

## Leithner Letter No. 105-107 26 September-26 November 2008

*In great empires the people who live in the capital, and in the provinces remote from the scene of action, feel, many of them, scarce any inconveniency from the war; but enjoy, at their ease, the amusement of reading in the newspapers the exploits of their own fleets and armies. To them this amusement compensates the small difference between the taxes which they pay on account of the war, and those which they had been accustomed to pay in time of peace. They are commonly dissatisfied with the return of peace, which puts an end to their amusement, and to a thousand visionary hopes of conquest and national glory from a longer continuance of the war.*

Adam Smith  
*The Wealth of Nations* (1776)

*Nothing is so unworthy of a civilised nation as allowing itself to be governed without opposition by an irresponsible clique that has yielded to base instinct. It is certain that today every honest German is ashamed of his government. Who among us has any conception of the dimensions of shame that will befall us and our children when one day the veil has fallen from our eyes and the most horrible of crimes – crimes that infinitely outdistance every human measure – reach the light of day? If the German people are already so corrupted and spiritually crushed that they do not raise a hand, frivolously trusting in a questionable faith in lawful order of history; if they surrender man's highest principle, that which raises him above all other God's creatures, his free will; if they abandon the will to take decisive action and turn the wheel of history and thus subject it to their own rational decision; if they are so devoid of all individuality, have already gone so far along the road toward turning into a spiritless and cowardly mass – then, yes, they deserve their downfall ... Do not forget that every people deserves the regime it is willing to endure!*

From the first leaflet of [The White Rose](#) (1942)

*From a Christian perspective there is only one way to describe U.S. foreign policy: it is evil. It was evil before the United States invaded Iraq, and it would still be evil if the United States withdrew all of its forces from Iraq tomorrow. It is because of our foreign policy that the U.S. military has become – through its wars, interventions, and occupations – the greatest force for evil in the world. U.S. foreign policy sows discord among nations, stirs up strife where none existed, intensifies the hatred that many foreigners around the world have for Americans and each other, and creates terrorists faster than we can kill them.*

Laurence M. Vance  
[Christianity and War and Other Essays Against the Warfare State](#) (2008)

## America's 2008 Elections, Its Sullied Republican Past and Its Fraught Future

The voluminous writings (nineteen books and thousands of essays, articles and reviews) of [H.L. Mencken](#), one of America's finest writers and perhaps its greatest journalist and chronicler of American English, are a virtually-forgotten treasure trove of sparkling wit and deep wisdom. Like knowledge of their own history and respect for their own Constitution, decades ago most Americans consigned him to the dustbin. To peruse his pearls about government, democracy, politicians and elections, as well as socialism and capitalism, is to perceive something of what America once was and now merely claims to be. "Government is a broker in pillage," Mencken said in *Prejudices: First Series* (1919), "and every election is sort of an advance auction sale of stolen goods." In that book he added "The urge to save humanity is almost always a false front for the urge to rule," and defined the socialist as "a man suffering from an overwhelming conviction to believe what is not true."

"Democracy is a form of worship," he observed in *The American Credo: A Contribution Toward the Interpretation of the National Mind* (1920). "It is the worship of Jackals by Jackasses." Further, "Socialism is simply the degenerate capitalism of bankrupt capitalists. Its one genuine object is to get more money for its professors." In *The American Mercury* (24 April 1924) he wrote about the state's indoctrination of the young: "[The] erroneous assumption is to the effect that the aim of public education is to fill the young of the species with knowledge and awaken their intelligence, and so make them fit to discharge the duties of citizenship in an enlightened and independent manner. Nothing could be further from the truth. The aim of public education is not to spread enlightenment at all; it is simply to reduce as many individuals as possible to the same safe level, to breed and train a standardised citizenry, to put down dissent and originality. That is its aim in the United States, whatever the pretensions of politicians, pedagogues and other such mountebanks, and that is its aim everywhere else."

In *The American Mercury* (27 August 1924) came this: "The aim of democracy is to break all ... free spirits to the common harness. It tries to iron them out, to pump them dry of self-respect, to make docile John Does of them. The measure of its success is the extent to which such men are brought down, and made common. The measure of civilisation is the extent to which they resist and survive. Thus the only sort of liberty that is real under democracy is the liberty of the have-nots to destroy the liberty of the haves." In *Notes on Democracy* (1926), Mencken elaborated this theme. "Democracy is based upon so childish a complex of fallacies that they must be protected by a rigid system of taboos, else even half-wits would argue it to pieces. Its first concern must thus be to penalise the free play of ideas ... The average man doesn't want to be free. He wants to be safe."

And in his *Chrestomathy* (1949), a summary compilation of his writings, Mencken identified the "inner nature" of government:

All government, in its essence, is a conspiracy against the superior man; its one permanent object is to oppress him and cripple him. If it be aristocratic in organisation, then it seeks to protect the man who is superior only in law against the man who is superior in fact; if it be democratic, then it seeks to protect the man who is inferior in every way against both. One of its primary functions is to regiment men by force, to make them as much alike as possible and as dependent upon one another as possible, to search out and combat originality among them. All it can see in an original idea is potential change, and hence an invasion of its prerogatives. The most dangerous man, to any government, is the man who is able to think things out for himself, without regard to the prevailing superstitions and taboos. Almost inevitably he comes to the conclusion that the government he lives under is dishonest, insane and intolerable, and so, if he is romantic, he tries to change it. And even if he is not romantic personally he is very apt to spread discontent among those who are ...

What lies behind all this, I believe, is a deep sense of the fundamental antagonism between the government and the people it governs. It is apprehended, not as a committee of citizens chosen to carry on the communal business of the whole population, but as a separate and autonomous corporation, mainly devoted to exploiting the population for the benefit of its own members ... When a private citizen is robbed a worthy man is deprived of the fruits of his industry and thrift; when the government is robbed the worst that happens is that certain rogues and loafers have less money to play with than they had before. The notion that they have earned that money is never entertained; to most sensible men it would seem ludicrous. They are simply rascals who, by accidents of law, have a somewhat dubious right to a share in the earnings of their fellow men.

This gang is well-nigh immune to punishment. Its worst extortions, even when they are baldly for private profit, carry no certain penalties under our laws. Since the first days of the Republic, less than a dozen of its members have been impeached, and only a few obscure understrappers have ever been put into prison. The number of men sitting at Atlanta and Leavenworth for revolting against the extortions of government is always ten times as great as the number of government officials condemned for oppressing the taxpayers to their own gain ... There are no longer any citizens in the world; there are only subjects. They work day in and day out for their masters; they are bound to die for their masters at call ... On some bright tomorrow, a geological epoch or two hence, they will come to the end of their endurance ...

Mencken saw clearly the great danger of blithely assuming that the public weal motivates politicians:

These men, in point of fact, are seldom if ever moved by anything rationally describable as public spirit; there is actually no more public spirit among them than among so many burglars or street-walkers. Their purpose, first, last and all the time, is to promote their private advantage, and to that end, and that end alone, they exercise all the vast powers that are in their hands ... Whatever it is they seek, whether security, greater ease, more money or more power, it has to come out of the common stock, and so it diminishes the

shares of all other men. Putting a new job-holder to work decreases the wages of every wage-earner in the land ... Giving a job-holder more power takes something away from the liberty of all of us ...

