
OFF WITH THEIR HEADS 2.0

European nations were preoccupied battling their own people on the home front. Unemployment was double-digit in many nations. As in the US, the over-specified housing bubble had burst and the European Central Bank had spent trillions bailing out banks.

But unlike the docile US citizenry, the over-burdened Europeans – billed for the bailouts and forced to pay for them with higher taxes, lost benefits, curtailed services and cut pensions – were rising in revolt.

Anti-Austerity Protests Sweep Across Europe

BRUSSELS – European unions orchestrated a crescendo of anti-austerity protests across the continent Wednesday, sending workers ranging from Greek doctors to Spanish bus drivers to Lithuanian engineers out to vent over job cuts, higher taxes, soaring unemployment and smaller pensions.

One man even blocked the entrance to the Irish parliament with a cement truck, decrying the country's enormous bank bailouts with blood red slogans like "Toxic Bank" and "All politicians should be sacked."

Waves of demonstrators clad in bright red, green and blue union jackets marched through Brussels toward European Union buildings, aiming to reinforce the impact of Spain's first nationwide strike in eight years.

Unions estimated the turnout in Brussels at 100,000 people. Some protesters there confronted riot squads with a sit-down protest in the middle of the street. About 150 people were detained, some in scuffles with police.

Strikes or protests took place Wednesday in Greece, Portugal, Ireland, Slovenia and Lithuania, all aimed at the budget-slashing, tax-hiking, pension-cutting austerity plans that European governments have implemented to try to control their debt.

In Slovenia, thousands of public service workers continued their open-ended strike to protest the government's plan to freeze their salaries for two years – or until economy grows again at a rate of 3 percent.

Unions in Portugal expected some 30,000 people to show up for demonstrations later Wednesday. (*AP*, 29 September 2010)

Spain was paralyzed. Ten million people (70 percent of the workforce) walked off their jobs. In some sectors – mining, metal, auto manufacture, electronics, fishing – participation was nearly 100 percent.

Confirming the “Workers of the World 2.0” trend forecast by Gerald Celente in 2009, John Monks, general secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation, said: “This is the start of the fight, not the end.” (See “Workers of the World 2.0,” *Trends Journal*, Summer 2010)

What was front-page news across Europe was dutifully covered in the US, but not as a top story. It made page eight in the *Wall Street Journal* and was relegated to page six of *The New York Times*, where it was positioned below the Iran bashing banner: “U.S. Blacklists Eight Iranian Officials Over Suppressions of Demonstrators.”

The *Times*, living up to its “Toilet Paper of Record” reputation, not only downplayed the protests, but actually lied about them. Its story began: “Madrid – As thousands marched in European capitals on Wednesday ...”

In Spain alone, where the story was reported from, 10 million protested. “Thousands” is not 10 million. “Thousands” is not even 100,000.

Was the *Times* reporter in Spain drunk, blind or stoned? Or was it that the reporter or the *Times* editors deliberately low-balled the number in order to diminish the scale and significance of the demonstrations?

And even if the reporter had been drunk, blind or stoned, what about those other “European capitals” such as Brussels, for example, where an estimated 100,000 marched? An honest story would have begun: “As millions marched across Europe ...”

More than just a journalistic slip up or quibble, the way the story was placed and the way it was written is a lesson in subtle propaganda – reducing what was obviously a defining event to just another story.

WAR AND (NO) PEACE

Even when the protests were accorded the prominence that they merited, the media painted the continent-wide turmoil in monochrome as merely an anti-austerity backlash. In real time, it was a 3-D drama playing out in living color. Few, if any, noticed its other supra-economic dimensions: Revolution and War. In 2010, all the elements were in place for a 21st century sequel to the 1930’s Great Depression and World War II.

Not only was it not being recognized by the media for what it was, governments were deaf to the chants of angry crowds and, in Ireland, so blind they couldn’t see



AP Images

the cement truck smashing through the front gates of its Parliament.

In a “let them eat cake” moment, scant hours after the demonstrators cleared the streets, the Irish government fed the public the news: an additional 15 billion euros would be given to bail out the banks.

Whether in the US, UK, Europe, Iceland or Tanzania, the song was the same: “Banks Failure Would ‘Bring Down’ Ireland, Warns Finance Minister.” (*FT*, 30 September 2010)

At this juncture in the economic crisis, it wasn’t because the average Paddy might lose his deposit at Anglo Irish. No. It was another burden put on Paddy to balance books filled with toxic, non-performing loans made to real estate developers, private equity firms and assorted parasites and swindlers who had borrowed huge sums of money for risky ventures that turned rotten.

With each bailout step, tax increase, wage decrease, job lost and benefit cut, the people moved closer to revolution and the governments moved closer to martial law – while rabble-rousers beat the bushes for scapegoats to take the blame.

EXIT, STAGE RIGHT

Throughout Europe, extreme nationalist parties were gaining strength, upsetting the always precarious balance of established parties. From egalitarian Sweden, that bastion of tolerance, to open-minded Netherlands, to fashion-conscious France, to class-conscious England, to architecturally-sensitive Switzerland, Muslims were singled out for their crime rate, birth rate, abuse of the welfare state, alien customs, offensive dress, and refusal to integrate.

