

THE WAR AGAINST REASON

Greed, Gods and Armies in the Modern World

by

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Capitalism has achieved primarily the domination of economies by corporations and corporations are profoundly anti-democratic. It is an oxymoron to speak of capitalist democracies. The structure of the corporation is monarchical or oligarchical in practical governance if not technically, through the manipulation and control of information that flows to shareholders and the grip executives within the hierarchy have on both ownership and board control.

This hierarchical and reptilian organization and operation increasingly came to dominate world trade and local governance during the twentieth century, transferring its methods through economic domination not only to control the economic edifice but ultimately the governing of the people themselves.

The same description can be made for other dominating institutions within the modern capitalist state, namely religions and armies. Increasingly, those hierarchical organizing entities have been absorbed into the corporate sector, enforcing it as it conveys benefits of status and financial advantage back to them. This, by the mid-twentieth century, had become an accelerating feedback loop whose primary concern became more and more identified with what was good for the institutions themselves and less and less for society as a whole. War, for instance, often fomented by corporations including the military-industrial, and supported by religions— which further increases the influence of the military— is not profitable by any measure. It involves intimidation, destruction and murder, and lays waste to much that is useful of human accomplishment. The costs of reconstruction are painful both in human and economic terms. What war has proven very good at accomplishing is the redistribution of the reduced wealth available to society as a whole in its aftermath. Some people gain in influence and property at the expense of the many. Those many often belong to outsider groups, both religious and national, and this becomes another accelerating feedback loop which leaves the stain of resentment and even hatred to foment and intensify future conflict.

The net effect is to disenfranchise and alienate the great majority of people around the world, to continue to ignore their needs as human beings, while the lives of a relative few are enriched beyond reason. And this enrichment beyond reason is accelerating as the twenty-first century unfolds.

How did we get here? When we search backward, moving beneath events and their history to the history of ideas, which are at the root of events, we arrive finally at the relation of individuals to others. The expanding definition of self to include first genetic family then tribe and on to ethnic and linguistic and territorial identity had its corollary in the narrowing definition of what is meant by 'others'. At first, others were literally everyone else, and in some respects this definition fosters less dangerous behavior to mankind than the increasingly narrowing definitions that followed— one can hardly be literally at war with everyone. But as in-groups dominated social organization, the concept of out-group hostility dominated much of their activity. And as these groups coalesced, growing exponentially, the damage they could do became exponentially greater. The present time is just the tail end of this monster.

We have run out of possible advantages for this long-practiced method of human organization and have arrived at the most dangerous time in the history of man since there were just a hundred of us in the entire world. Group rights, including the right to objectify and exclude outsiders, which grew out of this evolution of identity, must be eliminated.

Since this notion of outsiders is genetically coded and therefore enforced through emotion, it can only be combatted through the activity of the reasoning mind. If the existential idea of forming oneself— one's identity— through choices of the conscious intentional mind is correct, the species may survive. If not, it will not. Inherently, we are doomed.

People in the west worry publicly (if not effectively) about global warming of the atmosphere and biosphere while ignoring the fire within. Wholesale massive change in both attitude and organization will be needed, starting with the most fundamental definition of identity, changes which may require new as yet undeveloped ideas of understanding and governance. If this cannot be done, no-one will be around to see whether global warming really would have killed us all— we will have long since accomplished it ourselves.