspired an army of grassroots activists, old and new. With pivotal



mastery of Facebook and other social media, he excited a new Democrat base and raised millions in small donations. At election time, his energized supporters checked and rechecked stripped registration rolls and rigged electronic tallies, successfully avoiding reruns of Florida 2000 and Ohio 2004.

When Obama claimed victory in Chicago's Grant Park (where Dick Daley's crazed cops beat the hell out of us forty years before) Boomer tears flowed like liberated rain.

It was a watershed moment, a huge step forward for American diversity. That Trumpster bigots spent eight years obsessing over Obama's birth certificate confirmed the profound significance of having a black man (with his wife, two kids and mother-in law) running the White House.

And run it they did.

Dating back to George and Martha, Barack and Michelle ran as tight and clean an administration as any in US history. They beautifully raised their two daughters at the edge of the public eye. Their internal ship of state was scandal and indictment-free.

With charm, grace and wit, "no drama Obama" was cool and collected enough to pass for a hologram.

At the grassroots, Michelle was a fine Eleanor update. Her wit, charm and energy were endlessly welcome. Like those "Happy Days" promised by FDR, Hope and Change seemed here again.

But actual policy was another story. Endowed with astounding charisma and unique administrative abilities, Obama had the

Clintonesque ability to project an aura of caring progressivism while enacting policies that were anything but.

Like Tom Jefferson, the brilliant, enigmatic, pot-smoking Constitutional law professor was a cacophony of contradiction, an army of astrisks. Obama's inconsistent presidency evoked a turbulent mix of adoration, confusion and contempt from both left and right. Its failure to solve our economic crisis at the grassroots ultimately empowered a catastrophic successor.

The financial collapse of 2008-9 was rooted in the escalating gap between rich and poor. Overall American average wages had risen steadily from Jefferson to Nixon. Then they went (and stayed) stale. Except for Obamacare, the decades following the Vietnam War saw zero major legislation to benefit the working/middle class.

Said Yale Prof. Timothy Snyder in *The Road to Unfreedom...*

*In 1978, the top 0.1% of the population, about 160,000 families, controlled 7% of American wealth...*

*A family in the top 0.01%, about 16,000 families...was about 222 times as rich as the average American family...*

*By 2012, such a family was about 1,120 times richer.*

America's "99%" was desperate. The safety net was shredded. Since 1980, wrote Snyder...

*90% of the American population had gained essentially nothing, either in wealth or income. All gains have gone to the top 10%—-and within the top 10%, most to the top 1%;*

*and within the top 1%, most to the top 0.1%, and within the top 0.1% most to the top 0.01%.*

In 1933 Franklin Roosevelt confronted such super-rich (who conspired to kill him) and birthed the awakened drama and concrete accomplishments of the New Deal.

Railing at the “Malefactors of Great Wealth,” FDR and Eleanor built a regulatory infrastructure that prevented (for 80 years) the next catastrophe. Their programs protected working people and put a Keynesian floor on the bottom-up demand that guaranteed a stable economy. Unemployment insurance, Social Security, food stamps, public works and much more helped insure that basic human needs would be funded, and that this “rising-up” demand would keep the economy going.

As he took office in 2009, those who’d worked so hard to get Barack Obama elected expected him to do the same. The Democrats had a 257 to 178 margin in the House. They held 60 Senate seats for four months, and were over 55 for two full years.

The world seemed at the new president’s feet. The media filled with obituaries for a GOP they said was all but dead (which it was, but not in ways they fully understood, as Donald Trump would soon prove).

Obama inherited Bush 2’s financial mess. W’s TARP bailout was the pinnacle of American “lemon socialism,” forcing the working/middle class to pay for the “free market” larceny of the super-rich. As always, grassroots America absorbed the Barons’ gambling losses and cleaned up their mess.

In 2009, as the rest of TARP's ransom money poured into their pockets, Wall Street feared this new "populist" president might demand justice and remake the regulatory backstop.

He did none of the above. Barack filled his administration with Wall Street insiders like Robert Rubin, Tim Geithner, Larry Summers. Trillions vanished, billions were grafted, millions lost their jobs and homes.

Yet just one obscure number cruncher was indicted as a ritual sacrifice. Minor limits were put on some salaries. Only Shearson went bankrupt. As author Thomas Frank put it, the President met with the banking community in March, 2009, and...

*After warning them about 'the pitchforks' of an angry public, Obama reassured the frightened bankers that they could count on him to protect them; that he had no intention of restructuring their industry or changing the economic direction of the nation.*

Right then and there, "the hope drained out of the Obama movement." Any claim the corporate Democrats might have had to being a party of "change" for the people became obvious, infuriating roadkill. Franklin and Eleanor flipped their graves.

As they had since Jimmy Carter, even with control of the presidency and both houses of Congress, the "New Democrats" failed to produce anything of lasting value to the increasingly desperate working/middle class. Soon enough, that smug inaction would yield the likes of Donald Trump.

Much TARP money did eventually come back to the government. The auto companies stayed in business. The global economy did not immediately fly into the abyss...at least not for those on top.

But as the “too-big-to-fail” elite/Elect sailed to their private islands built on public assets, the rest of us didn’t do so well. The TRILLIONS lost were NEVER repaid by the slick, smug shysters and con artists that caused the crisis...and were ready to do it again pending the next inevitable bail-out.

Obama did open with the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, overturning a Supreme Court decision that had limited the clock for employees to challenge pay discrimination. He followed with ARPA-E, funding advanced energy research.

Then came the Stimulus Package, a monument to American post-imperial recovery. It was missing the Roosevelts’ regulatory wrath as well as their alphabet agencies and promotional passion.

It was certainly not Gene Debs’ democratic socialism, demanding public ownership of the means of production (including the banks) guarantees for those at the bottom, universal health care, an ocean of public works, an end to poverty, war and so much more.

And what *was* there got relentlessly hammered by “just say no” Republicans (allied with corporate “blue dog” Democrats) determined at all costs to make Obama fail.

But Barack’s “New New Deal” did embrace a sweeping vision of what a 21st century economy needed to survive and thrive. It embodied epic leaps in renewable energy, infrastructure (roads, bridges, etc), education, affordable housing, help for vets and the homeless, ecological restoration, high tech breakthroughs, computerized medicine, tax breaks for the working/middle class and much much more.

President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton helped save Paris Climate Accords that China might have derailed. The EPA pushed a Clean Power Plan to reduce CO2 emissions (primarily from coal). The FHA's Hardest Hit Fund saved thousands from eviction.

The stimulus package made a difference. In a sane, truly democratic society, it should easily have been two, three, four times bigger.

But charismatic though he was, Obama lacked FDR's Main Street touch. There were no exciting alphabet agencies, no massive public arts projects, no grassroots embrace or "feel-your-pain" angst...no "Happy Days are Here Again" (which was a stimulus agent of its own).

Like the Clintons, Obama would not seriously discuss a single-payer national medical plan. Medicare For All was not in Barack's Hope & Change playbook (until he was out of power, trying to roll back the Trumpocalypse he helped ignite).

He did win Obamacare. It's hard to overstate the impact that's had on millions of Americans (and the economy as a whole).

