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EDITORIAL

TOWARDS OCEANEA

CONTENTS

BUTTER, BACON AND FIRE: RECLAIMING THE TWO GREAT CHARTERS

Peter Linebaugh; Red Pepper; via Critical Thinking

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE EU'S DICTATORSHIP

Eric Zuesse; Global Research

THE LEFT WING CASE FOR LEAVING THE EU

John King; New Statesman; via Sonya Porter

WHY THE LEFT SHOULD VOTE 'NO'

Adam Fitchett; UKIP Daily; via Sonya Porter

DOES THE GREEK BAILOUT PAVE THE WAY FOR THE UNITED STATES OF EUROPE?

Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya; Global Research and Mint Press News

OBSCURE TPP PROVISION WILL LEAD TO CORPORATIONS REPLACING NATIONS AS THE RULERS OF THE PLANET

Dave Hodges; DC Clothesline; via Critical Thinking

BRITAIN USING PSYOPS DOMESTICALLY TO ENCOURAGE "CONFORMITY"

Derrick Broze; Activist Post

AN INTERESTING UPDATE RE GOOGLE

Judy Hope; UK Column Newsletter

SOCIAL ENGINEERING 2.0 – GOOGLE ALGORITHM POSES “SERIOUS THREAT TO DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM”

Aaron Dykes; Activist Post

WHY YOU NEED TO COVER YOUR WEBCAM RIGHT NOW

Claire Bernish; Activist Post

THE CONFISCATION OF BANK SAVINGS TO “SAVE THE BANKS”: THE DIABOLICAL BANK “BAIL-IN” PROPOSAL

Prof Michel Chossudovsky; Global Research

WHY IS THE EU FORCING EUROPEAN NATIONS TO ADOPT “BAIL-IN” LEGISLATION BY THE END OF THE SUMMER?

Michael Snyder; Activist Post

THE GREEK COUP: LIQUIDITY AS A WEAPON OF COERCION

Ellen Brown; Nation of Change; Web of Debt; Op-Ed

EDITORIAL

TOWARDS OCEANEA

I have remarked before how the European Union is like the cobra, a snake with a magic power to hypnotise and to paralyse ... in this case paralysing the critical faculties of many intelligent and well-meaning people. Although the subject of the EU has featured or been alluded to many times in this pages ... so far as I can recall, and without going back through 5 years of archives ... this is the first editorial directly on the subject.

Over the years the EU has become a master of self-propagating and self-eulogising mythology. It is worth unpacking and dissecting a couple of these myths now. The claim that the nation state was the product of the Treaty of Westphalia ... and thus some recent and therefore disposable phenomenon ... is denied by history. England was such by the 10th century; at least France, Spain, Sweden, Scotland were well established more or less within their modern borders by the late 13th century; and at least China long before any of these.

The EU claim to be a repository of continental peace may again be interrogated by the facts. By the late 1930's Nazi Germany was spending close to 20% of its GDP on its military. No modern elected government could spend near such a sum and remain in office. The notion that any European state could launch some pre-emptive war of conquest in the Hitlerian or Napoleonic style on less than 2% of GDP defence spending is entirely preposterous. It may also be pointed out that the only state to threaten European security since 1945 is Russia, which has never been, nor is ever likely to be, part of the European project.

The EU vaunts its 'commonalities'. Yet for centuries Europe had a common (as against a single) currency ... gold and silver bullion, a common language ... Latin, and an international monarchy. None of that prevented war. Peace has come through the bitter and ruinous experience by successive states who have tried and failed to win continental empires over the centuries, and by the advent of democracy (however imperfect perhaps in there lies the greatest threat).

A hundred years ago, the French statesman and soldier Georges Clemenceau said that

the only outstanding question of the balance of power in Europe since Waterloo was that there were 20 million too many Germans, That question is now back with us in a different (but perhaps not-so-different?) form.

Far from becoming a repository of peace and harmony the EU has become a repository of grand but unworkable projects. We have a fisheries policy which assures us of the most depleted fish stocks and yet the fattest seagulls in the world. We have common agricultural policy which has been a sink of special pleading, corruption and waste for decades. We have disintegrating Schengen system. We have the ghastly catastrophe of the Euro. We have austerity. We have the wicked response to the plight of Greece and other peripheral states, We have the looming prospect of TTIP.

On top of that we have the dominance of multinational corporations in the counsels of the EU; a failure for nearly two decades to produce audited accounts ... if the EU were a company it would have been wound up and its directors prosecuted years ago; one of the most secretive decision making systems anywhere; a deep intolerance to criticism which has led a number of senior eurocrats to liken such criticism to treason or blasphemy; immunity from legal prosecution, civil action and taxation for whole tranches of those same eurocrats ... the notion that the state is above law is wholly repugnant to the dispensation of the Magna Carta ... and the list goes on.

Above all, when all the stealthy euphemisms, deceits and downright lies about 'integration' and 'ever closer union' are stripped away, it is all about the creation of a single European megastate. That will not even be a federal state but a unitary one as anyone who has read the treaties will know. The ever deepening involvement of the EU into such areas as education, health, culture, and regulatory micromanagement (more than 400 'directives' on vehicle construction alone), already goes way, way beyond what would be permitted in any other federal constitution, be that in Washington DC, New Delhi or Canberra. And the politics of deceit and stealth is itself, of course, entirely repugnant.

So now, after all the meddling in firstly the Balkans and now Ukraine, we have ever louder calls from Germany and others for a single European defence force.

It is about intergovernmental versus supranational ... an oligarchic plan for international management, run top-down as against a co-operative model managed sideways on. Those commentators who have likened the EU to a form of latter-day secular papacy are exactly right.

When all said and done, the EU is only 7% of the world's population on 5% of its landmass. There is a great blue ocean out there.

In 1984 George Orwell foresaw a state he called Oceania ... clearly a transatlantic union of America and Europe. Now with single currencies, mass surveillance, dominant banks and corporations, an imperial NATO and USA allied to an increasingly imperial EU, mass migration engineered as deliberate policy, and TTIP this is becoming all of a piece. Orwell's Oceania is being constructed before our very eyes.

There are many who are now hopelessly hypnotised by all this weaving cobra. It might be wondered whether even if the European Commission issued a directive for the strangulation of the first-born it would raise more than half a critical eyebrow amongst such people. For the rest of us, just how bad does this institution have to get before we cry, Enough!

Frank Taylor

"Never impose on others what you would not choose for yourself."

Confucius; thanks to the Libertarian Alliance Blog

BUTTER, BACON AND FIRE: RECLAIMING THE TWO GREAT CHARTERS

Peter Linebaugh; Red Pepper; via Critical Thinking

Magna Carta is only one of the two Great Charters of English Liberty, and we should reclaim them both from the conservatives and neoliberals

Butter comes from cows; bacon comes from pigs; fire from wood. These are my simplicities. That they are part of the liberties of England is my argument. Actually it requires little debate, just some reading, remembrancing and common sense. Why we don't know this is because we don't understand the commons. But with a bit of work we may quickly repair our injured understanding.

Magna Carta says no to torture and dispossession, and it says yes to due process of law, the jury and habeas corpus. It limits state power. This we know, or ought to. It's the famous chapter 39, the one that refers to liber homo ('free man'). But the charters of 1215 also commit us to subsistence for all, and that in peculiar ways – via the neighbourly commons, not state communism.

To begin with we must consider two charters, not one: Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest. Indeed, Edward Coke, the man who more than anyone else gave to Magna Carta its modern meanings, considered them equally 'weighty of matter' and called them Magnae Chartae Libertatum Angliae, the Great Charters of English Liberty. Charles I was frightened of his research and while Coke lay dying the king had his house ransacked to destroy his papers concerning the charters. Yet they were saved, parliament published them as Institutes of the Laws of England (1642), and Charles I was decapitated for violating them, 'the fundamental constitutions of this kingdom', to borrow a phrase from the indictment.

Cromwell or Charles, royalty or republic? To Thomas Hobbes they were much the same. He deemed the state a gigantic, aquatic monster, the Leviathan, devouring lands overseas and people at home. Driving it were 'the merchants of Babylon' (John Milton) who would 'erase every line and clause of both our great charters'.

In the next century, William Blackstone (whose Commentaries on the Laws of England deeply influenced the framers of the American constitution) wrote the first scholarly treatment of the documents and semantics of the charters. His The Great Charter and the Charter of the Forest (1759) again paired them as Coke had done. Ever since they have been split in twain by a dangerous historical caesarean operation, still perpetuated by contemporary servants to Caesar, aborting the little charter. Lord Sumption's address to the Friends of the British Library, 'Magna Carta Then and Now', is a case in point. Likewise with David Carpenter's Magna Carta (Penguin, 2015).

Edward Coke wrote that the phrase from chapter 39 of Magna Carta, homo liber, applied even to villeins. It is a postulate rejected by conservatives and strict medievalists. Mark Twain called it 'a sarcasm of law and phrase'. Ever since, the power of the charters has been demeaned by pettifoggers who say that 'free man' refers only to the privileged possessioners, not to everybody. This was the attempt to inscribe private property, and later capitalism, in the charters' DNA.

'Generally a man may common in the forest,' Coke wrote, reminding us that 'common' may be a verb – which, if not excusing Robin Hood's programme, certainly did not help the Sheriff plant the hedges, dig the ditches, or erect the fences of enclosure.

The Charter of the Forest has 16 chapters. The first says the king must disafforest the woods afforested by his father and grandfather except in his own demesne 'saving the Common of Herbage and of other things in the same Forest to them who before were accustomed to have the same'.

Three things need to be said in this context. First, the word 'forest' came to England with the Norman Conquest and it is a legal rather than an ecological term, referring to royal law rather than to trees. Second, 'common of herbage' refers to the grazing of cattle. Did this belong to 'all Freemen', as the preface asserts, or did it belong to those accustomed to it? The answer belongs not to law but to history, and it differs from parish to parish, woods to woods, part of the particularisation of England and its 'greenhue'. That is the third comment. To be 'accustomed' confers a right, in this case the common of herbage, or 'the cow's grass' (to use the Irish phrase), which explains the 'butter' of my title. Like cheese, milk, cream, steak and beef, it

is a gift of the cow.

The gift of the pig

The ninth chapter of the Charter of the Forest brings us to bacon, the gift of the pig. It says: 'Every Free-Man may Agist his own Wood without Our Forest, at his Pleasure, and shall take his pannage.' 'Agist' simply means admitting cattle into the wood, and in this case to agist the forest is to admit swine. 'Pannage' means 'mast', or the acorns and beech-nut of the woods.

Thomas Fuller wrote in 1622 of the pigs in the New Forest that 'going out lean, return home fat, without either care or cost to their owners. Nothing but fullness stinteth their feeding on the mast . . .' William Ellis, writing in 1750 of beech mast, said it 'is the Poor man's great Friend, because it tags him a Pig or two, and, with some Help, a larger Hog, for pickled Port, or Bacon' for a full year. William Cobbett, writing during the 1820s of the Forest of Dean, where every cottage had a pig or two, found that: 'These graze in the forest, and in the fall, eat acorns and beech nuts and the seed of the ash; for these last, as well as the others, are very full of oil, and a pig that is put to his shifts will pick the seed very nicely from the husks.'

Hugh Latimer, the Tudor bishop of Worcester, preached a 'Sermon on the Plowers' in 1548. Referring to the commoners, he said: 'They must have swine for their food to make their . . . bacon of. Their bacon is their venison, for they shall now have hangum tuum if they get any other venison; so that bacon is their necessary meat to feed on, which they may not lack.' It thus was not a sermon advocating poaching, yet the politics of animal flesh, deer or pig, and the social hierarchy clearly depended on the commons. As Latimer explained, 'And pasture they cannot have if the land be taken in and enclosed from them.'

Latimer's joke about capital punishment (tens of thousands were hanged in Tudor England) reminds us that the tenth chapter of the Charter of the Forest stated 'No Man from henceforth shall lose either Life, or Member, for Killing of Our Deer,' but a fine, or imprisonment, or for repeated offence, outlawry instead. This was a major step in the long history of the abolition of English hanging. The only contemporary commentator of the Charters, Robert of Béthune, put this provision and that opposing the disparagement of women as the most important in the Charters.

Bob Malcolmson, from whose book on *The English Pig: A History* I have drawn, was a student of E P Thompson, who took his seminar in Warwick down to the cottage of Mabel Ashby in the Cotswolds. She wrote a remarkable memoir of her father, Joseph Ashby of Tysoe, a Warwickshire village. This is one of those books, like Ronald Blythe's *Akenfield* or Flora Thompson's *Lark Rise to Candleford*, that brings to rural life sweet powers of observation, an egalitarian and humane attitude, and a sensibility fully attuned to women's round of labour.

