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201001 OBITER DICTA: NEW YEAR 2010

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Steven Alan Samson

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http://www.americanthinker.com/2010/01/2010_will_be_worse.html

Here is a not very cheery reminder to ring in the New Year: We are skating on dangerously thin financial ice. It might be better to say that we are already "swimming with the fishes."

With every new stimulus package and pork barrel enterprise, we are lading ever more crushing debts on an already failing economy. We are in virtual freefall. This may not appear to be the case but only because of the magic of fiscal and monetary policy. Ben Bernanke, the wizard of Washington, is *Time's* Man of the Year. Of course, other countries with deeper pockets have been recruited to enable the drunken sailors in our Tidal Basin to continue their binge before proceeding to roll them. I am not given to chiliastic speculation, but I cannot help but note our country's financial resemblance to the great city of Babylon.

As should be evident from this article, our mounting and unsustainable debt burden far exceeds \$100 trillion. The pseudonymous author, "Monty Pelerin," draws upon "Austrian" economics and tips his hat to the Mont Pelerin Society, which was organized in the late 1940s. The initial meeting had been scheduled a decade earlier for the purpose of discussing Walter Lippmann's *The Good Society*. That meeting was canceled due to the deteriorating international political situation. Is it too late to try again? Unfortunately, it should be evident that storm clouds are again gathering on the horizon.

Most of this debt, by the way, will be repudiated. Sooner or later. Perhaps the sooner the better. We will be foreclosed upon in part by our own government and in part by foreign collection agents who are increasingly driving our national and international political agenda. Imagine a future (if not a present) in which the Saudis, Japanese, Chinese, Venezuelans, and Europeans all fight to control the wheel of the Good Ship Titanic.

Ponzi schemes always leave someone holding the bag. As usual, the taxpayer is the ultimate fall guy. Yesterday I watched the video of an Australian newscast about a terrorist who for the last nineteen years has been on welfare, collecting over \$100,000 a year to support himself and his family. Even Karl Marx had nothing good to say about what he called the *Lumpenproletariat*. H. G. Wells, equally disdainful, was content simply to marginalize what he called "the abyss," keeping it as a hot-bed of sterile immorality. Imperial Rome also bred its own mobs, the very material out of which ambitious demagogues built their careers. Taylor Caldwell's *Pillar of Iron* tells the tale brilliantly. Today we are breeding the very opposite of Al Capp's cuddly little Schmoo: The terrorist quard of the state.

Our elected and appointed officials have all failed us. Since 1913 few have understood the Constitution they are sworn to uphold. All of our current federal officials have, by default, violated the oaths of their office in the process of

selling off the birthright of our national sovereignty -- and for what? A cornucopia of IOUs! All of these backsliders and their enablers are in need of the saving grace of a constitutional restoration. An old adage has it "that Providence . . . watches over fools, drunkards, and Americans." But can this be the case when the fools and drunkards are running the United States of America?

http://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2010/01/obamacare_author_muses_about_p.html

More than two decades ago Otto Scott wrote a piece entitled "Why the Ancients Hanged Do-Gooders," basing it on an incident related in Livy's *History of Rome*.

The particular do-gooder represented in the piece attached above did not get his well-deserved "comeuppance," but this otherwise pedestrian account of a tawdry crime committed by the whiny ex-con spouse of a current congresswoman from New York can serve the larger purpose: that of enhancing by way of contrast a piece of constitutional wisdom set down by an American journalist 72 years ago. Gareth Garrett's "The Revolution Was" is worth reading and re-reading but, in light of the "Monty Pelerin" piece published at the same site today, I have decided to pass along the opening and closing paragraphs, which I have my students read. The entire essay is available on-line at the Mises Institute.

What we must understand is that our body politic is now riddled with cancerous lesions that have had decades to take root. What sort of statesmanship would it take to now undo the damage? We must start with the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares. Our idols must be cast out. From Hebrews 4:11-12 we should take heed and cease our striving. As the King James Bible puts it: "it is hard for thee to kick at the pricks" (Acts 9:5).

THE REVOLUTION WAS (1938)

There are those who still think they are holding the pass against a revolution that may be coming up the road. But they are gazing in the wrong direction. The revolution is behind them. It went by in the Night of Depression, singing songs to freedom.

There are those who have never ceased to say very earnestly, "Something is going to happen to the American form of government if we don't watch out." These were the innocent disarmers. Their trust was in words. They had forgotten their Aristotle. More than 2,000 years ago he wrote of what can happen within the form, when "one thing takes the place of another, so that the ancient laws will remain, while the power will be in the hands of those who have brought about revolution in the state."

