

Hitler's Ghost: The Revenge of Historical Revisionism

by Sean Arthur Joyce

*"Generals gathered in their masses
Just like witches at black masses.
Evil minds that plot destruction—
Sorcerer of death's construction."
—War Pigs, by Black Sabbath*

Hitler would be proud. I can see him now, beaming like a papa over his boys. I mean, after all, the Reichstag fire of 1933 was kindergarten stuff compared to 9/11. And now, the old Anglo-American beast prodding at Persia with special ops and bumbling sailors wandering into captivity. The slaughter of 600,000 Iraqis while hired guns run wild, free from the long arm of ANY law. Yep, old Führer would be spinning in his grave with delight, an Old Testament Lucifer smacking his fiery lips: "Like father, like sons!"

"Best of all," he chortles, "these boys didn't even have to act the raving lunatic and scream in peoples' faces to get them to buy this crap." Sure, the German scientific and intellectual community, with some notable exceptions, bought in. Sure, the newspapers, the radio stations, even most of the German public were willing to look the other way if it meant good jobs. But it still took a lot of tarted-up bullying, and a continuous barrage of twisted mythology about being the gods' chosen race. The 21st century boys managed all of that without ever having to raise their voices. "Hell, I had to maintain torture camps DESPITE the law," Adolf would complain. "These guys were smarter: they just changed the laws to make sure they could never be prosecuted."

Of course, the boys are really just perfecting what Goebbels and the gang in the Propaganda Ministry realized all along: entertainment WORKS as indoctrination. Far better than coercion because it STARTS with the willing participation of the brainwashee. That crusty old Brit Aldous Huxley was right, too: people may not have a predilection for tinpot dictators, but they nearly all have a predilection for fridges full of cold beer. And what was it that maverick publisher of the New Orphic Review, Ernest Hekkanen, said? "Keep the middle class at a certain level of comfort and you can commit any crime in their name and get away with it."

Even more than Goebbels and his grasp of the power of cinema, Huxley realized at the very outset of television that it would be *sine qua non* of propaganda tools. "The methods now being used to merchandise the political candidate as though he were a deodorant positively guarantee the electorate against ever hearing the truth about anything." Remember, this was written at least 5 years before the history of political debate was changed forever in the televised exchange between Nixon and Kennedy. Only now the lines between commercial and political propaganda have completely blurred.

Of course, the internet has revolutionized the media for the better. Or has it? Yes and no. These days the best news comes from independent journalists working online. Yet most North Americans still get their primary dose of news from TV, though online news is closing the gap fast. On the other hand, as the cult of the usurious middleman has taken hold and right wing arrogance spreads like a cancer, mainstream news looks more and more ridiculous to more and more people. When millions

were finally given the facts of the planet's 'inconvenient truth' instead of media lies, they got it. The administration in Ottawa and Washington still hasn't.

Which brings me to history. A subject so loaded with quotable quotes one needs a truckload of Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations*. "History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake," Stephen Dedalus says in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Joyce, for all his veneer of jadedness, was an idealist. He assumed a human being who is capable of learning from the past. Hegel was more pessimistic: "People and governments have never learned anything from history." Napoleon knew why: "History is the version of past events that people have decided to agree upon." He was a conqueror. He knew better than anyone: the conquerors write the history. Sometimes before it happens, in the case of the bloodthirsty hawks at the Project for a New American Century.

See, here's the mistake the Left made, in its naiveté: assuming that because the Right was wrong, they were also stupid. BIG mistake. These guys invented the system, loved it, gave the blood of their young for it. Would do anything to keep it. Never mind that the system is based entirely on self-interest, that it assumes altruism is just another sales gimmick. Great if you're capable of being vicious enough to survive the pit of vipers. And all for what? So a few dried up old lizards and their spawn can sun themselves on the French Riviera at noon and picnic at Giza's pyramids in the sunset?

Lefties use the political system mostly because they HAVE to. As my friend Dan Nicholson, an independent newspaper publisher, puts it, the problem is simply that most Lefties are too darn nice. Which I translate: Not willing to do what it takes, while the opposition is prepared to do WHATEVER it takes. The Right isn't stupid. They know well the uses of history, the same as they do the uses of banking and propaganda. As George Orwell wrote, "From the totalitarian point of view history is something to be created rather than learned." (Oh, but I've said the nasty 'T' word, and we don't say that here in America.) The old axiom of religious training applies here: start 'em young. Macdonald's gets it: a baby in a swing watching the 'golden arches' arc into view outside his window.