Joseph was the secretary to the Pig Club. He told her that in pig keeping, 'there could be real citizenship, if only the framework of life was right'. What he meant, as she told Malcolmson with Thompson leaning forward to hear, and as Thompson wanted us to understand, was that even rural misery might be alleviated by the collective self-activity of the people themselves, who otherwise looked forward to an early grave. The democracy-and-economics copulative generated pork and self-respect.

Such is the foundation for a right 'framework of life.'

After the aunt of Thomas Spence lost a cow from the commons owing to enclosure he became a life-long advocate for 'all things in common'. He coined his own money, a halfpenny piece with a pig treading on crown and mitre surpassed by a liberty cap. He called his radical newspaper *Pig's Meat*, answering the conservative Edmund Burke, who referred to the people as 'the swinish multitude'. Spence and Gracchus Babeuf of the 1790s were Europe's first communists. They transformed the commons into something like true communism. Spence, Babeuf, and Marx, it is important to say, had direct personal experience with violent expropriation from the commons.

'Reasonable estovers'

So, that's the 'bacon' of my title. The 'fire' of the title takes us away from the Charter of the Forest and to Magna Carta as emended in 1217. Its chapter seven says 'and she shall have in the meantime her reasonable estovers in the common'.

What are estovers? Coke explains that the word 'estover' comes from the French and it refers to 'things that concern the nourishment, or maintenance of man wherein is contained meat, drink, garments, and habitation.' He adds that, 'When estovers are restrained to woods, it signifieth housebote, hedgebote, and

ploughbote,' or as we might say estovers meant wood taken for home repairs, for fencing, or for tools. He takes it for sustenance. Stubbs believed estovers referred to firewood. American commentators expounded it simply: 'Estovers of common were a share of the produce.' Wood was the principal energy source, equivalent to petroleum today. The women of the village collected wood-falls, lops and tops, or brush wood, which often as not rightfully became the estovers for cooking and heating. Nowadays, all over the world it has been women who have protected the commons.

Suppose that we gave to the Charter of the Forest that same generosity of interpretation that in the past was given to the Magna Carta. Instead of finding incomprehensible a medieval lexicon of weird or forgotten terms, or an adorable setting for a skit of Robin Hood and men-in-tights, we treated the animals of the woodlands as our fellow creatures and the canopy of plants and trees as the lungs of life. Nor would we cast the era into a locked and shuttered historical chest called 'feudalism', a Pandora's box from which not even Hope could escape.

To those common rights or customs we would add others mentioned in the Charter of the Forest and the government of them through the swanimote courts, court leets, and wodemotes. Assarts were bits of land cleared from the forest for arable uses. Purprestures was forest land taken for buildings. Chiminage was the right to use roads without paying tolls. There is a lexicon unfamiliar to us because it was based on use-values rather than the abstractions of exchange value where 'money answers all things'.

An economy that was not based exclusively on money or commodity production could be built up from such a collection of common customs. It was an economy without the severe separation between production and reproduction. Such commodity production and market transactions as existed were closely regulated. 'A merchant has merchandise, a rustic his wainage' – the seed, the ploughs, the plough team, the grain in the stalk. Economically speaking, we might call them the means of production. Remember that Clause Four of the old Labour Party called for 'the common ownership of the means of production', not state ownership.

The English colonisation of the north American mainland occurred in the 17th century alongside the struggle against Stuart despotism. Cavalier and Roundhead battled each other at the same time that Anglo and African entered the history of the 'new world' as settler and slave. Many of the colonial charters quoted some of Magna Carta, but said nothing about the commons or the Charter of the Forest. Two consequences flowed from this absence.

First, subsequent American legal history was founded partly on Magna Carta, which became, second only to the bible, a sacred cow that the fundamentalist politician tries to milk. The American Declaration of Independence ('All men are created equal') owes its existence to a suggestion by Thomas Paine to the American rebels that 'a Magna Carta' be composed'. Then in the American Civil War the discussion of Magna Carta revived and its powerful enabling expression, 'due process of law', was enacted in the 14th amendment.

Second, American development could proceed without a notion of the commons despite the fact that its meanings had been deeply and permanently replenished as knowledge of indigenous practices was transmitted by European sailors (Thomas More's Utopia, 1516). The axe and chainsaw triumphed and the trees came down, the villages were burnt and the hunting grounds destroyed. The practices and concepts of the commons arising in the colonised world became part of European discussion. As the Irish say, 'English history happens elsewhere.'

'The fires of revolution are incorporated into the Magna Carta of our liberties, and no human power can avert the awful eruption which will eventually burst upon us as Mount Vesuvius burst forth upon Herculaneum and Pompeii.' This was written by Timothy Thomas Fortune (1856-1928), printer, colleague of Ida B Wells, coiner of the term 'Afro-American' and sometime editor of the largest circulation black newspaper for its time in the world, the United Negro Improvement Association's Negro World.

Imperialism, conquest, racism, patriarchy, capitalism, and privatisation are no longer sustainable. This becomes clearer with every flood, every earthquake, every woman raped, every polluted stream, every diseased fish, every disappeared species, every fire in the factory, every drone in the sky, every ounce of lead in the soil, in every dead man shot in the back.

We must champion the commons in the Charters. Otherwise they will become the licence of crusading bigotry, or the excuse for complacent adherence to the status quo, a museum relic, or racist slur. Ours is a time of ecological devastation. Our era is about to be deemed the 'anthropocene', so now is the time to come to the aid of our planet. Its lungs are sick, and a stethoscope is not needed to hear the wheezing.

Common meaning

So if one problem has been this caesura to the charters, another has been the meaning of one of the most powerful words in the English vocabulary of politics, economics, and society. I mean the commons. Here the simplicities with which I began become complicated. The fact that the same word may express different meanings (the Oxford English Dictionary lists 33) certainly may lead to confusion. Equally, however, it may suggest relationships that would otherwise be missed. This is the case with commons.

When E P Thompson went off to war in 1941 he put in his kit a single book, *A Handbook of Freedom*, edited by Jack Lindsay and Edgell Rickword. The book contains bags of quotations expressing English democracy through 12 centuries. 'It will be noticed,' wrote Rickword in his introduction, 'how the word "common" and its derivatives, now so strangely altered in drawing-room usage, appear and re-appear like a theme throughout the centuries. It was for the once-vast common lands that the peasants took up arms; it was as the "true commons" that they spoke of themselves when they assembled, and it was the aspiration of men not corrupted by petty proprietorship "that all things should be in common".'

What is remarkable is that commons refers both to people and to land, the animate and the inanimate; there is not a separation between 'common pool resources' (to use economic jargon) and popular community.

Going forward to Raymond Williams' *Keywords* (1976) we find a salutary warning: 'Common has an extraordinary range of meaning in English, and several of its particular meanings are inseparable from a still active social history.' He then develops a semantic contradiction between the commons as 'the generality of mankind' and as a noun of social division, contrasting the commons with the nobility.

The 'active social history' has advanced over the past 40 years. Williams does not consider the manifold agrarian, sylvan, maritime, urban, atmospheric, and electro-magnetic meanings of commons. That social history has been activated by indigenous peoples, by healthcare workers, by computer hackers, by squatters, by urban gardeners, by musicians and artists, by the takers-over of factories, and by the teachers and child-minders of neighborhood, family, and crèche.

Rickword, Thompson and Williams were all active members of the Communist Party of Great Britain for a time. While they resigned from the Communist Party with its Stalinist rigidities, they did not apostasise from the principle that brought them to it in the first place: the equality of just conditions. As scholars they dug deeply into the tangled roots of communism and the commons: Thompson's moral economy and archival localism, Williams' cultural structures of feeling and deep reading.

We would then find an 'alternative'. We could see that our own era is temporary, and that there is nothing inevitable about it. Central to this interpretation must be the commons with its many layers of meaning. Though tempted to reduce it to one of the stages of history – 'primitive communism' – this only establishes distance precisely when we need intimate, plausible proximity to an imagined future. Those stages in any case were based on modes of production and what any consideration of the commons demands from us is emphasis on reproduction. This took place around the fire, the kitchen, the realm of domesticity extending to the creatures of the yard and the greens of the garden. Here the historical subject is no longer homo but femina.

The law locks up the man or woman
Who steals the goose from off the common
But lets the greater villain loose
Who steals the common from the goose.

The temporalities of the commons are profoundly different from the technological criteria of histories of production. The commons requires a hermeneutics – a theory and methodology of text interpretation – as well as a politics. I use a theological term because our mental/conceptual resources must also expand beyond empirical determinisms, romantic rhapsodies, antiquarian obsessions or patriarchal triumphs.

The great charters of English liberty began as an armistice (1215), quickly became a treaty (1217), developed a legislative appearance (1225), became the first statutes of law, and mutated into something constitutional, clipping the wings of Stuart despotism, partaking of revolution (1649) and enabling the Enlightenment project of American independence (1776).

A covenant between classes

It was a deal, or a covenant we could say, between classes – that is, between a ruling class of barons and aristocrats, or Paine's 'Norman banditti', the merchants of the towns and the smaller landholders already with a market interest. In short, the bourgeoisie. The great charters of English liberty were born in conflict, in war, and they developed and changed in conflict and war. That is the human history. Will it be otherwise with the commons?

The US constitution was not a document of the class of workers. On the contrary, it was impossible without involuntary servitude. Frederick Douglass, the ex-slave and great abolitionist, said to the Cincinnati Ladies Anti-Slavery Sewing Circle in 1854, 'Let the engine of the Magna Carta beat against the Jericho walls of slavery, and no seven days blowing of ram's horn would be necessary.' The US constitution has been amended and no one could see in the 14th amendment the word 'slave'. And yet the entire force of this provision is the result of four years of civil war to abolish slavery. The generative power of the 14th amendment comes from phrases first appearing in Magna Carta's chapter 39. The state was forced to become an emancipator.

American robber barons, by means of judicial fudge and legalistic twaddle, turned it into a constitution for their own interests – namely, profit and private property – just as English imperialists turned Magna Carta into a load of humbug designed to cover up conquest and racism. This 'gilded age' depended on 'Jim Crow', or re-enslavement. The African-American T Thomas Fortune wrote that 'land is common property, the property of the whole people'. Even at the moment of high imperialism and glorification of the Anglo-Saxon race in the early 20th century, people of colour leading national liberations – Gandhi, Mandela, Sun Yat-Sen – appealed to it against empire and racism.

The second world war was another time when a class-wide covenant began to emerge from the cauldron of class conflict. As Dona Torr, the brilliant English communist, said in 1940: 'Millions who stood outside history have become makers of history.' C L R James, Virginia Woolf, Henry Miller, Aneurin Bevan, Christopher Hill and Mary Inman were a few of the thinkers who were transformed that year. In America 'The Ballad of Magna Carta', with music by Kurt Weill, was played on national radio.

The commons returned but not by name and not completely. It came with the Four Freedoms – freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want and freedom from fear – that Franklin Roosevelt obliged Churchill to accept as a condition for wholehearted war aid. These he related directly to Magna Carta in speeches in early 1941. In war or disaster, as Rebecca Solnit has shown, the ideal of common mutuality may naturally but unexpectedly be materialised. This was the case in 1941 when the people of London took over the Underground for their common security against the Luftwaffe. Only then did the government step in. Leviathan attempted to take over the commons, no longer as self-activity in production and reproduction, but as the welfare state.

Our own epoch is one of privatisation and the ideology of neoliberalism. Opposition can be conducted in the name of the commons – that is, of subsistence for all. Opposition must be disestablishmentarian, not part of the establishment of church, monarch and money – neither Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan nor Milton's 'merchants of Babylon'. Can a document sorting out ruling-class differences 800 years ago be used in the necessary project of abolishing the ruling class altogether? The master's tools cannot dismantle the master's house, says Audre Lorde, and perhaps she is right. Certainly we must develop tools of our own as the Zapatistas have done with their *juntas de buen gobierno*.

Using the great charters today

Meanwhile, how would we use this inheritance? We must restore the unity of the two charters so that grassroots subsistence and limitations on state power become our dual project. We need to address the commons as a solution to our own needs, for water, air, land, fire and (as we must add) mind. We want equalisation, or the abolition of the economic class system of exploitation. For compelling needs we need compelling law or *jus cogens*. We need a different conception of property that is neither state nor individual, and a different conception of 'man'.

Magna Carta gave us *homo liber*, or 'free man'; Carl Linnaeus gave us *homo sapiens*, or 'wise man'; E P Thompson spoke of *homo economicus*, or 'economic man.' Our era of privatisation has produced another ideal historical species of man, one opposed to the commons, and deriving etymologically from the Greek

work for private: I mean homo idioticus. Homo idioticus is idiotically polluting the air and waters, engrossing the land and forests, and creating misery in his ceaseless, selfish accumulation and wars of drones.

Be gone with homo idioticus! Be gone with homo altogether! Why should 'man' represent all? Suppose that the ungendered all was called femina instead of homo. Of course we do not propose femina idioticus. We want to common. So in keeping with binomial nomenclature let us try femina communis and build the world accordingly.