Worse outwitted were those who kept trying to make sense of the New Deal from the point of view of all that was implicit in the American scheme, charging it therefore with contradiction, fallacy, economic ignorance, and general incompetence to govern.

But it could not be so embarrassed, and all that line was wasted, because, in the first place, it never intended to make that kind of sense, and secondly, it took off from nothing that was implicit in the American scheme. [Think national health care, cap and trade, Climategate, and countless other New Deal avatars].

It took off from a revolutionary base. The design was European. Regarded from the point of view of revolutionary technique, it made perfect sense. Its meaning was revolutionary and it had no other. For what it meant to do, it was from the beginning consistent in principle, resourceful, intelligent, masterly in workmanship, and it made not one mistake.

The test came in the first one hundred days.

The first of all objections to the New Deal is neither political nor economic. It is moral.

Revolution by scientific technique is above morality. It makes no distinction between means that are legal and means that are illegal. There was a legal and honest way to bring about a revolution, even to tear up the Constitution, abolish it, or write a new one in its place. Its own words and promises meant as little to the New Deal as its oath to support the Constitution. In a letter to a member of the House Ways and Means Committee, urging a new law he wanted, the president said, "I hope your committee will not permit doubt as to Constitutionality, however reasonable, to block the suggested legislation." Its cruel and cynical suspicion of any motive but its own was a reflection of something it knew about itself. Its voice was the voice of righteousness; its methods therefore were more dishonest than the simple ways of corruption.

"When we see a lot of framed timbers, different portions of which we know have been gotten out at different times and places, and by different workmen ... and when we see those timbers joined together, and see that they exactly make the frame of a house or a mill, all the tenons and mortises exactly fitting, and all the lengths and proportions of the different pieces exactly adapted to their respective places, and not a piece too many or too few ... in such a case we find it impossible not to believe that . . . all understood one another from the beginning, and all worked upon a common plan or draft, drawn up before the first blow was struck." - Abraham Lincoln, deducing from objective evidence the blueprint of a political plot to save the institution of slavery

<http://www.debka.com/article.php?aid=1414>

My New Year's resolution: To study the prophets and continue to vent spleen at the knaves who rule this rabble. Except for the expense, I would be tempted to subscribe to this Israeli intelligence website. Lately, *Newsweek* has been indulging in wistful speculation about what America would be like if Al Gore had been inaugurated early in 2001, as the press had done in November. But why not wax sentimental about the inauspicious election of John Kerry while we are at it? Read the attached and spare yourself any regrets about "what might have been." We are living "what might have been" -- as the bell tolls in the here and now. Soon enough we may disprove Karl Marx's old saw. History indeed repeats itself - - but with Hillary care, first as farce and now as tragedy. Call it "gilding the skunk lily."

<http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/armed-tsa-agents-threaten-travel-journalist/?print=1>

Here is another case of the TSA closing the proverbial barn door after the livestock have escaped. People are fighting and dying for a free society in Iran, but do we lift a finger to help or comfort them? Indeed, do we even have the least idea how to defend our freedoms at home? This last point is driven home by the author of this piece when it becomes clear what the TSA wanted spiked. Imagine calling what happened in Detroit "an act of terrorism"?

But our real problem is not with government agencies that fail to speak truthfully or act boldly. We wards of the state have long since perfected the Aesopian language of Rousseau's foundlings. Ours is the quiescence of the guilty conscience, the agreeability of those who have consented.

No, our real problem clarifies what all the sound and fury signifies. It is that we suffer "a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord" (Amos 8:11).

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/blogs/beltway-confidential/Who-was-behind-the-September-2001-anthrax-attacks-80482982.html>

Perhaps this is a fitting note with which to bracket a decade that the British have called the Noughties. Once again the conventional wisdom has been overturned. Yesterday's proven fact has proved to be all for naught. And will science's reputation for veracity ever recover from the Climategate revelations?

<http://biggovernment.com/2010/01/01/the-most-underreported-stories-of-2009/>

Here is a review of the 2009 stories that were better covered in London than by the American press. Since so much of our economy is being outsourced these days, why not journalism? Perhaps I had better add the Times of India to my regular reading for the New Year. With the Spengler column in semi-retirement, I find myself turning less frequently to the *Asia Times*.

