

Zombie Nation

Cowardice, Complicity and the Withering of the Soul of America

By [David Penner](#)

Global Research, November 06, 2007

[Counterpunch.org](#) 6 November 2007

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

As The Office of the Vice President continues to scheme and plot for war with Iran, which would also likely correspond with martial law at home, the American worker continues to sink deeper and deeper into a horrifying abyss of economic, moral, and spiritual slavery. Even during the worst days of the Depression, never was the American worker more crushed, more beaten, more defeated. Never was he more atomized, more alienated, more alone.

Listen to what people are talking about on TV, on the streets, and in restaurants, and it is clear the American people are pathologically disconnected from reality. This disconnection from reality is particularly pronounced in both the media and academia, where the most critical issues of our time are either completely ignored, or drowned in a barrage of hyperbole and euphemistic blather. It is as if, due to so many decades of brainwashing, Americans are no longer capable of reason, no longer capable of independent thought.

It is also becoming harder and harder to obtain a good paying job without compromising oneself ideologically due to the destruction of the public sphere. The role that the military and prison industrial complexes play in providing employment, and the role played by the media and the education system in indoctrination, pose grave questions about whether constitutional democracy and American capitalism can continue to coexist, or whether the elite will sever the marriage entirely ushering in a military form of government. The unprecedented domination of work in American society, and the cult of placing one's career above and beyond all other considerations, has dehumanized the American people and turned them into collaborators.

In the education system, where universities are increasingly owned lock, stock and barrel by corporations (many universities *are* corporations), free market dogma reigns unchallenged. The education system, together with the unprecedented power of the mass media, have ushered in a brave new world where Newspeak reigns over the enlightenment, madness over empiricism, and barbarism over reason.

As Americans, we are so fond of saying how we have freedom of speech, but all too often, this simply is not so. How many students at expensive private colleges are permitted to speak out against any number of the vast myriad of unspeakable issues: the destruction of families and communities in American society, the likelihood of war on Iran, the prison-industrial complex, the use of outsourcing and offshoring to destroy unions, the current genocide being waged against black Americans, the censorship in American society? If a student wants to get good grades so as to be able to secure a good paying job later on, the rules are clear: say what you are supposed to say, write what you're supposed to write: shut up and do as you're told. The almost total absence of meaningful intellectual discussion in

many colleges and universities, along with the unprecedented corporate consolidation of the media, has put American society in a totalitarian ideological vice. Tenured liberal professors, or even professors that secretly harbor genuinely radical views, often think things privately that they would never dream of saying in class.

The American worker is more enslaved to his employer than ever before, but instead of rebelling against this enslavement, he feels resistance to be impossible or too dangerous to risk, or he embraces it as proof of his toughness and loyalty to his country.

Public school teachers that teach poor and disadvantaged students are under enormous pressures by authoritarian administrators to keep the level as low as possible and to not intellectually challenge their students. Those who resist are marginalized, harassed, and eventually forced out. This tyranny is blindly embraced in the name of multiculturalism, and enforced by morally bankrupt liberals who view students in troubled inner city schools as incapable of serious academic work.

The liberal adage "You have to work within the system" embodies the total moral spiritual, and intellectual collapse of the American people. The Democrats "work within the system," and consequently we have a one party system. Tenured liberal professors have worked within the system, and have gotten so good at it that they have become the system, feeding Amy Tan and *The House on Mango Street* to poor students so as to keep them illiterate in the name of protecting diversity.

Expensive private colleges are dominated by almost total unanimity of thought in the liberal arts and social sciences, particularly in politics and economics. What are one's chances of getting hired for a tenure-track economics position at a four-year university when you have written polemics attacking the impoverishment of third world countries by the World Bank and IMF? Almost zero. Is this our great freedom, our great liberty of thought? This overwhelming pressure to conform ideologically in the legal system, the media, and academia, and the relentless pressures to be as obsequious and sycophantic as possible at work, is a cancer that is slowly tearing at the heart of American civilization.

Blind obedience and brainwashing through Newspeak begin in school. The media, and other social pressures complete the process. The destruction of family and community life has made resistance at work extraordinarily difficult, because the loss of a decent job that can so easily come from speaking out against unconscionable abuses of power, puts the now atomized American in a void, a zone of nothingness, a banishment into purgatory.

Americans are constantly lying to themselves about the degree to which they have allowed themselves to become ideologically compromised at work. Even more disturbing than the collapse of the New Deal is the inherently reactionary nature of so many jobs in the twenty first century United States. It is almost absurd to talk about unions if you work for the military and are assisting in the manufacturing of new weapons. Jobs in the mass media and mainstream press are often equally as dubious. The education system, viewed by liberals from the 1960's in such an innocent light, bears at least as much responsibility as the media in the lobotomizing of the American mind.

Instead of desperately trying to ward off a looming martial law, Americans are busy trying to get ahead at work. Fascism hasn't come to America with rallies and bonfires but in the fight for the corner office.

Take a good look at what Americans will put up with at ten dollars an hour, and it is clear that unionization and solidarity have reached their nadir in American history.

The idea of not making much money, yet waking up in the morning and feeling good about oneself is a myth if you are a public school teacher whose hands are tied by anti-literacy administrators, or a defense attorney forced to betray clients and plea bargain innocent people into jail.

There is still time for the American worker to awake and take back his country. There is still time to resist, to stand up for freedom of expression and worker's rights. For the elite are rapidly taking us to a place where it may soon no longer be possible to resist. Once that Rubicon is crossed, there will be naught but demons all around us, the bough will be broken, and constitutional democracy will drown in a sea of death and darkness.

David Penner has taught English and ESL at Kingsborough Community College, CUNY

The original source of this article is Counterpunch.org
Copyright © David Penner, Counterpunch.org, 2007

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [David Penner](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca