

## **Conspiracy fact vs. conspiracy theory**

**By Carla Binion**

May 1, 2001—There have been actual conspiracies in this country, as we all know. Watergate, Iran-contra, BCCI, the savings and loan scandal, Iraq-gate, Cointelpro, and the CIA's drugs-for-weapons trade are all examples of actual conspiracies. They're all a matter of public record, most of them investigated by congressional committees.

In "Goebbels and mind control, part three," we talked about the fact that social problems, such as poverty, the lack of affordable health care, and an inequitable tax system, are not the result of just one aberrant conspiracy. Instead, they are natural outcomes of a system whose central goal is the accumulation of wealth and power for the few.

That central goal is the main impetus behind many of the genuine conspiracies. Politicians might talk about education, health care and social security. However, for many politicians, the top priority is seeing that the very few, who own vast amounts of wealth, get their interests served ahead of 99 percent of the rest of the population . . . far ahead.

In order for the few to keep expanding their wealth, they seek to control public dissent. Corporations try to undermine environmentalists, civil rights workers and labor in ways we examined in the series on Goebbels and mind control. "The people" and our discontent are often described by the ruling class and their think-tanks as threats to be "managed" rather than as fellow human beings with valid points to make.

For example, in "The Crisis of Democracy," (a report prepared by three social scientists on behalf of a right-wing think-tank) Samuel Huntington warned there was an "excess of democracy" in this country, which he described as a dangerous increase in egalitarianism and a "democratic distemper." Huntington argued that inflation, unemployment and other problems could best be solved by less, not more, democracy. (Bertram Gross, "Friendly Fascism," South End Press, 1980.)

Do the very wealthy ever seek to maintain their power through conspiracy? In "Land Of Idols," (St. Martin's Press, 1994) Michael Parenti offers "alternatives" to conspiracy theory:

- (1) Somnambulist Theory: The wealthiest 1 percent sleepwalk through life, never giving a thought to their vast wealth or how to keep it.
- (2) Coincidence Theory: Things repeatedly happen by chance in ways that magically maintain the interests of the very wealthy, year after year.

- (3) Stupidity Theory: The very rich are befuddled, incompetent and ineffectual. They just don't know how they keep that power.
- (4) Spontaneity or Idiosyncrasy Theory: Stuff happens (in a way that keeps the system in place.) Again and again. Over long periods of time.
- (5) Aberration Theory: Dirty tricks of the CIA and so forth are "atypical departures" from the norm.

The above theories would have us believe our inequitable tax system, corporate-owned media, unjust social conditions and other wrongful policies are momentary aberrations, isolated from the central goal of our political system. Again, that goal is protecting the money and power of the wealthiest 1percent.

Parenti points out that the wealthiest 1 percent naturally defend their interests, just as farmers or steelworkers defend theirs. He quotes a corporate executive voicing typical ruling class self-interest at a meeting of his colleagues, "The have-nots are gaining steadily more political power to distribute the wealth downward. The masses have turned to a larger government." Another executive said, "If we don't take action now, we will see our own demise. We will evolve into another social democracy." (Leonard Silk and David Vogel, "Ethics and Profits: The Crisis of Confidence in American Business.")

Conspiracy fact is harder to deal with than conspiracy theory, because it shows us that something is fundamentally wrong with a political system whose central goal is the accumulation of wealth and power for the very few. (I'm repeating that central goal deliberately, because it is vital to keep in mind as we look at every sub-topic.) As one example, it's a matter of public record that a number of wars have been waged and insurrections suppressed with the help of the Central Intelligence Agency, (CIA) for the purpose of increasing profits or protecting markets for the wealthy. Most of the CIA's covert actions have been conspiracies by definition.

For example, a Contra-era CIA training manual, "Psychological Operations in Guerilla Warfare," reads: "It is possible to neutralize carefully selected and planned targets, such as court judges, mesta judges, police and state security officials, CDS chiefs, etc. For psychological purposes it is necessary to take extreme precautions . . . The mission to replace the individual should be followed by: Extensive explanation within the population affected of the reason why it was necessary for the good of the people." (David McGowan, "Derailing Democracy: The America The Media Don't Want You To See," Common Courage Press, 2000.)

An earlier CIA training manual, "A Study of Assassinations," reads: "No assassination instruction should ever be written or recorded . . . The simplest local tools are often the most efficient means of assassination . . . anything hard, heavy and handy will suffice . . . The most efficient accident . . . is a fall of 75 feet or more onto a hard surface . . . Falls before trains and subway cars are usually effective, but require exact timing . . . assassinations can seldom be employed with a clear conscience. Persons who are morally squeamish should not attempt it." (McGowan, "Derailing Democracy.")

In his 1995 book, “The Twilight Of Democracy,” former CIA political analyst Patrick E. Kennon argues that democracy is a failure, and that only well-trained technocrats are qualified to run the country. He claims that voters and our elected officials are too ignorant to question bureaucratic experts or contribute to decision-making. The problem is, the technocrats often give us the kinds of anti-ethics “solutions” recommended in the above CIA training manual excerpts.

Today we have a president who was appointed instead of democratically elected. His team of well-trained technocrats run the country on behalf of the wealthiest 1 percent, with little regard for the other 99 percent of us. This is not a result of any one aberrant conspiracy, but is the rational outcome of a political system that exists to protect the wealth and power of the few at the expense of the many.

What we are living with today is the result of money-and-power run amok. It’s a political system that has gradually inched away from its stated purpose of government instituted “of, by and for the people,” toward a system aimed at fleecing the people, with no annoying “moral squeamishness” to interfere. There have been many actual conspiracies along the road from the former system to the latter.

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