

An American Journey: 1635 Arrival to 2020 U.S. Catastrophe

Expanded Text of Author's Presentation to the Alliance for Just Money (AFJM), August 2000

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I set out to write a commentary on current economic events for this engagement, with a focus on monetary issues. But the current nightmarish scenario in the U.S. is so confusing and is moving at such a rapid speed, that I decided to offer a broader perspective. However, I don't believe anyone knows how our unfolding national catastrophe is going to be resolved, or what the U.S. will look like even a year or two from now, or even if there will be a U.S.

The situation may actually be far more serious than most of us think. Are we seeing the last days of the American republic? Many would dismiss such a question as unduly alarmist. But to one who has studied history, events seem eerily similar to the end of the German Weimar Republic in 1933.

Who can any longer doubt that we have our own fascist cabal ready to strike? Many people in Germany laughed off Hitler and the Nazis until it was too late. So we shall see. We now have "our own" named Donald Trump and "the Republicans". In my opinion, we've already had rehearsals with the carefully staged Reagan takeover of 1980 and the Bush-Cheney putsch of 2000, with complicity going all the way up to the Supreme Court.

Are we awaiting another "Reichstag fire"—like 9/11—with the provocations being staged by hidden forces "rioting" in Portland and elsewhere as a prelude? We also have the deliberate destruction of the U.S. Postal Service by the Trump administration taking place in full public view, with the obvious aim of discrediting and canceling an anti-Trump vote in the November general election based on mailed-in ballots if Biden should win. Another thing history teaches is that aggressors usually announce their intentions beforehand.

"Democracy" is certainly no safeguard. U.S. presidents are always elected by a minority of the total population, Do the math—in 2016, Trump was elected by 19% of the people living in the U.S.—63 million votes out of a population of 326.7 million. Elections today are won by craft, guile, money, false flag events, and propaganda—above all, by propaganda. The Republicans are masters in this arena, especially when they have a sitting president.

But this history focuses on money. I do think I have something to say in this forum, because, since retiring as an analyst with the U.S. Treasury Department, I have played a public role in the monetary debate for quite a few years. So I am going to focus my remarks on my own personal journey and what I feel I have learned and experienced along the way. I will also

talk quite a bit about public events as I have seen them. So please bear with me.

I feel an affinity with Edward Snowden. When I read Snowden's account of his revelations of the government's pervasive and unconstitutional collection of electronic information on all U.S. citizens, it struck me that Snowden, now in exile in Russia, was descended from some of Maryland's earliest settlers. The family dutifully served our country as soldiers and public servants as far back as the Continental Army. Ironically, the National Security Agency, whose lawlessness Snowden exposed, is located at Fort Meade, Maryland, on land the Snowdens once owned!

My own ancestors, mostly English, have also been in North America for a long time. On my father's side, I am descended from an English settler named Thomas Bliss, who arrived in 1635 at the Plymouth colony in Massachusetts. His grandfather and namesake was a prominent Puritan dissenter who was dragged by a mule through the streets of London on orders of Archbishop Laud, then thrown into prison. It was a quest for religious freedom that got us here.

In America the family grew and moved west, migrating from New York to Illinois, and eventually to Oklahoma. My male ancestors served in many of America's wars. In Illinois, my ancestor got land as payment for serving in the army during the War of 1812. Ancestors on both sides of the family fought for the Union in the Civil War. My great great grandfather's New York Heavy Artillery unit was with General Grant at Appomattox. My two grandfathers both served during World War I, and my father was in the Navy in World War II.

My maternal grandfather was of French-Canadian descent. We have Native American ancestry through him. My great-grandfather on my father's side rode in the 1889 Oklahoma land rush and ran a general store that traded with the Indians. He was especially close to the Shawnee, the tribe of the great Tecumseh and his brother, the Prophet.

I was born in Missoula, Montana, and grew up in Midland, Michigan, where my father was a chemist with Dow Chemical. When I was in the 9th grade, we moved to Williamsburg, Virginia. The big event during my high school years was the assassination of President John Kennedy in 1963. This was deeply scarring personally but got me to look beneath the surface of things.



It wasn't too many years before I stopped believing the government's cover story of a lone assassin, thanks to Mark Lane's book, *Rush to Judgment*. The assassination of John F. Kennedy, with its cover-up, was a crime committed by the U.S. national security apparatus with participation by foreign parties. This crime has never been atoned for and is still part of the karmic baggage of the nation that so many people are blind to. People on the government payroll think they can perpetrate something like this without consequence? Incredible.

