

Painting the White House Red

Radical globalist ideology has possessed the occupant of the Oval Office and is bringing about the revolution Communism never could.

By John Laughland

IT IS OFTEN OVERLOOKED that George Orwell's *Animal Farm* predicted not only the horrors of communism but also the end of the Cold War. At the end of the fable, the farmer, who symbolizes the capitalist West, returns to the farm and plays cards with the pigs, who symbolize communism. The shivering creatures outside, symbolizing ordinary people, "looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which."

We normally think of the end of the Cold War as having marked the unambiguous victory of capitalism over communism. But has Orwell's prediction proved right, and has there instead been a convergence of the two? We hear much about how former communist states are Westernizing, but has this process been bought with the price of our own subjection to what used to be communist ideals?

Take revolution, for instance, a key Marxist concept. Fifteen years ago, it still carried—at least for conservatives—the negative connotations of "Bolshevik," "sexual," and "French." Now, by contrast, George W. Bush has elevated the promotion of "a global democratic revolution" to the central goal of U.S. foreign policy. In his second inaugural speech, he announced nothing less than a program of political emancipation for the whole planet—he said that America was pursuing "the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our

world." Trotsky would have been proud.

Revolution has now become a completely positive word in the Western political lexicon. Recent years have seen a spate of "people power" revolutions, especially in Eastern Europe. Perhaps authoritarian regimes, rather like the walls of Jericho, really are brought tumbling down by the chanting of a John Lennon song, but it often turns out that things were not as spontaneous as was claimed at the time. In the case of the Orange Revolution in Ukraine last year, it is now a matter of public record that the U.S. poured huge sums into the campaign of Viktor Yushchenko and that the Ukrainian KGB was also heavily involved on the Americans' side, playing a key role in stage-managing the whole charade. Nonetheless, the myth of revolution now wields such a strong hold over the Western mind that, with the compulsiveness of children who beg to be retold the same story, we regularly accept these fairy tales at face value.

Prior to the fall of communism, "revolution" and "people power" were considered just leftish propaganda. We dismissed the Soviet regime's appeal to its own founding event as grotesque political kitsch, masking the sinister reality of power machinations behind the scenes. Now we seem to have become more naïve and have started to take two-dimensional archetypes about "the people" seriously. This is because the West has fallen in love with the myth of

revolution. Chairman Mao once said, "Marxism consists of a thousand truths but they all boil down to one sentence: 'It is right to rebel.'" That sentiment now forms a central tenet of Western political orthodoxy and U.S. foreign policy.

George W. Bush is not, of course, a closet Marxist. But many of his closest advisors, especially the neoconservatives, do have post-Trotskyite backgrounds. The original Marxist plan was for the socialist revolution to engulf the whole planet, and this plan was embraced by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky. It famously came up against the buffers of Stalin's alternative proposal to build socialism in one country first. In exile, Trotsky kept the idea of world revolution going by setting up the Fourth International in 1938. Within two years, Irving Kristol—the man who was later to be the founding father of the neoconservative movement that so dominates the Bush administration—joined it. Irving Kristol never renounced or condemned his Trotskyite past: in 1983, he wrote that he was still proud of it. Likewise, in 1996, Michael Ledeen of the American Enterprise Institute—one of the leading ideologues of the war on terror—coined the phrase "global democratic revolution" in the subtitle of a book in which he attacked Bill Clinton for being a "counter-revolutionary." The book's title, *Freedom Betrayed*, is an obvious allusion to Trotsky's own 1938 account of his break with Stalin, *The Revolution Betrayed*.

Indeed, when President George H.W. Bush enthusiastically proclaimed the New World Order in his speech to Congress on Sept. 11, 1990 he was in fact using a phrase that had re-entered the political lexicon in the late 1980s purely thanks to Soviet leaders. Bush senior was eagerly heralding the imminent enforcement of international law—specifically, a United Nations Security Council resolution—by military might. “We’re now in sight of a United Nations that performs as envisioned by its founders,” he said. But this was exactly what the USSR wanted, as it struggled to disentangle itself from its Stalinist heritage. On Dec. 7, 1988, Mikhail Gorbachev—who once said he was going back to Marx and Lenin after the excesses of Stalinism in the same way as modern Catholics were going back to Jesus and the Bible after Richelieu and Mazarin—used the phrase “new world order” when he called for an end to the division of the world economy into different blocs, on the grounds that there was in reality only one world economy, and for the United Nations to assume a central role in world peacekeeping.

