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# The return of feudalism

## An explanation of our myth ridden society



We would be kidding ourselves if we thought that feudalism had ever left us, reality is that it merely was suppressed since the late Middle Ages. The growth of representational democracy in northern Europe was largely responsible for moving feudalism to the back burner. With the rise of the Industrial Revolution democracy became more and more difficult to operate. It became very clear in Britain, Germany and France that the disparity between the very very wealthy and the very very poor was growing extraordinarily quickly. In the United Kingdom, leaders in the industrial revolution realised that they could maximise their profits and expand their production by increasing the wages of the worker and that most remarkably, led to the development of a middle-class. It may well be that it was the expansion of the education system that produced this moderation of feudalism.

The effect was profound and with the economic power in the hands of the middle-class, the Bill of Rights was passed and with it, a meaningful representational parliament. The spirit of a democratic free society developed.

Industrialisation in Germany took a quite different turn, even though there were similar moves towards democracy, it appears that the concentration of wealth remained in the hands of a few. Karl Marx proposed quite a different solution to the problem, it is interesting that his ideas and concepts were not implemented in Germany, but would in fact, be attempted in Russia, a country where feudalism never was suppressed.

In France the revolution spilled into the streets and the monarchy and its infrastructure was replaced by a succession of brutal dictatorship governments. Though the wealthy were slaughtered, the disparity between rich and poor remained.

Though established on lofty idealistic suppositions, America was and is nothing but a lie. It's Constitution stated that all men were created equal, but did not outlaw slavery until ninety years after the founding of the country. Even then, lies were the standard method of operation, for blacks did not get to vote



until 1965, a full 100 years after emancipation. Justice and fairness were not and never have been a part of what constitutes United States of America. At the insistence of those of the thirteen colonies that formed the union who depended most upon slavery, there was a need to have armed para-military militias to be able to control slave uprisings. So it was, that owning firearms was embedded in the American Constitution. Today, that provision, intended to have military forces available to control the population, has been interpreted to mean that everybody can carry a gun. This fundamental flaw in American society explains one of the reasons why it has the highest level of incarceration in the entire world.

In a democracy we tend to view the role of the executive branch of government, the politicians and the judiciary, as the main components of the system, though all three are important and the church still plays an important role in shaping of the concepts and concerns of society, it is the press, independent and able to report uncensored information to the public,





that makes for a true democracy. Information must be factual, accurate and timely if a society is expected to make informed decisions.

You will recall that it was pointed out how education played a dominant factor in the development of democracy in the United Kingdom. So it is that education today in the form of print and visual literacy, is the cornerstone of a democratic society. There is a direct one to one correlation between the level of literacy and education in a society and the quality of life in that society. With 60% of Americans having a grade eight, or less education and with one of the highest levels of poverty in the developed world, in such a society it is almost impossible to be well informed. The dominance of fundamentalist Christian religious groups guarantees a backward society.

In Canada we have seen a direct assault on science at every level across the nation since 2006. We have and continue to witness a remarkable lack of information coming from government, while the independent press is simply no longer a real and actual part of our society.

At first one might think that this is just a perfect storm, a hap-hazard development, a naturally occurring sequence of events, but such an assumption would be completely incorrect. Right from the time of the Industrial Revolution, family owned and partnerships, have gradually given way to the development of corporations. These business entities, see themselves as individuals and have attempted, in most cases successfully, to establish themselves with the same

rights as an individual in a society. Their operational structure is decidedly feudal, with their management being paid outrageous compensation for their work, these are the Lords, the Dukes and the Earls of today. However, this is not a modern development, they merely picked up where the knights of yore left off. What has changed is the role they play in society as a whole. In the 20th century corporations in Germany were at the core of the factors that led to the outbreak of World War I, then after the war, it was corporate money and support, that placed Adolf Hitler in power. Though politicians have continuously proclaimed, that they are and were in charge, the reality is that the American industrial corporate society won World War II. In the postwar era President Dwight Eisenhower lamented his limited power due to the influence of the military industrial complex. This fundamental issue was dealt with in the book and the movie of the same name "Catch 22" though a work of fiction it demonstrated the incidental role politicians and



leaders now play in the society of the 20th and 21st centuries.