In conclusion I want to bring together two June events. One is the assassination of Wat Tyler at Smithfield on 15 June in 1381. Tyler had been telling Richard II about an earlier meeting when the people demanded that he return the commons or common lands (marsh, pasture, meadow) from the greedy landlords who had taken and enclosed them. That was a freedom day.

The other is the news of Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation arriving late into Texas on 19 June. To this day it is celebrated among African-American communities as 'Juneteenth'. That too is a freedom day. Surely this is a holy day if there ever was one and must needs become worldwide!

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE EU'S DICTATORSHIP

Eric Zuesse; Global Research

(The last item was about the Magna Carta. The notion, endemic in the EU and widespread across many European countries, that any official should be immune from prosecution ... or, for that matter, immune from taxation ... must be regarded as utterly repugnant to the central tenet of the Magna Carta that government is subject to law and not above law - Ed)

Url of this article: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-constitution-of-the-eus-dictatorship/5462917>

It's here: [http://www.esm.europa.eu/pdf/ESM Treaty consolidated 13-03-2014.pdf](http://www.esm.europa.eu/pdf/ESM_Treaty_consolidated_13-03-2014.pdf)

That's the treaty establishing (which was originally done in 2012) the ultimate lending-fund for what the EU now officially considers to be a permanent economic crisis in Europe, of member-nations that are experiencing "severe financing problems," and that are therefore continually ripe for asset-stripping by aristocrats. It's called the European Stability Mechanism.

It's anything but that. Here is what it actually does:

<http://corporateeurope.org/economy-finance/2014/06/european-stability-mechanism-esm-no-democracy-bailout-fund>

In other words: it establishes the European bureaucracy to serve global aristocrats, so as to help them asset-strip the European populations of corrupt member-nations. These bureaucrats get transferred back-and-forth between this bureaucracy and the big financial institutions (which also are dependent upon the same billionaires), so that these bureaucratic servants of the aristocracy can themselves gradually emerge as aristocrats, basically joining (now becoming principals, no longer merely agents of) the aristocratic financial war stripping the public.

Here are some key provisions of this "Treaty," or Europe's (or the EU's) new constitution:

Article 34. Professional secrecy. The Members or former Members of the Board of Governors and of the Board of Directors and any other persons who work or have worked for or in connection with the ESM shall not disclose information that is subject to professional secrecy. They shall be required, even after their duties have ceased, not to disclose information of the kind covered by the obligation of professional secrecy.

Article 35. Immunities of persons. 1. In the interest of the ESM, the Chairperson of the Board of

Governors, Governors, alternate Governors, Directors, alternate Directors, as well as the Managing Director and other staff members shall be immune from legal proceedings with respect to acts performed by them in their official capacity and shall enjoy inviolability in respect of their official papers and documents. ...

Article 36. Exemption from taxation. 1. Within the scope of its official activities, the ESM, its assets, income, property and its operations and transactions authorised by this Treaty shall be exempt from all direct taxes. ...

It's a "Mechanism" (basically, a government) to transfer to the aristocracy the public's assets, which are the lands and pensions and healthcare and educational systems, which, in a democracy, are supposed to serve the public, but which, in an aristocracy, serve instead the billionaires. In Europe, aristocrats are still in charge. For example, one confidential document, dated 11 June 2013, "Real Estate Based Asset Financing for the Hellenic Republic," has this:

"The Hellenic Republic [Greece] holds a diverse collection of assets, many of which have been scheduled for sale as part of its commitments under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank [the three members of 'The Troika'], and the Hellenic Republic. The sale of state-owned assets is a one-off opportunity to raise capital for the Hellenic Republic [to be able to repay banks, which had lent to Greece at an 18% interest rate — and thereby already enriched aristocrats heavily at the public's expense — and now retrospectively taxpayer-guaranteeing those junk bonds, which global aristocrats had bought through those banks, granting these 18%-interest-rate junk bonds a retrospective AAA+ equivalent taxpayer-guaranteed status, courtesy of the politicians who were supposed to have represented the public]."

Furthermore: "This would help increase the privatisation proceeds beyond the amount currently foreseen in the MoU. The majority of the real estate is undeveloped land, with substantial potential," which "potential" won't be enjoyed by the Greek public via a future improved Greek national economy and increased tax-income into the Greek Government, but instead enjoyed by global aristocrats, who will be buying that "undeveloped land" now, before its value soars — so that aristocrats will be in on the rip-offs of the Greek public, both coming, and, now, going.

The document specifies that, "A large part of the Greek real estate portfolio is suitable for tourist development, and given Greece's climate and leisure and holiday potential this is the key source of potential value for investors." In other words: whatever desperate Greeks will still remain in Greece after all of the stripping of the assets of the state, will now become available, at rock-bottom subsistence wages, to serve tourists, while the billionaire owners, throughout the world, will be reaping the profits, from that land (including the beaches and new hotels), and from their slaves there (serving those tourists). This is commonly called "the free market": the more desperate and poor the public (the Greeks serving those tourists) are, the more profit the aristocracy (the owners of those resorts) will receive. After Barack Obama's coup overthrew Ukraine's democratically elected President in February 2014, Ukraine's soaring debt is already being treated this way (being set up for privatization), even before Ukraine joins the EU (if it ever will). Similarly, privatization followed the junta that Obama protected (if he didn't even place them into power) in Honduras in 2009.

There is nothing basically new about this. Benito Mussolini introduced privatization in Italy during the 1920s. Admiring his success with that wealth-transfer to aristocrats, Adolf Hitler then took it up in Germany during the 1930s.

Nowadays, this is called "libertarianism" in the United States, and "neoliberalism" in Europe. It's just standard economic theory, being put into political practice. Another term for it is "austerity" (as the public calls it), or (to employ the economist's euphemistic phrase for it) "fiscal consolidation."

What Mussolini and Hitler started, is now being put into practice increasingly around the world, but it is no longer overtly called "fascism." Mussolini and Hitler were defeated in WW II, and so the label "fascist" needed to be changed, but the aristocracy, which financed fascists' rises,

has by now emerged victorious (in the U.S. and not only in Europe), using deceit (including these new labels), instead of relying upon mere bombs and guns. There are enough fools ('libertarians,' or believers in 'the free market,' etc.), so that victory comes far cheaper via such deceits (mental coercion) than via violence (physical coercion — coercion against the body). (But, of course, war, too, can be profitable.)

The entirety of the 'Greek bailouts' is bailouts of the aristocracy, not of the public; it's just like America's 'Wall Street bailouts,' which bailed out the banksters instead of the cheated MBS investors and homeowners. The 'Greek bailouts' were actually loans, not 'bailouts' at all; and after the loans turned sour, taxpayers were forced to buy them from the aristocrats, who were the ultimate recipients of the actual bailouts. The lenders never bailed anybody out, but instead were bailed out by the public. However, in the Greek case, the people who are blamed are the Greek public, who are being stripped. After all, such blame-the-victim is the natural response, for believers in 'the free market.' But it would be like blaming the stripped pension funds, and the underwater homeowners, for having caused the bailouts of Wall Street. Calling them 'bailouts of Greece' is the reverse of what they actually are, which is an ongoing stripping of the Greek public. (Other European publics should be angry against the aristocrats they're bailing out, not against the Greek public, who never benefited from those loans, and who aren't the people that socked away some or all of those borrowed funds into Swiss or other accounts abroad.) It's like blaming a raped woman for having been raped. That's conservative, in the extreme. It's fascist.

The EU's dictatorship is by the aristocracy, against the public. It's just like the U.S. dictatorship — competing parties, both or all of which represent the aristocracy, against the public; none representing the public, against the aristocracy. Conservatives support it, because they support the aristocracy. (A reader replied to this, "it isn't just the doctrinaire conservatives that support the new aristocracy it is the majority of the public"; but the majority of the public is conservative, they're devoted to myths; so, that's not contradicting my assertion, it's just restating the tragedy.)

This is why inequality is high, and soaring. Democracy is disappearing.

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THE LEFT WING CASE FOR LEAVING THE EU

John King; New Statesman; via Sonya Porter

Supporters of the EU sneer "Little Englander" at those with a different opinion, but most of the arguments against membership are left-leaning and liberal.

Despite the denials by our political and media elite, the most important issue of the 2015 election was Britain's membership of the European Union. Nearly four million votes went to Ukip, a party that has been consistently abused and dismissed by our controllers, with much of that support coming from former Labour voters, while big numbers of people backed the little-loved Conservatives.

Both parties offered referendums on Britain leaving the EU – Ukip powerfully, the Tories reluctantly. It is not hard to work out why they did so well, yet there is still little acknowledgement of this fact from the establishment. An arrogant refusal to listen to the public has left Labour and the Liberal Democrats in tatters. Nick Clegg could moan about "identity" politics in the election's aftermath, but this matters to the majority of people.

Our membership of the EU undermined the major debates and warped most of the policies being put forward in the build-up to the election. The EU will influence the future of the NHS just as it helped smooth Tory privatisation of the Post Office and the organisational break-up of the railways; it is in tune with austerity and drives a larger and more deadly version in the eurozone; it escalates problems linked to housing, work, wages and education; creates worry and stirs up anger and threatens people's sense of self. A lazy acceptance of establishment propaganda and a fear of being branded "xenophobic" have silenced

many liberals and left-wingers. And yet the EU is driven by big business. This is a very corporate coup.

It is essential to understand where the EU is heading. The mission? To create a centralised superstate. As the former European Commission president José Manuel Barroso said in 2007: “. . . I like to compare the EU as a creation to the organisation of empire. We have the dimension of empire.” While there have been idealists involved and progressive laws made along the way, at its core it is undemocratic and distant, a threat to all those living in its shadow. However sweet the propaganda, it is a tool for multinationals, another part of the globalisation process.

A majority of the British population is either opposed to or sceptical about our inclusion in the EU, and yet any serious discussion of what it represents and where it is leading is near enough impossible. Instead we have McCarthy-like campaigns directed at those who have a different vision for Britain and the other member countries.

However, decades of pro-EU spin have failed to convince the mass of working people of its worth; the only reason their opposition has been so restrained is the secrecy and speed of the takeover. This has occurred across generations, a slow-motion transfer of control, driven by the rich and powerful. Our leaders are complicit, know where their futures rest. There are careers to protect and promote, fortunes to be made. The feelings of the wider society are ignored.

The idea put across by its promoters, that the EU is somehow synonymous with “Europe”, is nonsense and yet this use of language has become commonplace. We are told that to be anti-EU is to be “anti-European”, but, in reality, to oppose the EU makes you pro-European. If Europe is its people and cultures then it is surely better that France, Greece, Poland and every other member state becomes a proper democracy again. If the main legacy of the European Enlightenment was the collectivisation of political power in the hands of the masses, then the EU model is the antithesis of this: centralising decision-taking in the hands of an unaccountable technocratic elite.

A single European nation suits the US government, its multinationals and its military. One leader is a lot easier to deal with than many. The same goes for a single currency. This is clear in moves by the EU and the US to impose the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which will allow the corporations of both blocs the chance to exploit each other’s markets, smoothing out “obstacles” in the process. The NHS would be targeted by US health-care companies and trade union rights threatened. Negotiations to bring in TTIP have been taking place in secret. There is no voting involved, no pretence at democracy, little proper coverage by the media. The main parties are broadly supportive. With TTIP comes the Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) system, whereby business can take governments to court if its profits are infringed upon. This is mind-blowing stuff, but our politicians say nothing.

The media tell us that the Tories are anti-EU while Labour and the Lib Dems are fighting their narrow-mindedness, and Ukip is dismissed as a far-right group bordering on the fascist. This is bubblegum politics. Little Europeans sneer “Little Englander” at those with a different opinion, peddling stereotypes, unwilling to consider the bigger arguments.

That it was the Conservatives who took Britain into a six-nation EEC in 1973 is dismissed. This was a betrayal of the Commonwealth, which a mere 28 years earlier had fought with us against two of these countries, the then fascist Germany and Italy. Commonwealth economies suffered as a result. Prime Minister Ted Heath insisted that the Common Market was no more than a trade arrangement, but a large chunk of the population was outraged and saw it for what it was, and Heath would later admit he had lied about its long-term goal. Labour was socialist at this point and along with the trade unions naturally opposed the Tories. Despite some big talk, Margaret Thatcher and John Major did not take us out, while Tony Blair would have joined the eurozone if he’d had his way. Backing the EU because the Tories are supposedly against it is pathetic. The EU is not a party issue. It is much more important. David Cameron is softly pro-EU but has been forced into holding a referendum by rebel elements in his party. Ed Miliband was also a firm supporter, his own sceptical backbenchers keeping quiet for fear of being branded right-wing by the Labour Party’s thought police.