Although we normally think of the administration of George W. Bush, and the neoconservatives who surround him, as being viscerally hostile to the United Nations, the fact is that the 1991 Gulf War of Bush senior and the 2003 one of Bush junior are seamlessly linked. Both father and son justified their respective wars in the name of the very same United Nations Security Council resolutions, George W. Bush most recently in his speech on Veterans Day. Bush junior, in other words, adheres to the same internationalist dogma as his father. He has repeatedly said that the purpose of the Iraq War was to save the UN’s credibility: on Nov. 19, 2003 in London, Bush said, “America and Great Britain have done, and will do, all in their power to prevent the

United Nations from solemnly choosing its own irrelevance and inviting the fate of the League of Nations.” He said he was determined that the UN become an instrument of “our collective security.” In saying this, Bush junior was expressing the same one-world, pro-UN sentiment that Gorbachev’s foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, had advanced in his seminal speech to the 42nd session of the General Assembly in 1987. All talk of “collective security” during the Cold War had been completely off the agenda, yet Shevardnadze crucially used this very phrase when he first proposed that the Cold War be ended by giving the UN its own “peacekeeping force” under the direct command of the Security Council.

If such comparisons seem outlandish, it is precisely because we in the West have failed to grasp the true nature of Marxism-Leninism. This may be because we tend to think of communism as being only about state ownership of the means of production and the command economy. In fact, Karl Marx himself advocated neither. Instead, the true core of

New Class, that the key to communist ideology was the belief in the primacy of matter and the reality of change.

Because permanent revolution was the natural state of reality, and hence of politics, Marx, Engels, and Lenin reasoned that all fixed forms of political association, especially the state, were oppressive, and that men would not be free until the state itself had “withered away.” It was this withering away of the state that all the leading Marxists identified with communism itself. Lenin wrote, “So long as the state exists, there is no freedom. When there will be freedom, there will be no state.” Emancipation, revolution, and internationalism were all aspects of the same thing.

How was this withering away of the state to occur? For Marx and Engels, the answer was clear: world capitalism would do the trick. The two authors of *The Communist Manifesto* eulogized the unstoppable revolutionary force of what we now call “globalization” and what Mikhail Gorbachev called the “one world economy.” “All fixed, fast-frozen

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Marxist-Leninist doctrine, according to Alexander Solzhenitsyn, was the ideology of dialectical materialism. Derived from Hegel and ultimately Heraclitus, this doctrine—on which Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin all wrote extensively—holds that the world is in a constant state of flux, that nothing is absolutely true or false, and that progress comes from the constant union of opposites. Milovan Djilas, the Yugoslav communist intellectual who turned against the system, said in the opening paragraphs of his seminal work on communism, *The*

relations,” they enthused, “with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into the air, all that is holy is profaned.” According to dialectic reasoning, it was precisely the international, cosmopolitan nature of the bourgeoisie that would dissolve existing borders and social structures and thereby prepare the ground for the creation of a homogeneous international proletariat and the unification of humanity. “To the great

chagrin of Reactionists,” they wrote, “the bourgeoisie has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed. In place of the old local and national self-seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations.”

Marx and Engels were, in short, the first prophets of globalization. Engels was an early advocate of the concept of “creative destruction” later to be espoused by Michael Ledeen: “The disintegration of mankind into a mass of isolated, mutually repelling atoms,” Engels wrote, “means the destruction of all corporate, national and indeed of any particular interests and is the last necessary step towards the free and spontaneous association of men.” This is why he and Marx were in favor of free trade. In January 1948, Karl Marx told the Free Trade Congress in Brussels that “We are for Free Trade, because by Free Trade all economical laws, with their most

ster class in Moscow—rather as *perestroika* did in the late 1980s and privatization in the 1990s—and it involved the sale of state assets to foreigners. As Lenin himself told Armand Hammer at the end of August 1921, at the height of the first Soviet famine, “What we really need is American capital and technical aid to get our wheels turning once more.” When Milovan Djilas analyzed the apparent collapse of communism in his sequel, *The Fall of the New Class*, he wrote, “Every Marxist, going back to Marx himself and forward past Lenin, regarded the creation of a world market and all that it brought about (strengthening each and every link among peoples, tearing down the barriers between nations, etc.) as a progressive fact of capitalism and a necessary condition for proletarian internationalism itself and the true convergence of peoples in socialism.”

It was not ideologically problematic, therefore, for serious communists to embrace the worldwide free market. Many realized that globalization and a

used this alleged withering away of the state to argue in favor of a one-world political regime, in which the particular interests of statehood would have to give way to the superior claims of the whole of humanity—in other words, what we now call “human rights.”