Let us reflect for a moment on recent history and historical events, do you honestly think that George W. Bush was ever in control of the government of the United States? How else can one explain the complete incompetence and impotence of the current American administration. Clearly, Barack Obama is not in charge. In Canada, China, the whole of the European Union,

the United States, are any of their politicians making the decisions that are determining what is happening?

In October 2008 the capitalist system collapsed, primarily American banks simply screwed up with ridiculous derivative schemes that made the largest of them financially insolvent. Total economic collapse was prevented by massive government financial intervention, now over five years later, not one of those who perpetrated the collapse have been sanctioned or punished, but rather, they have been rewarded, such is the nature of the feudal system.

Wealth, privilege and position determine how people are treated before the courts or even before, in determining whether prosecution should take place. With all of the wealth being controlled by 1% of the population, rampant poverty and inequality make for a decidedly unjust society. Corporate feudalism is alive and well.

All human societies are governed by the rule of scarcity, what you need and is in limited supply, becomes the determining factor in how things are played out. Indeed, for a time in our existence, food played that role, but through the industrial revolution and the technological development that followed, energy today is king. It was a Chairman Moa Tse Tung who said that "power flows from the barrel of a gun" nothing today has changed the





axiom. Untold wealth equates with the acquisition of untold acquisition of weapons and munitions. In the 1930s vast quantities of cheap and easy to develop oil was discovered in the Middle East. From the very beginning, the oil corporations determined that they would pay for the oil and it's development to the rulers of the oil-rich Middle Eastern countries. From then until the present, all of the oil money has flowed to a very limited number of feudal rulers around the Persian Gulf. These rulers feel no obligation to share that wealth with the people of their kingdoms or countries, quite simply this part of the world is inhabited by a huge number of very poor very unhappy people. Since that time ,war and conflict in the whole of the Middle East is commonplace, some suggest it's religiously-based. However, at its very core is the extreme wealth in the hands of a few and the extreme poverty of the masses. On September 11, 2001 nineteen so-called terrorists, most of whom were from Saudi Arabia, launched an attack on the United States of America.

The results of the 9/11 attack on New York and Washington will reverberate for decades,

perhaps a 100 years or more, for today we are too close to the event to have the perspective of history to understand its consequences. However, in the corporate world, this tragic event allowed the expansion of the feudal presence in the every day lives of people. The massive surveillance

and documentation of all forms of communications and of all people now knows no bounds. As in a feudal kingdom, there is no freedom of speech and there is no such thing as privacy.

Throughout the world there has been a remarkable concentration of the ownership and control of news media, with that concentration has come the corporate need to increase profits. The standard method of increasing profits is to reduce workers and reduce services. Ultimately, the result has been a drastic reduction in the volume and the quality of news presented to the consumer. You will no doubt remember hearing the axiom that he that controls the information that people need, controls the people that need it, so it is that in our time, information is less available, more controlled and less accurate than perhaps ever before. Though various forms of the Internet have made the dissemination of information extraordinarily abundant, without the legions of trained and experienced journalists to interpret the events of the day, we the public, are left in ignorance.

In the past, when I have written a story like this, I have always pointed out the extreme elasticity of our democratic institutions and I have advocated our involvement in politics to





remedy the situations in which we find ourselves. Alas, this story does not have a happy ending, nor is there very much that you, or we as individuals, can do about our present plight. Feudalism, by his very nature is oppressive and perhaps unaffected by any opposition by peaceful means. Let us first consider the futility of trying to make changes using the ballot box.