But in the public eye it was corporate, complex and incomplete. For the hateful GOP, it was a socialist apparition. For the grassroots left, it wasn't the Medicare for All that made so much more long-term sense. .

It didn't help that Rahm Emanuel, Barack's Chief of Staff and Congressional enforcer, came with a Dick Cheney sneer and endless contempt for working/middle class Americans and their activist advocates. The elite image of a detached president was

engraved in his taped condescension to “bitter” citizens who “cling” to guns and religion in times of need.

Most of all, the Obama package simply didn’t penetrate deep enough into the grassroots. Despite all the TARP, Stimulus and Obamacare money, virtually every dollar of new wealth created since their enactment has gone straight to the top 0.1%.

For America’s working/middle class, real wages remained (at best) virtually flat. Things did not get as dramatically worse as they could have. But they didn’t seem to get much better, either.

Likewise the Drug War.

Unlike Shrub and Bill, Barack bragged about inhaling marijuana. “That was the point,” he quipped. His federal drug warriors eased up on *cannabis* (see the “Cole Memo”), helping to free many victims of the for-profit prisons.

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But in a bad early moment Obama actually mocked those who expected him to legalize pot. Some two dozen states approved medical *cannabis*. Colorado (very successfully) legalized it outright. But the federal arrests continued. He failed to pardon Indigenous activist Leonard Peltier, whose decades in prison on dubious murder charges drew global protests.

A Constitutional lawyer, Obama hammered government whistleblowers with more arrests than any other president. His iron grip on classified information matched (at least) those of Reagan and the Bushes.

Obama’s Dreamer Program welcomed children of illegal immigrants. But he deported millions of others.

Barack paid lip service to climate chaos with restrictions on fossil/nukes. But his “all the above” energy policy embraced an \$8.3 billion loan guarantee for the last two doomed US reactors, now bankrupting Georgia. He waffled on the eco-lethal Keystone and Dakota pipelines until massive Indigenous-based opposition forced his hand. He failed to fight the plague of fracking. Breaking a campaign promise, he let Genetically Modified Organisms continue to spread without mandatory labelling.

Like so many other Democrats, Obama did little for organized labor, which strongly supported him. There was no great push for campaign finance reform...or for an end to GOP registration stripping, voting machine flipping, or the Electoral College. When the Kochs took control of the redistricting process in 2010, they got little pushback from Barack’s corporate Democrats.

In late 2012 he proposed cutting Social Security benefits through a complex ruse called the “chained CPI.” He was stopped by grassroots outrage and a Hill counter-attack led by Sen. Bernie Sanders and Joel Segal, a key Congressional operative at the Michigan Rep. John Conyers’ office.

Peddling “bi-partisanship,” Obama glad-handed Republicans who trashed everything he proposed while he and Rahm stiffed the green social democrats who put them in office.

However hard Barack may have tried (and whatever barriers he faced) our sinking manufacturing base did not re-float, the minimum wage didn’t jump, Guantanamo didn’t shut, college tuitions and student loan debt skyrocketed, whistleblowers were ravaged, millions still lacked health care.



The blowback was immediate. In February, 2009, Chicago TV face Rick Santelli falsely labelled the Too-Big-To-Fail Bailout as a handout to low-income Americans (read: “blacks and Hispanics”) who’d signed bad mortgages.

The billions went to rich bankers. But the blame (as usual) went to the victims.

The astro-turf “Taxed Enough Already” Party immediately played the race card. It drew big corporate cash for yet another divide-and-conquer white supremacist uprising. Wrongly labelled “Populists,” the Koch-funded Tea Party hated everything the multi-racial/social democrat/rebel feminist 1890s People’s Party had stood for.

In 2011 Obama proposed a pair of landmark American Jobs Act bills. But the radicalized GOP now owned Congress. The brief window for real social change slammed shut as the Republican Party morphed into a fanatic phalanx of pure reaction, focused on nothing but wealth and winning.

Overseas, Obama himself became an imperial warrior. He broke far more than just our hearts.

Barack’s Senatorial vote against the Iraq War helped win the presidency...and a very premature Nobel Prize. In perhaps the peace award’s most inappropriate acceptance speech, he argued for the “necessity” of war.

Barack spoke passionately about abolishing nuclear weapons, and negotiated a very important non-proliferation treaty with Iran. But he eliminated fewer warheads than did W, then pushed for a trillion-dollar “upgrade” of our atomic arsenal.

He became the first sitting president since Calvin Coolidge to visit Cuba, but failed to shut Guantanamo's hellish torture chamber.

To the horror of his grassroots backers, Obama extended Bush's refusal to sign a global ban on landmines, which annually kill countless innocent children. Said fellow laureate Jody Williams...

*This decision is a slap in the face to landmine survivors, their families and affected communities everywhere.*

Worst of all, Barack deepened our imperial Afghan sinkhole.

According to historian Thomas E. Gouttierre, previous losers in the "Graveyard of Empires" have included Persia (500BC), Alexander the Great (330BC), Kushans (96BC), Sasanians (200AD), Huns, (400), Persians again (900), Mongols (1200), India and Persia again (1550), Great Britain (1839), Russia (1850), Great Britain again (1878), and the Soviet Union (1978).

The new Nobel Laureate staged a series of well-publicized closed-door strategy sessions with the usual corporate/militarists. Not invited were grassroots activists who were right on Vietnam, central America, Iraq, Iran....and were right again about avoiding the Afghan quagmire.

While withdrawing troops from Iraq (in February 2009 and then again in December) the Peace Prize winner sent thousands more troops into Afghanistan. The surges cost countless lives, billions of dollars and cast a pall over all Obama did. When he executed Osama bin Laden, it was in Pakistan.

With no due process, he flung countless extra-legal drones at "suspected terrorists"...including at least one American citizen,

then his child. Wedding parties, family gatherings, innocent civilians, small children, random villages fell like three-point shots.

Like Bush in Iraq, Obama left Afghanistan immeasurably worse than he found it, with no visible progress in the “war against terror,” whatever that now meant. All Hell engulfed the region.

A massive corridor stretching across Southwest Asia, the Middle East and north Africa devolved into a festering Hades. Ancient Arab/Israeli/Palestinian conflicts deepened and metastasized.. Civil war consumed Syria. Mass slaughter ravaged Yemen, Jordan and beyond. Democratic “Arab Spring” uprisings morphed into tyrannies worse than those they overthrew.

With Secretary of State Clinton beating the war drums, Obama facilitated the murder of Libya’s Gaddafi. Along the Shores of Tripoli (site of Thomas Jefferson’s first overseas intervention) America’s imperial over-reach came full circle.

Like Saddam, Gaddafi dared mention leaving the petro-dollar. He was a secular opponent of fundamentalist terror, with the gold reserves (maybe 130 tons) to back an All-African currency. He warned the west what was about to happen...

*Now listen you people of Nato. You’re bombing a wall, which stood in the way of African migration to Europe and in the way of al Qaeda terrorists. This wall was Libya. You’re breaking it. You’re idiots, and you will burn in Hell for thousands of migrants from Africa.*

Sure enough, Libya devolved into a barbaric Iraq-like failed state. Some 40,000 people died. Thousands more fled to a Europe completely unready for them. They lit a human firestorm of

desperate insecurity and communal fear that threatened another race-based fascist nightmare.