The concept of universal human rights now forms the guiding principle of U.S. foreign policy. It is explicitly in the name of universal and international values that George W. Bush has made his various appeals in favor of the war on terror, including the attack on Iraq. Certain values, he has repeatedly alleged, are valid for all people, in all places, at all times. Like Marxists, he believes that economics and politics are guided by ineluctable and deterministic laws which will eventually force the whole world to follow one same political and economic path: “The great struggles of the twentieth century between liberty and totalitarianism,” he has written, “ended with a decisive victory for the forces of freedom—and a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise.” Laced as his language is with religious (often esoteric and even apocalyptic) vocabulary, the American president frequently says that freedom is God’s plan for mankind. Bush’s Messianic universalist political discourse recalls the Marxist movement that swept through Latin America in the 1970s, conjugating God and politics, that was known as “liberation theology.”

Other neoconservatives agree with the eminently Marxist notion that the U.S. is the providential bearer of a universal internationalist idea that will lead the world. Just as internationalism was a key Marxist tenet—the Soviet Union claimed that it was based on the friendship of peoples, both between the different peoples within its borders and also between it and its Warsaw Pact allies—so the commentator Ben Wattenberg applied the sobriquet “the first universal

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astounding contradictions, will act upon a larger scale, upon a greater extent of territory, upon the territory of the whole earth; and because from the uniting of all these contradictions into a single group, where they stand face to face, will result the struggle which will itself eventuate in the emancipation of the proletarians.”

Indeed, it was this Marxist theory about the revolutionary force of capitalism that allowed the early Bolsheviks to introduce the so-called New Economic Policy only four years after the revolution. Defended by both Lenin and Stalin, the NEP caused the emergence of a gang-

supranational international system offered them even more than that of which Trotsky had dreamed when he created the Fourth International. Many adapted the eminently Marxist argument that economic and technological developments were about to consign the sovereign state to the dustbin of history. Just as Marx had said, “The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord, the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist,” so Western ideologues of globalization claimed that the Internet and the fax machine had rendered the sovereign state obsolete. They then

nation” to America, specifically emphasizing that the U.S. embodied the cosmopolitan ideal of a country founded on an ideological concept and not on contingent things like the accidents of history, geography, or religion. Newt Gingrich linked America’s unique cosmopolitanism to its alleged right to lead the world: “No country has ever had the potential to lead the entire human race as America does today. No country has ever had as many people of as many different backgrounds call on it as we do today.” William Kristol and David Brooks have written, “American nationalism is that of an exceptional nation founded on a universal principle, on what Lincoln called ‘an abstract truth, applicable to all men and all times.’” Most importantly of all, just as the Soviet Union specifically regarded international relations as an ideological battleground—in their case as a forum for prosecuting the international class struggle—and just as Michael Ledeen has written, “We are an ideological nation,” so George W. Bush said on Veterans Day that America is involved in “a global ideological struggle.”

It is his promise to emancipate the whole of mankind that so endears George W. Bush to a phalanx of former Marxist ideologues. People who in their youth idolized the worker “who has no country” have little difficulty idolizing today the global executive or the international bureaucrat. They identify with today’s cosmopolitan ideology of globalization and with George W. Bush’s internationalism. Christopher Hitchens has defended his own surprising support for the neoconservatives by saying, “I feel much more like I used to in the 1960s, working with revolutionaries,” and he understands that Bush’s policy of regime change is by definition going to be supported by revolutionaries: “It is right, I think, that conservatives oppose regime change: that is what conserva-

tives do.” Bush, by implication, is no conservative. In the same vein, Eric Hobsbawm, the veteran British Marxist historian, wrote at the end of June, “At least one passionate ex-Marxist supporter of Bush has told me, only half in jest: ‘After all, this is the only chance of supporting world revolution that looks like coming my way.’”

Support for world revolution also explains why 10 Eastern European heads of government—nearly all of

leaders so attacked are in fact old leftists like Slobodan Milosevic, Alexander Lukashenko, or Saddam Hussein.

In internal politics, the Marxist-Hegelian understanding of “civil society” has also become a central plank of Western thinking, at least for states the West wishes to control. In Eastern Europe, for instance, supposed “non-governmental organizations” are invariably presented as being more authentic and objective representatives of popular

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them former communist apparatchiks—almost alone in the world lined up obediently to sign an open letter of support for the impending Iraq War in February 2003. “Dissidents” in Eastern Europe—broadly speaking, the people who are now in power—were not anti-communists at all, but instead “critical” Marxists who worked within the communist system to reform it, not destroy it. Bush’s announced fight “against tyranny” is of obvious appeal to those who used to rally around the old communist cry of “anti-fascism,” which in turn was largely a slogan expressing leftist hostility to the nation and the state, both of which are now deeply unpopular concepts in the West. Indeed, it is a striking indication of the dominance of left-wing modes of thought in the West that the supreme political insult in the new world order is “authoritarian.” Authority is, by definition, a conservative notion, yet without exception, every single political leader whom the West has removed or tried to remove in the last decade and a half has been tarred with the “authoritarian” or “nationalist” brush. It is as if these right-wing vices were the only political sins. This malediction is bandied about even when the

opinion than the established, public, law-based structures of the state, rather as the “councils” or “soviets” were supposed to be spontaneous associations of ordinary folk. This belief persists even when the so-called NGOs are in fact front organizations funded by Western governments, in other words when they are in reality like Leninist cells—apparently uncoordinated and spontaneous but in reality highly disciplined and centrally-controlled.