Last year saw the death of two genuinely left-wing figures within a matter of days in Tony Benn and Bob Crow. These were honest men who refused to bend to the group mind. They were idealists and knew where the EU was leading us. In later life Benn was patronised as a well-meaning crank when he tried to talk seriously about the EU. Crow died young and his dream of a left-wing, anti-EU party will be harder to achieve now he is gone. But this is what Britain needs. Urgently.

The move towards a European state is a long way down the line and yet even this simple truth is denied

by those whose careers are sewn into the process. According to House of Commons Library research, if one counts regulations as well as directives, half of all UK laws are derived from Brussels, measures that cannot be reversed once passed; but if even one law is made outside parliament, then that is a huge abuse of power.

The EU has a president and a militarised police force in EUROGENDFOR, is pushing for its own army, and has helped stir up the crisis in Ukraine with its expansionism. Its single currency has caused untold misery for tens of millions of working people across Europe, yet there is no apology, just an arrogant demand for greater powers. The Greeks are branded lazy and forced to cut services in return for more loans.

If there is a referendum on our EU membership in this new parliament, the propaganda unleashed by the establishment will be unparalleled. From the Guardian to the Times, from the BBC to Rupert Murdoch, our masters will close ranks as withdrawal is deemed a disaster. But would Britain be damaged? For a start, we would save roughly £10bn a year in our net handout to the EU. This is a huge sum, which, if used properly, would benefit those who actually pay these taxes. The idea that our neighbours would no longer trade with us is simply untrue. Trade would continue and we would be able to deal with the rest of the world more freely. Only about 15 per cent of British GDP is accounted for by our exports to the rest of the EU and this percentage is falling as the eurozone stagnates. The future for Britain lies in building ever better trade relations with the economically expanding parts of the world, such as the Commonwealth countries. Britain would be liberated.

Most of the arguments against EU membership are left-leaning and liberal. Ukip has done so well because it tells the truth about the EU, even if some of its tactics and emphases put people off. That it can pull in Labour voters despite its Thatcherite, non-patriotic economics is revealing. Just as depressing has been the cowardice of the so-called independent parties. The Greens, the SNP and Plaid Cymru exist to promote localism and the devolution of power, yet they refuse to challenge an EU that is about the centralising of power.

The Scottish referendum quickly became about money rather than identity, yet few talked seriously about the madness of a standalone Scotland re-entering the EU as a new applicant and adopting the euro. Why would the SNP want to gain independence and then hand it over to a larger, more remote body, where it would have less say than now in how it runs its own affairs? Why would it want to have even less control of its economy? You have only to look at Sinn Fein's attempts to keep Ireland out of the euro for a comparison. The whole debate about Scotland leaving the UK seems pretty pointless if the SNP's willingness to join the EU isn't challenged. If Scotland had its own currency and rejected Brussels it would make sense, but leave the UK and join the EU instead?

Open borders are essential to the EU's single state. It makes for a more mobile (often cheaper) workforce on one level, allows business and the wealthy easy access on another. It will also change voting patterns, as there will come a point when elections are going to be open to whoever lives in a country at a given time. There has always been movement of people and there always will be. Leaving the EU will not stop this, just take us away from the Fortress Europe model.

Ukip targets poorer workers, warning of the threat to working-class jobs and wages in the same way certain trade unions do, but it ignores "high-end" immigration and the negative effect this has had on the lives of the everyday person, especially in and around London. This probably hindered the party in last month's election, limiting the swing from Labour. Everything we have has been put up for sale and the rich and powerful of the world are making a fortune at our expense. House prices are driven up and new properties sold as investments rather than homes. In large areas of London local people have been driven out, their culture erased. This creates huge ripples that spread through the rest of the country. It is natural to feel angry at this unfairness.

We are continually told that Britain's muted opposition to the EU is somehow a quirk that shows us to be intolerant, but we are one of the most open-minded countries in the world. And the idea that every European is happy being in the EU is untrue. Most are resigned, feel more powerless and despondent than we do. The need for a left-wing opposition to the EU should be taken care of by the Labour Party, but it lost its nerve when Thatcher was in power, along with elements in the trade union movement, selling its soul to Brussels in return for some positive legislation. Then it was hijacked and turned into New Labour. Its collapse in the election is a continuation of this thread. Too many voters see it as hypocritical, unpatriotic, politically correct and in the hands of an aloof, wealthy clique.

Most important in all this is people's sense of identity. This is seldom mentioned by anyone with a public voice, perhaps for fear of being branded "racist". The less you have, maybe the more your identity matters, and the powerful elite do not have the right to sell this off to the EU or anyone else. Our controllers, tucked away in their big houses, worshipping money either openly or from behind their fake-liberal lectures, do not understand or care about this, and yet it is in the mass population that the real integration has always occurred, where diversity isn't measured by the colour of your skin. This is ongoing, part of the British tradition. It is no shame to want to preserve your culture.

During this year's election campaign Tony Blair argued that the people should not be given the chance to vote in an EU referendum because, in effect, we could not be trusted to make the "sensible choice". His elitist questioning of the intelligence of the electorate is no different from those 19th-century reactionary Tories who argued on similar grounds that the franchise should not be extended to women and the working class. Most within our political and media classes and big business seem to think the same way as Blair, want the EU issue sidelined, ruled off-limits for democratic debate.

The EU offers us little. It costs billions to belong to a club that interferes in our affairs and has created needless divisions, one that will ultimately lead to our removal from the map. If a European superstate is achieved, the resentment and anger will flow through the centuries to come, creating resistance movements right across the continent.

Leaving the EU would save Britain money that could (in the right hands) be ploughed back into the public sector to safeguard jobs and services. And yet, nearly every mainstream politician lifts his nose in the air and turns away, embarrassed at ideas he considers crass. Across the world people are fighting to be more independent, not less so. They crave democracy and accountability, want to see their identities and cultures live on. The European Union is not new and it is not progressive, its trail winding back to the Roman empire. Britain needs to look to the future.

John King is the author of novels such as "The Football Factory" and "Human Punk". He has acted as an adviser for the People's Pledge and co-owns London Books

WHY THE LEFT SHOULD VOTE 'NO'

Adam Fitchett; UKIP Daily; via Sonya Porter

Back in May, the Lib Dem candidate for Thurrock, Rhodri Janieson-Ball, claimed that "the only people who want a referendum, to put it blunt [sic], are extreme right wingers"*. It was a ludicrous statement, quite obviously so, but it betrayed a common assumption: that euroscepticism is the preserve of right wing politics. Today, no-one could be forgiven for making that assumption. The Lib Dem vote collapsed whilst half the electorate voted for pro-referendum parties. Since then, Kate Hoey MP has set up the pro-Brexit Labour for Britain group, Guardian columnist Owen Jones has switched to the eurosceptic camp, and even Jeremy Corbyn has expressed some ambivalence. The better leftists are coming out for British independence and have every reason to do so.

What does it mean to be a leftist? The concepts of left wing and right wing have been mangled almost beyond recognition since their origins in the French Revolution, but I think a broad definition can be given: a leftist is critical of power structures; a leftist wants to undermine and transform them. The leftists in monarchical France were anti-aristocracy and pro-democracy, pushing for revolutionary constitutional change, pushing for freedom. In modern times, leftist politics has become near synonymous with statism, mostly as a result of leftists thinking the end justifies the means. Nevertheless, the anti-authoritarian left maintains a growing presence, carrying the torch of true leftism into today's political arena. They are the ones eurosceptics need to reach if we want to win the referendum.

Apart from a tiny residuum of revolutionaries, most of the modern left support some kind of democratic transformation of society. Even for the revolutionaries, some kind of democracy is seen as the ultimate ideal. Leftists want to democratise wealth, to democratise capital, to democratise institutions, to bring power back to the average man or woman. How then can leftists support the EU when it places itself squarely, explicitly, against any form of democracy?

"Elections change nothing" said Wolfgang Schäuble and, as we saw in Greece just two months ago,

neither do referenda. The Commission displays total contempt for the will of the average voter. No leftist who wants to empower the ordinary, working citizen can possibly reconcile that with support for a technocratic, elitist EU.

Not only is the EU killing democracy, but it's also propagating corporatism. The pharmaceutical industry alone spends €40m per year lobbying the EU.

The estimated total number of lobbyists in Brussels has doubled in the last 10 years from 15000 to 30000; thousands of separate interest groups have installed permanent staff in the city to always be on hand to acquire more influence. Large companies, who are more able to cope with new regulations, encourage their imposition in order to hurt smaller companies. Tobacco companies that don't sell e-cigarettes, in order to hurt their rivals that do, encourage the EU to clamp down on them. The private companies are not the only ones to blame here; none of this would be possible without the Commission's bottomless money pot. Leftists and rightists may disagree about the ideal economic system, but surely none of us can abide the EU's corporate welfare and cronyism. It is not a system; it is economic war.

Whilst big business continues to rake in the largesse, people across the continent are increasingly turning against the EU's imposition of austerity programs. Once again, the left and right may disagree about the proper solution to economic crises but there is one thing we can definitely all agree on: the unfairness of the modern bailout system. Big banks take big risks (enabled by the State), fail and then get bailed out (as happened in Spain). Big governments borrow tonnes of money, go bankrupt and then get bailed out (as has happened in Greece – three times). And who picks up the bill? Of course, it is always the ordinary, productive, politically disempowered people. The EU is an inverted welfare state: those at the bottom are bled dry in order to prevent those at the top from having to endure the consequences of their own recklessness. Any leftist who believes in holding governments and bankers to account cannot justify continuing with such a system.

These are the main areas where right and left wing eurosceptics see eye to eye. There are other important reasons that a leftist might have for opposing the EU, such as opposition to free trade and globalisation. Since I don't agree with such arguments, I won't promote them here. But they exist, and many on the left will find those arguments persuasive.

Whatever you want out of politics, whatever your stance on the economy or society, the change you seek can be achieved in two ways: democratically or undemocratically. EU officials have demonstrated, time and again, what little respect they have for the will of voters and elected institutions. A Yes vote in the referendum is a vote for the anti-democratic cause. It is, in fact, a vote against voting. The statist, the champagne socialists, the social democrats and progressive liberals – they don't care for democracy. The true leftist does care, and cannot reconcile their views with anything other than a big fat No.

DOES THE GREEK BAILOUT PAVE THE WAY FOR THE UNITED STATES OF EUROPE?

Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya; Global Research and Mint Press News

Url of this article: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/does-the-greek-bailout-pave-the-way-for-the-united-states-of-europe/5467636>

Illusions are at play in the modern tragedy that is the Greek economic system, particularly when it comes to notions of who benefits most from the latest bailout.

The big myth is that Greece overspent and the Greek government was reckless with its budgets, ultimately indebting Athens. It is true that Greek officials tried to gain influence and political support through spending. It's also true that they signed lucrative contracts with local businesses.

Athens, however, is no exception here; this type of conduct has been displayed by politicians throughout the European Union and around the world.

The fact is that this is not what created the economic crisis in Greece. What is really taking place in Greece and the eurozone is something altogether different. The Greek bailouts appear to be part of a rigid

restructuring of the EU that is placing other members under the control of Germany.

Banker Bailouts versus National Bailouts

We are not dealing with national bailouts for failing economies, but with banking sector bailouts. Almost all the money that has been given to Greece, Cyprus, Ireland, and Portugal has gone to the banks of the creditor lenders. In his 2013 documentary “The Secret Bank Bailout,” German investigative journalist Harald Schumann documents how the peoples of Ireland, Cyprus and Spain were not bailed out. The biggest recipients of the Irish bailout that saved Anglo-Irish Bank were British, French and German banks, including Union Investment Privatfonds, Rothschild et Compagnie Gestion, and Deutsche Bank. German and French banks accounted for 50 out of the 80 bondholders. The blogger Guido Fawkes revealed that the Irish government was protecting German investors when he published a list of the bondholders that he had obtained from an insider.

Watch The Secret Bank Bailout:

Éric Toussaint, the Belgian spokesperson for the Committee for the Abolition of Third World Debt (CADTM), accurately describes this in an interview with Rosa Moussaoui, explaining that the private banks managed to transfer their debts to the Greek people through the bailout arrangements in 2012. Think Schumann and Toussaint are alone? Not by far. Even mainstream media and prominent analysts admit this is exactly what happened in Greece.

The bailouts were not “geared to the requirements of the people of Greece but to the needs of the international financial markets, meaning the banks,” economist Christian Rickens candidly reported in a 2012 commentary in *Der Spiegel*. The synopsis of Rickens’ commentary reads: “The bailout package about to be agreed by the euro finance ministers will help Greece’s creditors more than the country itself. EU leaders should channel the aid into rebuilding the economy rather than rewarding financial speculators for their high-risk deals.”

Likewise, in analysis for *Forbes*, Agustino Fontevicchia wrote:

“As it stands right now, the Greek bailout and debt deal agreed by European Finance Ministers is a farce, a program designed to pay Greece’s international creditors and buy time to somehow engineer growth in a completely uncompetitive economic environment.”