One of the major reasons that the words “government” and “tyranny” are virtually synonyms, Mencken showed, was the gullibility of the ruled: “The State is not force alone. It depends upon the credulity of man quite as much as upon his docility. Its aim is not merely to make him obey, but also to make him want to obey.” Is government sometimes useful? You must be joking! “So is a doctor. But suppose the dear fellow claimed the right, every time he was called in to prescribe for a bellyache or a ringing in the ears, to raid the family silver, use the family tooth-brushes, and execute the *droit de seigneur* upon the housemaid?”

Finally, Mencken did not reserve any greater affection for the “military caste” than he did for the civilian bureaucracy:

The military caste did not originate as a party of patriots, but as a party of bandits. The primeval bandit chiefs eventually became kings. Something of the bandit character still attaches to the military professional. He may fight bravely and unselfishly, but so do gamecocks. He may seek no material rewards, but neither do hunting dogs. His general attitude of mind is stupid and anti-social. It was a sound instinct in the Founding Fathers that made them subordinate the military establishment to the civil power. To be sure, the civil power consists largely of political scoundrels, but they at least differ in outlook and purpose from the military ...

Mencken denounced the conjoined twins, socialism and democracy; he ridiculed the pretensions and idiocies of politicians (civilian and military); and he mourned the death of the American Republic. He therefore opposed America’s entry into both the First and Second World Wars, and reserved special contempt for the execrable Franklin Roosevelt and his catastrophic New Deal.

Mencken has been buried, it seems, because the principles he (and many others) defended in the 1920s are the ones he (virtually alone) continued to extol until he died in 1956. Evil Franklin, on the other hand, has been lionised precisely because the promises he made in 1932 – namely to uphold the gold standard, balance the budget and reduce the government’s payrolls – were abandoned in 1933; and his repeated vow in 1940 (“your boys are not going to be sent to any foreign wars”) was swiftly repudiated in 1941. Today, most Americans would dismiss Mencken’s principles as “radical,” “extreme” and even “heretical.” Not a few would denounce them as “un-American,” and neoconservatives would revile him as a “defeatist” and a “traitor.” How might Mencken answer these epithets? In a letter to Upton Sinclair (14 October 1917) he fired this fusillade:

The notion that a radical is one who hates his country is naïve and usually idiotic. He is, more likely, one who likes his country more than the rest of us, and is thus more disturbed than the rest of us when he sees it debauched. He is not a bad citizen turning to crime; he is a good citizen driven to despair.

## Two Preliminary Omissions

With Mencken's many insights in mind – and with his sharp prose ringing in our ears – we can turn a sharp eye to America's presidential and congressional elections on 4 November. If he were here, Mencken might first of all bring his compatriots' attention to two garden-variety delusions. Although they are hardly minor, they are not causes of America's deep-seated problems.<sup>1</sup> Instead, they are symptoms and consequences, or at best proximate rather than ultimate causes. First, no candidate dares to utter, and still less to premise his foreign and economic manifesto upon, the obvious but unmentionable fact that the Cold War was a fraud. More generally, the First World War, a pointless and avoidable war, spawned the Second World War, another senseless and preventable war,<sup>2</sup> which begot the Cold War – which, you guessed it, was futile and needless.<sup>3</sup> If only they had adhered to the principles of their Founders, Americans of the mid-1940s could have readily seen that the Cold War was a deception foisted upon them by their own government.<sup>4</sup>

Alas, Americans forgot (and their politicians certainly didn't remind them) the Iron Law of Socialism: it always and inevitably fails. Therefore socialist (i.e., poor) lands cannot plausibly threaten others. As Ludwig von Mises derived from first principles in the 1920s (see in particular [Economic Calculation in the Socialist Commonwealth](#)), socialist economies including the Soviet Union were destined for disaster, collapse and the scrapheap of history. As such, their governments were a danger only to their own inhabitants. Americans also forgot

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<sup>1</sup> Judging from their past form, in some socialist/neoconservative quarters the contents and conclusions of what follows will be denounced as “anti-American.” If 300 million souls populated Australia and its government possessed an empire and military that spanned the world, would the Commonwealth Government act differently than the U.S. Government? I very strongly doubt it. Hence what follows should be read as an analysis of a people (in this case Americans) who are unfortunate enough to live in a country whose politicians – and, regrettably, most of whose people – cannot resist the temptations of socialism, empire and war. Yesterday Britain, today the U.S., and who knows who will succumb tomorrow?

<sup>2</sup> See Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War: Explaining World War I*, Basic Books, 2000; Jim Powell, *Wilson's War: How Woodrow Wilson's Great Blunder Led to Hitler, Lenin, Stalin and World War II*, Crown Forum, 2005; and Patrick J. Buchanan, *Churchill, Hitler, and “The Unnecessary War”*: *How Britain Lost Its Empire and the West Lost the World*, Crown, 2008. See also Buchanan's [Bush Plays the Hitler Card, Was the Holocaust Inevitable?](#) and [Was WWII Really “The Good War”?](#)

<sup>3</sup> As he is of so many others, Murray Rothbard pioneered this insight and its corroboration. See, for example, [Myths of the Cold War](#) and [The Transformation of the American Right](#), and [It Usually Ends With Murray Rothbard: My Long and Winding Road to Libertarianism and Austrian Economics](#) by Joseph T. Salerno.

<sup>4</sup> Of course, if they had adhered to these principles a few years earlier then they would have recognised that the Second World War was unnecessary, and therefore remained neutral; and if they had held fast to their Founders' guiding stars, Americans would have remained neutral in the First World War.

(and politicians went to great lengths to distract from their attention) the Iron Law of Bureaucracy: it always seeks to grow and will never willingly accept reduction, to say nothing of abolition. Hence at the conclusion of the Second World War, American politicians and bureaucrats sought a new “enemy,” no matter how impoverished and implausible, that would justify the maintenance and expansion of the military-bureaucratic behemoth that had developed during the war. Ignore or deny the Iron Law of Socialism, activate the Law of Bureaucracy, mix well and hey presto – the demonisation of the hapless Soviet Union and the outbreak of the Cold War.