Near the Halls of Montezuma, Obama and Clinton assaulted the duly elected Manuel Zelaya, supporting the usual thugs in another deadly round of Dollar Diplomacy. Honduras sank into the murderous chaos of corporate dictatorship, feeding the flow of colonial suffering and desperate refugees.

In 2009 and 2010 Obama appointed Elena Kagan and Sonia Sotomayor to the Supreme Court. In 2015 they joined a 5-4 majority supporting the right to gay marriage. The swing vote came from Justice Anthony Kennedy (who would soon retire). Across the nation, millions of loving humans celebrated an Awakened breakthrough.

But when the Supreme Court's uber-corporatist Antonin Scalia passed away, the GOP stonewalled Obama's nomination of the moderate Merrick Garland to take his seat. Though some argued (with little support) that he had the right to appoint Garland on an interim basis, the President declined to give it a try. As the 2016 election approached, the entire judicial system hung in the balance.

## ***The REDMAP/Crosscheck Coup***

In a nation defined by identity politics, our irrepressible Indigenous soul cycled through history like a set of rising tides.

In the new millennium, Rainbow Coalitions of multi-racial/spiritual communities joined feminist, LGBTQ, eco- and other movements to further a Yippie revolt that never ended.

With their hip countercultural verve, the Obamas proved that an African-American could run the country at least as well as the 42 caucasians who came before (not to mention the one who came next). Barack was a reverse Oreo, a competent black president sandwiched between two bumbling whites.

But his Administration's slow crawl through the Great Recession stirred bitter class resentment throughout the Heartland. The Clintons, Gore and Kerry were all Republican Rich. Barack's "too-big-to-fail" surrender let the Barons chop US democracy into a heap of easy pieces...

X In November, 2008 (as Obama won the White House) California voters approved Proposition 11 on gerrymandering.

Supported by GOP Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Prop. 11 slashed into the California Dems' hold on a huge Congressional delegation whose incumbents rarely lost a seat .

The new citizens' redistricting commission was far less partisan and more democratic than what it replaced. Had the corp/Dems adopted it nationwide, the Koch/GOP *coup* of the 2010s might never have happened.

As it was, the corporate takeover of our electoral system with top-down cash was set to go...

X On January 21, 2010, a 5-4 US Supreme Court (building on the 1976-8 *Buckley/ Bellotti* decisions) approved *Citizen's United*, further empowering corporations to buy our elections.

X That fall, the *Koch/GOP Coup* produced one of US history's most devastating electoral flips. With Obama's corporate Dems in a coma, gerrymandering became (as per the infamous title of David Daley's brilliant expose) the *Great American Ratf\*\*ck*.

The foundation was laid in what Jane Mayer has called *Dark Money*. From the 1980s onward, the billionaire Koch Brothers super-funded a glib horde of Randian "thinkers." Their American Legislative Exchange Committee spawned an anti-human virus that infected university faculties, funded media, deployed "experts" to spread the gospel of contempt and greed.

Their bought horde of Ayn Randian fanatics pounded the air waves. They purchased an evangelical movement whose Puritan priesthood sanctified million-dollar estates, fat-cat cars and Rolex watches as sure signs of their Election to Heaven.

In the wake of *Citizens United*, GOP strategists Chris Jankowski, Ed Gillespie and Karl Rove used Koch Dark Money to buy state houses and governors' mansions by the bushel. The every-ten-years redistricting process became a gerrymandered REDMAP. The GOP flipped (from blue to red) the US House and state/local regimes—about a thousand offices—for the rest of the decade.

For example: in 2008, he and US Senator Sherrod Brown had won a clear majority of gerrymandered Ohio's 2008 electorate.

But for the next decade, the GOP held about 12 of Ohio's 16 Congressional seats, plus an iron grip both houses of the state legislature. That kind of ratio now went viral.

In 2010, in what Obama called "a shellacking," the Kochs swung a 255/178 blue House to a 242/193 red majority (and picked up six US Senate seats). In 2012, Barack was easily re-elected. But beneath him, there was no more there there.

In FL, NC, PA, MI and WI (all critical in 2016) the GOP regularly lost popular votes but held Congressional delegations and statehouses. Nationwide the Dems now needed to win by 6-8 percent just to break even in the US House.

REDMAP stuffed as many Dems as possible into urban districts, creating some safe seats for African-Americans. But...

X In 2012, the Supremes (again 5-4) approved *McCutcheon*, further expanding corporate ownership of our elections.

X In 2013 Michigan's super-rich Gov. Rick Snyder seized "emergency" control of mostly black-run local governments. To enrich crony investors, he switched Flint's water supply from the Great Lakes to the filthy Flint River, poisoning the town with industrial toxins (including lead), ruining lives and families.

When Obama (as shown in Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 11/9*) flew into Flint, he made a show of sipping the river water (twice). With ample federal resources at his command, he did nothing.

X In 2015, the Supremes' *Shelby* decision (again 5-4) gutted the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which had protected minority voting mostly in former Confederate states. A re-enshrined Jim Crow fed an increasingly racist GOP.

The Koch-funded Republicans also peddled hackable e-voting machines and rigged registration rolls. As reported by Greg Palast, Kansas' white supremacist Secretary of State Kris Kobach used his infamous *CrossCheck* program to strip thousands of (primarily black and Hispanic) citizens from voter rolls.

Our elections became a “push and pray” farce played with secret source codes on electronic touchscreens. (With a few geeky keystrokes a U. of Michigan IT professor made one of them sing our famous fight song).

A zombie army of reactionary incumbents now virtually owned their Gerrymandered districts. Fearing only internal party challenges, GOP incumbents flocked to reaction and racism. The Dems sank into smug “blue dog” corporatism.

Still ranting at Ralph, still mute about Ohio 2004, still unable to deliver real change to the working/middle class, still unwilling to face what the Kobach/Kochs did to the electoral process...the corporate Dems slept through the REDMAP/Crosscheck *coup*.

In 2014-6, six Democratic US Senate candidates were eliminated CIA-style despite apparent exit poll majorities. The GOP then stonewalled Obama's court appointments, and foisted the very reactionary Neil Gorsuch (followed by Brooks Brothers mobster Brett Kavanaugh) onto the Supreme Court. .

Meanwhile, the corporate Dems stonewalled young activists and their progressive ideas. The party (said Chair Donna Brazile)) became the personal toy of Obama, the Clintons and previous chair Deborah Schultz. In 2016, Hillary bought it outright.

She then delivered Donald Trump.



# ***THE STOLEN ELECTIONS OF 2016***

## ***First...Hillary Rips Bernie***

The art and science of election theft is as old as our republic.

It peaked in 2016.

As Obama sailed through his stylish two terms, the Kochs and their cohorts brilliantly deployed their billions.

From 2008 to 2016, the GOP's REDMAP *coup* gave them both houses of Congress and scores of governorships and state legislatures, joined by hundreds of supervisors, mayors, school boards, dog catchers and much more.