Modern Pillaging

Greece is being pillaged. Following a neoliberal economic formula, Greek publicly owned assets are forcibly being sold to foreign investors to pay the debts of the banks. All the means for the Greek government to generate income have been liquidated to private enterprises.

“[V]aluable Greek assets of [50 billion euros] shall be transferred to an existing external and independent fund like the Institution for Growth in Luxembourg, to be privatized over time and decrease debt. Such fund would be managed by the Greek authorities under the supervision of the relevant European institutions,” eurozone leaders demanded in mid-July.

On July 13, *Time* magazine reported that a proposal was geared towards “locking up Greek assets in a special fund emerged on Saturday from Germany.” “The German Finance Ministry even suggested moving the titles to Greek assets to an ‘external fund’ in Luxembourg so that Athens could not renege on their sale,” the magazine reported. Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and his Syriza-led government acquiesced to the demands to privatize more public property and infrastructure. Athens handed control of its public assets to German bankers. These assets, *Time* reported, will include publicly owned “buildings, possible areas of land, and even islands” that are home to Greek ruins and other archeological national treasures.

The illusions go on. Not even the so-called “troika” that organized the Greek bailout is real. Though it’s composed of the European Commission, the European Central Bank, and the International Monetary Fund, the troika is really a duet. While the European Commission is the executive branch of the EU, the European Central Bank is one of the six other institutions of the EU. Athens was really dealing with the EU and IMF.

Why the insistent narrative about a troika? It may be that the European Central Bank is being presented

as a separate entity that is beyond the power of the public, thus preventing the public from demanding any oversight.

The Greek bailout is for Germany and Western Europe, not Greeks

Not only is it more than likely that German banks and creditors are the benefactors of Greek bailout(s), German corporations are also part of the picture. While the austerity regime that forced the Greek people's living standards to fall has reduced their wages by hundreds of millions of euros, Greek media reports started mentioning that the Greek Administrative Court of Appeals ruled that the biggest tax evader inside the country was Germany's biggest construction company, Hochtief Aktiengesellschaft.

In October, the Greek journalist Costas Efimeros reported what happened with Hochtief. The Athens International Airport that Hochtief had managed vis-à-vis Hochtief Airport Capital was ordered to pay over 500 million euros in value-added taxes or general sales taxes and dividend taxes. This was because the airport had been in a stretched out fiscal dispute over tax payments with Athens since 2001. The International Court of Arbitration in London ruled in 2013 that the international airport did not need to pay the taxes "until it makes a return on its initial investment," according to Efimeros.

This is where the story gets complicated. Although the Greek government owns the 55 percent majority stake in the Athens International Airport, the contract Athens was forced to sign stipulates that Hochtief, with its 40 percent share through Hochtief Airport Capital, selects the management and runs the airport. The German management amplified its losses in the books, and then in 2013 it sold Hochtief's shares to a Canadian insurance company. Hochtief would eventually merge with the Spanish construction and engineering giant GrupoACS, leaving what the Greek government calls a big "smudge" and cautiously transferring its Greek debt over.

The Greek government's strange Kalamatiano

Something is rotten in the Hellenic Republic. Athens has been acting schizophrenically. While Greek officials have threatened to leave the EU, they have solidified Greece's ties to Brussels. Athens has ignored the results of the national referendum on the bailout and flirted with Moscow. Despite Syriza's anti-war rhetoric and pro-Palestinian declarations, it has also moved Greece militarily closer with Israel.

Prime Minister Tsipras and his Syriza-led government held a national referendum to decide whether to accept the troika's demands on July 5. Domestic opponents argued the referendum was unconstitutional, saying that under Article 44 of the Greek Constitution referendums could only concern: (1) significant national matters and (2) important social matters, with the exception of fiscal matters. Greece's economic crisis fell under the first clause of Article 44 as an important national issue. In the referendum, 3,558,450 out of a total of eligible 6,161,140 Greek voters voted against the referendum. The rejection of the troika's demands won with 61.31 percent of the votes.

After the referendum to reject the bailout terms was won, Tsipras and the Greek government went ahead and approved the bailout. There was internal mutiny in Syriza and many Greeks felt betrayed. It was argued that Athens only called a referendum to gain leverage in negotiations. But can a decision made by the majority of those Greeks who voted in a national plebiscite simply be ignored?

The Greek government has been involved in a strange dance where it has flirted with Russia and its BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) partners. Greece and Russia have even formed some type of agreement for extending the "TurkStream" natural gas pipeline, which is scheduled to take natural gas from Russia to Turkey via the Black Sea. The TurkStream will export Russian natural gas to the Greeks by eventually extending into Greece. Despite the courtship of Russia and the Syriza-led coalition government's threats to leave the EU and the eurozone, the Greek government's threats have proved to be mostly bluffs.

With the okay of Prime Minister Tsipras and Syriza, Greek Defense Minister Panagiotis Kammenos has even signed a deal with the Israeli military. Visiting Israel last month, Kammenos signed a status of forces agreement, which essentially means Greece will be hosting Israeli military personnel. What does this mean? The previous Greek government had allowed Israel to conduct long-range flight exercises simulating an attack on Iran. Is Tsipras allowing the Israelis to continue those preparations?

A United States of Europe?

The Greek tragedy also has a strange twist. Where there is crisis for some, there is opportunity for others.

France has proposed that the 19 EU members in the eurozone form their own federal government complete with a single budget, one treasury department/ministry, and a unified parliament as a means of tackling the economic crisis in Greece. French President François Hollande penned an article in the Journal du Dimanche last month, calling for the formation of what is essentially a “United States of Europe” that would effectively relegate all existing governments in the eurozone into provincial or state-level governments.

Hollande’s proposal signals the consolidation of what appears to be German control over Greece and the other countries of the EU.

OBSCURE TPP PROVISION WILL LEAD TO CORPORATIONS REPLACING NATIONS AS THE RULERS OF THE PLANET

Dave Hodges; DC Clothesline; via Critical Thinking

An obscure Trans Pacific Partnership provision will serve to threaten the very existence of the nation state and replace governmental authority with the power and the whim of the corporation. This secretive provision promises to supplant all national authority with a “Rollerball” type of world. If you are not familiar, Rollerball was a very popular movie which debuted in 1975 and it depicted the planet as being ruled by six corporations in the place of national governments.

The movie was set 43 years into the future from the time of the release of the movie, in the year 2018, in which a total of six corporations have replaced government as the ruling authority following the demise of the nation state. With the absence of war or conflict, a forcibly passive population’s bloodlust is satisfied by a brutal new sport known as Rollerball.

More popular than today’s NFL Football and the Superbowl, Rollerball resulted in a corporate-backed sensation, the most popular athlete in the world, named Jonathan E. (played by James Caan). Jonathan E. had steadily climbed the ladder to superstar status of the sport and would be on a par with the legendary Michael Jordan.

Rollerball’s lethality and the inevitable demise of all the participants serves the social control purpose of conditioning the masses into a state of learned helplessness in which they are programmed to believe that they have no control over their fate and the whim of the corporations is all-powerful over the free will of the individual. In the movie, there are no Constitutions or civil liberties.

When the corporate backers of Rollerball begin to fear that Jonathan’s popularity has instilled him with a potentially dangerous amount of personal power and individual freedom, a thunderous struggle between man’s free will and the oppression of the masses threatens to shatter the fragile strings that the puppet masters use to manipulate mankind and this struggle begins to ensue in earnest. Despite corporate demands, Jonathan E. decides not to retire from the game in which he’s a superstar and this flies in the face of the very social control reason that Rollerball was conceived. Subsequently, the corporate rulers hatch a plot to abandon the rules of Rollerball in the hope that Jonathan E. will be killed and their grip of power will remain as an unyielding chokehold on the helpless populace. The ultimate message of this movie is that if we ever permit corporations, such as Monsanto and Walmart, to rule the world, we will be living in a “hell on earth” scenario. Quite obviously, the movie was 40 years ahead of its time and its predictive value as to the state of today’s world was enormous. This is what our planet will soon look like.

Transferring the American Economy to a Corporate, Rollerball Style of Dictatorship

When something is secret and kept from you, it is usually very bad for you! As America races toward her date with destiny, there is yet another “fundamentally transforming” event coming her way

and that event is known as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). The TPP is a plot designed to hand over control of the world's governments to private corporate interests and it is all being done in secret. Even Congress is not allowed to examine the TPP provisions.

Under the TPP, for example, GMO labels for US food would not be allowed. To make matters worse, there is an obscure portion of the TPP and other trade agreements which is so diabolical, so devastating, that the planet will eventually resemble the movie, Rollerball, in which a small number of corporations will rule the planet.

Many of us in the media believe that some of the effects of the TPP will be felt before the coming war and martial law crackdown. However, after careful analysis, I am convinced that the brunt of the TPP will be felt after the America we know has been totally taken over in a post-war and post-economic collapse scenario. In other words, following World War III, the United Nations, as a body, will be replaced with the United Corporations. At the end of the day, it does not matter when the implementation of the TPP comes, because when it does, America will no longer be recognizable to anyone who has grown up in this once great country. The reason that America will no longer be recognizable is because America will no longer exist because of a key provision contained in the TPP.

Within a few short years, following implementation of the TPP, which will surely grow from the 40% of the world's population that it will soon control as it will eventually encompass 100% of the planet. The TPP will eliminate all nation states as the ruling authority and it will be supplanted by corporate authority. This will be made possible because of an obscure provision of the TPP known as the Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS). ISDS is a key component of the TPP. Unfortunately, for the planet, ISDS principles are being negotiated as I write these words, outside of the Trans Pacific Partnership, in ongoing trade deals between the United States and the European Union. ISDS allows corporations to sue governments, for any government action (at any level, including local government level) which hinders a corporation's future profits. Literally, Monsanto could provably be poisoning the entire population of a nation and the nation could do nothing which might result in the loss of profits to Monsanto. This also means that as a private citizen, if you organize a boycott against Monsanto, you could be sued in a foreign court for obstructing Monsanto profits.

If a corporation feels that a government has impeded its ability to maximize profits, a suit is filed, outside the country being sued, and the case will be heard by an arbitration panel of trade lawyers, in a jurisdiction totally of the corporation's choosing. Under ISDS, the dispute panel may only consider the 'free trade' values of the case. No other factors may be considered when deciding the case. This means that these corporate panels must disregard values of public health, civil liberties, environmental protection, or the rights of workers (e.g. working conditions) or any other Constitutionally protected liberties.

Conclusion

ISDS will primarily be enacted through the TPP legal process. However, the corporations, growing impatient with the progress of implementation of the TPP have begun to include ISDS in most trade talks on the planet. This means the end of the nation state as we know it and before you applaud the demise of corrupt governments, consider what we are replacing national governments with. We should be reminded of Einstein's quote about World War III when he said "I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones." We could adapt Einstein's quote to something like, "I know not what nations will begin World War III, but World War IV will be fought between rival corporations".

In this nightmare scenario, officials from corporations such as Monsanto and Walmart, have complete control of the developmental process of the TPP and the ISDS legal provisions.

Hell on earth has begun in earnest as the Rollerball mentality will soon sweep across the planet!

Dave Hodges is the Editor and Host of The Common Sense Show.

"By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; Second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest."

Confucius; thanks to the Libertarian Alliance Blog

BRITAIN USING PSYOPS DOMESTICALLY TO ENCOURAGE “CONFORMITY”

Derrick Broze; Activist Post

(This item mentions 'learned helplessness'. Seligman's work on this subject is well worth examination - Ed)

According to newly released documents published by The Intercept, a special unit with the British spy agency is involved in psychological operations, or PsyOps, and propaganda campaigns against groups it labels “extremist.”

The documents are the latest from the trove released by whistleblower Edward Snowden. The new documents show that the British Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) operates an elite unit known as the Joint Threat Research Intelligence Group (JTRIG). First revealed last year, JTRIG is known for using sexual “honey traps” to discredit targets, using denial-of-service attacks to shut down Internet chat rooms, and generally pushing propaganda on social media. Despite official claims that JTRIG is focused on international targets in Iran or Afghanistan, the latest information reveals that the unit was focusing on domestic activity within the U.K.—activity typically monitored by local police or domestic law enforcement agencies.

The Intercept reports:

An August 2009 JTRIG memo entitled ‘Operational Highlights’ boasts of ‘GCHQ’s first serious crime effects operation’ against a website that was identifying police informants and members of a witness protection program. Another operation investigated an Internet forum allegedly ‘used to facilitate and execute online fraud.’ The document also describes GCHQ advice provided ‘to assist the UK negotiating team on climate change.’

Particularly revealing is a fascinating 42-page document from 2011 detailing JTRIG’s activities. It provides the most comprehensive and sweeping insight to date into the scope of this unit’s extreme methods. Entitled ‘Behavioral Science Support for JTRIG’s Effects and Online HUMINT [Human Intelligence] Operations,’ it describes the types of targets on which the unit focuses, the psychological and behavioral research it commissions and exploits, and its future organizational aspirations. It is authored by a psychologist, Mandeep K. Dhami.