Why on earth does any of this matter? Because it verily shouts to Americans (and Australians, and Britons, etc.), if only they would listen, that the “War on Terror” and associated idiocies, which is one of the biggest “issues” of the elections, is an utter con. If Americans do not know the general point that their intervention in one war provides a pretext for the next war – and yet another deceit – then how can they grasp the corollary that the fraudulent Cold War has spawned the stupid War on Terror? If their minds are gripped with the fear of fictitious enemy, how can they realise that the risk that “terrorists” pose is miniscule? (For background, see [The Terror Trap](#) and [Terrorism: We Wildly Overestimate the Risk of Being a Victim](#).) Blowback from the unnecessary First World War gave us the avoidable Second World War; and blowback from the bogus Cold War, together with politicians’ desire to find a new contrived “enemy” to replace the inconveniently-collapsed Soviet Union, has bequeathed the phony War on Terror.<sup>5</sup>

The second omission is that no candidate dares even to mention the obvious reality that the U.S. Government is bankrupt (see [Letter 87-89](#) and [Letter 93-95](#)). If it weren’t tragic, it would be comical: the presidential candidates are staggering under roughly equal weights of delusion, hubris and humbug. Sen. McBloody Old Fool, for example, asserts that over the next 10 years (during only the first eight of which he can remain in office, but then he’s never let the Constitution impede his way) he will cut \$3.7 trillion of taxes. Sen. Obama counters that he’ll cut \$2.7 trillion. Neither man has uttered a syllable about the reduction of expenditure. Some bubbles suddenly burst and others gradually deflate. I suspect that America’s fiscal gap is a bubble. If so, then among the questions ignored at this year’s elections are when and how – i.e., gradually or suddenly – it shrinks (see also [The Non-Issue That Should Be an Issue](#) by Gregory Bresiger).

### **Omission #1: Nobody Gives a Damn About Iraqi Civilians**

It might take years for the full import and impact of the U.S. Government’s bankruptcy to dawn upon its voters and creditors. Human nature being what it is, it’s natural to ignore a very slow crash whose crescendo could lie well beyond the

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<sup>5</sup> See in particular three books by Chalmers Johnson: *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire*, Holt, 2000; *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic*, Metropolitan Books, 2004; and *Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Republic*, Holt, 2008.

next election. It's less easy and less excusable to ignore and deny something that's much more immediate and graphic. Like virtually all wars, the Anglo-American invasion and occupation of Iraq has been a far longer and bloody affair than its many enthusiasts ever imagined. For American, British and other troops, the death toll has been tracked meticulously. In 2003-2005 (but less prominently thereafter), the names and photographs of the soldiers killed, as well as the incidents which cost their lives, have been published far and wide. In contrast, information regarding Iraqi civilian casualties is far less readily available and much less reliable. Before the invasion, during a news conference at the Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan in March 2002, General Tommy Franks sneered, "We don't do body counts." His boss adopted the same dismissive attitude. "We don't do body counts on other people," Defence Secretary Ronald Dumsfeld intoned in November 2003.

Like virtually all utterances by politicians, whether they are American or British, military or civilian, these statements seem to be misrepresentations and may be outright lies. *The Independent* ([Aid Worker Uncovered America's Secret Tally of Iraqi Civilian Deaths](#), 20 April 2005) reported: "A week before she was killed by a suicide bomber, humanitarian worker Marla Ruzicka forced [American] military commanders to admit they did keep records of Iraqi civilians killed by US forces ... In an essay Ms Ruzicka wrote a week before her death on Saturday and published yesterday, the 28-year-old revealed that a Brigadier General told her it was 'standard operating procedure' for US troops to file a report when they shoot a non-combatant. She obtained figures for the number of civilians killed in Baghdad between 28 February and 5 April [2005], and discovered that 29 had been killed in firefights involving US forces and insurgents. This was four times the number of Iraqi police killed."

A [report](#) by the Iraq Study Group dated December 2006 found that the country's occupiers have systematically under-reported the extent of violence in order to disguise the failure of their policies. For example, American officials reported 93 attacks or significant acts of violence on one day in July 2006, yet "a careful review of the reports for that single day brought to light more than 1,100 acts of violence." Further, "The finding confirmed a Sept. 8 McClatchy Newspapers report that U.S. officials excluded scores of people killed in car bombings and mortar attacks from tabulations measuring the results of a drive to reduce violence in Baghdad. By excluding [those] data, U.S. officials were able to boast that deaths from sectarian violence in the Iraqi capital had declined by more than 52 percent between July and August." The ISG's report stated: "A murder of an Iraqi is not necessarily counted as an attack. If we cannot determine the source of a sectarian attack, that assault does not make it into the database. A roadside bomb or a rocket or mortar attack that doesn't hurt U.S. personnel doesn't count."

Estimates of civilian casualties arising from the conflict, beginning with the invasion and continuing with the occupation, have come in many forms. The table summarises the most prominent estimates (see also [The Real State of Iraq](#) and [Casualties of the Iraq War](#)). Their mean is 467,289 civilian deaths since March

2003 – equal to the population of metropolitan Atlanta or Miami, or Edinburgh or Manchester, or London or Kitchener-Waterloo, Ont. It is important to add to this number an estimate of Iraqi civilian deaths attributable to the Anglo-American sanctions, no-fly zone, etc., after the 1991 Persian Gulf War. On 5 December 1996, CBS reporter Lesley Stahl [asked](#) Secretary of State Madeleine Albright: “We have heard that a half million [Iraqi] children have died. I mean, that’s more children than died in Hiroshima. And, you know, is the price worth it?” Albright, who had been appointed by Bill Clinton on 5 December, replied: “I think this is a very hard choice, but the price – we think the price is worth it.” A reasonable estimate is therefore ca. one million deaths of Iraqi civilians as a result of the Anglo-American aggression since the early 1990s. Do Iraqis think that it was “worth it”? Can any sane person? A million here and a million there, and soon you’re talking not about a mere genocide, but about a holocaust. Indeed, this total is one-sixth of the way towards a Hitler-style Holocaust. But no American politician, and very few Americans (or Australians, Britons, etc.), seem to care.

Source	Iraqi Civilian Deaths Attributable to the Anglo-American Invasion and Occupation	From March 2003 to ...
<a href="#">Iraq Body Count</a>	80,419 to 87,834 civilian deaths reported in English-language media (including Arabic media translated into English)	Jan 2008
<a href="#">Opinion Research Business survey</a>	1,033,000 violent deaths (range of 946,000 to 1,120,000) as a result of the conflict	Aug 2007
<a href="#">Iraqi Health Ministry survey</a>	151,000 violent deaths (range of 104,000 to 223,000) out of 400,000 excess deaths due to the war	Jun 2006
<a href="#">Lancet survey</a>	601,027 violent deaths out of 654,965 excess deaths	Jun 2006

Deaths do not comprise all of the suffering that has been inflicted upon Iraqi civilians. According to Louise Roug (“Decrepit Healthcare Adds to Toll in Iraq,” *The Los Angeles Times*, 11 November 11, 2006), “The nation’s health has deteriorated to a level not seen since the 1950s,” said Joseph Chamie, former director of the U.N. Population Division and an Iraq specialist. “They were at the forefront,” he said, referring to healthcare just before the 1991 Persian Gulf War. “Now they’re looking more and more like a country in sub-Saharan Africa.” *The International Herald Tribune* [reported](#) the views of Iraq’s Health Minister. Ali Al-Shemari said “Iraq needed at least 10 years to rebuild its infrastructure,” and that the medical situation in the country was “gloomy.” Medical supplies are very short; roadblocks prevent people from reaching hospital; no hospital has been built in Iraq since 1983; the country has 15,000 available hospital beds but needs 80,000; and many doctors have fled the country. “We need help from anybody.”