With 500 million EU citizens distributed over 27 coun-

tries, and freely flowing across borders, the next in line to be targeted as unwelcome were the Roma (Gypsies) who were being thrown out of France in 2010. The third group that would be told to go back where they came from were the EU's Eastern Bloc poor relations, who had been welcomed for their cheap labor during the continental building boom and in the early days of euro-phoria.

History was repeating itself (as closely as history ever repeats itself). The lyrics were different, but the tune was the same: an insurgent populist, ultra-nationalist/anti-immigration/xenophobic movement at one pole, and a resurgent workers' solidarity/anti-plutocrat movement at the other.

Yet, while the groups were at opposite ends of the political spectrum, there was common ground between them; their love of country. Right or left, both considered themselves citizens first and EU members second. Both right and left had become disillusioned with promises that a common currency, open borders and globalization would usher in an era of earning more, working less and living better.

Back in the U.S.S.A. The main issues that were driving Europeans into the streets – immigration, taxpayer-funded bailouts, rising unemployment, tax increases, falling living standards, unrestricted globalization – were also troubling to Americans. But their reaction, in comparison, was muted at best, even though, in many ways, the provocations were much worse.

Not only were the bailouts bigger, the gap between rich and poor wider, and immigration as hot a button, the US had to confront a separate set of momentous, and even more intractable problems that did not exist in Europe.

Trillions of US taxpayer dollars were being squandered on ruinous wars and a ravenous defense industry. America's infrastructure was rotting and antiquated. Road repairs that used to be finished in months now took years. Rail and metro systems were a century behind the times. Many of its inner cities and older cities had become decaying wastelands.

And while Americans may have disparaged Europe's welfare nanny states, the reality was that while an uninsured and out of work Joe Sixpack was out of luck, on the street and on his own, his European counterpart was still being covered.

Yet it was the Europeans who were protesting in the streets by the millions, while the best that Americans could seem to do was hold a Tea Party. With so much at stake and losing so much, what was holding them back? What happened to that rebellious Yankee spirit? (See pg. 21, "What's Holding Americans Back?")



Laura Martin

Road work that took weeks now took months

It had been tamed, tempered, legislated into quiescence, and Executive-Ordered into submission, yet it had not been fully extinguished. In 2009, a spark of revolution was reignited under the same rallying cry that set off the first American Revolution: no taxation without representation. The Tea Party was born.

The trend had been long in the making. But typical of the media, if they didn't see it coming, didn't like it, or didn't understand it, a trend can't be taken seriously. The media's initial reaction to the Tea Party/tax protests was mostly mockery.

TEA TIME

By 2010, all those media commentators that didn't see the movement coming and made fun of it when it came, became instant-Tea connoisseurs. By September, with midterm elections nearing, and Tea Party candidates stealing the spotlight, America was drowning in Tea.

It was the talk of talk radio. Tea made the cover of *Time*. Barely a broadcast second went by on cable without some pundit panel, party operative, or opinionator weighing in and waxing on about every flavor nuance of the latest tempest in the Tea Party.

With election hopes and fears running high, the outcome was being ballyhooed in advance as "historic." With Tea Party candidates in the running, supporters believed that the victory of even a few would usher in a whole new era of "change they could believe in."

However, at the other end of the political spectrum, opponents painted the very varied assortment of Tea Party candidates with a single brush: as an unruly band of unhinged, radical nuts who, if elected, would plunge the na-

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tion into an irrevocable downward spiral.

What would Congress look like with the Democratic Senate majority leader pushed from his perch by a Tea Party upstart? Or the House once again spoken for by a conservative Republican Speaker?

Countless pundit hours were spent dissecting the candidates and speculating what it would mean if who won what. Nevertheless, well before the Election Day results were in, whoever won, it was clear that the voters would lose.

- The wars, initiated by Republicans and ramped up by Democrats, would be continued.
- The failed economic policies dictated by the Federal Reserve (flooding the markets with cheap money, interest rates near zero) would be continued.
- Tax loopholes, token financial regulations, ruinous free-trade policies would be continued.
- The endless debates and empty promises to create new jobs would be continued.
- The promises to hunt down terrorists, bring them justice and win the “War on Terror” without ever winning it, would be continued.
- Debate about how best to protect the environment, while permitting friends (i.e., campaign contributors) to ravage it, would be continued.

- Middle East Peace Talks that never bring peace would be continued.
- The abrogation of Constitutional Rights, engineered by both parties over the past three Administrations, would be continued ... even though there were few left to abrogate.

Nevertheless, the liberals and progressives were terrified at the prospect of losing everything they had worked so hard not to get.

In 2010, regardless of who won or lost, Tea Partiers or Party faithful, it would do nothing to disrupt the course set by the two-headed, one-party system. Indeed, early on the Tea Party itself had been hijacked by a wing of the Republican Party. Most of the Tea Party candidates’ victories would come at the expense of Republican stalwarts. Once again proving that politics makes for strange bedfellows, as Election Day neared, deals had already been cut to “normalize” Tea Partiers back into the Republican fold. (See above, “Wimpocrats Cry Over Tea”)

HEADS THEY WIN — TAILS YOU LOSE

Anyone not suffering from Alzheimer’s should have remembered they had seen this same show many times before. There was no excuse not to know that whoever got elected, nothing of consequence would be done differently. How many more political promises had to go unfulfilled before people understood that they would always go unfulfilled as long as the current system was in place?