

Daily Meditation 10-27-25

Big But Quiet News Buried Behind the News of White House Rubble

Good morning.

In today's daily meditation, we've covered a number of topics, each of them very serious. Let me just begin with a little embellishment about the movie I refer to, about *Truth and Treason*. Again, I recommend it very highly. It's so timely, it's very well done, and it's historically based, for sure.

And especially pertinent, I think, given the revelations this last week of many young people, young leaders of the Republican Party, being recorded saying such things as "I Love Hitler." And one of the President's nominees for an important position of the DOJ saying, "I have a streak of fascism in me, or Nazism in me." These are serious revelations. Now, a number of these people who were caught on camera, so to speak, have been demoted. But they represent pockets all around the country.

So all the more reason that a movie like this that tells us the truth about what's going on behind the scenes of fascism -- fascism by its very definition, is violent. Indeed, Susan Sontag defines fascism as institutional violence. Institutional violence. It's violence going on with the institutional front controlling it. And this movie is so powerful because it's so real. But it shows the violence going on in the hidden police headquarters and prisons under Nazism.

And outside everything seems to be normal. People are going to work, coming home from work, etc., but people are also being kidnapped and hijacked, including a friend who is one-quarter Jewish, of the 16-year-old whose pastor really radicalized him, if you will. That really calls him to question the whole system: that, and being in church and learning what Jesus was teaching about telling the truth, about being the truth. And he tried to get his pastor, who was a bishop, to acknowledge the truth. But instead the pastor was enabling, ennobling, praising Hitler, in between the services, etc.

This is very real. Christianity failed millions and millions and millions of people in the time of Nazism. There were some like Dietrich Bonhoeffer and others, some priests also, who stood up and spoke out, and paid an ultimate price.

But is that kind of courage alive and well in America today? In the Republican Party? Among congressmen and senators, too afraid to lose their job, to speak the truth, even when the President is tearing down structures such as the White House, a big chunk of the White House? Barely a cricket sound can be heard.

And as Thom Hartmann so richly laid out, “The coup that finally worked,” how Mike Johnson as Speaker of the House doing something thoroughly illegal by not calling the House of Representatives together to do its job, and of course, solely because the commander in chief does not want that to happen. He says, *What Johnson has pulled off is a procedural coup. He and Trump now control whether Congress exists at all. His keeping the House in recess concentrates extraordinary power in the Speaker’s office and, by extension, in Donald Trump, whose direction Johnson slavishly follows.*

As a theologian, I have to note that Johnson wears his so-called Christianity on his sleeve, always bragging about it. “Behind sentimentalism lies violence.” Behind sentimentalism lies violence. Carl Jung said that. And I’ve written about it, and drawn on other sources that demonstrates the same thing. Christian nationalism is not Christian. It’s violence.

Says Thom Hartmann, *Without ever proclaiming it out loud, Mike Johnson has accomplished what open insurrection never could: the methodical, bureaucratic nullification of Congress itself, eliminating its ability to perform oversight over Trump. He has turned the Republic into a kingdom, coupled with a massive new throne room. Before our very eyes, the massive new throne room is the ballroom project so dear to the President’s agenda.*

But as Hartmann points out, all this is directly contrary to those who created what was in its time, a very unique democratic experiment, a unique constitution. According to James Madison, *No political truth is of greater intrinsic value, or is stamped with the authority of more enlightened patrons of liberty: that is, the accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary in the same hands, may justly be pronounced the very definition*

of tyranny. The very definition of tyranny, when legislative, executive, and judiciary power are in the same hands. That's James Madison in Federalist Papers 47.

And Thomas Jefferson, Federalist Papers 48: All the powers of government, legislative, executive, and judiciary result to the legislative body. The concentrating of these in the same hands is precisely the definition of despotic government. Despotic government, an elective despotism, was not the government we fought for. This is Thomas Jefferson. For one which the government should be so divided and balanced among several bodies. And now just to see is that no one could transcend their legal limits without being effectively checked and restrained by the others.

That check, that restraint has been removed. And in this sense, Thom Hartmann says, the coup has finally worked, the coup that tried on January 6, 2021, to take over the legislative ballot about dimension in Congress by invading various spaces and threatening Congress people with their lives. That coup, Thom Hartmann feels, has now succeeded through bureaucracy and through the acquiescence of Speaker Mike Johnson - *- but also all those who are participating, including the Supreme Court, in pouring all the powers of our democracy into the White House.*

A White House that is being literally disrupted and dismembered with no checks and balances itself, and no responding to the critics, architectural and otherwise. This "big, beautiful ballroom," so-called, is going to be almost twice the size of the White House itself. So it's going to lord-over this lost history.

And there too, we call on this archeologist who has worked around the sites that were destroyed by ISIS in Syria and Iraq. And as he says, *Behind this destruction of historic buildings, in the spirit of disregarding the past and those who came before, saying, if we don't like something, we erase it. Party lines matter more than history. We'll erase the past to paint one side of our story. That is exactly what ISIS did, says this archeologist. The White House doesn't belong to Donald Trump. It's a federal building, a taxpayer building, belonging to the American people. What he's doing is horrific, and done without any oversight or acknowledgement from the bodies that should oversee this. This kind of presidential obsession amounts to a tyrannical destruction, very parallel to what he has seen where ISIS, another body of institutionalized violence, took over.*

So we have examples now, from Germany of the 30s, and from ISIS in our time. And how much longer can half the country keep its head in the sand, and one entire political party?

Thank you. We'll see you next week.