

Give Me Liberty or Give Me Debt

By Jeff Thomas – International man

Some people are more observant than others. Some are more capable of thinking outside the box than others. Whether this is by nature or nurture is a moot point.

When we are children, we tend to look upon the world in all its wonder. We are amazed at what exists and we absorb it like a sponge. Then, when we are in our teens, we begin our second wave of discovery. We begin to pay more attention to the things that we find confusing; we become absorbed in issues like world hunger, warfare and political strife. These situations seem senseless and we repeatedly ask, "Why should these things be?"

Typically, in our twenties, we have not yet found any solid answers and our mood turns from interest to anger. We tend to gravitate toward liberal philosophy, as liberal philosophy tells us what we would most like to hear; that these terrible things should not exist and that we should take every step available to us to end the injustices of the world – at whatever cost to ourselves and others.

Most of us continue in this approach for several years, but in our thirties we begin to recognize that, no matter how many steps are taken in this effort, the problems seem to be self-renewing and, at that point, a split occurs in philosophical outlook. Many people cease to grow at this point, as they do not want to live in a world where it is necessary to accept that suffering of one type or another is perennial. They may become increasingly stubborn in this view and, from this point on in life, tend to dig in their heels increasingly and fail to continue to grow in their understanding of the world.

However, there are others who decide that, no matter how unpleasant reality is, we will continue our pursuit of it. For those of us who do follow this (admittedly less pleasant) path, the true nature of life begins to unfold. Somewhere in our forties, it dawns on us that our thinking is no longer liberal. We may well find that our former liberal friends may treat us like traitors to the cause and we may even become pariahs to them. (Churchill said, "If you are not a liberal when you are twenty, you have no heart. If you are not a conservative when you are forty, you have no brain." A lot of truth in that.)

Somewhere in our fifties, if we have remained diligent in our study of mankind, it all begins to gel and we begin to have a real grasp of the interrelationship of business, politics, the haves and have-nots, the whole ball of wax. We begin to recognize that there will always be those who are inspired leaders, but that there will also be those who are uninspired usurpers. There will always be those who are eager to be producers and, likewise, there will always be those who would prefer merely to consume.

From this point on in our lives, we increasingly recognize that this state of affairs is perennial, that human nature will assure that the same verve that existed to

create the Roman Empire exists today, just as the same waste and decadence that destroyed it also exists today.

When I was in High School, I read George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. I remember how impressed I was that he had set his novel in a farmyard and that his characters were farm animals. Orwell had consciously simplified an otherwise confusing world by boiling it down to the smallest format he could think of. In that book, when the animals gained their freedom from the "oppression" of the farmer, they were filled with high-mindedness. In order to forever remind them of what they stood for, they painted on the barn, "All animals are created equal."

The greatest revelation of the book, for me, was when the pigs, who had become the government, altered the sign under cover of darkness to say, "All animals are created equal, but some are more equal than others." I remember thinking, "This is where the rot sets in. I must never forget this. For the rest of my life, I will need to be watching for this change in leadership approach."

Unfortunately, it is a fact that the majority of people truly do not want to be bothered with this effort of continual reassessment of the governmental situation. In every country, in every era, the majority genuinely prefer leaders who make big promises, regardless of whether the promises will ever be delivered upon. Every country in every era has its "chicken in every pot" slogan to hang on to.

In the late eighteenth century, America became heated up over the "oppression" of King George (whose taxation, incidentally, was far lower than today's taxes) and, eventually, openly rebelled. It has often been said by historians that, if there was a specific moment at which the move to become the United States truly began, it was when Patrick Henry stated in the House of Burgesses, "Give me Liberty or give me death."

As we all know, the American people gained their independence and, after a fair bit of stumbling, set forth on a course of prosperity, based upon excellent natural resources and an excellent work ethic. In the middle of the nineteenth century, a war was fought, not over slavery, but over who would control the economy of the future – the northern industrialists or the southern plantation owners. The north won and the latter half of the nineteenth century saw the greatest expansion the world had ever seen. In this period, America settled the entire continent and dramatically sped up the pace of the industrial revolution. This was done without income tax or a Federal Reserve, confirming that these factors are not necessary for progress and prosperity.

Then in 1913, the pigs rewrote the sign on the barn.

A decade later, American bankers (with the support of the government) put into motion the largest scam ever to be perpetrated upon Americans. It was an unqualified success, with an unfortunate byproduct being the Great Depression. In 1999, the American bankers (again with the support of the government) put into place an almost identical scam, which has proven to be an even bigger

success and (I believe) will ultimately result in an even more devastating depression.

In 1999, The Democratic US president, with the support of the Republican US Congress, repealed the Glass Steagall Act, which would allow the scam of the 1920's to be repeated, only on a grander scale. The "pigs", in effect, rewrote Patrick Henry's inspiring statement. From 1999 on, the slogan has, effectively, been, "Give me liberty or give me debt," and the governments, both democratic and republican, have encouraged and provided the latter.

On any given day, we can turn on our televisions and watch the news programs, which continually feature Republican political advisors and Democratic political advisors argue with each other over whether all the damage that has been done was done by the other side. Neither side gives an inch to the other. Americans watch this game of ping pong endlessly play out with no conclusion, yet, at election time, they must make a choice.

Most Americans today treat the two political parties the way they would treat sports teams. Just as no self-respecting sports fan would own both a Yankees and a Red Sox hat, so every American supports one political team or the other, and along the way, that support becomes so all-encompassing that there is no room for doubt. Blind conviction becomes the norm.

In 1787, Alexander Tyler, an Englishman, commented on the new US experiment as a democracy. He said, "A democracy is always temporary in nature; it simply cannot exist as a permanent form of government. A democracy will continue to exist up until the time that voters discover they can vote themselves generous gifts from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates who promise the most benefits from the public treasury, with the result that every democracy will finally collapse due to loose fiscal policy, which is always followed by a dictatorship." His prediction has proven astonishingly accurate, with the last step yet to be played out.

The debt that crippled Rome two thousand years ago, and that crippled every major power since that time, is now crippling the US. Today, all Americans are aware of the problem, and almost all are hoping that, somehow, the problem will go away. It will not. In every country, in every era, it is not in the interests of the "pigs" to fix the problem. It is in their interest to allow the situation to play itself out until it ultimately crashes. Tyler was extraordinarily astute. He understood that all great powers have a shelf life. They also have a process by which they are created, then thrive, then become corrupted, then decline, then fall into ruin. This process is as perennial as the grass.

The pundits will continue to rail with righteous indignation on television. The two political sports teams will continue to kick and gouge each other, but the outcome of the game is already cast in stone.

So, is this the end of the world as we know it? Yes and no. It is not the end of the world, just the end of the world as we know it. Whenever the leading power in the world falls, others are already in the wings, rising. And so it is today.

Americans who are alive today have never known a situation in which their country was not the top dog in the world, and so it is hard to imagine a different world. For those who are not American and who do not reside in the US, it is easier to see a truer picture. With the collapse of the US (and Europe), there is still a very big world out there, waiting in the wings. Some second- and third-world countries are, admittedly, doing badly. However, others are getting by nicely. And still others are thriving.

Yes, there is a bright future ahead, but, sadly, not in America; at least not for many years. Those who were described in the first paragraph of this article as being more observant are already looking away from America into the future. For the first time since the eighteenth century, those who are pursuing the bright future are walking away from America, not toward it.

Editor's Note: Economically, politically, and socially, the United States seems to be headed down a path that's not only inconsistent with the founding principles of the country but accelerating quickly toward boundless decay.

It's contributing to a growing wave of misguided socialist ideas.