So buying bombers instead of schoolbooks creates a perfect circle: by keeping kids ignorant of the truth of their history, you create a blank slate to fill with whatever suits the military industrial complex. War is an industry with a product to sell the same as the chick selling hair colour or deodorant. People mistake the tree for the forest: Yes, the Iraq war is really about oil. But oil is just fuel for the giant juggernaut known as War Incorporated.

Don't get me wrong: I'm not a traditionalist. I'm not saying history doesn't need to be rewritten once in awhile to catch up with the facts. Historical revisionism has its place, the same as medical research does, so we can eventually find treatments that actually work. It would be not only stupid but racist to go on calling Columbus the 'discoverer' of the Americas. But as with any sales pitch, it all goes to motive: what are they selling? When you see the CBC ad for their new miniseries on 'The Great War', with actors in fresh new uniforms beaming stoically amidst the incendiary special effects, what is being sold? Who benefits? The defense contractors who have wooed General Rick Hillier? That old corporate welfare case, Bombardier? Who?

It is an obscenity of the most arrogant kind to repackage the First World War as if it were some gallant, heroic adventure. Wait a minute. That's how the press of the early 20th century sold it to the public! And it's how we're being sold Afghanistan. Except that in WWI, tens of thousands of young

soldiers died in a single protracted battle. It was the worst human meat grinder of history. As Jared Diamond or John Ralston Saul might remind us, it was the unequal clash of 19th century military thinking with 20th century military hardware. Men with bayonets being sent out against machine guns, or shredded by shrapnel from the new long-range artillery. And for what? Who benefited? The international banking system? The Krupps armaments corporation? DuPont? Millions died, and absolutely nothing changed. "The war to end all wars," a sick joke on the dead. And the living dead, the walking wounded who had to wear their corpses another 30, 40, or 60 years before their spirits were finally set free.

Today's 'war on terror' is like Roman Emperor Nero hunting down Christians while his imperial city burns to the ground. Only now what's burning is the planet. Here we are paving "the highway to extinction" (*Globe & Mail*, March 31, 2007), and what are we doing? Funneling more billions into the global arms race than at any time since the Cold War, reaching a new worldwide peak in 2006 of a trillion dollars. When we're facing not just peak oil but the not-so-distant END of oil.

While I agree the planet will breathe a sigh of relief when that happens, the recoil will shatter our economies. The billions that are being blown on bombing the world need to be spent on developing the new renewable energy infrastructure, on ending poverty forever, and providing Earth's citizens with enough food, clean water, medicine and education to face the hard centuries ahead. Whether it's a New Ice Age or a Global Desert, it will be no picnic for our grandchildren and great-grandchildren. They deserve more from us than a crumbling, graffiti-sprayed wall that says, "I laughed all the way to the bank."

And are we any safer? In a recent poll of some 35 countries, the BBC found a divergence of opinion on whether the US should 'stay the course' or pull out of Iraq. But on one thing everyone agreed: fully 60% of respondents said the 'war on terror' has made the likelihood of terrorist attacks more, not less, likely. Yet like true fanatics, the Bush junta deny reality even when presented with the facts. "Hell," they figure, "we got away with using depleted uranium not only under Bush Senior but Bush Junior. Why not nukes?" Here of course is where their talent for manipulation and control is exceeded only by their boyish grasp of military reality. Risking not only contamination of the entire Middle East with radioactive poison but prodding awake the Russian Bear and the Chinese Dragon. Not to mention a sophisticated, well-equipped standing Iranian army of nearly a million.

My generation grew up under the shadow of the mushroom cloud. Many of us felt by our early teens that we might not live to see middle age. When the Communist bloc collapsed, glasnost took wing, and the Berlin Wall came down, I thought: At last! I can live out my days without fear! How wrong I was. When I die, let my epitaph read: "Here lies one who, against all evidence, believed humans are capable of a better world." Rewrite that into your history. Lay Hitler's ghost to rest, forever. I dare you.

—Sean Arthur Joyce, April 2007