

Scared Americans and “The US Terror State”

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Global Research, May 11, 2013

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#)

Syria, Libya and other US crimes invisible to financially scared Americans.

Watch Out, World! Even America's Wealthy Are Losing Ground.

Cognitive dissonance among the US sub-elite means more war and death for everyone else.

*Occasionally the tip of the iceberg pokes through, and the reported facts corroborate the experience of most of the people. The recent Pew Center report that has now reached broad circulation shows that a full 93% of US households [*lost* ground in the much vaunted recovery of 2009-2011.](#)*

This just validates what we are all living through, glossed over by averages, smoke and mirrors. There is no “recovery.” Sectors *within* the top quintile are holding on, barely.

This is the starkest portrayal I've seen in black and white; I had previously been telling anyone who would listen that, while there seems to be a pickup for those in the \$250,000 and up range, it is clearly not the case for the bottom 4 quintiles [i.e. \$100,000 combined household income 2010]. It should be shocking enough to most middle class types that the real picture is so different from what they believe to be living—that is, that they are actually in the top 8-10%... BUT the data shows even worse. Even families up to \$500,000 (!) are losing ground.

This bespeaks the desperation in the political outlook of what Zinn called The Guards and what Chomsky called The Priesthood: people who are doing just fine in the current system but think it needs a few tweaks. As this sector shrinks, the internal contradictions will become more apparent and the response of the state becomes harsher and less elastic. So households with “two good jobs” say \$100,000 plus each, are prone to seeing some hope, the famous ‘green shoots’ mantra that fell on deaf ears for most of us a few years ago. Come on, guys—it *can* work! We all need to just be a bit more patient! Etc.

The political ramifications are quite alarming. This sector is crucial to the viability and perceived legitimacy of the system, and their panic has far reaching consequences. It may just beginning to dawn on them that they, too, will ultimately be left behind in the wealth shift, and that it was never really about them. Slowly but surely, and to varying degrees, they are recapitulating Judas' epiphany [the Andrew Lloyd Weber version, at least]: “My god I'm sick. I've been used—and you knew all the time!” They are just beginning to see that they are facing an uphill battle in a rigged game against the House with a stacked deck—and any other cheesy analogies you want to cram in there—but there is nowhere for them to go.

Paradoxically, the initial wave of reaction to this newfound betrayal by their patrons in the ruling class is not to turn on their masters. It is to express this anger at those below, in the

age-old game of shooting the messenger. Consequently, they become even better “shushers,” the Seinfeld term for viewers who keep order in a theater. Border collies, gatekeepers... they have always been there, but they were more consciously part of the professional ‘left,’ an icon of the political class. In the current period, their anger is more desperate and more diffuse: They have always been more inclined, for example, to trust the police, to believe the official version of events, to avoid sources of information considered by their class position and experience to be beyond the Pale. Having rarely, if ever, been on the wrong side of Officialdom, or had to bail relatives out of jail, or had any race-tinged experiences themselves, they are primed and pampered to be the intellectual shock troops of Acceptable Discourse. In the face of increased perfidy on the part of their class betters, they can’t (yet) bring themselves to bite what they still perceive as the hand that feeds them. Consequently, they will lash out at the incongruously labeled ‘parasites’ who they feel are ruining their banquet, even as the din of cognitive dissonance grows inside their heads.

The brutal fallout from this game is apparent all around us, as the body counts rise and the single minded state terrorism of the state apparatus grows ever more horrific in its attempt to maintain their bloated lifestyles through hegemony over the world’s resources. This transaction is completely lost on the Shushers—rather, they become its ghoulish cheerleaders, with or without acknowledgement. They are capable, somehow, of rationalizing the complete destruction of country after country—even as they are shown they are being lied into doing so. It is inconsequential to them that their government is funding, arming and training the very Islamic terrorists in Syria and Libya that they are primed to fear elsewhere. The simple mathematical rule of balance and scale demands that they acknowledge and reject the 1000 : 1 ratio of violence ravaging the world in their name, with their money, with their silence at best and enthusiastic endorsement at worst. They just don’t give a shit, and their macabre privileging of the relatively few victims among their own—as awful as these surely are—is lost outside the bubble, where the rest of the world grieves for their victims.

The economic consequences of their loss of station “scares the sh..t” out of them: while logic and basic morality dictate that they should wake up every morning with the bloody carnage of their own drone army foremost in their minds, they are instead preoccupied with how they can no longer afford an annual pilgrimage to Disney, or that they may have to postpone the kitchen/bath/boat/car upgrade they have been contemplating. If this makes them sound like monsters, it should. There is something epic about the horror of simultaneously having no power over a political system that wreaks such destruction and yet defending that very system as acceptable and benign, without at the very least having been the proverbial canary in the coal mine, the littlest Who shouting ‘We are here!’ from the tallest available tower. It is more than a sham and a shame. It is a moral crime, a breach of ethical duty that will yield unimaginable consequences when the balance is eventually righted. And yes, for international readers, I do realize the self-absorption of focusing on the internal American experience, and hear your cries of “Who gives a shit!” inside my head.” If you have stuck with me this long, much respect. Sometimes I feel it necessary to speak to and about my American countrymen from the perspective of one who shares, albeit sometimes tangentially, their experience.

I believe we are living in the time of tremendous turmoil. It may take a year or two or ten, but in historical terms we are living in that instant, that one day where, looking back, it will become apparent that everything changed. It is the pivotal moment so brilliantly enacted by the montage at the end of *Les Miserables* where all social actors, no matter their role or

position, sense that something momentous is on the horizon: "Tomorrow we'll discover what our God in heaven has in store. One more dawn. One more day. One day more!"

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