It wasn't long after Kennedy's death that the Vietnam War got going in a big way. War has

always been a very big deal in the U.S., and it was in the 1960s, but I personally never much cared for it, to say the least. I have always found the militaristic mentality repugnant. By this I mean the idea that use of military force is an “option” to be exercised by rational human beings to achieve policy goals. Rather we should do everything possible between and within human communities to resolve our differences openly, peacefully, and fairly. There should be no hidden agendas, no jockeying for advantage. There should be no prejudice and no assumptions that one particular group is a “chosen” or “exceptional” party.

Those we perceive as “different” should be treated with respect. Physical force should be a last resort and should cease once stability in relationships is restored. Even “justice” is too nebulous a concept, as justice often means no more than “an eye for an eye.” Justice without mercy and forgiveness leads to the cruelty of the jungle.

I also believe deeply in the sanctity of “The Family of Man,” which was the title of a famous book of the 1950s and 60s. I feel this concept is particularly necessary in a nation as racially and socially diverse as the U.S., with its history of oppression and genocide against Native Americans, African-American slaves, and conquered peoples in places like the Philippines and Puerto Rico.

In high school, I wanted to become a diplomat. I made a start in being accepted at Yale. But due to personal and family circumstances, I dropped out after a few weeks. This caused me little heartburn, as I did not feel comfortable at all in a privileged bastion of American Cold War ideology. After leaving Yale, I attended the College of William and Mary in my home town of Williamsburg, where I studied literature. I now wanted to be a writer.

But I also wanted to move to Washington, D.C., and needed a paycheck. I was able to get a job as a report writer with the federal government, going to work in 1970 as an analyst with the U.S. Civil Service Commission. I then taught history at a private high school in Washington, D.C., for two years, then went back to the Commission. After that I worked at the Food and Drug Administration for two more years in the office of Commissioner Donald Kennedy, then served on special assignment in the Jimmy Carter White House.

I’d like to dwell a bit on what was going on in the U.S. when I went to work at the Carter White House in 1979-80. The Vietnam War, thank God, was over. Nixon and Ford were gone, and Carter had been elected in 1976 in what we thought was a return to normalcy. But it was not to be.

Carter was a good man who wanted to be a peacetime president. His first act on assuming office was to issue a blanket pardon for all Vietnam draft dodgers. But he was no match for the powerful forces that wanted to get rid of him. They came up with Ronald Reagan, a mediocre but glib movie actor who had become a right-wing figurehead as governor of California.

Reagan was maneuvered into the White House through a recession engineered by the Federal Reserve starting in 1979-80, combined with the plot to discredit Carter as a weakling after the Iranian seizure of American hostages in their Islamic revolution. As an aside, Carter was made to look bad by Reagan’s debate performances after his followers stole Carter’s debate notebook. Reagan and his ilk were disgusting. I agreed with Speaker of the House Tip O’Neill when he said of Reagan, “It’s sinful that this man is president of the United States.”

I continued working in the White House office while all this was going on. I had thought about volunteering for Carter's presidential campaign, but was glad I didn't. Instead, I was able to keep my civil service appointment and was assigned to do PR chores on Reagan's behalf until I couldn't stomach it any more and quit the government in 1983. I moved with my family to a small farm we had purchased in West Virginia. I was now completely disenchanted with government.

Despite all this, it was during my brief stay in the Carter administration that I discovered the world of monetary reform.

I was an avid student of history who, like many others, was baffled by the disasters of the 20th century. The usual explanations, including those of Marxism, failed to satisfy me. In my reading, I came across the ideas of a Scottish engineer named Major Clifford Hugh (C.H.) Douglas. A prominent figure in the U.K. in the 1920s, Douglas pointed out a key fact: that the source of economic instability in modern western industrial nations is the fact that national production consistently outpaces the availability of collective income to purchase it. The primary cause is not just underpayment of workers, as Henry Ford realized, but the withdrawal of income from sales for purposes of savings, hoarding, and reinvestment.



JM Keynes

This "gap" between production and income had also been discovered by John Maynard Keynes, whose entire program was built upon making up the difference by government borrowing. Because this debt-based solution was so appealing to creditors; i.e., the banks, it was that set of policies that became enshrined within the capitalist world of macroeconomics. "Keynesian Economics" was the answer, except it didn't work.

