

"The persuasive power of your articles lies in your insistence on upholding the highest journalistic standards"

19 January 1999

At a time in this country when we are sorely lacking in heroes, you ladies and gentlemen have distinguished yourselves as such in the truest sense of the word. You have my sincerest thanks, as well as that of, I would hope, millions of Americans across the nation. Your courage in bringing the truth to the people, as well as your journalistic standards and integrity, clearly put you in a class by yourself.

As a socialist for the last 20 years, since my political awakening in college, I have long lamented the lack of true leftist thought in what passes for political debate in this country. It has been, intellectually speaking, a rather lonely 20 years. It is, as I'm sure you know, rather frustrating trying to convince anyone of the validity of one's views when one is limited, in making one's arguments, to those resources available in the American "free press." For this reason, I have tended to suppress my views, often finding it easier to "go with the flow." For this, I carry no small amount of shame.

I have, in recent years, experienced a rebirth of my ideological beliefs, necessitated by the current state of crisis that this country is in. The factors contributing to this are ones you are all too familiar with, including the rapid rise of the police state, wholesale surrender of civil rights by a fearful populace, an increasingly belligerent and militaristic foreign policy, the privatization of the prison industry, the consolidation of power by the Religious Right, the fraudulent impeachment of the president, and many other warning signs too numerous to list here.

It is my firmly held belief that we have reached a historical crossroads in this country. Whether we choose to follow our current path, or choose another, will have severe consequences for this and future generations of Americans. Clearly this ship of state will

not stay afloat under current conditions. A revolutionary change will be required to stabilize this sinking ship. One way out of the current crisis is to adopt a wide ranging program of social reform, consisting of the redirection of funds away from the already bloated military budget and the misguided and reactionary "war on drugs," and into meaningful and substantial social programs.

This approach, unfortunately, has been rejected out of hand by Republicans and Democrats alike. The other course, indeed our current course, is to dispense with any pretense of Constitutional Democracy and prop the state up with sheer brute force. Alas, this path has been traveled before, with dire consequences. Yet the unavoidable fact remains that all signs currently point in that direction.

It is my optimistic hope that we may yet be able to reverse this course. To do so, however, will require a massive reeducation of the American people. It is only through education that the massive levels of anger and frustration among the people can be focused and channeled into productive energy. This will be, to be sure, a formidable task. It is my desire to play a part, however small, in this monumental effort.

To that end, I have taken the liberty of downloading several of the articles appearing on your web site. Having printed out these articles, I am now in the process of organizing them into a cohesive package, including some commentary of my own, that I hope will be persuasive enough to break through the inherent resistance of those who have been force-fed a daily diet of mainstream "news."

It is my desire, upon completion, to reproduce enough copies to distribute to my circle of friends and family. It is my hope that they will then pass this along to their

inner circles, in essence creating a grass roots reeducation campaign. The primary purpose of this letter, besides offering my thanks, is to seek your permission to reproduce your materials in this way and for this purpose.

I would like to add, in closing, that the persuasive power of your articles lies in your insistence on upholding the highest journalistic standards, as well as focusing on factual presentations, as opposed to inflammatory rhetoric. While I can understand the rage and frustration that leads to such incendiary writing, it inevitably makes such writings easy to dismiss as propaganda. By avoiding such pitfalls, your work is considerably harder to discredit. Therein lies the value of these documents for my intended purposes.

Sincerely,

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