

A Paranoid's Guide to History
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Culture Division

"Does not every man love that which he deems noble and just and good, and hate the opposite of them?"-- Socrates

Twentieth Century Post Mortem

Part of the background hum of human culture has always been that we were separate from nature in very distinct and important ways. Humans believe that in a few small areas we control what happens to us; that we are not simply subject to the whims of fate or the tyranny of biology. The development of culture is the history of a species seeking to put themselves under control enough to be free. Throughout this whole time the definition of freedom has itself been elastic.

In the process of domesticating homo-sapiens human culture has become increasingly complex as it became stable and then urban. The first highly complex and hierarchical societies in the middle east, were no less intricate than ours, simply technologically enabled differently. The religious, architectural, military and economic achievements of the Sumarians, Chinese, Maya, Roman,

English and American states, enabled them to overcome their rivals, is a reflection of the means and the success by which the people were motivated into action.

The twentieth century is called the American century, but that is not really accurate. More aptly it is the "Democratic" century. The two dominant powers of the century, the United States and the Soviet Union, were the product of eighteenth century political rhetoric and nineteenth century economic practice. These were used to motivate enough people to achieve the ends of a relatively small and elite group of leaders.

Revolutionaries usually come from the middle class, sometimes they descend from the ruling class, Washington, FDR and Akhenaton for example. The capitalist and the socialist visions of the people's state and democracy were competing with each one another for resources, the technology to use them, labor and a market. The West won. Significantly once the initial period of adjustment was over, the mid-sixties, the Cold War became more stable, and the two sides began a long and slow process of mutual gravitation. They began to act and look more similar all the time. Nixon established détente with the USSR and the Chinese. The American "hard-liner" Ronald Reagan came into power not long before Soviet "reformer"

Mickel Gorbichov. The demise of the Soviet Union left the Chinese to continue the process. Look how far they have come in their adaptation of capitalist techniques and the lure of consumerism to spur their own amazing economic transformation. They have created a western-like "middle class" of about 230 million people. Yet at the same time the over all amount of oppression and violence has only become more instutialized in relation to the worst days of the cultural revolution. It is that same generation who is now in many of the positions of power in the government. Just as in America the baby boomers like Bush, Cheney and Clinton have taken over the reigns of power here. In many ways it is still the same struggle of the counter culture versus the establishment with some of the same players.

Perhaps we can take heart Socrates was the product of the demise of the Athenian "Democracy", he even fought in the Peloponnesian Wars. This was perhaps the first democracy to fall to militarism and empire. The development of the hierarchical societies the early fertile crescent groups must have developed out of nomadic hunter gatherer societies in which there was a completely different political and social structure that made its way to impressive levels of accomplishment in many fields human

endeavor. This is also true for the culture of China,
India and Mezo-America.