Douglas, by contrast, argued that the "gap" actually showed the strength of the producing economy and should be filled by a "national dividend" paid directly to individuals. He called his system "Social Credit." Political movements based on Douglas's ideas were started in Canada and New Zealand. In New Zealand today, there is a political party devoted to Social Credit.

Douglas's idea of a national dividend is similar in some respects to today's proposals for a universal basic income. It is an idea deeply respectful of the spiritual autonomy of individuals, which neither Marxism nor market capitalism offers.

Without such a measure, Douglas explained, nations would try to fill the production-income gap by consumer and government debt, which the banks obviously clamored for, or by a favorable balance of trade, where the gap would be filled either by sales of products to other nations or by their purchase of the debt instruments of debtor nations. With such an imbalanced system, the obvious result would be endless war.

As far as I was concerned, Douglas had explained the 20th century: why it was so awful and what could have been done about it. I convened a meeting of friends and colleagues at the Executive Office Building but no one else was able to understand what Douglas was talking about. Soon events had overtaken me with the 1980 election. So I put Douglas's ideas on the back burner for the time being. But I was grateful to have learned from him that economics should be oriented to respect the spiritual autonomy of the human individual.

Returning to the early 1980s, there we were, living on a small farm in Union County, West Virginia, where I was going broke. So we sold the farm and got ready to move back to Washington. After doing some work for a temporary agency, I was surprised to be offered a job as an analyst on NASA's space shuttle staff. This was new and different. Back in the government and working for NASA to boot!

As fate would have it—and I do believe in fate—my first assignment was to interview the engineers for the space shuttle solid rocket boosters and find out what was going on with problems with the "O-rings." I did find out. For years, these round rubber washers that fit between rocket segments had been showing signs of burning through during flights. A complete burn-through would mean the shuttle would blow up and all the astronauts would die. NASA was keeping this a secret while they tried to redesign the rocket joints. In the meantime, on January 28, 1986, there was a burn-through, and Challenger *did* blow up with its seven-member crew. A cover-up then began.

For whatever reasons, I felt I could not go along with the cover-up and gave a collection of O-ring papers to the *New York Times*. My name got in the news, and I testified that NASA had known about this problem for quite a while. I never returned to NASA, though I published some newspaper articles of my own and gave a few interviews. A journalist told me, "They've killed people for less than what you did." But within a week of my testimony I had transferred to a very obscure job in the U.S. Treasury Department, where I stayed for 21 years. The job was not all that demanding, so I had plenty of time to study the machinations of government finance and its relation to private sector economics. Eventually I was teaching training courses for Treasury on U.S. financial history.

Life went on as I commuted to Washington from a small farm we had bought in Virginia a couple of hours from the city. I spent time with my kids as they grew up, including a lot of camping and backpacking trips. I grew vegetables, raised poultry, and drove a vanpool to work. Life was starting to seem somewhat normal. I was even able to pursue my spiritual interests by trying to learn meditation.

But the world was changing.



The turning point had come in 1979-80, when the Federal Reserve, under David Rockefeller's protégé Paul Volcker, crashed the producing economy with interest rates in excess of 20 percent. This was supposedly to fight inflation, but the real reason was to reduce our industrial core to rubble for hidden political and financial motives.

The actions of the Fed were documented brilliantly in William Greider's landmark book, *The Secrets of the Temple: How the Federal Reserve Runs the Country*. Small business in particular was devastated, and the planned hollowing out of America's industrial cities was underway. Vast stretches of our urban landscape eventually became what are still aptly called "Death Zones."

Through the so-called "Reagan Revolution" of the 1980s that followed the Fed's mischief, we saw the complete takeover of the U.S. economy, along with much of the rest of the world, by the Money Power that owns the banks, investment houses, hedge funds, and other controlling institutions. It was the Republican Party, now with Reagan as its figurehead, that was the instrument of the Money Power, as it had been since it was founded in the late 1850s.

Let's pause for a moment to make note of the fact that the Money Power exercises its control through the practice of usury. The ancient Hebrews and the early Christians, as well as many in the Greek and Roman world, saw usury as ruinous to individuals, to nations, and to civilization as a whole. Some even saw usury as equivalent to murder.