In November 2006, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that 1.8 million Iraqis had been displaced to neighboring countries, and 1.6 million had been displaced internally. Every month, nearly 100,000 fled to Syria and Jordan (see Alexander G. Higgins, [U.N.: 100,000 Iraq Refugees Flee Monthly](#)). As of March 2007, more Iraqis had lost their homes and become refugees than the nationals of any other country. Over 3.9 million people, close to 16% of Iraq's population, have been uprooted. Of these, around 2 million have fled Iraq, and an estimated 1.9 million are internal refugees (see Anthony Arnove, [Billboarding the Iraq Disaster](#)). Roughly 40 percent of Iraq's middle class has left the country. Most are fleeing systematic persecution and have no desire to return. People from all walks of life, from university professors to bakers, have been targeted by militias, insurgents and criminals. According to [Human Rights Watch](#), 331 school teachers were slain during the first four months of 2006, and at least 2,000 doctors have been killed and 250 kidnapped since 2003 (see also Carolyn Lochhead, [Iraq Refugee Crisis Exploding: 40% of Middle Class Believed to Have Fled Crumbling Nation](#), *The San Francisco Chronicle*, 16 January 2007).

Give us your huddled masses – except if they're the victims of our own aggression. Ann McFeatters notes ([Iraq Refugees Find No Refuge in America](#), *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 25 May 2007) that “Last month, the United States admitted one immigrant from Iraq. As Congress ties itself up in knots wrangling with the Bush administration over what to do with 12 million illegal immigrants already in the United States, it is an absolute scandal that in the past seven months only 69 people from Iraq have been granted refuge in America.” In response to growing international pressure, on 1 June 2007 the Bush regime announced that it was prepared to admit 7,000 Iraqi refugees who had helped the Coalition since the invasion. [According to the Refugees International](#), the U.S. has admitted fewer than 800 Iraqi refugees since 2003. Sweden has accepted 18,000 and Australia has resettled almost 6,000.

Most Anglo-Americans have shut their eyes to and washed their hands of the carnage, genocide and holocaust in Iraq. But if the death and destruction rained upon that country isn't a crime against humanity, then what is? In Iraq for almost twenty years, and in other parts of the world for much longer, the agents of the U.S., British and other Western governments have acted like devils (see also [How to Train Death Squads and Quash Revolutions from San Salvador to Iraq](#)). Is it any wonder that, in many parts of the world, they are despised as demons? The real wonder is that, particularly in the Arab and Muslim worlds, people don't loathe Western governments more than they do. Fortunately, many Arabs and Muslims know something that most Americans forgot long ago: a people and its rulers are not coterminous. But that does not lessen the severity of the suffering that the agents of Anglo-American governments have unleashed. As they cast their ballots in November, Americans should not just hang their heads in shame. Their rulers must not just abandon the occupation: they must also pay massive reparations, issue a sincere apology for the carnage and misery they have caused, and accept the jurisdiction of – and surrender Bush, Cheney, et al., to – the [International Criminal Court](#) (see also [Leaving Iraq](#) by Walter Block).

## Omission #2: From Its Infancy, the Republican Party Has Extolled Socialism, Imperialism, War, Slavery and Death

What is the ultimate cause of America's present troubles, and the outrages its rulers inflict upon other countries? Founded in 1854, the Republican Party rose to prominence and power when its nominee, Abraham Lincoln, won the presidential election of 1860. To this day, many people regard it as the "Party of Lincoln" and historians and the general public have long considered Lincoln, next only to Washington, as [America's greatest president](#) (see also [Rating the Presidents](#) by Pat Buchanan and [Down With the Presidency](#) by Lew Rockwell). Alas, the only thing new in the world is the history you don't know. Almost everything that Americans in general and Republicans in particular think they know about Lincoln and the "Grand Old Party" is a toxic mixture of myths, distortions and wicked lies.<sup>6</sup>

Lincoln, dubbed the "Great Emancipator" by his cult of worshippers, did not choose war in order to free slaves. The abhorrence of racial injustice and the desire to abolish slavery played no role in the Union's determination to strangle the Confederacy in its cradle. What did? One factor was Lincoln's determination to preserve the Union at any cost – including the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. In 1862, Lincoln wrote to Horace Greeley (the leading Northern newspaperman of the day): "My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and it is not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it." Similarly, in 1861 Congress resolved that the purpose of the war was not "[to interfere] with the rights or established institutions of those states," but to preserve the Union "with the rights of the several states unimpaired." On the day that hostilities commenced at Fort Sumter (12 April 1861), only the seven states of the Deep South had seceded, there were more slaves within the Union than outside it and Lincoln hadn't the slightest intention to free any of them. Alexis de Tocqueville's observation in *Democracy in America* (1835-40) remained true: "The prejudice of race appears to be stronger in the states that have abolished slavery than in those where it still exists."

Another factor was the Republican Party's lust (which, with few and brief exceptions, it has retained to the present day) to tax and spend. The North waged war against the South in order to regain the federal tax revenue that would be lost if the Southern states seceded peacefully.<sup>7</sup> Republicans were then, and remain

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<sup>6</sup> The authority in this field is Thomas DiLorenzo. See in particular his books (*The Real Lincoln: A New Look at Abraham Lincoln, His Agenda, and an Unnecessary War*, Prima Lifestyles, 2002, and *Lincoln Unmasked: What You're Not Supposed to Know About Dishonest Abe*, Crown Forum, 2006), and [short articles](#). See also [Government Growth, the Party of Lincoln, and George W. Bush](#) by Anthony Gregory, and Jeffrey Rogers Hummel, *Emancipating Slaves, Enslaving Free Men: A History of the American Civil War*, Open Court, 1996.

<sup>7</sup> In 1860, the proceeds from tariffs comprised 95 percent of federal revenue. The secession of the Southern states thus meant considerable loss to the federal treasury. Expenditures – i.e., pork barrel politics – would have to fall, and Lincoln's and his Republican henchmen's *raison d'être* become much less viable. That, they would not abide.

today, a Party of Big Government. In Lincoln's time, Republicans championed a high (i.e., protectionist) tariff. They used the proceeds – which were laundered through roads, canals, railways, etc. – to dispense lavish corporate welfare to their backers. To Republicans, the fact that tariffs, corporate welfare and the like favoured an anointed few (whose residences, factories, etc., were overwhelmingly in the North) and punished a benighted many (Southerners were mostly “outs” rather than “ins”) was inconsequential. What *was* essential, however, was that consumers, Southern as well as Northern, subsidise Republicans' wealthy backers. Southerners' unwillingness to subjugate themselves to Republicans ultimately drove them to secede. In Lincoln's view, only by keeping the Union intact – by force of arms if necessary – could Republicans' lust to tax, dispense largesse and build an empire be sated. In his [First Inaugural Address](#) (4 March 1861), Lincoln threatened to invade any state that failed to collect federal “duties and imposts.” On 19 April, he rationalised his order to blockade Southern ports on the grounds that “the collection of the revenue cannot be effectually executed” in the states that had seceded.<sup>8</sup>

A second wicked lie is that Lincoln championed natural rights and racial equality. Both his words and his deeds utterly repudiated any belief in or respect for these admirable principles. “I have no purpose to introduce political and social equality between the white and black races,” he announced in the first (21 August 1858) of his [celebrated debates](#) with Stephen Douglas. Like many and perhaps most other men of his time and place, Lincoln was an unapologetic and irredeemable racist: “I, as well as Judge Douglas, am in favour of the race to which I belong having the superior position.” He added “Free them [slaves] and make them politically and socially our equals? My own feelings will not admit of this. We cannot, then, make them equals.”

No reasonable person can possibly deny Lincoln's staunch and vociferous advocacy of apartheid and white supremacy.<sup>9</sup> On 17 July 1858, he said: “What I would most desire would be the separation of the white and black races.” And in the fourth of his debates with Douglas (on 18 September), he vowed: “I will to the very last stand by the law of this state, which forbids the marrying of white people with Negroes.” Lincoln enthusiastically supported the Illinois Constitution, which at that time prohibited the emigration of black people into the state; he also backed the infamous [Illinois Black Codes](#), which deprived the small number of free blacks residing within the state any semblance of citizenship; and he

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8 Republicans demanded the blockade and bombardment of Southern ports because the Confederate constitution had outlawed protectionist tariffs. Given a 50 percent tax on goods imported via New York, and a 10 percent tax in Charleston (South Carolina), then much trade would divert from Northern to Southern ports – to the detriment of the former and the profit of the latter. This the Republicans could not abide: hence even before the War started they demanded the blockade and bombardment of Southern ports. See also David Gordon's review of [A Century of War: Lincoln, Wilson, and Roosevelt](#).

9 Native Americans have as many grounds as Southerners to despise Dishonest Abe. The man who gave the military a free hand to oppress Northerners and Southerners also gave carte blanche to federal troops and cavalry to exterminate Indian tribes in the West.

applauded the [Fugitive Slave Act](#) (1850), which compelled Northerners to capture runaway slaves and return them to their owners.

Lincoln brought these shamelessly racist attitudes and pro-slavery policy preferences to the White House. In his First Inaugural Address, he promised to support a proposed constitutional amendment (that had just passed the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives) that would have prohibited the federal government from ever assuming the power “to abolish or interfere, within any State, with the domestic institutions thereof, including that of persons held to labour or service by the laws of said State.” Also in his First Inaugural, Lincoln proposed to make this constitutional amendment “express and irrevocable.” Finally, Lincoln was a lifelong advocate of “colonisation,” that is, of shipping all black people to Africa, Central America, Haiti – anywhere other than the U.S. “I cannot make it better known than it already is,” he stated in a Message to Congress (1 December 1862), “that I strongly favour colonisation.” Indeed, he favoured it so strongly that he was the president of the Illinois Colonization Society. To Dishonest Abe, African-Americans could only be “equal” once they had been expelled from the United States.

A third myth is that Lincoln’s war saved the Union. Clearly, it did so *geographically*; just as clearly, however, by destroying its voluntary nature – which the Founders had emphasised and which had been taken for granted thereafter – the war destroyed the Union *philosophically*. In the Declaration of Independence (1776), Articles of Confederation (1777-1781) and Constitution (1788), the states described themselves as “free and independent.” These documents could not be clearer: states delegated specified powers to the federal government which they had created as their agent, and they retained ultimate sovereignty for themselves. When they put their signatures to the Declaration of Independence, America’s Founders announced the secession from the British Empire of the states which they represented; and when George III signed the peace treaty ending the war, he named all of the states individually. He waged war against thirteen states, not a single entity called “the United States Government.”

Given those precedents, what sane person could possibly deny the same right of secession to Americans who withdrew consent from the federal government? Early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Northern rather than Southern states threatened to secede. Vermont considered secession in order to register its extreme disgust at the [Louisiana Purchase](#) – whose champion, Thomas Jefferson, knew was unconstitutional and who throughout his life affirmed the right of any state to dissolve the bonds of Union. Further, Massachusetts threatened to secede as a protest against the [Embargo Act of 1807](#), the War of 1812 and the annexation of Texas in 1845. On none of these occasions did any Southerner (or any American of any description) threaten Yankees with invasion.<sup>10</sup> When Texans seceded from

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<sup>10</sup> Canadians, too, have good reason to laugh in derision at Americans delusions about “self determination.” Just as Southerners were forcibly denied the right of secession, on two occasions (1775 and 1812) Americans invaded Canada in order to force annexation upon unwilling British North Americans. Canadians declined the American “offers” because

Mexico, no American doubted their right to do so and to join the Union. Quite the contrary: all insisted that they had such a right, and that no Mexican had any right to stop them. But to Lincoln and his henchmen, freedom of *association* did not permit freedom of *disassociation*: hence Southerners (including Texans) could join but couldn't depart the Union. Like the insect in the Venus Flytrap and the guest at the Hotel California, you're free to enter but you can never leave.

The truth, however, is that in 1861 the principle of freedom of association and right of secession was as widely understood and affirmed in the North as it was in the South. As *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* editorialised on 13 November 1860, the Union "depends for its continuance on the free consent and will of the sovereign people of each state, and when that consent and will is withdrawn on either part, their Union is gone." *The New York Journal of Commerce* concurred. On 12 January 1861 it warned that a coerced Union, one in which states were forcibly restrained from secession, would change the nature of government from "a voluntary one, in which the people are sovereigns, to a despotism where one part of the people are slaves" (see also John Remington Graham, *A Constitutional History of Secession*, Pelican, 2002).

A fourth blatant lie, cherished by Republicans, is the assertion that Lincoln was a "Defender of the Constitution." The polar opposite is true: Lincoln was a tyrant and the despoiler *par excellence* of the Constitution. Generations of historians have accurately labelled him a "dictator." "Dictatorship played a decisive role in the North's successful effort to maintain the Union by force of arms," wrote Clinton Rossiter in *Constitutional Dictatorship* (first published in 1948). "Lincoln's amazing disregard for the Constitution was considered by nobody as legal."

James G. Randall documented Dishonest Abe's assault upon law and liberty in *Constitutional Problems Under Lincoln* (first published in 1926). Lincoln suspended the writ of habeas corpus and ordered the military to arrest tens of thousands of political opponents. At his command, but without a shred of legal authority, ca. 300 newspapers were closed and all telegraphic communications censored; elections in the North were rigged; throughout the Union, Democratic voters were intimidated; [in New York City, hundreds of protesters against conscription \(a form of slavery\) were shot](#); West Virginia was unconstitutionally carved out of Virginia; and the most outspoken member of the Democratic Party opposition, Congressman [Clement L. Vallandigham](#) of Ohio, was deported. For good measure, duly-elected members of the Maryland legislature were gaoled, as was the mayor of Baltimore and a Maryland Congressman. In total disregard of the Second Amendment to the Constitution, inhabitants of Border States (Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri and West Virginia) were disarmed, and wherever Lincoln's evil tentacles could spread, private property was confiscated.

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they have long known something that utterly escapes Americans: a benign despot across the seas, particularly one that takes no more than an intermittent interest in his overseas Dominions, is far preferable to a malignant one within the Beltway. Fortunately for the liberty of Canadians, on each occasion the Americans withdrew in ignominy and disarray.