The Dems withered. Says Donna Brazile...

*Obama left the party \$24 million in debt...[His] campaign was not scheduled to pay it off until 2016.*

*Hillary...had taken care of 80% of the remaining debt in 2016, about \$10 million, and had placed the DNC on an allowance.*

Early in the 2018 primaries, Clinton drew sparse, listless handfuls to hear boring, uninspired speeches that gave no indication as to why she was running for president except that it was "her turn."

But the rallies of Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders exploded with thousands of wildly enthusiastic young activists. A self-

proclaimed socialist (who lionized Gene Debs) Sanders was a professorial veteran of the 1960s New Left. He got virtually no serious coverage from the corporate media.

But Bernie's grassroots advocacy unleashed a *HUUUGE* upwelling of public anger. Anonymous, spontaneous cash poured in from an ocean of internet enthusiasts (averaging \$27).

Ranting at "the millionaires and billionaires," Bernie demanded economic justice, ending racism, a livable minimum wage, union solidarity, gay/feminist/minority rights, eco-harmony, legal *cannabis*, free community college tuition, student loan forgiveness, protected voter rolls, universal hand-cast/counted paper ballots, a stronger Bill of Rights and much more.

Amidst a horrific wave of police violence targeting the African-American community, the *Sandernistas* built on popular resistance to the Iraq/Afghan Wars, to the accelerating gap between rich and poor, to the corporate assault on our global environment. They spread with the grassroots No Nukes/Rainbow/Occupy Wall Street/BlackLivesMatter/Solartopian groundswell. Polls showed tens of millions of Americans (especially young ones) favoring socialism over capitalism.

In the 2016 primaries, with all the excitement of a spontaneous non-violent revolution, some thirteen million Americans gave Bernie a dozen times more votes than Debs got a century prior.

Stumbling toward its Philadelphia convention, the Democratic National Committee was legally and morally bound to be neutral. But it was also owned and operated by the *Clintonista* cabal, whose hack consultants choked the corporate talk shows. .

In Brooklyn (where Bernie was raised) more than 100,000 voters were stripped from the registration rolls. Oddball regulations disenfranchised thousands more in California. Chaotic state caucuses were decided by dubious vote counts and actual coin flips. The Sandernistas emerged angry and alienated.

As the convention opened, leaked internal memos exposed a rigged game. The party establishment meant to nominate Hillary, no matter what the voters wanted. Facing a prairie fire of grassroots rage, Deborah Schultz was forced to resign.

But imperious dicta still rained down from the party elite and its “super delegates.” The convention didn’t explode like Dick Daley’s Chicago ’68. But *Sandernista* icon Nina Turner of Ohio was blocked from delivering a major petition. Party hacks banned demands for peace and justice from the convention floor. They ignored the youthful rallies in the streets and dumped on the seasoned organizers who led them.

As in 1896, 1968, 1980 and 2000, the Dems’ flight to the White House demanded fusing the party’s two wings. If Hillary was to be the next president, she needed Bernie as Vice...or to enlist his activist supporters with some degree of enthusiasm.

Instead, her corporate geniuses chose a Virginia Senator (Tim Kaine) who was even more conservative and less charismatic than Clinton. (It was a bad replay of 1896, when Gene Debs’s supporters wanted to fuse with the rural radical Tom Watson...and then Bryan dumped them both, taking a Maine banker as his VP).

Team Hillary emerged from Philadelphia cloaked in an aura of doom it refused to acknowledge.

Failing to notice that nobody was coming to their rallies, the *Clintonistas* sleep-walked through their incredibly boring campaign as if merely killing time before an inevitable coronation —-which they wrongly assumed would be their own.

## ***Then...Trump Rips Hillary***

While the Clintonites wallowed in smug complacency, the 2016 GOP staged a runaway reality show gone really really wrong.

Playing the part of a loathsome buffoon, Trump still made fools of the GOP's "biggest loser" plutocrats. The primaries played as farce, then tragedy.

Media master Donald was born into the fever swamps of organized crime, His grandfather (a German immigrant) was the mobbed-up owner of a California brothel.

His brutal father Fred openly supported the Ku Klux Klan. Sponsored by New York's infamous "five families," the skinflint slumlord was "honored" with an anthem by his abused tenant, the legendary populist folk singer Woody Guthrie...

*I suppose  
Old Man Trump knows  
Just how much  
Racial Hate  
he stirred up  
In the bloodpot of human hearts  
When he drewed  
That color line  
Here at his  
Eighteen hundred family project*

A self-made infant, Fred's fortunate son enjoyed a laundered six-figure income by the time he was six. Born with a bestial cruelty, young Donald bonded to Roy Cohn, the infamous mobster shill for Joe McCarthy's witch hunts. When old man Trump passed away,

Cohn's underworld cohorts set up fraudulent family shelters to slip the kids millions in filthy tax-free cash.

Meanwhile, in Russia, tattooed gangs emerged from Stalin's gulag to carve up the immense resources of the dying USSR. These new billionaire oligarchs toyed with the drunken CIA-installed buffoon Boris Yeltsin. In 1999 they (mostly) welcomed the tough, savvy KGB-trained Vladimir Putin.

Along the way (see Craig Unger's *House of Trump House of Putin*) The Donald fronted some 1300 real estate deals for Russian mobsters to funnel their cash into US banks. One paid \$6 million for five condos. Another more doubled the \$40 million ask on a Florida property. Trump Tower (721 Fifth Avenue) became a mobster mattress.

Once \$4 billion in debt (with six bankruptcies) Trump swung huge cash deals in laundered roubles. Said Don, Jr., in 2008...

*In terms of high-end product influx into the US, Russians make up a pretty disproportionate cross-section of a lot of our assets.*

Piling up his ill-got gains, The Donald's three marriages (two to immigrants) and many affairs became cheap tabloid trash...

*You know, I'm automatically attracted to beautiful — I just start kissing them. It's like a magnet. Just kiss. I don't even wait. And when you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything...Grab 'em by the pussy. You can do anything.*

(Those hoping such misogyny would ruin Trump overlooked the 1960's "Sukarno Syndrome," where the CIA meant to blackmail the quirky Indonesian leader with a sex orgy tape; Sukarno

gleefully spread it nationwide, sending his “macho man” ratings soaring like Bill Clinton’s during the Lewinsky affair).

Trump’s rigged *Apprentice* let him brutally “fire” supplicants. His unhinged morning tweets meant nothing beyond grabbing the daily news cycle while burying real issues.

Unburdened by dignity, compassion, truth or grace, Trump became a riveting demagogue for the idle rich wanting tax cuts and for a Rust Belt working/middle class embittered by the vacuous fails of Clinton/Bush2/Obama.

Trump’s mighty fortress was the all-hate-all-the-time FOX megalith which goose-stepped on the grave of the Fairness Doctrine and with Clinton-Gore’s 1996 Telecommunications Act. Like a true Puritan, Trump could tolerate no information provider other than himself. As he told journalist Leslie Stahl about his relentless “Fake News” attacks...