The documents (Behavioural Science Support for JTRIG’S Effects and Online HUMINT Operations, U.K. Ministry Stakeholder Relationships Spreadsheets) outline tactics employed by the agency, including ways to manipulate public opinion, understand human thinking and behavior, and encourage conformity. According to the documents, JTRIG “currently collaborates with other agencies,” including the Metropolitan police, the Security Service (MI5), the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), the Border Agency, Revenue and Customs (HMRC), and the National Public Order and Intelligence Unit (NPOIU). One of JTRIG’s objectives includes “monitoring ‘domestic extremist groups such as the English Defence League by conducting online HUMINT’; ‘denying, deterring or dissuading’ criminals and ‘hacktivists’; and ‘detering, disrupting or degrading online consumerism of stolen data or child porn.’”

One of the reports from 2011 outlines JTRIG’s tactics, including uploading YouTube videos containing “persuasive communications,” starting Facebook groups and Twitter accounts, and creating fake online personalities and supporters “to discredit, promote distrust, dissuade, deter, delay or disrupt.”

JTRIG also relies on an understanding of psychology which is “critical” to operations. The unit used social media campaigns to encourage and foster “obedience” and “conformity”. Section 3.6 Obedience, says compliance can be achieved by “engendering liking (attractiveness); instilling a sense of scarcity or secrecy; getting compliance to a small request at first.”

Essentially, the U.K. government is using an elite unit of spies to launch psychological operations on “extremists” by creating fake accounts and videos to promote conformity and obedience. However, the practice is not exclusive to the U.K.. PsyOps are used by nations around the world.

The 2002 edition of the Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms defines psychological operations as

integrated employment of the core capabilities of electronic warfare, computer network operations, psychological operations, military deception, and operations security, in concert with specified supporting and related capabilities, to influence, disrupt, corrupt or usurp adversarial human and automated decision making while protecting our own.

Since that time, PsyOp has fallen out of favor and the term is now officially known as Military Information Support Operations, or MISO. It is defined as

Planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals in a manner favorable to the originator's objectives.

The United States military was famously caught using psychological operations in 2011, when Rolling Stone reported that “the U.S. Army illegally ordered a team of soldiers specializing in ‘psychological operations’ to manipulate visiting American senators into providing more troops and funding for the war.”

Indeed, the operations seem crucial to the mission of the United States government (and totalitarian governments around the globe, for that matter). According to the leaked U.S. Special Forces counterinsurgency manual:

PSYOP [Psychological Operations] are essential to the success of PRC [Population & Resources Control]. For maximum effectiveness, a strong psychological operations effort is directed toward the families of the insurgents and their popular support base. The PSYOP aspect of the PRC program tries to make the imposition of control more palatable to the people by relating the necessity of controls to their safety and well-being. PSYOP efforts also try to create a favorable national or local government image and counter the effects of the insurgent propaganda effort.

Without a doubt, the U.S. government continues to label its own population “extremist” and is focusing its propaganda efforts domestically. The U.S. Special Forces Counterinsurgency Manual—as well as the new Snowden documents—should be required reading for all revolutionaries seeking to understand the tactics of the U.S. government. Only by educating ourselves can we hope to form a united, empowered front against government tyranny.

Derrick Broze writes for theAntiMedia.org, where this article first appeared.

AN INTERESTING UPDATE RE GOOGLE

Judy Hope; UK Column Newsletter

(This item has immediate interest in that Google have recently devised a new 'privacy' policy which they are now inviting user to sign up to as a condition of using the service. This 'privacy policy' is a piece of ultra-spin if ever there was one. What it boils down to is a carte blanche permission to use personal data in any way they see fit. So far as I know, this permission, once given, can never be withdrawn. I have refused their generous offer and am now using MSN. That, too, is probably not sufficient. As the author sums up ... any suggestions are welcome.

Jade Helm 15 is a series of military exercises being conducted in the USA, which ... various of the more outlandish theories aside ... certainly have a worrisome, if not ominous, tone to them. That said, I cannot discover who Jade Helm is or was ... any theories? - Ed)

Google's artificial intelligence (DeepMind), quantum computer D:Wave II, along with its Military Robots

and their link to DARPA, CIA, NASA, GCHQ and In-Q-tel - is more to do with 'a single global military governance'! For via DARPA, Google also links to quantum software called JADE which is an acronym for 'Joint Assistant For Development and Execution' - by BBN Technologies in conjunction with Raytheon (which also operates in the UK and all the big banks have shares in it, so that's a corporation to keep our eye on). That is where Google ties into military exercises on the ground such as Jade Helm in the US, but quite where Jade Helm is going at this point no one but the US government can say. However, it seems Google's idea of future security and wars will not be thought-out, nor carried out by humans, but by a quantum computer which controls unmanned drones, missiles and a vast array of robots! Now that is a step too far in the wrong direction for a private corporation of such magnitude.

We can also know for certain now why Google is gathering all our personal data and tracking everyone, it is no passive exercise on their part, nor restricted to the US! They are feeding all that data along with face and voice recognition (again all our data) into that same Jade program! We should be asking why, for I certainly have not given my consent to Google to gather and store my data, let alone use it for that purpose.

Then via Ray Kurzweil and Silicon Valley, Google is directly linked to Microsoft and that same program Jade runs on Windows NT Operating Systems and Sun workstations - another reason to ditch Windows and Google, for they are getting too cosy for comfort. Microsoft and Google are the world's leading internet giants and they helped to fund the Singularity University, which technology whiz-kid Ray Kurzweil co-founded. Singularity University, is devoted to exploring exponential technologies - like, "the moment in the future when men and machines will supposedly converge". It is all about Transhumanism, a real live Matrix.

They are up to no good, for apart from Google and DeepMind (AI) having attended Bilderberg 2015 - the same duo along with Bill Gate from Microsoft has hired Greek ruins on Sicily for top-secret strategy 'camp', Monday night the 27th and 28th of July! That raises the question what is Google, Deepmind and Microsoft up to in those Greek ruins? I doubt they would get much from the oracle of Delphi, but perhaps they have found the lost city of Atlantis on Google maps? So do they think they are the new super race which Hitler tried to find? Heaven help us if they do.....and they have the cheek to call us the extremists! Or maybe it is some occult ritual with the ancient Greek gods? Who knows what those dangerous playboys of technology are up to there, but they have not gone all that way for afternoon tea and pleasantries, that I do know. Any suggestions are welcome?

SOCIAL ENGINEERING 2.0 – GOOGLE ALGORITHM POSES “SERIOUS THREAT TO DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM”

Aaron Dykes; Activist Post

Did democracy just get downgraded (yet again)?

(Following from the previous item, more black stuff about Google. However it might be useful if the author would explain more detail about what SEME is and how it actually works - Ed)

Social engineering is now a dated practice, that has undoubtedly influenced nearly all our lives for the past century in ways that many of us perhaps don't notice.

I have a book titled Social Control from 1901, by Edward Alsworth Ross, that as the dust jacket explains, "formulated (and gave an answer to) the problems of the massive transformation of the American society by industrialization" where Ross "analyzed the dynamics of social change for modern societies in general and for America in particular." The book was a hit, and influenced economists, scholars, politicians and Progressives.

In the decades that followed, P.R. gurus like Edward Bernays and Ivy Lee pioneered the use of spin, advertising, propaganda, cross-branding and quite a few subtle tricks of undue persuasion to sell a consumerist society to the masses, and create a marriage of the mind between their clients and the people who would come to depend upon and identify with their products.

The BBC has an excellent mini-series called The Century Of The Self that explains the huge

impact that Edward Bernays and Madison Avenue had in transforming America. Using psychology to fuel market research and advertising to reach customers on a more potent level, society became populated with suggestible, obedient naive sheep, with critically thinking citizens fewer and further between. The success at penetrating the minds of the masses was so successful that the same approach used by advertisers – to target unconscious desires and emotional appeal – with politicians and campaigns for important public policy issues.

Fast forward to more recent times, where the public relations-launched official version of events has become a staple substitute for reality, airing 24 hours a day on sanitized news networks and appearing in every stale scripted soundbite uttered by officials and authorities in our lives. The phoniness is inescapable.

But...

Things are now so advanced, that Politico is blowing the whistle on how much influence technology has gained in its ability to steer a “democratic” society that believes in the illusion of choice, elections and voting.

A simple algorithm could allow Google to swing popular opinion on election candidates or issues by as much as 20%, and beyond according to this report. That’s more than enough to alter the outcome of democracy... and make our voices something of a moot point. According to Politico’s Robert Epstein:

Google’s search algorithm can easily shift the voting preferences of undecided voters by 20 percent or more—up to 80 percent in some demographic groups—with virtually no one knowing they are being manipulated...

Research I have been directing in recent years suggests that Google, Inc., has amassed far more power to control elections—indeed, to control a wide variety of opinions and beliefs—than any company in history has ever had.

There are at least three very real scenarios whereby Google—perhaps even without its leaders’ knowledge—could shape or even decide the election next year... the employees who constantly adjust the search giant’s algorithms are manipulating people every minute of every day. The adjustments they make increasingly influence our thinking—including, it turns out, our voting preferences.

What we call in our research the Search Engine Manipulation Effect (SEME) [...]

Because SEME is virtually invisible as a form of social influence, because the effect is so large and because there are currently no specific regulations anywhere in the world that would prevent Google from using and abusing this technique, we believe SEME is a serious threat to the democratic system of government.

And so there you have it. Of course, voting was already very much a farce. But even so, computers and Internet search engines are having new profound effects on our thinking and our opinions – enough to officially be declared a threat.

Google’s ranking system has been labeled unfair and discriminatory before, particularly since the massive company announced its plans to rank search results by perceived factual content rather than the number of relevant links. This opens the door wide to politicized “facts” and distorted truths that can be steered and controlled by sophisticated algorithms that can in turn steer society – even against its true will.

While all technology is neutral until it is deployed, we are all wading in enough bullsh*t as it is. We don’t need to go further into the fog.

It’s officially time to face it – we are a highly manipulated society, and the game is rigged. There is no voting. Only mega-donors, high tech organizers and algorithms. Welcome to the Techno-Oligarchical Collectivism, i.e. an oligarchy that rules the masses with experts and technology.

Read more:

Technology Enhances Control: The Impact of Science on Society

Two Major Psy Ops Documents You Must Read

Humanity in an all-out effort to save itself from government

Aaron Dykes is a co-founder of TruthstreamMedia.com. As a writer, researcher and video producer who has worked on numerous documentaries and investigative reports, he uses history as a guide to decode current events, uncover obscure agendas and contrast them with the dignity afforded individuals as recognized in documents like the Bill of Rights.

WHY YOU NEED TO COVER YOUR WEBCAM RIGHT NOW

Claire Bernish; Activist Post

Your computer's built-in webcam is easy to take for granted if you don't use it very often. But just because you don't take advantage of this amazing piece of technology — as a woman in Toronto was recently shocked to learn — doesn't mean it isn't being used.

Chelsea Clark's night watching Netflix with her boyfriend didn't seem like anything out of the ordinary — until pictures of the couple from that evening were sent to her Facebook account by the hacker who'd taken them from her webcam. Clark described this as “a terrifying notion. It was a really bizarre thing to receive those messages and it really took a second to be like, ‘OH MY GOD, that's what this means, that's the implication of receiving this message is someone was just watching us. We obviously had no idea it was taking place at the moment, but retroactively it was like a really, really deeply creepy feeling. It was very unnerving. I mean it does feel like there's just someone in your home with you.”

Hackread reported previously that hackers use Remote Access Trojan (RAT) to gain access to unsuspecting users' computers and record their activity, including webcam sessions. In a separate incident, a Canadian woman who had taken control of users' webcams was arrested for spying.

This RAT malware is easily obtained by young and novice hackers through those with more experience. Called “ratters” because of the name of the malware they most often use, these hackers take control of a victim's computer and electronic devices and then attack, according to Hackread.

Toronto Police are investigating Clark's case. An easy safeguard everyone can use to prevent their candid moments from being seen by prying eyes is to attach a small piece of any opaque tape, band aid, or other material over the webcam. In fact, if you haven't yet, maybe that should be the next thing you do.

Claire Bernish writes for theAntiMedia.org. Anti-Media Radio airs weeknights at 11pm Eastern/8pm Pacific. If you spot a typo, email edits@theantimedia.org. Claire Bernish joined Anti-Media as an independent journalist in May of 2015. Her topics of interest include social justice, police brutality, exposing the truth behind propaganda, and general government accountability. Born in North Carolina, she now lives in Ohio.

THE CONFISCATION OF BANK SAVINGS TO “SAVE THE BANKS”: THE DIABOLICAL BANK “BAIL-IN” PROPOSAL

Prof Michel Chossudovsky; Global Research

The Crisis in Greece: Will it result in a Haircut “Bail-in” as applied in 2013 in Cyprus? This article was first published by Global Research in April 2013.