A fifth lie is that Lincoln was a “great humanitarian” who bore “malice towards none.” The truth is that Lincoln planned and managed a total war upon Southern civilians (see in particular Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War*, Cambridge University Press, 1997). Like Robert Mugabe today and sordid host of dictators during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Lincoln ordered his troops to murder women and children. His war included the destruction of entire towns populated solely by civilians, massive looting, rape and execution without trial (or even charge) of non-combatants. To this day, General William Tecumseh Sherman’s [March to the Sea](#) (November-December 1864) remains the worst act of terrorism committed on American soil (see, for example, [Sherman’s March](#) by Clyde Wilson). Americans would be wise to remove their blinds and recall that this evil act was perpetrated by the agents of the U.S. Government at the vengeful behest of a Republican president. Sherman wrote on 24 December: “We are not only fighting armies, but a hostile people, and must make old and young, rich and poor, feel the hard hand of war, as well as their organised armies. I know that this recent movement of mine through Georgia has had a wonderful effect in this respect.” Using the rules established by the Allies after the Second World War, Lincoln and the high command of the Union Army unquestionably qualified as war criminals.<sup>11</sup>

A sixth lie, perhaps the most despicable of all, is that the War of Northern Aggression was necessary. Only war, say its mythologisers and apologists, could have ended slavery. The truth, of course, is that it was a war of choice and not of necessity. This war, the deadliest in American history, caused the deaths of 620,000 soldiers and an undetermined number (but possibly as many as 250,000) of civilians. Approximately one in four adult, white male Southerners perished. And it was all for nothing. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, dozens of countries, including the British, Russian and Spanish empires, abolished the indefensible institution of slavery. They did so peacefully and by means of compensated emancipation. Among the countries of the Western Hemisphere that followed this route were Argentina, Colombia, Chile, all of Central America, Mexico, Bolivia, Uruguay, various French colonies, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela. Only in the Land of the Free is war and the destruction of property and constitution regarded as a necessary condition of emancipation. Whether in the American South or the Middle East, Republicans, it seems, have to destroy a country in order to deliver it.

Abraham Lincoln, then, was not the Great Emancipator: he was the Great Warmonger and Imperialist, the Great Racist, the Great Taxer-and-Spender, the Great Corruptionist, the Great Incarcerator and the Great Vandal of the

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<sup>11</sup> In his memoirs (1891), Sherman wrote that he met with Lincoln after the March to the Sea. The president was eager to hear stories about how thousands of Southern civilians (mostly children, women, the elderly and the infirm) had been plundered, sometimes murdered, and rendered homeless. According to Sherman, Lincoln laughed uproariously at the stories. One of Sherman’s biographers (Lee Kennett, *Sherman: A Soldier’s Life*, Harper, 2002), who otherwise writes very favourably about the general, concludes that if the Confederates had won the war then they would have been “justified in stringing up President Lincoln and the entire Union high command for violation of the laws of war, specifically for waging war against non-combatants.”

Constitution. He was a war criminal and America's worst-ever president. Thus far during the 2008 election, the curtain has not been (and until the election occurs in November will probably not be) withdrawn far enough to allow Americans to glimpse the truth. Nobody will remind Americans that today's Republicans are the loyal descendants of Evil Abe. And nobody will note that the Republican playbook of the Bush Era has been eerily reminiscent of that of the Lincoln Era.

True, many now see that the Bush regime has launched a war of choice rather than of necessity; that this war has been perpetrated on false and ever-shifting pretences; that it has generated untold misery and cost an incalculable fortune of life, limb and treasure; that it has been prosecuted on behalf of the Republican Party's privileged backers for the purposes of empire; and that the regime has stopped at nothing – and certainly not the Constitution – in order to get its way. Many see some of this, and a few discern much of it. Alas, far too many blithely assume that the Republicans' nominee this year, Sen. McBloody Old Fool, represents a new start. The tragedy is that so many Americans ignore, mythologise or deny their history. Hence next to nobody sees that, like almost all of his predecessors,<sup>12</sup> McCain is a Son of Lincoln. That means he's merely the latest in a conga line of warmongers, socialists, imperialists and enemies of limited and constitutional government. His only redeeming feature – and his only significant difference with Dishonest Abe – is that he has not advocated the expulsion of African-Americans from the country of their birth.

### **Omission #3: Southern “Reconstruction” and Iraqi Destruction**

People at all times and in all places are bundles of inconsistencies and even contradictions. Even so, it's astonishing and inexcusable that Southerners – of all people – should tend more than other Americans to be pro-Republican and pro-war. In particular, the [Reconstruction Era](#) of their history should have permanently immunised them against the misrepresentations and outright lies currently pervading the occupation and “reconstruction” of Iraq.

These days, Republicans are acting as if their 1865-1877 “reconstruction” of the ex-Confederacy is their blueprint for the “reconstruction” of Iraq. As it was then, so it is now: no good and much bad results from the expenditure of vast amounts of taxpayers' money; scores of Republican hacks, parasites, contractors and their

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<sup>12</sup> [Warren Harding](#) and [Calvin Coolidge](#) are exceptions to this rule, and perhaps Dwight Eisenhower is a part-exception. In his [Farewell Address](#), Eisenhower warned, “In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist . . . We should take nothing for granted.” But then he relapsed into Republican-speak: “Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defence with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.” A phrase often attributed to Benjamin Franklin is much closer to the mark: “those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety.” See also footnote 15.

local henchmen pocket most of the inflow of funds and leave locals in much worse shape than they were before the war; this orgy of corruption, together with the occupation, magnifies resentment and hostility among the locals; and the whole disaster becomes a lame excuse to expend even more taxpayer dollars and thereby prolong, broaden and deepen the carpetbaggers'<sup>13</sup> looting and the locals' suffering. Then as now, much of the money is being used to buy the political support of various local factions – including a puppet government – in the occupied territory. And in an effort to keep the whole racket going indefinitely, money is being recycled to the Republican Party in the form of campaign contributions from carpetbaggers.

Although the U.S. Government and its lapdogs in the mainstream media<sup>14</sup> have sought to distract attention from Iraq's "reconstruction," some information has bubbled to the surface. A [report](#) dated 6 September 2006 stated: "[it is] three years since the fall of the former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein's government and Iraqis are still lacking basic facilities such as power, clean potable water and sanitation, problems some experts blame on corruption. 'Corruption has become common in Iraq. Every government department is plagued by some type of corruption and the problem has become endemic countrywide,' said Judge Radhi al-Radhi, head of the Commission on Public Integrity (CPI), which is tackling corruption. 'About US \$4 billion has been pilfered from state coffers and no one is taking responsibility – but we are working hard to find those responsible,' al-Radhi said. The US government has injected some \$US21 billion for reconstruction and relief funding in addition to the \$US5 billion Iraqi Security Forces Fund and the \$US19.6 billion Development Fund for Iraq."