Yet the whole of the Western economic system has been turned over to banks and other financial institutions that live off interest charged to businesses and consumers for almost everything. The burden on society is enormous, amounting cumulatively of to up to 40 percent of the costs of all goods and services, according to some estimates. Any moron can see that the unrestrained result of interest compounded at regular intervals will be the gradual accumulation of all of society's wealth in the hands of the money-lenders. So why won't economists admit this?

Jesus said to lend freely to our neighbor in need but without asking anything in return. For almost 1400 years, the Christian world outlawed usury. The Islamic world continues to outlaw it today. Contrary to what many believe, usury didn't sneak into Western culture through the agency of the Jews. Yes, there were Jewish money-lenders during the Middle Ages, but they were small scale. Usury became the norm in Western capitalist society through the practices of the Roman Catholic Church led by the Renaissance Popes in league with the merchant banks of Florence and other Italian city-states. Many Catholic priests even ran pawn brokerships. From there the contagion spread throughout Europe. It took

over much of Germany through the Fugger banking family and Great Britain through the Bank of England, established in 1694. The usurers' control gradually gained ground in the U.S. until the final takeover through the passage of the Federal Reserve Act in 1913.

Back to the 1980s, which also saw the militarization of the economy hit high gear with Reagan's trillion-dollar military buildup, claiming an increased threat from the Soviet Union at a time when U.S. intelligence knew the Soviet empire was in steep decline. In collusion with the Reagan White House, the CIA under William Casey and his protégé Bob Gates falsified intelligence reports to make the Soviet Union seem a far more formidable power than it really was. (See *Whistleblower at the CIA* by Melvin Goodman.) While he was expanding military spending, Reagan gave huge tax cuts to the rich.

By destroying the savings and loans, the deregulated banks now took over mortgage lending. With the later repeal of Glass-Steagall, the commercial banks could lend in the investment markets, leading to entire industries going on the sales block and the export of millions of jobs overseas. In order for Americans to save for retirement, they had to turn their money over to the stock brokers who managed the IRAs. To buy anything substantial meant massive consumer lending. Today kids can't even go to college without ruinous debt.

With their financial control, the Money Power, aka Wall Street, sealed its grip on the political life of the nation, including both major political parties. The Democratic Party was once the party of Roosevelt and the New Deal. Under Bill Clinton, Terry McAuliffe, and the Democratic Leadership Council, they became "Republicans Light." Both the Republicans and Democrats now base their programs on trickle-down, or "supply-side" economics, where the working class is expected to live on what is left after the Money Power skims its take from the producing economy.

This is why it is so imperative for politicians to demand economic "growth." The worst calamity that can befall a nation is "negative growth," or recession. Never mind that this growth never creates the purchasing power needed to buy the increased output. So the banks then step in with more and more lending, as inflation, bankruptcies, and war all ramp up as natural consequences of the production-income gap I had learned about by studying C.H. Douglas. Of course governments love all these things as it gives them more work to do and increases taxes along with their power.

It is through the Money Power that St. Paul's maxim is expressed most vividly: "The love of money is the root of all evil." They would deny it, but if you examine the psychology at work, I think you would agree that the Money Power could only operate as they do through an abiding hatred of those they exploit, including the growing army of homeless, those kicked out of their homes through the now common practice of foreclosure, and the victims of wars abroad, especially after 9/11.

The Money Power despises all those who actually work honestly for a living, even though the workers at the bottom of the heap generate the production the world needs for daily life. Marx was right in pointing this out, though wrong in proposing just another totalitarian system as a solution.

My study of U.S. financial history showed me that today's ruling paradigm had kicked into high gear when the Money Power took over the U.S. through the establishment of the Federal Reserve in 1913. Leading the charge was J.P. Morgan's Money Trust, a bastion of Republican Party strength, though they had to call in German bankers such as Paul Warburg

to dupe American politicians like Democratic President Woodrow Wilson. The coup was facilitated by the Schiff banking family that had set up shop on Wall Street in the late 19th century.

It was then that a collection of sinister forces gained control of the U.S., as they already had in Great Britain through the Bank of England and the 19th century takeover of Britain by the Rothschilds. Soon came World War I, a conflict among nation-states and ideologies that has been continuous through today.

It was also the American Money Power, particularly the Schiffs, who financed Lenin and Trotsky in perpetrating the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1918 and financing the Red Army's victory in the Russian Civil War. In the 1930s, it was the American Money Power who financed Hitler's rise to power, allowing Hitler's rearming of Germany. These financiers grew even richer as they watched the start of World War II then Hitler's launch of the suicidal German invasion of the Soviet Union.