*You know why I do it? I do it to discredit you all and demean you all so when you write negative stories about me no one will believe you.*

Trump’s opening *blitzkrieg* tore through a pathetic Polish cavalry of sixteen bumbling Republicans united in serving the corporate rich. Like any hate-based dictator, Trump gorged on scapegoats. Muslims, immigrants, blacks, LGBTQ, differently-abled, demonstrators, journalists, women. They all fit the classic fascist sacrificial mould.

So did the arrogant, regal Clinton doormat. Calling us all “deplorables,” her rigged nomination, dismissive contempt and content/charisma-free campaign sent millions of Berniecrats running to Trump. .

In return, Trump smeared Clinton as “Crooked Hillary.” For the first time in US history, a major party candidate for president threatened to throw his opponent in prison. He encouraged violent attacks on demonstrators and journalists at his campaign rallies while puking up a steady flow of racist, sexist innuendo.

In tandem, the Koch/Kobach-Putin axis poisoned our electoral process. Electronic machines flipped vote counts on demand. White Supremacist Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, used *Crosscheck* to strip a million-plus likely Dems from computerized voter rolls in some two dozen states.

Meanwhile, Putin’s trolls, bots, phishers, ratfu\*\*rs and other saboteurs poured through the internet. The Dems’ secret files, various voting machines and at least one state’s (Illinois) voter data base were all within easy reach. After shafting Bernie, the Obama/Clinton/corporate Dems did virtually nothing to protect what was left of our rotted democracy.

Despite all that, when the ballots were counted, Hillary still won the 2016 election by more than 2.8 million votes. Her margin of victory was twenty times that of JFK in 1960, six times Nixon’s in 1968 and five times Gore’s in 2000.

She won the exit polls in Wisconsin (where she did not campaign) Michigan, Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Florida, which would have easily won her the Electoral College. Like Florida 2000 and Ohio 2004, all five states reeked of serious irregularities that she (like Gore and John Kerry) refused to investigate.

But the Green Party did. Candidate Jill Stein (a Boston doctor) ran on all Bernie’s issues, but with stronger stances on imperial



spending and war, gun control, cannabis prohibition, Solartopian conversion, election integrity and more.

In the grassroots social democrat Populist/Socialist/Progressive/Peace and Freedom/Naderite tradition, the Greens sustained Indigenous demands for diversity, human rights, social justice, civil liberties, ecological harmony, an end to empire.

Jill was (of course) marginalized by the mainstream media. She and Libertarian Gary Johnson (who advocated legal pot but foolishly promised not to smoke in the White House) were barred from the presidential debates.

When interviewed at all, it was about their impact on the vote count, not on what they stood for. Clinton operatives shrieked that all Green ballots were their rightful property and that Jill (like Ralph) was undermining their divinely ordained ownership of the White House on the Hill.

But on Election Day (as in 2000 and 2004) the outcome hung on stripped registration rolls and flipped vote counts in corrupted swing states. Ignoring rampant disenfranchisement, theft and fraud, Hillary's corporatists embraced the glaring irregularities that decided the presidency. Only the Greens checked the vote count.

Raising \$7 million in small internet donations, Green attorney Robert Fittrakis found Wisconsin was illegally hiding the source codes on its electronic voting machines. Koch-owned Gov. Scott Walker also used race-based photo ID and other scams to strip enough citizens from registration rolls to flip the state.

In Pennsylvania (with a Democrat governor and secretary of state) rampant precinct-level irregularities were locked down with obscene demands for massive recount fees.

In Michigan (which Hillary allegedly lost by about 10,000) Jill found more than 70,000 “beheaded” ballots with no preference for president. Most were from Flint and Detroit as if countless impassioned voters stood hours in line to not choose a president (as on Indigenous reservations in New Mexico, 2004).

A Michigan judge listened. He granted a recount, but not to Stein, who had no mathematical chance to win. Hillary’s brilliant attorneys (standing in the courtroom) declined the offer. Their job was merely “to observe.” The recount died. Trump took the White House.

For the third time in five elections the “New Democrats” blew off the millions whose blood, sweat and tears had once again won them the Oval Office.

Secure in their personal fortunes, the Gore-Kerry-Clinton corporatists left the country twisting in the wind. They also ignored countless other key races defined by dubious official vote counts and disastrous outcomes.

In preparation for becoming the Party of Trump, the GOP deepened its gerrymandered REDMAP death grip on the state and local governments, the Congress, the courts (including the Supreme).

The day after she meekly conceded, Hillary drifted off to walk her dogs, “sip chardonnay,” write a caustic memoir, enjoy her private fortune, prepare to run (and lose) again.

At the “deplorable” grassroots, all Hell broke loose.

# THE TRUMPOCALYPSE:

## *Our Imperial Vultures Come Home to Roost*

### **AUTHOR'S NOTE:**

***BETWEEN NOW & FINAL PUBLICATION OF THIS BOOK  
(WHICH WILL AWAIT TRUMP'S DEPARTURE) WE  
EXPECT TOTAL TURMOIL. BUT IN THE MEANTIME.....***

In the pall of Donald Trump, America faced at last its imperial *karma*. Four-decades of Vietnam PTSD and globalized exploitation filled the swamp for an authoritarian demagogue.

Amidst our Clinton/Gore/Kerry/Bush2/Obama death-of-empire coma, we were ravaged by poverty and decay. Our food, bodies and ecosphere were debased by genetic mutation, a torrent of toxic chemicals, radiation, filth, warming gases and more.

Our infrastructure crumbled. Our too-big-to-fail corporations became obsolete techno-dinosaurs. We lagged fast-rising juggernauts in Europe and Asia (especially China).

The rich/poor gap cratered. Oligarchic income soared 100 times beyond workers' wages. After the Bush/Obama 2008-9 Billionaire Banker Bailout, nearly every dollar added to the GNP went to the top 1%, hammering our heartland.

Except for the confusing, corporate-friendly Obamacare, no major new social program had arrived to help our struggling worker/middle class since the early '70s.

We were buried overseas in another deadly quagmire (this time in southwest Asian) and at home over race, ethnicity, language, misogyny, sexual preference, class, dignity, civility, you name it. With terrifying regularity, police across the nation beat, jailed, murdered private citizens (mostly of color) for no good reason... and without accountability...

Our voter rolls were stripped by race, income, ethnicity, age. Electronic machines were hacked to produce any outcome an election official might order up. The Electoral College twice gave our biggest losers control of the Oval Office.

After so often slaughtering Indigenous peoples and imposing killers and kleptocrats to rob and torture them, our karma inevitably returned to roost. As Abe Lincoln might have put it...

*Two centuries of imperial thuggery demanded that every dollar gouged from the Third World would be extorted from us by corporations here at home, every election stolen abroad would be duplicated in our own precincts, every drop of blood extracted during our imperial conquests would be shed amidst our own decayed streets, polluted fields, ravaged forests, filthy air, radioactive water.*

Donald Trump was the karmic payback... living proof that the universe has an immutable sense of both justice and the absurd.