That brings the total expenditure of American taxpayers' funds devoted to the "reconstruction" of Iraq to more than \$US45 billion. Of the money "invested" by the U.S. Government, together with ca. \$US10 billion "invested" by others, "at least 25 percent of the entire amount is missing without an explanation," al-Radhi said. (Presumably, an additional chunk of it is missing *with* an explanation – regardless of how lame it is.) "Some of this money has gone towards the purchase of furniture for government officials who have also restored their homes with government funds."

An [earlier report](#) concluded that during the rule of Paul Bremmer, more than \$US8 billion simply vanished. The U.S. Government is also unable to account for 90,000 rifles and 80,000 pistols intended for Iraqi police. A billion dollars

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<sup>13</sup> A [carpetbagger](#) was a Northerner who moved to the South during the Reconstruction Era and allied with freed slaves and scalawags (southern whites who supported Reconstruction) in the Republican Party. They looted and controlled ex-Confederate states for varying periods. Since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the term has been used more widely to describe outsiders' attempts to gain political office or economic advantage, especially in areas to which they previously had no connection – an apt description of Americans in Iraq.

<sup>14</sup> For an exposé of the sycophancy of most mainstream journalists, see [Enough Already! The Eulogies for Tim Russert Ignore His Role as the War Party's Sounding Board](#) by Justin Raimondo and [Tim Russert vs. Harry Browne](#) by Johnny Kramer.

earmarked for a refinery repair program was stolen and landed in the hands of the insurgency. “Despite” (shouldn’t that read “because of”?) the allocation of several billion American tax dollars to repair them, Iraq’s oil refineries are still “dilapidated” and suffering from “crippling problems.” And this is just what bureaucrats admit – who knows what further horrors lurk below the surface?

Why should any of this be remotely surprising? History is simply repeating itself and the Iron Law of Socialism – namely that it fails always and everywhere – is reasserting itself. The Republican Party was the U.S. Government after the War of Northern Aggression; its occupation of the South took the form of a military dictatorship with a democratic façade; and its failed “reconstruction” squandered incredible amounts of tax dollars. According to William Archibald Dunning (*Essays on the Civil War and Reconstruction and Related Topics*, Kessinger, 2006), “the expenses of [Southern] governments were largely increased; offices were multiplied in all departments; salaries were made more worthy ... ; costly enterprises were undertaken ... The result of all this was ... an expansion of state debts and an increase in taxation that to the property-owning class were appalling and ruinous.” Further, “the progressive depletion of the public treasuries was accompanied by great private prosperity among [Republican] politicians of high and low degree.” To cite just one example, Illinois native Henry Clay Warmoth was installed as the governor of Louisiana and paid \$8,000 per year in salary. After four years in office he “accumulated” more than \$1 million and retired to a large plantation. To perpetuate this racket, the Republican Party of the 1860s and 1870s subsidised pro-Republican newspapers, and muzzled and banned the opposition press in the South.

#### **Omission #4: Taking Its Lead from Evil Abe, the Republican Party Has Always Extolled Central Banking – and Hence Inflation, Socialism, Imperialism and War**

When he entered politics in 1832, Abraham Lincoln announced to the voters of Illinois: “My politics are short and sweet ... I am in favour of a national bank ... the internal improvements system and a high protective tariff.” To these three things – central banking, protectionism and corporate welfare – Abraham Lincoln devoted much of his political life.<sup>15</sup> Also in 1832, the dispute between President Andrew Jackson and Nicolas Biddle regarding the rechartering of the second [Bank of the United States](#) climaxed. Fortunately, Jackson won the showdown and the bank’s charter expired. Unfortunately, in response to (1) the Bank’s demise, (2) Southerners’ failure to prevail against the [Tariff of Abominations](#) and (3) the ensuing [Nullification Crisis](#), the [Whig Party](#) (which was the forerunner of the Republican Party) was born.

A central bank was the Whigs’ potential political lifeblood, and nobody was more devoted than Lincoln to its resurrection. According to Michael Holt (*The Rise and*

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<sup>15</sup> This section draws very heavily from [Lincoln, Gold, and Greenbacks](#) by Thomas DiLorenzo.

*Fall of the American Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War*, Oxford University Press, 1999), during the 1840, 1844, and 1848 elections Lincoln “crisscrossed [Illinois] ardently and eloquently defending specific Whig programs like a national bank ... Few people in the party were so committed to its economic agenda as Lincoln.” In 1848 he campaigned on behalf of the Whigs’ presidential candidate, Zachary Taylor, and promised that if Taylor were elected he would revive the central bank.

Richard Timberlake, in his *Monetary Policy in the United States: An Intellectual and Institutional History* (University of Chicago Press, 1993), emphasised the central importance of central banking to Lincoln and his fellow Whigs: “... a national bank was their life – the vital principle – without which they could not live as a party – the power which was to give them power ... To lose it was to lose the fruits of the election, with the prospect of losing the party itself.” The Whigs intended to use a central bank, and the consequent printing of vast amounts of paper money not backed by gold or silver, as the means with which they would finance massive schemes of patronage (“internal improvements”). Whigs hoped that these schemes would keep them in power indefinitely. This is one reason why Democrats such as Thomas Jefferson, the Jacksonians and their heirs (most notably the redoubtable [Grover Cleveland](#), who interrupted the Republican dominance of American politics during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century) were so implacably opposed to the existence and operation of a central bank.

When Lincoln became president, he immediately tripled the tariff’s average rate, and subsidised the construction of a transcontinental railway. On 25 February 1862 he enacted a Legal Tender Act which empowered the Secretary of the Treasury to issue paper money (“greenbacks”) that was not immediately redeemable into gold or silver. The National Currency Acts of 1863 and 1864 created a system of nationally chartered banks. They did not have the same power or play the same role as a single central bank, but they could and did issue bank notes supplied to them by the new Comptroller of the Currency, and a 10 percent tax was levied upon state bank notes in order to drive them out of business. The practical effect, therefore, was the establishment of the federal government’s quasi-monopoly over the definition, regulation and creation of money. Like its pure cousin, and certainly during a war, quasi-central banking inevitably unleashes a vast increase of the supply of money – that is, inflation. And so it was: the government’s torrent of greenbacks so flooded the banking system that by July of 1864 its greenback dollars were worth a mere 35 cents in gold.

Republicans intended that their quasi-central bank would achieve particular objectives. As Heather Cox Richardson recounts in *The Greatest Nation of the Earth: Republican Economic Policies during the Civil War* (Harvard University Press, 1997), Senator John Sherman, brother of General William Tecumseh Sherman and chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, declared, “nationalise as much as possible, even the currency, so as to make men love their country before their states. All private interests, all local interests, all banking interests, the interests of individuals, everything, should be subordinate to the interest of the Government.”

These words, which are the Republican Party's credo, encapsulate the collectivist philosophy that marked the 20<sup>th</sup> century as history's bloodiest. National Socialists such as American Republicans insist – noisily and often aggressively – that citizens are pawns and servants of the state. Their duty is to worship the state, and their greatest possible “service” is to kill on its behalf and die at its behest. Republicans alternately ridicule and recoil in horror at the words of Thomas Jefferson: “When the people fear their government, there is tyranny; when the government fears the people, there is liberty.” Today in the U.S., Jefferson is barely a memory, people rightly fear their rulers, and politicians and bureaucrats regard their subjects with complete contempt.

