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OPINION PAGES | GUEST OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR

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The Lamps are Going Out on Us All Now

On the 3rd of August, 1914, the British Foreign Secretary, Edward Grey, was said to have uttered a grimly prophetic remark: "The lamps are going out all over Europe, we shall not see them lit again in our life-time." Within days, the continent would be engulfed in the First World War, unleashing the nightmarish forces that still haunt our recollections of the 20th century. Those words have resonance for us on this Veteran's Day which is, after all, a continuation of the Armistice Day that marked the end of World War I. But that resonance stretches far beyond the mere commemoration of an event comfortably lodged in a previous century. The omen of August 3, 1914 applies again to us today 105 years later, across the globe, and far more horribly than even in those dark days on the eve of the Great War.

The Pandora's Box of our own era was cast open mere months ago, in August of this year. As all of you no doubt recall on the fateful 26th of the month, a historic mass deleveraging rippled through the credit markets of the United States, far worse even than the Great Depression or the debacle of 2008. Trillions in defaulted mortgage, auto, and student loans, asset values plunging in a death spiral, crippling debt deflation, the collapse of the shadow banking

system followed by its more public counterpart – our world was permanently upended that day. Yet the ordeal that now awaits us has only begun, and it is about to become much worse, incalculably so. This is why I write to you today.

What exactly happened to precipitate the events of our own cursed August, let alone why and how, remain unclear and subject to much speculation, with barely muted whisperings of manipulation or prior intent. To this day we lack even a name for the mass unraveling that unwound our world. It was clearly a calamitous financial reckoning of sorts, bearing hallmarks that bring to mind the darker predictions of the 20th century economist Irving Fisher. This "Fisher's Reckoning" may or may not have had the malign encouragement of corrupt power structures within America's social fabric; given the lack of reliable evidence on this matter, at the moment I have decided to sidestep this question and the maddening conjectures it invites. What is undeniably evident, nonetheless, is that a small yet potent oligarchy of interests was in place to exploit this catastrophe and the power vacuum it engendered. These marionette-pullers are already moving to manipulate the American public and plunge our world deeper into a chaos that would dwarf the horrors

of the prior century, and the harsh reality is that they will likely succeed. That is, unless we prepare for the coming onslaught on our collective mind and soul as a nation.

We are entering a new and dangerous phase of an ancient societal struggle – but likely not the one you have long suspected. For centuries now Americans as a whole, bound together in the main by a set of common interests, have been pitted against each other and tricked into opposing one another based on class, background, political party or ideological alignment. Yet the ageless battle for stability and reliable evidence on this matter, at the moment I have decided to sidestep this question and the justice in our world is not, and never has been, a matter of "Left" vs. "Right." Rather, it is of the people against the kleptocratic ruling classes, whose very ruthlessness and lust for control makes them an everpresent menace to seize the very power they are so incapable of wielding wisely. Moreover their strength grows in direct proportion with their capacity to keep the masses divided and off-balance, a task to which they have taken with great relish.

As my own surname might suggest, my family's origin is French, having

been invited as engineers in the early 1700s to assist the Russian Czar Peter the Great. There we remained until the Russian Revolution and the bloody purges of the Bolsheviks, fleeing to Chile where we resided for decades – only to be expelled once again at the hands of the fascist Pinochet Regime. Whether our tormentors were arbitrarily labeled as “Left” or “Right” made little difference to us or our unfortunate compatriots wasting away in the prison camps. What did matter is that we were targeted by a cabal of rent-seeking elites in both cases, an oligarchy with enough monopoly control over political and economic assets that they could parasitically exploit us for everything we had... and crush us underfoot if we resisted. (Or even if we didn't.)

So it is with the rentier class tightening its death-grip on US institutions as we speak. Hailing from well-connected financial, industrial, and political interests already in place before 2019, they have organized themselves into an assemblage of powerful “families” – only loosely related by blood – who now exercise de facto control over our country. American democracy had already been gutted for years before Fisher's Reckoning, with our Supreme Court handing the keys to the kingdom to whichever monied interests were unscrupulous enough to buy our elections and fill government posts with their willing (or at least paid-off) lapdogs. But now our elected and appointed public officials have been reduced to mere figureheads, acting at the whim of the Ruling Clans who call the shots and reap the gains; the welfare of the American people has become, at best, a mere afterthought.

The grave danger now stems from what these unchallengeable despots-in-the-making have in store for us, as they maneuver to maintain and extend their grip. Taking a page from history's demon-haunted chapters, these oligarchic, plutocratic elites will do their best to keep us divided and at each other's throats. A bevy of vulnerable groups will be targeted, with Orwellian zeal, to vent the frustrations of the hard-pressed masses and deflect public anger away from the true culprits. As it is, our minds are being kneaded and molded without our even being aware of the manipulations.

The Ruling Clans are using the desperation of the people as a catalyst to bend our will to their aims. Already the whispering campaigns have launched against convenient enemies within, coupled with exhortations to take up arms against monsters without. The world is in flames as we speak, with half a million of our soldiers already dispatched to South Midawana and the other national ephemerata that have sprung up like fragile mushrooms since August. Not unlike our world at the turn of the previous century, only this time with far deadlier consequences as war and its bloodthirsty handmaidens – famine and plague – ravage the globe.

In light of the tribulations that await us, I am unfortunately compelled to end this op-ed on a note that is, at best, ambiguous. I can only urge all of you to stiffen your resolve, to think critically, and to reject the violent temptations and deflections that are already being insinuated into your minds and hearts. To be aware of your real enemies and to see the big picture. To remember the words and message of Dietrich Bonhoeffer

– that acquiescing to the coming repression, for which you yourselves will be recruited as enforcers, will merely defer the day that the same tyranny will show up on your own doorstep. I hope that many of you will; I know that millions of you will not, and the consequences for our land will be tragic. I only ask, no matter what dark impulses are stoked within the unruly animals that still lurk beneath our civilized veneers, that you take nothing at face value now, and that you realize there is always a way back from the precipice to which you will be pushed.

This will be the last time you will be hearing from me for a while, perhaps for good. I and my family, true to the spirit of our ancestors, have once again been threatened by a ruling authority that sees us as an obstacle to their nefarious designs – something we never thought would happen in America. So it was even before this op-ed, and from now on we will be hunted. Know that wherever we are, we will be fighting and standing with you, even if you never see us. Stand tall and stay strong. Whatever is left of the hope and promise of this great nation, it now rests on your shoulders.

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