As the inevitable balloon payment on our imperial over-reach, Trump bit with the lecherous, larcenous, lethal venom of CIA-installed beasts like Pinochet (Chile), Castelo Branco (Brazil),

Somoza (Nicaragua), Batista (Cuba), Papa/Baby Doc Duvalier (Haiti), Mobutu (Congo/Zaire), the Greek Junta, the Shah (Iran), the Saudis, Saddam Hussein (Iraq), Yeltsin (Russia), Shinzo Abe (Japan), Rhee (Korea), Suharto (Indonesia), Marcos (Philippines), Pol Pot (Cambodia), Lee Kuan Yew (Singapore), Diem/Thieu/Ky (Vietnam)...and too many more to list without getting even sicker at stomach and heart.

All the above killed, “disappeared,” or otherwise ousted social democrats and native nationalists in “elections” rigged by our imperial operatives. They pitilessly pillaged their own people in service to their master US corporations and their own Swiss bank accounts.

Born of the underworld, Trump was precisely of their ilk. He conducted himself with all the grace, charm, wisdom and compassion of a cheap, leering street thug.

To divide and conquer, Trump puked up the obligatory scapegoats. Hispanics were targets *du jour*. “Immigrants” (like his wives and grandparents) became murderers, rapists, “bad hombres.” Mexico would pay for a border wall.

Muslims were “terrorists,” subject to a travel ban. When neo-Nazis killed Heather Heyer in Charlottesville, Trump praised the “good people” on “both sides.” Then he retracted that. Then he regretted the retraction. The message was clear....

*Jews will not replace us.*

Trump was the last gasp of the feral straight white Judaeo-Puritan macho male, a made man unable to face a rigid world turned upside down. Terrified by the prospect of a diverse eco-matriarchy, the empire spawned a mutant would-be tyrant.

As of 2016, whites had become a minority in California, Texas, Nevada, New Mexico, Hawaii and the District of Columbia. By 2050 it would national. LGBTQ activists threatened the pillars of Puritan sexuality (such as it was). Rising “others” showed no signs of melting into a mythological pot.

Trump was an uncivil savior with fingers in three crumbling dikes...white supremacy, male dominance, fossil/nuke energy. In the material world, his primary masters were America’s corporate elite...and Putin’s mobster oligarchs.

Rude, openly racist, misogynist, malapropic, inept, incompetent, authoritarian, narcissistic, deeply hostile to democracy and fact, Trump was the ultimate rich boy, an above-the-law goodfella.

The Republican Party (pronounced dead as Obama won the White House and Congress in 2008) morphed into the Trump Party, a mobster cult devoted only to winning and wealth. The 2016 GOP could claim nothing like common sense, a philosophy or a heart. Into the nearest lake it would have dumped the likes of Ike and Lincoln, Teddy and Coolidge, cement shoes and all.

Its primary enemies were democracy, diversity, resistance and truth. Trump’s job was to create diversionary outrage, divisive chaos and debilitating confusion. He was really good at all of it.

For the Koch/Putin elite, he delivered what he promised. His high crimes and innumerable misdemeanors will fill countless volumes in years to come.

But here let’s briefly point out that he...obscenely locked thousands of refugees into inhuman concentration camps while killing and abusing their children and profiting crony prison

operators with millions in federal loot; enriched himself and his fellow oligarchs with obscene tax cuts; promised non-profit protection to evangelical churches engaged in partisan politics, morphing them into money-laundering machines for the reactionary rich; attacked the health care, social security, food stamp and other programs on which millions of Americans depend for their solvency and survival; mocked the science of the climate chaos that produced horrific hurricanes, fires, droughts, floods and more throughout his regime; opened vast tracts of public land and water to the rape and pillage of corporate billionaires; scorned elected leaders while embracing autocrats; moved the US embassy to Jerusalem in contempt of 1.5 billion Muslims and much of the rest of the world; openly used the presidency to enrich himself and his family; stuck taxpayers with millions in personal vacation costs (like a \$90,000 First Lady hotel bill for a six hour stay); pushed eco-suicidal pipelines, drilling, nuke reactors and more to benefit his fossil/nuke cronies; proclaimed his love for coal while slashing programs meant to prepare miners for a green-based future; decimated long-term US business and financial interests with a steady stream of idiotic trade and tariff deals; dizzied global allies and markets with insulting, erratic, petty, juvenile antics; trumped up a fake border crisis for the 2018 mid-term elections; shut the government to fund a border wall he said Mexico would pay for and that would do nothing worthwhile; flooded the judiciary (including the Supreme Court) with unqualified far-right ideologues; left unstaffed large parts of the federal bureaucracy for months at a time; let Education Secretary Betsy DeVos loot our public school systems; let EPA Secretary Scott Pruitt (forced to resign for corruption) decimate environmental regulations; let Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke loot public lands preserved by Lincoln, Grant, TR, FDR, JFK, LBJ, Nixon, Carter, the Bushes, Clinton, Obama; let HUD Secretary Ben Carson hand public housing to Trump cronies while gouging destitute renters and using their money to buy high-end

furnishings for his own offices; let Energy Secretary Rick Perry scam billions in “emergency” hand-outs for old money-losing fossil/nuke burners; gave \$3.7 billion in guaranteed government loans to Georgia’s obsolete Vogtle nukes whose ultimate price tag soared over \$20 billion while being unable to compete with renewables; raised tariffs on Chinese solar panels to slow the spread of Solartopian green energy; joined Obama in letting the eco-insane fracking industry run wild; let Attorney General Jeff Sessions prosecute *cannabis* use despite its being legalized by more than half the states; assaulted the rights and safety of LGBTQ citizens; joined corporate Democrats like Chuck Schumer in gutting fiscal safeguards passed after previous crashes meant to prevent the next one; pitched paper towels at Puerto Rican survivors of Hurricanes Irma and Maria while lying about the death toll and heaping racist, misogynist contempt on San Juan’s Latina Mayor Carmen Yulin Cruz; let thousands of islanders go years without food, water, shelter; fought against bringing renewable energy to the island; claimed (on June 4, 2018) the right to pardon himself and his family and friends from any federal prosecutions; established (then abandoned) a federal commission on election theft led by election thieves Kris Kobach and Ken Blackwell; gutted a successful treaty with Iran meant to prevent it from making nuclear weapons; pledged to vastly expand our own nuclear arsenal; ignored long-standing global agreements against weaponizing space by pushing a “Space Corps” projected to cost trillions while destabilizing the planet; made clear in his dealings with Russia, North Korea, China, Brazil, the Philippines that he envied their autocracies, and their ability to torture their own citizens at will; screamed endlessly about the Mueller investigation into his own personal finances and connections to the Russian mob, all of which proved to be real, and which sowed the seeds of his ultimate downfall.



There's much much more. You will read all about it in countless volumes over the coming years.

But simply put: in service to his mob roots and his underworld owners, Trump brought the American state to the brink of collapse. Democracy, optimism, independent thought, factual integrity, financial honesty, common sense, personal courtesy, human compassion, a sense of humor, basic empathy, any connection to the natural Earth...all bent before his psychotic narcissism and the domestic corporations and foreign dictator that owned him.

With no Truth, no compassion, no common decency, no trust, no human community to show for it...our corporate-imperial Puritan DNA...born in 1600s Boston with such stark obsessions and dark prudery...left us four centuries later in the hands of a psychotic monster, a heathen *dybbuk* of apocalyptic proportions..