Congressman Elbridge G. Spaulding, first a Whig and then a Republican from New York, sponsored Lincoln's banking legislation in the House. Spaulding foresaw that the new system of fiat money would finally – and after the interminable wait since 1832 – clear the way for the mercantilist program of massive subsidies for “internal improvements.” On 9 March 1863, *The New York Times* (then as now an implacable enemy of liberty and a shill for privileged interests and the interventionist state) published a celebratory editorial. “The legal tender act and the national currency bill crystallised ... a centralisation of power, such as [Alexander] Hamilton might have eulogised as magnificent.” *The Times* was right. So was Lasarus Powell, a despondent Democrat from Kentucky. “The result of this legislation is utterly to destroy the rights of the states. It is asserting a power which if carried out to its logical result would enable the national Congress to destroy every institution of the States and cause all power to be consolidated and concentrated here [in Washington, D.C.].” And so it has transpired.

Thomas DiLorenzo concludes: “The Party of Lincoln wanted to transform the American government from the limited, constitutional republic of the founding fathers to an empire that would rival Great Britain's, and they knew they needed a central bank to achieve that task. Empires are very expensive propositions, as they require sending armies and navies all over the globe. As [Heather Cox] Richardson explains: ‘By 1863 the Republicans envisioned a dominant international role for a unified American nation, and [Senator John] Sherman promised that the bank bill, with its implicit strengthening of the national government, would advance that goal.’ The Republicans under Lincoln ‘were building a new economic role for an increasingly powerful national government, permanently involving it in the country's monetary affairs.’” And therefore, it is hardly necessary to add, in its commercial affairs, in corruption and in war.

## **Whither America?**

In [The Real DiLorenzo: A “Southern Partisan” Interview](#), DiLorenzo was asked: “What do you see as the future of America? Do you see [things] getting worse before [they get] better?” He replied:

Right now, the people in charge of the government remind us every day that they are the Party of Lincoln. They've stretched Lincoln's philosophy to say that not only should we wage war within our

own country ostensibly for democracy, as Lincoln said in the Gettysburg Address, but we should wage war all around the world to force democracy on people, whether they want it or not. Not just in Iraq. They're talking about invading the entire Middle East, to bring democracy there, as though it were any of our business.

That is empire. Any country that has had a big empire like that has always been *bankrupted*. If that's the road we're going on, I think it's the road that Lincoln started us on. Look at what [his successor] government did. Immediately after the War, they commenced a campaign of ethnic genocide against the Plains Indians. That was all part of this plan to have a continental empire. Now, these people think we need to have a world empire. It's un-American. The Founding Fathers would have fought another revolution over this.

It seems to me that the American public has been dumbed down so much by the government schools that they're just going to go along with this until it either bankrupts us all or we make enough enemies out there that September 11 will seem like child's play. You can't do this without making a lot of enemies in the world. That's my biggest fear – that we won't get rid of these Sons of Lincoln who run the Republican Party ... America can't be saved or returned to its roots until the Republican Party is destroyed ...

Making matters even worse, since the time of Woodrow Wilson, Democrats have also thought and acted like devils (for some recent consequences, see [The Welfare-Warfare State: How It Works](#) by Justin Raimondo). In 1913, the worst year for American liberty since 1861, they did what not even Lincoln managed to do – create the Federal Reserve. Also in that year they revived the federal income tax that Evil Abe originated; and by finalising the passage the [17<sup>th</sup> Amendment](#), they completed the destruction of the states. Democrats also deceitfully launched America into the First World War, the Second World War, and the Korean and Vietnam Wars. The result – namely that today's Republicans and Democrats are merely wings of a single Welfare-Warfare Party – was described aptly by the heroic [Harry Browne](#) on *Meet the Press* (22 October 2000):

You know, I know, everybody watching this show knows that four years from today, whichever of them is elected, government will be bigger, more expensive, more obtrusive and more oppressive. If you vote Republican or Democrat, you are giving up. You're saying "I'm never going to be free. America will never be a free country again. I will never get smaller government. So I'm just going to vote for the one I think will take me to hell at the slowest-possible rate."

The Republican Party is presently riding maniacally in its Lincolnian saddle. As it was at its birth, so it is today: a party of big government, centralisation, cronyism, militarism, imperialism and constitutional vandalism.<sup>16</sup> In sharp contrast, during

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<sup>16</sup> In addition to Harding and Coolidge, honourable exceptions to this rule include [Robert Taft](#), [Howard Buffett](#) and [Ron Paul](#).

the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Democrats were staunch Jeffersonians – and thus remained reasonably faithful to the America of its Founders. That changed under Wilson, and Franklin Roosevelt completed the destruction of the Democratic Party as the party of hard money, peace and a government small enough to fit comfortably inside the Constitution.

Perversely, therein might lie the last chance for Americans – and for the people around the world being terrorised by the U.S. Government (see, however, [On the Impossibility of Limited Government and the Prospects for a Second American Revolution](#) by Hans-Hermann Hoppe). Republicans choose malevolence as a matter of deranged principle, but Democrats seem to do so out of expediency.<sup>17</sup> Unlike the Reps, the Dems have a respectable distant past. Republicans campaign on a manifesto of evil, and if elected they reliably implement it. In sharp contrast, at several historic junctures Democrats have run on one platform – and once in office have rotated 180 degrees. Most notoriously, in 1932 Franklin Roosevelt stoutly defended the gold standard and advocated strict economy of expenditure. After he secured office, he effectively abolished the dollar's link to gold, and his disastrous New Deal accelerated Herbert Hoover's interventionist and recklessly profligate policies – and thus prolonged and deepened the Depression.

The forlorn hope is therefore that, if he becomes president, Barack Obama “flip-flops” – that is, embraces a philosophy and adopts policies that are the diametric opposites of those he presently espouses. If he's elected, who will Obama be: a follower of Wilson and Roosevelt, or of Jefferson and Cleveland? Let us therefore hope, against our better judgement, that Obama's relentless babble about “change” really means a speedy and strict return to the Thomas Jefferson and Grover Cleveland. Anthony Gregory ([On Ron Paul's Political Future](#), 7 February 2008) has the last word:

. . . the [Republican Party] is a coalition of murder-happy, central bank-mongering police statist and [Americans] probably have more hope turning the Democrats back to their Jeffersonian, Clevelandian heritage than [they] do in returning the other party to a set of principles that it has never upheld, except rhetorically so as to blindside naïve voters, give libertarian cover to their fascism and dirty the good name of free markets and individual liberty.

*Chris Leithner*

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<sup>17</sup> Another way of looking at American politics is to regard it as a faux two-party system. There is an evil party (the Republicans) and a stupid party (the Democrats). Quite often, and these days rather routinely, the two parties unite and do things that are both stupid and evil. This is called bipartisanship. Australian, British and Canadian politics are faux multi-party variants of the same malevolent phenomenon.