The Money Power aims at one thing: to rule the world and destroy anyone who stands in their way. They exercise this power in both communist and capitalist societies, as well as today's system which is a hybrid of both. Of course Jesus foresaw all this when he threw the money changers out of the Temple and called the powerful of his day hypocrites and murderers. I think we can fairly call the ruling class of the U.S. and most other nations the same. Jesus also spoke of, "Your father the devil." These words are also applicable.

You can see the effects of these malignant forces worldwide during the past century or more, including, as I said, not only the emergence of communism and its millions of victims but also the ravages of market capitalism. Evil is metaphysical, though it's still the fault of human individuals who allow their will to be taken down wrong paths. And real religion has faded away proportionate with the assaults from materialistic philosophies. Instead, we have today's fundamentalist pseudo-religions that use their creeds to mask their delusions. Evangelical fascism has been the result. So have the preachers and churches that depend on a steady flow of cash for their survival. Probably the best example of this corruption is what is going on today with Liberty University.

Back to the chronology: 9/11 came. 9/11—another massive crime against the nation and humanity. Another conspiracy, another cover-up. The karma that few acknowledge remains and acts on us every day, especially through the massive military build-up, similar to Reagan's perpetrated through the criminal Bush-Cheney cabal.

By the Friday after 9/11, at a memorial service that should have been, but was not, denounced by church leaders, Bush was calling for war against—who knows whom? I knew something deeply wrong had happened, but not the way the government claimed. I had to find out what was going on. The U.S. had again been taken over—by something very ugly. Today, through reports appearing only in *Veterans Today*, we know how the false-flag event was carried out and by whom.

I next returned to the study of monetary theory I had started years before. About this time I read Stephen Zarlenga's book *The Lost Science of Money* which particularly called into question fractional reserve banking. I contacted Zarlenga and soon we were in regular touch. I invited him to Washington to speak with Treasury officials, none of whom understood what he was talking about, especially in his critique of the Federal Reserve.

Zarlenga asked me to help him write a draft of legislation that would implement his ideas. This became the American Monetary Act. I also suggested that he contact Congressman Dennis Kucinich, who eventually got on-board with monetary reform, especially after I gave him an hours-long briefing on U.S. monetary history focusing on the damage done through the Federal Reserve Act of 1913.

The one area where Zarlenga and I disagreed was on insistence that monetary reform include a citizens' dividend along the lines of C.H. Douglas's Social Credit. Despite our differences, we remained in close touch as long as I continued to work for the government, including my attendance at some of Zarlenga's American Monetary Institute conferences in Chicago.

My book on the Challenger disaster was published in January 2007, shortly after my retirement after 32 years of federal service. The title was *Challenger Revealed: An Insider's Account of How the Reagan Administration Caused the Greatest Tragedy of the Space Age*. I concluded that the underlying cause of the Challenger disaster, and the reason so many shortcuts were taken, was the militarization of the space shuttle program to service Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative boondoggle—"Star Wars." The trigger for the decision to launch Challenger in cold weather against engineers' recommendations, was to have the shuttle with the Teacher-in-Space, Christa McAuliffe, in orbit in time for Reagan's state of the union speech that night.

I would also like to mention two developments I witnessed at the U.S. Treasury Department of major historic import that affected my writing and analysis. The first was the conversion of all financial transactions in the government and indeed in the broader society to electronic funds transfer that took place at breakneck speed in the 1990s. Treasury promoted this conversion for its own purposes in being able to move its financial balances into the Federal Reserve nightly and thereby receive interest payments, while at the same time cutting staff and saving on its payroll budgets by eliminating manual or human-aided processing as much as possible.

But beyond its self-interest, Treasury also facilitated conversion to EFT for the Federal Reserve and the private sector. This vastly increased the power and reach of the Money Power and the global banking industry. Without EFT, money laundering would never have come into its own as a staple of organized crime, nor would the world of derivatives and hedge funds come into being. With the imposition of these processes on the producing economy, where money is a mere electronic blip, and the creation of money out of thin air through bank lending, today's system is the greatest act of grand larceny the world has ever known. It destroys nations and individuals. Nixon had opened the door to this tsunami of unsecured bank-created credit by taking the U.S. off the international gold standard in 1972.