(In this and the next item there are yet further warnings both of an impending further crash ... long expected .. and to those who hold any significant amount in bank accounts. Remember, when you pay into a bank account you cede effective ownership of your money to the bank - Ed)

Is the Cyprus Bank “Bail-in” a “dress rehearsal” for things to come? Is a “Savings Heist” in the European Union and North America envisaged which could result in the outright confiscation of bank

deposits?

In Cyprus, the entire payments system has been disrupted leading to the demise of the real economy. Pensions and wages are no longer paid. Purchasing power has collapsed. The population is impoverished. Small and medium sized enterprises are spearheaded into bankruptcy. Cyprus is a country with a population of one million.

What would happen if similar 'hair cut' procedures were to be applied in the U.S. or the European Union?

According to the Washington based Institute of International Finance (IIF) (right) which represents the consensus of the global financial establishment, "the Cyprus approach of hitting depositors and creditors when banks fail, would likely become a model for dealing with collapses elsewhere in Europe." (Economic Times, March 27, 2013).

It should be understood that prior to the Cyprus onslaught, the confiscation of bank deposits had been contemplated in several countries. Moreover, the powerful financial actors who triggered the bank crisis in Cyprus, are also the architects of the socially devastating austerity measures imposed in the European Union and North America.

Does Cyprus constitute a "model" or scenario?

Are there "lessons to be learned" by these powerful financial actors, to be applied elsewhere, at some later stage, in the Eurozone's banking landscape?

According to the Institute of International Finance (IIF), "hitting depositors" could become the "new normal" of this diabolical project, serving the interests of the global financial conglomerates. This new normal is endorsed by the IMF and the European Central Bank. According to the IIF which constitutes the banking elites mouthpiece, "Investors would be well advised to see the outcome of Cyprus... as a reflection of how future stresses will be handled." (quoted in Economic Times, March 27, 2013)

"Financial Cleansing". Bail-ins in the US and Britain

What is at stake is a process of "financial cleansing" whereby the "too big to fail banks" in Europe and North America (e.g. Citi, JPMorgan Chase, Goldman Sachs, et al) displace and destroy lesser financial institutions, with a view to eventually taking over the entire "banking landscape".

The underlying tendency at the national and global levels is towards the centralization and concentration of bank power, while leading to the dramatic slump of the real economy.

Bail ins have been envisaged in numerous countries. In New Zealand a "haircut plan" was envisaged as early as 1997 coinciding with Asian financial crisis.

There are provisions in both the UK and the US pertaining to the confiscation of bank deposits. In a joint document of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) and the Bank of England, entitled Resolving Globally Active, Systemically Important, Financial Institutions, explicit procedures were put forth whereby "the original creditors of the failed company", meaning the depositors of a failed bank, would be converted into "equity". (See Ellen Brown, It Can Happen Here: The Bank Confiscation Scheme for US and UK Depositors, Global Research, March 2013)

What this means is that the money confiscated from bank accounts would be used to meet the failed bank's financial obligations. In return, the holders of the confiscated bank deposits would become stockholders in a failed financial institution on the verge of bankruptcy. Bank savings would be transformed overnight into an illusive concept of capital ownership. The confiscation of savings would be adopted under the disguise of a bogus "compensation" in terms of equity.

What is envisaged is the application of a selective process of confiscation of bank deposits, with a view to collecting debt while also triggering the demise of "weaker" financial institutions. In the US, the procedure would bypass the provisions of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) which insures deposit holders against bank failures:

No exception is indicated for "insured deposits" in the U.S., meaning those under \$250,000, the deposits we thought were protected by FDIC insurance. This can hardly be an oversight, since it is the FDIC that is issuing the directive. The FDIC is an insurance company funded by premiums paid by private banks. The directive is called a "resolution process," defined elsewhere as a plan that "would be triggered in the event of the failure of an insurer . . ." The only mention of "insured deposits" is in connection with existing UK legislation, which the FDIC-BOE directive goes on to say is inadequate, implying that it needs to be modified or overridden. (Ibid)

Because depositors are provided with a bogus compensation, they are not eligible to the FDIC deposit insurance.

Canada's Deposit Confiscation Proposal

The most candid statement of confiscation of bank deposits as a means to "saving the banks" is formulated in a recently released document of the Canadian government entitled "Jobs, Growth and Long Term Prosperity: Economic Action Plan 2013". The latter was submitted to the House of Commons by Canada's Minister of Finance Jim Flaherty on March 21 as part of a so-called "pre-budget" proposal.

A short section of the 400 report entitled "Risk Management Framework for Domestic Systemically Important Banks" identifies bail-in procedure for Canada's chartered banks. The word confiscation is not mentioned. Financial jargon serves to obfuscate the real intent which essentially consists in stealing people's savings. Under the Canadian "Risk Management" project:

The Government proposes to implement a 'bail-in' regime for systemically important banks. This regime will be designed to ensure that, in the unlikely event that a systemically important bank depletes its capital, the bank can be recapitalized and returned to viability through the very rapid conversion of certain bank liabilities into regulatory capital." This will reduce risks for taxpayers. The Government will consult stakeholders on how best to implement a bail-in regime in Canada.

What this signifies is that if one or more banks (or credit unions) were obliged to "systemically deplete their capital" to meet the demands of their creditors, the banks would be recapitalized through "the conversion of certain bank liabilities into regulatory capital." The "certain bank liabilities" pertains (in technical jargon) to the money they owe their customers, namely to their depositors, whose bank accounts would be confiscated in exchange for shares (equity) in a "failing" banking institution.

"This will reduce risks for taxpayers" is a nonsensical statement. What this really means is that the government will not provide funding to compensate depositors who are victims of a failed banking institution, nor will it come to rescue of the failed institution.

Instead the depositors will be obliged to give up their savings. The money confiscated will then be used by the bank to meet their liabilities contracted with major financial creditor institutions. In other words, this entire scheme is "a safety net" for too big to fail banks, a mechanism which enables them as creditors to overshadow lesser banking institutions including credit unions, while precipitating either their collapse or their takeover.

Canada's Financial Landscape

The Risk Management Bail in initiative is of crucial significance for Canadians across the land: once it is adopted by the House of Commons as part of the budget package, the Bail-in procedures could be applied.

The Conservative government has a parliamentary majority. There is a good likelihood that the Economic Action Plan 2013" which includes the Bail-in procedure will be adopted. While Canada's Risk Management Framework intimates that Canada's banks "are at risk", particularly those which have accumulated large debts (as a result of derivative losses), a generalised across the board application of the "Bail in" is not contemplated.

The likely scenario in the foreseeable future is that Canada's "big five" banks, Royal Bank of Canada, TD Canada Trust, Scotiabank, Bank of Montreal and CIBC (all of which have powerful affiliates operating in the US financial landscape) will consolidate their position at the expense of lesser (provincial level) banks and financial institutions. The Government document intimates that the Bail-in could be used selectively "in the unlikely event that one [bank] becomes non-viable." What this suggests is that at least one or more of Canada's "lesser banks" could be the object of a bail-in. Such a procedure would inevitably lead to a greater concentration of bank capital in Canada, to the benefit of the larger financial conglomerates.

Displacement of Provincial Level Credit Unions and Cooperative Banks

There is an important network of over 300 provincial level credit unions and cooperative banks including the powerful Desjardins network in Quebec, the Vancouver City Savings Credit Union (Vancity) and the Coastal Capital Savings in British Columbia, Servus in Alberta, Meridian in Ontario, the caisses populaires in Ontario (affiliated to Desjardins), among many others, which could be the target of selective "Bail-in" operations.

In this context, what is likely to occur is a significant weakening of provincial level cooperative financial institutions, which have a governance relationship to their members (including representative

councils) and which, in the present context, offer an alternative to the Big Five chartered banks. According to recent data, there are more than 300 credit unions and caisses populaires in Canada which are members of the "Credit Union Central of Canada".

New Normal: International Standards Governing the Confiscation of Bank Deposits

Canada's Economic Action Plan 2013" acknowledges that the proposed Bail-in framework "will be consistent with reforms in other countries and key international standards". Namely, the proposed pattern of confiscating bank deposits as described in the Canadian government document is consistent with the model contemplated in the US and the European Union. This model is currently a "talking point" (behind closed doors) at various international venues regrouping central bank governors and finance ministers.

The regulatory agency involved in these multilateral consultations is the Financial Stability Board (FSB) based in Basel, Switzerland and hosted by the Bank for International Settlements (BIS). The FSB happens to be chaired by the governor of the Bank of Canada, Mark Carney, who was recently appointed by the British government to head the Bank of England starting in June 2013.

Mark Carney, as Governor of the Bank of Canada, was instrumental in shaping the provisions of the Bail-in for Canada's chartered banks. Before his career in central banking, he was a senior executive at Goldman Sachs, which has played a behind the scenes role in the implementation of the bank bailouts and austerity measures in the EU.

The FSB's mandate would be to coordinate the bail-in procedures, in liaison with the "national financial authorities" and "international standard setting bodies" which include the IMF and the BIS. It should come as no surprise: the deposit confiscation procedures in the UK, the US and Canada examined above are remarkably similar.

Bank "Bail-ins" vs. Bank "Bail-outs"

The bailouts are "rescue packages" whereby the government allocates a significant portion of State revenues in favor of failed financial institutions. The money is channeled from the coffers of the State to the banking conglomerates. In the US in 2008-2009, a total of \$1.45 trillion was channeled to Wall Street financial institutions as part of the Bush and Obama rescue packages. These bailouts were considered as a De facto government expenditure category. They required the implementation of austerity measures. Together with massive hikes in military expenditure, the bailouts were financed through drastic cuts in social programs including Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.

In contrast to the Bailout, which is funded from the public purse, the "Bail-in" requires the (in-house) confiscation of bank deposits. The bail-ins are implemented without the use of public funds. The regulatory mechanism is established by the central bank.

At the outset of Obama's first term in January 2009, a bank bailout of the order of \$750 billion was announced by Obama, which was added on to the 700 billion dollar bailout money allocated by the outgoing Bush administration under the Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP). The total of both programs was a staggering 1.45 trillion dollars to be financed by the US Treasury. (It should be understood that the actual amount of cash financial "aid" to the banks was significantly larger than \$1.45 trillion. In addition to this amount defence allocations to fund Obama's war economy (FY 2010) was a staggering \$739 billion. Namely the bank bailouts plus defence combined (\$2189 billion) eat up almost the totality of the federal revenues which in FY 2010 amounted to \$2381 billion.

Concluding remarks

What is occurring is that the bank bailouts are no longer functional. At the outset of Obama's Second term, the coffers of the state are empty. The austerity measures have reached a deadlock.

The bank bail-ins are now being contemplated instead of the "bank bailouts".

The lower and middle income groups which are invariably indebted will not be the main target. The appropriation of bank deposits would essentially target the upper middle and upper income groups which have significant bank deposits. The second target will be the bank accounts of small and medium sized firms.

This transition is part of the evolution of the global economic crisis and the impasse underlying the application of the austerity measures.

The purpose of the global financial actors is to wipe out competitors, consolidate and centralize bank power and exert an overriding control over the real economy, the institutions of government and the military.

Even if the bail-ins were to be regulated and applied selectively to a limited number of failing

financial institutions, credit unions, etc, the announcement of a program of confiscation of deposits could potentially lead to a generalized “run on the banks”. In this context, no banking institution would be regarded as safe.

The application of Bail-in procedures involving deposit confiscation (even when applied locally or selectively) would create financial havoc. It would interrupt the payments process. Wages would no longer be paid. Purchasing power would collapse. Money for investment in plant and equipment would no longer be forthcoming. Small and medium sized businesses would be precipitated into bankruptcy.

The application of a Bail-In in the EU or North America would initiate a new phase of the global financial crisis, a deepening of the economic depression, a greater centralization of banking and finance, increased concentration of corporate power in the real economy to the detriment of regional and local level enterprises. In turn, an entire global banking network characterized by electronic transactions (which govern deposits, withdrawals, etc), –not to mention money transactions on the stock and commodity markets– could potentially be the object of significant disruptions of a systemic nature.

The social consequences would be devastating. The real economy would plummet as a result of the collapse in the payments system. The potential disruptions in the functioning of an integrated global monetary system could result in a renewed global economic meltdown as well as a drop off in international commodity trade.

It is important that people across the land, in the European Union and North America, nationally and internationally, forcefully act against the diabolical ploys of their governments –acting on behalf of dominant financial interests– to implement a selective process of bank deposit confiscation.

WHY IS THE EU FORCING EUROPEAN NATIONS TO ADOPT ”BAIL-IN” LEGISLATION BY THE END OF THE SUMMER?