But in 2018...empowered by the remnant DNA of our original diverse matriarchal democracy.... our Indigenous soul struck back.

# AMERICA BEING REBORN

***“ To change something, build a new model that makes the existing one obsolete...”***

***—-Bucky Fuller***

With climate chaos, species extinction, toxic pollution, atomic idiocy, obscene overconsumption, social injustice, racial caste, gender hostility, corporate domination, imperial madness and so much more, we sail into a self-created abyss.

*If space aliens patrolling the universe for harmful species saw what we've done to each other and our planet (and then caught a glimpse of Donald Trump) we'd be instantly exterminated.*

Given the horrifying cruelty and contempt with which we treat so many of our kin, we would be hard pressed to beg for mercy.

Given the arrogant incompetence of so many so-called leaders (not just Trump) it's tough to claim regenerative genius.

There's ample reason to doubt our ability to get out of this mess. In the larger scheme of things (if there is one) it could be said the Puritans embedded in our DNA the technological prowess to build the machines that would link our global mind, feed and power seven billion humans...then send our seed into space.

But the price has been steep, and the abyss of despair is deep, maybe even inescapable.

Some call it *Koyaanisqatsi*, Hopi for *life out of balance*, the death-of-nature apocalypse. At very least, we are skating on the edge of survival itself, with ample evidence to indicate we will not make it.

Here is some of what we know...

X A legal system that grants corporations human rights but no human responsibilities still endures.

X So does an economic system based on the power of money rather than human and ecological needs.

X Our corporate two-party duopoly shuts out new activism and ideas.

X *Buckley, Bellotti, Citizens United, McCutcheon* and other “one dollar one vote” rulings granting corporate control over our elections have no place in an actual democracy, and must be circumvented.

X Our elections are still run with easily stripped voter registration rolls and early flipped electronic machines.

X The Electoral College, which has put six popular vote losers in the White House, still stands .

X Our electoral system is corrupted by unlimited dark money.

X Our local, state and national representational districts are seriously gerrymandered.

X The oligarchic Senate favors small, rural states over an urbanized majority (40 million Californians have two Senators versus 40 from 20 small states with the same total population).

X Lacking statehood, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia are colonized with no Congressional representation.

X The gerrymandered Senate appoints the judiciary, tilting it right. The Trumpster curse of mobster authoritarianism includes a horde of horrendous court appointments that will haunt us for decades to come.

X Like Jackson, Wilson, Nixon and the Johnsons, Trump has proven again that the presidency is too far beyond popular control, and that the impeachment/removal process must be made easier.

X An economic system valuing money and greed over human need and ecological harmony is not sustainable.

X Nor is warfare of any kind, no matter who wages it or why.

X Nor are nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction, no matter who has them.

X Divide-and-conquer hate (racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, LGBTQ, etc.) is still with us.

X America's "exceptional" claim to a global empire that robs others of their labor, resources and freedom still curses our existence.

X Imperial/military spending still sucks up the "peace dividend" that must serve human needs.....

# ***TrumpExit (in progress)...***

Here we must pause.

As I write, an astonishing confluence of recriminations, investigations and incarcerations are mounting.

There's no way to know at this point exactly what will bring Trump down and when it will happen.

But this is a history book that craves continuity and closure.

So I'm holding this slot open for a full description of the blessed event. I've projected his departure for April 22 (Earth Day) 2019.

But whatever the date, we'll proceed with our narrative and fill in this slot (finishing the book) when it happens.

It will be among the most joyous passages I'll ever write.

It will also indicate that we as a nation have the likelihood of survival. and thus:

*Getting to Solartopia...*

*“The Happy Ending is Our National Belief”*

—-Mary McCarthy

Through the cycles of our history, the humanist resistance has always bounced back. Bad as things have gotten, we are still here.

Rooted in the tribal matriarchies that produced the *Haudenosaunee* Confederacy, the Indigenous DNA embedded in our double helix gave us North America's first true democracy... and repeatedly asserts its essential spirit...again and again...and yet again.

It erupted amongst the Great Awakening of the 1730-40s, the Transcendentalists of the 1830-50s, the Bohemians of the early 1900s, the CIO/New Deal 1930s, the New Left/psychedelic Yippie '60s, the Solartopian campaigns of the '70s and beyond. The astounding spread of our diverse mosaic arose in the new millennium with Occupy, #blacklivesmatter, #metoo, Colin Kaepernick's knee, the Keystone/Dakota Pipeline encampments, the Sunrise Movement, the Green New Deal and so much more.

It blew apart the colonial Calvinist church, authored the Declaration of Independence, won our Revolution, got us a Bill of Rights, ended chattel slavery, established labor unions, authored an Economic Bill of Rights and a Universal Declaration of Human Rights, birthed movements for racial equality, participatory democracy, radical feminism, LGBTQ rights, an end to empire, No Nukes, the birth of a green-powered economy...the twin demands for a sound economy and harmony with our Mother Earth...and with each other.

On the wings of the internet (which requires eternal vigilance), our Awakened energies have revolutionized music and the arts, embraced spiritual diversity, opened the doors of perception with *cannabis*...and with revived explorations into psychedelic substances whose ultimate impacts remain unknown.



That human flow has been enshrined by an endless flow of American heroes, representing that Indigenous side of our DNA, and the Better Angels of Our Soul (see the Notes Section for a partial list; YOU may be on it).

Throughout our history such indomitable social-democrats, humanist activists, cultural revolutionaries, spiritual teachers and eco-pioneers have fought to maintain a survivable alternative to our Puritan Empire.

Now, we face our ultimate test...as a nation and a species.

As the American center has ceased to hold, our organic soul is being bent. With passion, persistence, power and pacifism...we struggle to keep it from breaking.

In the huge marches...against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, in the raw grassroots against-all-odds vigor of organized labor, the persistent power of feminist, LGBTQ and minority resistance, grassroots campaigns against King CONG (Coal, Oil, Nukes, Gas) the explosion of the Sandernistas, the pipeline fights, the battles over the Supreme Court, and so much more...our basic instincts abide, the better angels of our soul are still around.

The diverse millions who powered Bernie Sander's astonishing 2016 run cast an order of magnitude more votes than those counted for the democratic socialism of Gene Debs a century before. In 2018, demands for social justice, ecological sanity, an end to empire, the dawn of global peace, human kindness and a culture of compassion fueled an historic electoral turn-around. In tandem, they light the road to our species' survival.

In desperate times, we still have at our command the means to survive, thrive and evolve as a species...

X With modern organic methods we have a fast-evolving grasp on how to feed everyone on this planet while preserving its ecological integrity.

X With modern wind, solar, battery storage, LED-style efficiency and more, our Solartopian technologies can fully power a global economy without the fossil/nuke fires that super-heat and terminally contaminate our planet.

X With modern plant-based industrial techniques we can produce 100% of our consumer goods with recyclable materials (and clean up the plastics, glyphosates, radioactive waste and so much more that defile our planet).

Through the Solartopian spiral of our history...in evolving Awakened glimpses....we have SEEN the Promised Land.

So repeat after me....