We do not need to look south of the border to see how completely un-affective trying to bring about change by electing politicians who tell us, "yes we can." Without control of Congress, President Obama has no power, it matters not of his good intentions, or the ideological positions he holds. Here in Canada, voters send to Ottawa politicians bent on reforming Canada's parliamentary system, the current prime minister was one of the leaders in this reform movement and you can see how that turned out. Making substantive changes to the system is not the prerogative of a politician in this era. What is even more upsetting, the individual members of Parliament have been stripped of any and all powers that they once might have had, they cannot voice any opinions that differ from the official line of the Prime Minister's office if they are sitting members of the government. I can think of no justifiable reason for campaigning, or even voting for politicians in our present Canadian federal system. A page in the House of Commons, has





more power than a member of Parliament. Political campaigns in North America are won and lost by money alone and here in Canada, politicians routinely overspend and break the rules set out to make fair elections and do so with impunity. In the 2008 election thousands of Canadian voters were directed to other polling stations, thereby losing their vote, by the government and its officials. So what is the point, if the politicians we elect have no power and the elections are rigged, it seems that there is no reason to even pay attention to them.

The corporations hold such a strangle hold on the political process in our country and in others, making the political process and all forms of government trivial. Important decisions are made at corporate boardroom tables and by multimillion dollar CEOs who have bought and paid for the politicians in power and know that no matter what action they take, money will flow to them, this was the lesson of the economic collapse of 2008. You may think that this is a gross exaggeration, but only four decades ago, Canadian corporations paid taxes at the same rate as did Canadian individual taxpayers. Those days are long over, corporations today pay as little as 12% corporate income tax. Canadian corporations pay the lowest corporate tax rate of any country in the developed world.

Massive subsidies are paid to the largest corporations operating in North America by our governments. Ford and General Motors are relocating manufacturing plants in United States and Mexico where the subsidies are even higher than they are in Canada and at present, Chrysler is begging for more money to upgrade its manufacturing facilities and with out taxpayer's money it will move its production to places where governments will provide them with operating capital for manufacturing plants. Conservatives and Republicans alike praise the miracle of private industry, but in reality, those large private corporations are being funded, operated and paid for, by the individual taxpayers in both countries. The same situation is not confined to the automotive industry, but to large corporations in general, particularly the banking industry.

America's large banks, particularly their financial institutions, are essentially funded and operated as arms of the government. The link between government and banks is so complete that government in the United States, depend upon bankers from the largest financial companies to run the business of government. In Canada the large national banks are protected and nurtured by Canada's political leaders. The former Liberal government of Canada was so closely linked with the banks, even having a bank executive of the largest bank in the country as a member of the cabinet, the present conservative government will make no move that might reflect negatively on its banks.





This past week stock markets in New York and Toronto were down considerably, should we be concerned? Actually, the stock market is just an entertainment show baring no real relationship to business or even the economy. Insider trading by Lehman Brothers and Morgan Stanley pretty much have determined that the New York Stock Exchange is fixed, it is reasonable to assume that similarly, the Toronto Stock exchange is also fixed. In a feudal state power, wealth and privilege are all that really matter.

With all this bleak and unrelenting perspective is our situation futile? In October 2015 Canada will have a federal election where we will be asked to elect impotent politicians to seats in parliament. If it goes like the one in 2008, it will likely be predetermined and fixed with election rules being ignored, massive negative ad campaigns, paid for by the corporate sector, it will not matter if Harper is returned to office, or Justin Trudeau becomes our new prime minister. The feudal stranglehold by the corporations will remain in place and politics is superfluous.

I offered to you one difficult but positive strategy which has shown in the past to be effective and to be able to affect change

with a minimum of violence.

When you compare the percentage of workers who belong to a trade union from country to country, you will discover the higher the proportion of unionised workers, the lower the level of poverty and the lower the amount of disparity, between the very rich and the very poor. Canada has substantially less poverty than does United States and proportionately, Canada has a larger proportion of unionised workers than does our neighbour to the south.