Saturday, January 2

Here is another column. Perhaps I am becoming a columnist without portfolio.

http://townhall.com/columnists/CharlesKrauthammer/2010/01/01/war_what_war?page=full

Just as Rebecca West once wrote about *The New Meaning of Treason*, so Charles Krauthammer now reveals the new meaning of asymmetric warfare. The United States has now become not only a "city of refuge" for huddled masses yearning to be free but also a gigantic King's X for terrorists who manage to set foot on our soil.

Krauthammer, who studied and practiced medicine, is good at describing the etiology of a new disease that has lately arrived on these shores. Like the recent strain of H1N1 it appears to bear a strong resemblance to variants that caused earlier epidemics, such as the "Spanish flu" of 1918. What is lacking with this latest disease is a name. But a name denotes a presence. What if the point of something is its absence? The "man with no name" became our first great anti-hero in Sergio Leone's spaghetti westerns.

What is in a name? Perhaps in this case the refusal to give it a name is one of the symptoms of the disease, just as the refusal to think ill of one's captors gave us the "Stockholm syndrome" in the 1970s. Of course, any disease worthy of that designation effectively captures the defenses of the body and turns them into enemy agents. Our "disease with no name" does the same. It renders our leaders mute in the face of our enemies and, as a bonus, neuters them, much like *Les Rois fainéants* (do-nothing kings) of the Merovingian dynasty. Our leaders appear to be in the grip of some paralysis of the survival instinct.

Hence the new asymmetric warfare. Our president *fainéant* is the new anti-Reagan. Reagan's view of the Cold War endgame was simple: "We win, they lose." But in the throes of the Detroit syndrome, our leaders cannot win for losing. They offer a new "politics of friendship." If you allegedly attack our cities, they will prosecute you as criminal suspects -- "innocent until proven guilty" -- and, by enrolling you among American citizens, accord you with all the rights and privileges appertaining thereunto.

Such is the grace of our latest *lèse-majesté* against the Constitution. It may sound magnanimous but that is only due to the magnitude of the disease. It distorts its victims' perceptions. Every terrorist is magnified into a son of Anak: "As we were in our own sight grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight" (Num. 13:33). This Detroit syndrome is merely the latest strain of revolution envy. Through their inertia, our armchair-revolutionary leaders have rendered us naked among our enemies.

As Charles Krauthammer puts it: "a government that refuses to admit that we are at war, indeed, refuses even to name the enemy -- jihadist is a word banished from the Obama lexicon -- turns laxity into a governing philosophy."

<http://garynorth.com/public/5899.cfm>

The Huffington Post misidentifies the real "fences" but has the right idea: Boycott the recipients of our misappropriated tax dollars. We have an elected and appointed political class that would tarnish the name even of the old Merovingian monarchs: *Les Rois fainéants*. Let us start bailing out of our failing state-owned enterprises and return to a free market. I would take one honest George Bailey over all of the Potters that the Tidal Basin can spit out onto our shores. Watch the video and pass it along.

http://www.americanthinker.com/2010/01/expedite_nobel_peace_prize_to.html

Prisoners of conscience may be found wherever the spirit of liberty still presides, even if it is only in the hearts of isolated individuals. We need to honor the heroes among us rather than saddle them with our collective sins and frog-march them into prison or exile. I have had the sons of daughters of such outcasts and murder victims in my classes. In recent years I have been corresponding with at least three exiles. Such people may be the salt of the earth but, although far from having lost their savor, they are still being ground underfoot. America must return to its true calling to be a beacon of hope and a reminder that we are all made in the image and likeness of God.

http://www.mlive.com/news/detroit/index.ssf/2009/12/flight_253_passenger_kurt_hask.html

Here is an eyewitness account of the flight boarding in Amsterdam that raises issues about evidence and the specter of conspiracy.

http://palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc_id=1526

These are the people our political leaders want to create a new Palestinian state with its capital in Jerusalem. Where are the demonstrators chanting: Hey, Hey, Dalal Mughrabi, how many kids have you killed today?

http://atlasshrugs2000.typepad.com/atlas_shrugs/2010/01/father-of-northwest-ball-bomber-integral-to-rise-of-sharia-wahabbism-in-kenya-.html

I like visiting the Atlas Shrugged site and should do so more frequently. I had already learned about the attempted assassination yesterday of one of the Danish cartoonists (also featured in this issue of Atlas Shrugged), but this piece includes a selection from a Ghanaian site that implicates the Detroit terrorist's Nigerian father in radical Islamic politics in Kenya. When will it ever sink into people's skulls that there is a new International? An International of globe-trotting jet-set jihadis.