*Yes, things are tough. But if we all organize and work really hard and figure out how to get along, we can prevail."*

Now hug somebody random. And sing *Kumbaya*.

Or we could say....

*When that Puritan madness finally shoots our seed into space, our Indigenous DNA may just let us sigh, hug other, clean up the mess and make this Earth truly livable again.*

Has the process already begun?

The 2018 “Blue Wave” pulled us (in the nick of time) back from the brink, giving control of the House to a diverse, matriarchal bunch of Democrats.

Really it was a “Rainbow Tsunami.”

It erupted in opposition to our worst brush with outright fascism since World War I.

The corporate misogynist Brett Kavanaugh slithered onto the US Supreme Court. Trump aimed troops at a “caravan” of desperate central American refugees. A fanatic sent pipe bombs to liberal leaders. A hater murdered eleven Jewish worshippers during Shabbos services at a Pittsburgh synagogue, conjuring nightmares of Hitler’s Germany.

But in 2018, two-thirds of the under-thirty voters appeared to oppose such madness.

They gave Nevada our history’s the first state legislature with a female majority.

More than 100 women (119) entered in Congress for the first time, twenty of color, including our first two Indigenous women, our first two Muslim women, the first black females from Massachusetts and Connecticut, the first two Latinas from Texas. The first female Senator from Tennessee joined the first female governor of South

Dakota (both Republicans) and the first female Senator (a bisexual Democrat) from Arizona.

Colorado got America's first openly gay governor, joining more than 150 LGBTQ candidates who won federal, state and local offices.

A runoff featured the first contending black US Senate candidate from Mississippi (Mike Espy) since Reconstruction. The first black female contender for Governor of Georgia (Stacy Abrams) became the rightful winner again a secretary of state who ran his own election with the usual Jim Crow registration stripping and tally flipping. When she refused to concede, Abrams opened a whole new window on the fight against election theft.

As females win ultra-marathons in running and swimming, Trump embodied the desperate death shriek of the misogynist male, a fossil/nuke flail into the ash heap of evolution. His monumental female-fearing mess shriveled before the specter of a reborn Indigenous-style matriarchy.

So will 2018-2020 will mark our organic being's most vital generational shift?

The Boomers who claimed power with Bill Clinton have transformed our culture.

Plenty of pockets of Puritan resistance sure do remain. Millions of rightist evangelicals and Jim Crow reactionaries give ample testimony to the residual power of 1630 Boston, 1685 Jamestown, 1692 Salem, the KKK south of 1865.

But the “Hippie Revolution” has pulverized the mainstream worldview. Rooted in our Indigenous DNA, the Greatest Awakening has transformed (now in ways we take for granted) music, literature, dance, the visual arts, journalism, architecture, theater, film, dress, bearing, attitude, diet, love, marriage, child-raising, joy, freedom. Nearly every corner of the American mind has been altered.

Legalized *cannabis*, revisited psychedelics (see Michael Pollan’s *How to Change Your Mind*), the enlightened influence of oriental philosophies, meditative practices, yoga...all come with the Indigenous view that we humans are inseparable from and dependent on (rather than superior to) the transcendent forces of nature and the “web of life” that links us all.

Racial diversity is part of the process. Skin pigment is an absurd diversion, a trick question. Residual racism, with all its authoritarian uses, is certainly far from gone. But the crack in the color line has cut through the Oval Office and plunges ever-deeper into whatever remains of the Jim Crow cancer.

Sexuality has joined (actually led) the tsunami. Humankind’s favorite (by far) internet TV flaunts diverse sensual explorations open enough to seduce (or kill) the stoutest Calvinist. The transcendent Hippie embrace of open sexuality is an evolving liberation (“like splitting the atom,” as Mabel Dodge said) from which there’s no turning back.

Likewise an LGBTQ embrace from which millions once hid in shame. Just five decades since Stonewall, the openly gay march into the mainstream is far beyond irreversible.

Meanwhile, Mother Earth has made Her ecological imperatives clear...and we may at last have the technology to meet them.

In the half-century since Earth Day, we've made wind, solar, battery storage and LED-style efficiency an open path to both economic and ecological sustainability. A Green New Deal, organic agriculture, veganism, substitutes for plastic, advances against pollution...social justice, cultural diversity, racial/gender/LGBTQ equality...all are essential steps to survival... all are within our reach.

We'll need the accumulated visionary genius of our great social justice and ecological activists to at last transcend the institutional barriers against them, to open our greed-dominated body politic to the new ideas and ideals it so desperately needs.

We must also accept that the City on the Hill has had its day, that the arc of history demands that the ALL empires must fall.

We'll feel a lot better, and have far more resources to remake our Earth, once we stop messing with the internal affairs of other nations, slash our imperial budget, shut all overseas bases, bring our troops home (to fight fires, install solar panels, build affordable

housing and so much more) and let social democracy and eco-sustainability provide our truest national security.

Worldwide, the age of nationalist domination is gone. The planet cannot sustain it, nor can the human economy.

In this brave new millennium, if we are to be a global force worth keeping, it must be through our ability to transform and grow in peace and non-violence, to merge our Puritan-born technological capabilities with our Indigenous legacies of grassroots democracy, social justice, ecological sustainability.

What Albert Einstein described as ***a whole new way of thinking*** must evolve with some serious meditation (and probably medication, including the wise, sacred use of some psychedelics).

Our vital next stage of evolution demands worldly capabilities joined with empathy, compassion, courage, wisdom and common sense...to transcend at last the violence, greed, dominion, machismo and hubris that has so thoroughly marred the first spiral of our history.

Thankfully, the will for global survival repeatedly arises from that Indigenous/Awakened side of our natal double-helix, the one that relentlessly returns with the better angels of our soul.

We've ridden the first incarnation of our national organism long beyond its original, isolated life-span...into an era that demands holistic rebirth on a global scale.

As we fight to see the LED light, maybe Deganawidah, Hiawentha and their Indigenous matriarchs will again grace us with their wisdom.

Maybe we'll find at last the good sense to heed what they teach while we manage the evolving green technologies of a just, sustainable world.



## A NOTE ON NOTES

I hope you've enjoyed surfing this amazing historic pipeline as much as I have.

To save trees we've made our notes (there are a lot of them) and bibliography available entirely on line. They've been compiled and edited by Kirk Bampton. They're at [www.solartopia.org](http://www.solartopia.org). You can write me there, or at

Box 4446, Valley Village, California, 91607.

FYI my radio shows are

*California Solartopia* @ KPFK-Pacific 90.7FM Los Angeles,  
& *Green Power & Wellness*, podcast @ prn.fm

Other books at [www.solartopia.org](http://www.solartopia.org) include:

*Harvey Wasserman's History of the US*

Intro by Howard Zinn

*A Glimpse of the Big Light: Losing Parents, Finding Spirit*

Intro by Marianne Williamson

*Solartopia! Our Green-Powered Earth*

Intro by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

*America's Gay Potsmoking Founders*

& their Amazing Psychedelic Adventures

With "Thomas Paine"

*The Strip & Flip Disaster of America's Stolen Elections*

With Bob Fittrakis

***Ishalamabuddhila!!!***