I also witnessed, following 9/11, an entirely new and extremely comprehensive focus on real and imagined security measures, including the designation of the financial system of the United States as "critical infrastructure." This designation entitled the Money Power, and its banking cartels, to protection and promotion from the military and the national security state. The banking system now became a means of waging war against enemies of the U.S. and its corporate/financial structure. We have seen this in the last two decades in the constant imposition of financial "sanctions" against our declared "enemies," especially Russia, Iran, and China. It is interesting that the U.S. labels as "authoritarian" any nation that utilizes the power of its central government to prevent takeover and domination by the Money Power, such as happened to Iraq after it was conquered by the U.S. in 2003 and

Libya by NATO in 2011.

Returning to where I was in 2007 after my Challenger book came out, I began publishing articles on economics and monetary reform on the internet, with the most receptive site being Global Research, run by Michel Chossudovsky out of Canada. By mid-year I had compiled enough material to package it in book form and found a publisher who came out with *We Hold These Truths: The Hope of Monetary Reform* the following year. I also began annual trips to New York to make presentations for the U.S. Basic Income Guarantee Network, where I introduced them to the work of C.H. Douglas.

Unfortunately, I was not making much money as a writer. Though my Challenger book was to be recognized by some as the definitive work on the Challenger disaster, it was ignored by the mainstream press that only had eyes for works flattering to the national security state. So I decided to return to my old home town of Williamsburg, where I lived with my mother for a couple of years while I continued to write. In 2008 I met my wife Karen. The following year we decided to move to Roanoke, Virginia, where we bought a house in the Grandin Village neighborhood of the city.

Roanoke was a lot of fun. We spent time roaming the surrounding Blue Ridge Mountains, and guided people in meditation at the Lifestream Center and our home. We rented out the upper floors of our home, managed a rental house, and I did maintenance work for local realtors while We also flipped a couple of houses that we had rehabbed.

We also traveled—to Ireland, to Mexico, where I gave the keynote address on the benefits of the barter economy at the annual meeting of the International Reciprocal Trade Association, and to various other places for short vacations. I also traveled to California in 2011 to speak at the 25th anniversary of the Challenger disaster at Chapman University and later to San Rafael to speak on universal basic income at the annual meeting of the Public Banking Institute. I continued to publish articles, broadening my scope to a range of political issues, and made the acquaintance of numerous readers around the world. Particularly rewarding was contact with monetary reformers in New Zealand, who I found to have a stronger understanding of the fallacies of bank-based monetary systems than almost anyone on the globe.

Also during our Roanoke days, the work I had done with Steve Zarlenga came to fruition in 2011 when Congressman Dennis Kucinich introduced the NEED Act in Congress. This stood for the National Emergency Employment Defense Act.

The NEED Act was based on the American Monetary Act I had helped Zarlenga draft five years earlier. The NEED Act would replace the Federal Reserve System with a central federal monetary authority having the power to enter money directly into circulation through federal expenditure. It would abolish fractional reserve banking but would allow lending of money borrowed by banks from the central authority. The entire banking system would thereby be managed as a public utility. The NEED Act also included a citizens' dividend similar to a basic income guarantee. Unfortunately, soon after introducing the Act, Kucinich's congressional seat was gerrymandered out of existence.

Note that this new financial system would be perfectly compatible with our market economy and would allow businesses and individuals to save for the future.

The new system would remove the monetary system from the realm of larceny and greed

that is helping destroy our nation and the world. It would modify or eliminate credit bubbles and their deflation. It would eliminate most of the problems that make life in the U.S. a financial hell for much of our population.

The temptation, of course, would be for the government itself to create money for non-legitimate purposes, such as its usual menu of wars of aggression. One shudders to think what might happen if the sovereign power of currency creation lay unrestrained in the hands of madmen like Trump. But this temptation will always exist. It's what got European governments so deeply in debt to the Money Power in the first place. But in the end, the only thing that can ensure the health and survival of any nation is the character and virtue of its citizens. Once that is gone, the nation is gone, regardless of the system it operates under. So no monetary system is a panacea. But we can do much better than what we have today.

We stayed in Roanoke for about four years. But we found we were too far from our grown kids and siblings in the Washington area, so we decided to move back. We found a small stone cottage in Washington County, Maryland, near the Antietam battlefield, where we continue to live today. So we still reside in the Blue Ridge Mountains as we did in Roanoke, but now four hours to the north.