The image at the end of *Animal Farm* illustrates a profound anthropological truth, which is that when people become obsessed by an enemy, and define themselves by their struggle against him, they end up resembling him. Violence being imitative, they become a sort of mirror image of their combatant. Perhaps the Cold War, which defined American foreign policy for four decades, has so corrupted the United States of America that it has become just that: the mirror image of the Soviet enemy that it believes it defeated. ■

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Out of Africa

When the sun set on the British Empire, chaos overtook the former colonies.

By Theodore Dalrymple

AS SOON AS I qualified as a doctor, I went to Rhodesia, which was to transform itself into Zimbabwe five years later. In the next decade I worked and traveled a great deal in Africa and could not help but reflect upon the clash of cultures, the legacy of colonialism, and the practical effects of good intentions unadulterated by any grasp of reality. I gradually came to the conclusion that the rich and powerful can indeed have an effect upon the poor and powerless—perhaps even remake them but not necessarily (in fact, necessarily not) in the way they wanted or anticipated. The law of unintended consequences is stronger than the most absolute power.

Until my arrival at Bulawayo Airport, the British Empire had been for me principally a philatelic phenomenon. When I was young, Britain's still astonishing assortment of far-flung territories—from British Honduras and British Guiana to British North Borneo, Basutoland, Bechuanaland, and Swaziland—each issued beautiful engraved stamps with the queen's profile in the right upper corner, looking serenely down upon exotic creatures such as orangutans or frigate birds or upon natives going about their natively tasks, tapping rubber or climbing coconut palms. To my childish mind, any political entity that issued such desirable stamps must have been a power for good. And my father, a Communist by conviction, also encouraged me to read the works of G.A. Henty, late 19th-century adventure stories extolling the exploits of empire builders, who by bravery, sterling character, superior

intelligence, and *force majeure* overcame the resistance of such spirited but doomed peoples as the Zulu and the Fuzzy Wuzzies. Henty might seem an odd choice for a Communist to give his son, but Marx himself was an imperialist of a kind, believing that European colonialism was an instrument of progress toward History's happy denouement; only at a later stage, after it had performed its progressive work, was empire to be condemned.

And condemned Rhodesia most certainly was, loudly and insistently, as if it were the greatest threat to world peace and the security of the planet. I expected to find on my arrival, therefore, a country in crisis. Instead, I found a country that was thriving: its roads were well maintained, its transport system functioning, its cities manifesting a municipal pride long gone from England. The large hospital in which I was to work, while stark and somewhat lacking in comforts, was extremely clean and ran with exemplary efficiency. The staff had a vibrant *esprit de corps*, and the hospital had a reputation for the best of medical care. The rural poor would make immense and touching efforts to reach it: they arrived covered in the dust of their long journeys. The African nationalist leader and foe of the government, Joshua Nkomo, was a patient there and trusted the care implicitly, for medical ethics transcended all political antagonisms.

The surgeon for whom I worked, who came from England, was the best I have ever known and a man of exemplary character. Devoting his enormous technical

accomplishment to the humblest of patients, he seemed not only capable of every surgical procedure, but he was a brilliant diagnostician, his clinical intuition honed by a relative lack of high-tech aids. He saved hundreds every year and inspired the most absolute trust and confidence in his patients. He never panicked, even in the direst emergency, and he knew what to do when a man had been half eaten by a crocodile or mauled by a leopard, when a child had been bitten in the leg by a puff adder, or when a man appeared with a spear driven through his skull. When called in the early hours of the morning, he was as even-tempered as if attending a social event.

He was not a missionary, however. He was infused by nothing resembling a religious spirit, only by a profound medical ethic and an enthusiasm for his art and science. He wanted an interesting surgical practice, and he wanted to save human life. Rhodesia offered him ideal conditions for using his skills to maximum benefit. Within a short time of the political handover in 1980, however, he returned to England because the swift degeneration of standards at the hospital made the high-level practice of surgery impossible. The institution that had seemed to me on my arrival to be so solid and well founded fell apart in the historical twinkling of an eye.

In returning to England, he accepted a much-reduced standard of living. Talleyrand said that he who had not experienced the *ancien régime* (as an aristocrat, of course) knew nothing of the sweetness of life. The same might be