When Canadians, particularly in Western Canada, were faced with the depression of the 1930s, the dirty 30s, there was a big and powerful movement for workers to organise and unionise. "Workers of the world unite," that was the slogan in the 1930s, a slogan that many people associate with communism, but that is simply not the case. Communism involves the dictatorship of the proletariat, which essentially means the population owns the corporate sector. Of course today, that might very well be the situation we are already in, as taxpayers, are in fact paying for the operation of all the corporations. But unions and the union movement, involves workers establishing agreements with their employers to determine wages and benefits, that's it that's all. The concept of a trade union is merely imposing fairness in the workplace.

You might find it instructive to find out



why Henry Ford established in his factories the 40 hour workweek, at the time competitive carmakers were paying their workers low wages and working them up to twelve or more hours a day. Henry Ford was looking at the bigger picture, he wanted his workers to be able to afford and have the time to enjoy products that they could buy with their wages. He wanted his employees to buy his cars. He also understood that if he had a 40 hour work week in his factories other manufacturers would have to follow suit and they did. Look at the auto industry today, highly unionised and earning the highest wages in the manufacturing industries.

Businessman, corporate executives, conservative politicians, all fear and loath the idea of wealthy workers. Surf workers earning meagre poverty line wages are less likely to complain about bad working conditions and combined with high unemployment, corporations can count on abundant cheap labour to turn profits for them. From a government standpoint, or from a citizens standpoint, this is completely opposite to the way things should be. As a society, we need wealthy taxpayers, who can afford their taxes ,who can afford to buy consumer items. Every increase in wages to workers is an automatic increase in the amount of taxation paid by those workers. Taxation, which in turn, can be used to pay for the business of government. The reason we even have minimum-wage rules across our country is because of the lack of unionisation.

If you want to make this a better country, a better society, we need rules and regulations to unionise fast food, retail outlets and all of the various occupations in the country. You will notice under our feudal system, our governments in North America, our so-called conservative



governments, are completely and totally opposed to trade unions. By increasing the wealth of the average person, we could completely transform our society.

But, increasing the wealth of the individual will not put an end to feudalism, for that, we need to take a much larger leap. North America needs a major overhaul of its education system.

Our public school system is a great starting point, for the most part, it is doing the job we need it to do, but there is more. The first thing we need to do with our public schools is stand back and let it function. We can increase the standard of education for our teachers, but we need to back off on interfering in the work of professionals. Content, subject matter, how the education process is carried out, quite simply is not the domain of the amateur.

Post secondary education is totally and completely essential for every individual in a democracy, although completely unnecessary in a feudal state. Conservatives and business people do not accept the concept of higher education in general, they advocate the expansion of internships and trade training, they are wrong. The days of earning a living with manual, or even skilled labour, are almost gone. Robots are not a thing of the future, they are a thing of the present and the near future. If we as a society want to go forward, we must do so with our intellect and that means a college education, perhaps only a partial college education, but everybody needs at least those first two years of university. First and second-year university should be made universal and paid for, by the taxpayers of this society.



If you are one of those people who thinks that there is no point in a person getting a bachelors degree in history, or English, or psychology, or what ever arts programme they may enter, you are wrong. A democratic society and innovative society, needs intellectuals, people who can and will think their way through the problems the society is faced with. Certainly, we need engineers, chemists and biologists, doctors, we even need lawyers, but we also need historians, archaeologist, mathematicians and philosophers. Our highly technological society is loaded with challenges, challenges that will require research, development and fresh new ideas.

Corporate feudalism will not give up without a fight and we must be prepared to resist its resistance to change. Unions and education are only two possible strategies to overcome the entrenchment and the associated violence of big business and large corporations. For now, it is unlikely that politics can offer us any improvement in our society, without first improving the income of the people who live in our country and improving their education.