We have been here now for six years where I work on our house and property. We have done a major renovation while trying to retain the qualities of the 200-year-old structure. My writing has slowed down, though it is still going on, and I have also worked during the summers at a local state park as a part-time interpreter. This has involved presentations on geology and history to local groups, including a slide show on Native American heritage.

In the meantime, I have done my best to separate myself mentally from the ongoing disaster that the U.S., has turned into. I do not see any reason to hope that the U.S. will reform or redeem itself before the onset of worldwide catastrophe, perhaps the world war against Russia and China that already seems to have been decided upon. Maybe this war is inevitable. But I am not going to worry about it.

The U.S. carries overwhelming karma, but "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord." In the meantime, at age 73, I will do everything I can to help my friends and family, live my life, tend my garden, and stay out of the way. But my admiration and support for those in younger generations who are fighting the battle for truth and compassion has no bounds. And for anyone who cares to listen I would say forget about your prayers for the future of this nation if you are not willing to change the system right now.

The question remains, though, where do we look for inner strength and inspiration? Increasingly, and perhaps ironically, I look to Germany. I have family members in Germany and have traveled there a bit, as well as to Austria and Switzerland. This has motivated me to undertake a deep study of German history and culture, including revisionist history of World Wars I and II. I have concluded that Germany has been given a raw deal. The world wars of the 20th century have as their root cause, in my opinion, the drive of Great Britain, the U.S., and, increasingly today, Israel, for world domination. Germany certainly had its own ambitions, but was eliminated as a competitor through two world wars that weren't all its own fault. In fact the destruction of Germany as a cultural entity was probably the main goal of the Money Power during much of the 20th century.

I won't dwell on specifics here, and will certainly point out the wrong turn Germany took with Hitler in charge—but I will not say the German people as a whole chose that path. Beneath the unhappy events of 1917-1945 lay an ancient and deeply spiritual culture that manifested through such figures as Meister Eckart, Wolfram von Eschenbach, the *Theologia Germanica*, Martin Luther, Johann Arndt, Jakob Boehme, Emanuel Kant, Johan Wolfgang von Goethe, Thomas Mann, Rainer Maria Rilke, Herman Hesse, Karl Barth, Bô Yin Râ, Eckart Tolle, and many others. These are the teachers I study today. This culture lives on, and now as a linchpin of the European Union the German heritage can help guide the West to a better fate, while the English-speaking powers are bankrupt, morally, spiritually, and increasingly economically.

Let's hope the U.S. can eventually be part of a better fate as well, but not given its current direction and leadership and not with its unpaid karmic debts. Will there even be a U.S. much longer? No one really knows. The U.S. government is collapsing, its moral authority is gone, and it is not difficult to see why. Least of all is the utter state of dishonesty at all levels and in all sectors in a failed attempt to hide that it serves mainly the rich, powerful, and influential—and Israel.

Lately this situation has been brought home to me as I have been reading several books by Melvin Goodman, including *Whistleblower at the CIA*, an amazingly revealing work. Goodman provides first-hand documentation of how, starting with the Reagan administration, the CIA ceased providing objective analysis of contemporary events, and began falsifying intelligence to satisfy the political desires of the White House.

The leaders of the CIA at the time were William Casey and his top aide Robert Gates, later made CIA director by George H.W. Bush and Secretary of Defense under presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama. The administrations most eager for skewed intelligence were Reagan's and that of Bush/Cheney, particularly after 9/11. But the corruption continues today, particularly after Obama's CIA director John Brennan combined that agency's operational and analytical directorates, removing its last vestige of independent thinking

I am not the only one to say we are looking at a failed state. The U.S. government has squandered any natural affection our populace or that of other nations may once have had for it. The U.S. government at all levels now rules primarily by bureaucratic rules at home and violence abroad—i.e., by fear. But authority divorced from honesty and compassion cannot last long. The U.S. is on a downward trajectory in a descent into a totalitarian police state. It has been captured by a criminal gang led by lying gangsters like Trump—and Netanyahu. And if things do go over the brink, "We the People" have stood by and watched it happen.

It's a good time to remember the words of the song, "The Gambler": "Sometimes you hold 'em and sometimes you fold 'em. Sometimes you walk away, and sometimes you run." Your choice.

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