Michael Snyder; Activist Post

Are they expecting something to happen? As you will read about below, the European Union says that any nation within the EU that does not enact “bail-in” legislation within the next two months will face legal action. The countries that are being threatened in this manner include Italy and France. If you fast forward two months from this moment, that puts us in early August. So clearly the European Union wants everything to be squared away by the end of the summer. Is there a reason for this? Are they anticipating that something really bad will happen in September or thereafter? Why such a rush?

We all remember what happened when major banks were “bailed out” during the last financial crisis. A tremendous amount of taxpayer money was given to the big banks to help prop them up so they wouldn’t fail. This greatly upset a lot of people. Well, when the next great financial crisis hits Europe, banks are not going to get “bailed out” this time. Instead, we are going to see “bail-ins”.

So precisely what is a “bail-in”?

Essentially, what happens is that wealth is transferred from the “stakeholders” in the bank to the bank itself in order to keep it solvent. That means that creditors and shareholders could potentially lose everything if a major bank in Europe fails. And if their “contributions” are not enough to save the bank, those holding private bank accounts will have to take “haircuts” just like we saw in Cyprus. In fact, the travesty that we witnessed in Cyprus is being used as a “template” for much of the new legislation that is being enacted all over Europe.

The bottom line is that not a single bank account in the European Union will ever be truly safe again.

By this time, everyone in the EU was already supposed to have enacted “bail-in” legislation, but some countries in Europe have been dragging their feet. So now the European Commission (the executive body of the European Union) is giving them a hard deadline. According to Reuters, any

nation that has not passed “bail-in” legislation within two months will be subject to legal action...

The European Commission on Thursday gave France, Italy and nine other EU countries two months to adopt new EU rules on propping up failed banks or face legal action.

The rules, known as the bank recovery and resolution directive (BRRD), seek to shield taxpayers from having to bail out troubled lenders, forcing creditors and shareholders to contribute to the rescue in a process known as “bail-in”.

So which countries are being threatened? It turns out that there are 11 of them. The following comes from Mark O’Byrne...

The article “EU regulators tell 11 countries to adopt bank bail-in rules” reported how 11 countries are under pressure from the EC and had yet “to fall in line”. The countries were Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Sweden, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, France and Italy. France and Italy are two countries who are regarded as having particularly fragile banking systems.

But why only two months to get this done?

When I was in law school, I took an entire course on European Union law. Normally, things in Europe take a very long time to get done. It is out of character for the European Commission to rush to get something like this done so quickly. Could they be anticipating that this legislation will need to be put into use very soon?

What we do know is that bonds in Europe have already been crashing, and it appears that the European Central Bank is starting to lose control over European financial markets.

And we also know that there has been a sustained bank run in Greece. In fact, it is being reported that 700 million euros were pulled out of Greek banks on Friday alone. Personally, I think that anyone that still has any money in Greek banks is absolutely insane. Some day in the not too distant future, Greek bank account holders are going to be in for a “haircut” just like we saw in Cyprus. The following comes from Zero Hedge...

While the Greek government believes it may have won the battle, if not the war with Europe, the reality is that every additional day in which Athens does not have a funding backstop, be it the ECB (or the BRIC bank), is a day which brings the local banking system to total collapse.

As a reminder, Greek banks already depends on the ECB for some €80.7 billion in Emergency Liquidity Assistance which was about 60% of total deposits in the Greek financial system as of April 30. In other words, they are woefully insolvent and only the day to day generosity of the ECB prevents a roughly 40% forced “bail in” deposit haircut a la Cyprus.

But of course Greece will only be just the beginning. In the end, I expect major banks to fail all over Europe as we head into the greatest financial crisis that Europe has ever seen. Bank account holders all over the continent could end up having to take “haircuts”, and that would just make the coming deflationary cycle in Europe a lot worse.

And I actually expect events in Europe to start accelerating greatly by the end of this calendar year. Apparently the top dogs in the European Union are also concerned about the immediate future, because they are rushing to get “bail-in” legislation passed in every nation in the EU by the end of the summer.

Fortunately, the United States has not moved in a similar direction – at least not yet. It is always possible that during an “emergency situation” anything can happen. We saw that in Cyprus. But for the moment, European bank accounts appear to be more vulnerable than U.S. bank accounts.

Not that any of us should have much confidence in the major banks in the United States either. Since the end of the last financial crisis they have become more reckless than ever. At this point, the six largest banks in this country collectively have 278 trillion dollars of exposure to derivatives. A day is coming when the “too big to fail” banks will actually start failing, and that will absolutely

cripple our economy.

We are moving into a time of great financial instability. During such a time, one of the keys will be to not have all of your eggs in one basket. That way it will be more difficult for your wealth to be wiped out by a single event. So what other advice would you give to people that are wondering how to deal with the coming global banking crisis?

This article first appeared here at the Economic Collapse Blog. Michael Snyder is a writer, speaker and activist who writes and edits his own blogs The American Dream and Economic Collapse Blog.

THE GREEK COUP: LIQUIDITY AS A WEAPON OF COERCION

Ellen Brown; Nation of Change; Web of Debt; Op-Ed

All banks need a credit line with the central bank in order to be part of the payments system in modern banking. So was cutting this off actually blackmail the Greek government couldn't refuse?

"My father made him an offer he couldn't refuse. Luca Brasi held a gun to his head and my father assured him that either his brains, or his signature, would be on the contract."

— The Godfather (1972)

In the modern global banking system, all banks need a credit line with the central bank in order to be part of the payments system. Choking off that credit line was a form of blackmail the Greek government couldn't refuse.

Former Greek finance minister Yanis Varoufakis is now being charged with treason for exploring the possibility of an alternative payment system in the event of a Greek exit from the euro. The irony of it all was underscored by Raúl Ilargi Meijer, who opined in a July 27th blog:

"The fact that these things were taken into consideration doesn't mean Syriza was planning a coup If you want a coup, look instead at the Troika having wrestled control over Greek domestic finances. That's a coup if you ever saw one."

Let's have an independent commission look into how on earth it is possible that a cabal of unelected movers and shakers gets full control over the entire financial structure of a democratically elected eurozone member government. By all means, let's see the legal arguments for this.

So how was that coup pulled off? The answer seems to be through extortion. The European Central Bank threatened to turn off the liquidity that all banks – even solvent ones – need to maintain their day-to-day accounting balances. That threat was made good in the run-up to the Greek referendum, when the ECB did turn off the liquidity tap and Greek banks had to close their doors. Businesses were left without supplies and pensioners without food. How was that apparently criminal act justified? Here is the rather tortured reasoning of ECB President Mario Draghi at a press conference on July 16:

"There is an article in the [Maastricht] Treaty that says that basically the ECB has the responsibility to promote the smooth functioning of the payment system. But this has to do with . . . the distribution of notes, coins. So not with the provision of liquidity, which actually is regulated by a different provision, in Article 18.1 in the ECB Statute: "In order to achieve the objectives of the ESCB [European System of Central Banks], the ECB and the national central banks may conduct credit operations with credit institutions and other market participants, with lending based on adequate collateral." This is the Treaty provision. But our operations were not monetary policy operations, but ELA [Emergency Liquidity Assistance] operations, and so they are regulated by a separate agreement, which makes explicit reference to the necessity to have sufficient collateral. So, all in all, liquidity provision has never been unconditional and unlimited."

In a July 23rd post on Naked Capitalism, Nathan Tankus calls this "a truly shocking statement." Why? Because all banks rely on their central banks to settle payments with other banks. "If the smooth functioning of the payments system is defined as the ability of depository institutions to clear

payments,” says Tankus, “the central bank must ensure that settlement balances are available at some price.”

How the Payments System Works

The role of the central bank in the payments system is explained by the Bank for International Settlements like this:

“One of the principal functions of central banks is to be the guardian of public confidence in money, and this confidence depends crucially on the ability of economic agents to transmit money and financial instruments smoothly and securely through payment and settlement systems. . . . [C]entral banks provide a safe settlement asset and in most cases they operate systems which allow for the transfer of that settlement asset.”

Internationally before 1971, this “settlement asset” was gold. Later, it became electronic “settlement balances” or “reserves” maintained at the central bank. Today, when money travels by check from Bank A to Bank B, the central bank settles the transfer simply by adjusting the banks’ respective reserve balances, subtracting from one and adding to the other.

Checks continue to fly back and forth all day. If a bank’s reserve account comes up short at the end of the day, the central bank treats it as an automatic overdraft in the bank’s reserve account, effectively lending the bank the money in the form of electronic “liquidity” until the overdraft can be cleared. The bank can cure the deficit by attracting new deposits or by borrowing from another bank with excess reserves; and if the whole system is short of reserves, the central bank creates more to maintain the liquidity of the system.

The most dramatic exercise of this liquidity function was seen after the banking crisis of 2008, when credit was frozen and banks had largely stopped lending to each other. The US Federal Reserve then stepped in and advanced over \$16 trillion to financial institutions through the TAF (Term Asset Facility), the TALF (Term Asset-backed Securities Loan Facility), and similar facilities, at near-zero interest. Toxic unmarketable assets were converted into “good collateral” so the banks could remain solvent and keep their doors open.

Liquidity as a Tool of Coercion

That is how the Fed sees its role, but the ECB evidently has other ideas about this liquidity tool. Whether a country’s banks are allowed to “access monetary policy operations” is seen by the ECB not as mandatory but as discretionary with the central bank. And as a condition of that access, if a country’s bonds are “below investment grade,” the country must be under an IMF program — meaning it must subject itself to forced austerity measures. According to ECB Vice President Constâncio at the same press conference:

“[W]hen a country has a rating which is below the investment grade which is the minimum, then to access monetary policy operations, it has to have a waiver. And the waiver is granted if there are two conditions. The first condition is that the country must be under a programme with the EU and IMF; and second, we have to assess that there is credible compliance with such a programme.”

Liquidity is provided only on “adequate collateral” — usually government bonds. But whether the bonds are “adequate” is not determined by their market price. Rather, political concessions are demanded. The government must sell off public assets, slash public services, lay off public workers, and subject its fiscal policies to oversight by unelected bureaucrats who can dictate every line item in the national budget. Tankus observes:

“Europe now has a system where liquidity and insolvency problems can occur and can be deliberately generated (at least in part) by the central bank. Then the Troika can force that country into an “IMF program” if it wants to continue having a functioning banking system. Alternatively, the central bank can choose to simply “suspend convertibility” to the unit of account [i.e. cut off the supply of Euros] and force the write down of deposits [haircuts and bail-ins] until the banks are solvent again.”

Pushed to the Cliff by the Financial Mafia

Were liquidity and insolvency problems intentionally generated in Greece's case, as Tankus suggests? Let's review.

First there was the derivatives scheme sold to Greece by Goldman Sachs in 2001, which nearly doubled the nation's debt by 2005.

Then there was the bank-induced credit crisis of 2008, when the ECB coerced Greece to bail out its insolvent private banks, throwing the country itself into bankruptcy.

This was followed in late 2009 by the intentional overstatement of Greece's debt by a Eurostat agent who was later tried criminally for it, triggering the first bailout and accompanying austerity measures.

The Greek prime minister was later replaced with an unelected technocrat, former governor of the Bank of Greece and later vice president of the ECB, who refused a debt restructuring and instead oversaw a second massive bailout and further austerity measures. An estimated 90% of the bailout money went right back into the coffers of the banks.

In December 2014, Goldman Sachs warned the Greek Parliament that central bank liquidity could be cut off if the Syriza Party were elected. When it was elected in January, the ECB made good on the threat, cutting bank liquidity to a trickle.

When Prime Minister Tsipras called a public referendum in July at which the voters rejected the brutal austerity being imposed on them, the ECB shuttered the banks.

The Greek government was thus broken Mafia-style at the knees, until it was forced to abandon its national sovereignty and watch its public treasures sold off piece by piece. Suspicious minds might infer that this was a calculated plot designed from the beginning to throw Greece's prized assets onto the auction block, a hostile takeover and asset stripping for the benefit of those well-heeled entities in a position to purchase them, including the very banks, hedge funds and speculators instrumental in driving up Greek debt and destroying the economy.

No Sovereignty Without Control Over Currency and Credit

In the taped conference call for which Yanis Varoufakis is currently facing treason charges, he exposed the trap that eurozone countries are now in. It seems there is virtually no legal way to break free of the euro and the domination of the troika. The government has no access to the critical data files of its own banks, which are controlled by the ECB. Varoufakis said this should alarm every EU government. As Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King warned in 1935:

"Once a nation parts with the control of its currency and credit, it matters not who makes the nation's laws. Usury, once in control, will wreck any nation."

For a nation to regain control of its currency and credit, it needs a central bank with a mandate to serve the interests of the nation. Banking should be a public utility, serving the economy and the people.

*Ellen Brown is an attorney, author, and president of the Public Banking Institute. In *Web of Debt*, her latest of eleven books, she shows how the power to create money has been usurped from the people, and how we can get it back. Her websites are <http://webofdebt.com> and <http://ellenbrown.com>.*

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