

OCCASION FOR THOUGHT

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# REPORT ON OBAMA

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Part Two

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## THE TRUTH NO LONGER *ALLOWED*? THE CANDIDATES AREN'T— WHAT THEY *ARE*?

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Brickbats and rotten tomatoes, slings and arrows, tight-lipped demands to be removed at *once* from my email list—I find it no fun to be so disliked, but even less fun to be so betrayed by a nation that looks at one thing and sees another, then blames the likes of me just because I look at something and see—well, what's *there*.

People seem to think it little short of criminal that I'm not "ecstatic" about Obama—or a notion even more absurd—they seem to think that if I'm not ecstatic about Obama, then I must be *for* McCain and The Dumb Ditz.

Good god, people of this lost nation: *Get a grip!*

Lost or not, I do know that we're not a *reading* nation, and I have a powerful sense that most of the people whom I send my stuff to—well, they tend not to read the *essays* that the email is there to *introduce* them to, and I even wonder how many of them even read the email but content themselves with a quick eye-job at the subject line and then call it a day.

Well, who am I to complain? I mean, this is the age of the internet, right? Pushy of me to send the stuff out in any case. And double-pushy to expect everybody to *read* it.

And yet, *on the other hand*, ahem, ahem. What if some of the people who *didn't* read the essay, and who *didn't* read the email, but who read *only the subject line* (“REPORT ON OBAMA: GOD HELP US”) before sending pitchforks and cats’ claws my way—well, if any readers out there *are* people like that, I think they owe it to me *and* to themselves either to read every word of the email (essay schmessay) *very carefully or* write in for a return of your pitchforks and olive pits. One or the other.

For the moment, however, here’s what I propose. I propose reproducing that email here and using it to show all those who hooted me down for not worshipping Obama just *why* it seems to me impossible to worship him. Go ahead and vote for him if that’s your decision. But *please*, at least *know what you’re doing!*

Okay. Here’s the email:

To: ericlarsen@ericlarsen.net  
 From: Eric Larsen <ericlarsen@ericlarsen.net>  
 Date: September 5, 2008  
 Subject: REPORT ON OBAMA: GOD HELP US  
 Cc:

Dear Readers of [A Nation Gone Blind](#), Other Recipients, Writers, Thinkers, Patriots, Friends:

By now you’ve most likely been treated to way too many preposterously enormous images of Insane McCain and Tootsie, the Moose-Killer. The producers of those gargantuan pictures hope that media saturation—godawful metaphor—will make people just forget about Obama and Michelle and—well, all the hype that came from THAT party.

No such luck, at least not for me. I’ve got Obama on the brain—but not in the way such a statement might make it sound. No, I’ve been reading news analysis and commentary, not listening to NPR or watching TV (but then I’m sure YOU haven’t been doing those things either).

But I’ve been reading Black Agenda Report and its editor Glen Ford’s [Cynthia McKinney Deserves Your Support, Obama Does Not](#) (Sample: “Surely no one with a brain any longer believes that Obama is a closet progressive, or even a genuine liberal.”)

And Cynthia McKinney’s own [It’s Time for Real Change: How the Democrats Helped Bush Hijack the Country](#) (Sample: “Our country has been hijacked and the Democrats have proven themselves to have been in on the plan.”)

And Michel Chossudovsky’s [The Democrats endorse the Global War on Terrorism: Obama goes after Osama](#)” (Sample: “Obama’s American Promise is War.”)

And Webster G. Tarpley’s book on the candidate, [Obama, the Postmodern Coup](#) (Sample One: “Obama. . . represents the most ambitious and dangerous covert operation by the combined forces of the intelligence community since 9/11.” Sample Two: “Obama’s striking ability to transform anti-war left liberals into ferocious backers of war with

Sudan, with Pakistan, and with China gives some idea of why Obama has been chosen by the Trilaterals to mobilize the United States for total war.”)

According to all these writers and analysts—and to [Sean M. Madden](#), too—we’ve really, really, been snookered. Had. Screwed. Skinned and nailed to the wall.

Why? How? Well, Paul Craig Roberts says something about that in his recent “[War With Russia Is On the Agenda](#).” What he’s got to say is that “Americans have become perfect subjects for George Orwell’s Big Brother. They sit stupidly in front of the TV news or the *New York Times* or *Washington Post* and absorb the lies fed to them. What is wrong with Americans? Why do they put up with it? Are Americans the nation of sheep that Judge Andrew P. Napolitano says they are? Americans flaunt ‘freedom and democracy’ and live under a Ministry of Propaganda.”

As you probably know, I think Roberts is dead on. And so I’m hoping to look into the Obama phenomenon in “[REPORT ON OBAMA](#).” I expect it may run to three or four installments. Here’s the first: “[OBAMA RECEIVES DEMOCRATIC NOMINATION: GOD HELP US](#).”

I hope you’ll [read it](#). And I hope all of us will survive four more years of what looks increasingly like the political-cultural equivalent of a slaughter-house with bunker busters hidden inside every carcass. Read Glen Ford, and seriously consider, as he suggests, sending money to Cynthia McKinney’s candidacy for President. She’s all we’ve got.

[Eric Larsen](#)



There we are. Now, let’s take a look at what some of the writers and analysts under all those URL links are actually *like* and what they’re actually *saying*. It’s the only fair, intellectually responsible, and adult thing to do, don’t you think?

After all, Obama-mania is not a good thing *unless* the candidate is the biggest trickster and disguise-artist of the century and plans once in office to do *totally otherwise* than he now says he’ll do. On the other hand, if he’s being *honest*, if he *means* what he says, an Obama presidency would bring no improvement over, say, a *Cheney* presidency.

Now, what’s to look forward to about *that*?

In the email, I said that “I’ve been reading *Black Agenda Report* and its editor Glen Ford’s “[Cynthia McKinney Deserves Your Support, Obama Does Not](#).” I gave the sample of Ford saying in that essay that “Surely no one with a brain any longer believes that Obama is a closet progressive, or even a genuine liberal.”

I admit that Ford’s line taken alone may sound a bit like mud splatting onto a flat surface. But that’s *my* fault, not Ford’s, for quoting the line by itself. Let me assure you that Glen Ford is *in no way* shallow, mean-spirited, quick on the trigger, or anything other than a *widely* experienced, deeply observant, enormously thoughtful, intellectually solid reporter, writer, and analyst. Don’t take *my* word for it. Read here [about him and others of his \*Black Agenda Report\* staff](#) and find out for yourself.

Anything else would be irresponsible. *Wouldn't* it.

Okay, now that you know who Glen Ford *is* (and now that you've signed up, like me, to [send in five bucks to BAR each month](#)), let's see a bit more of the quality and depth of his *writing* and therefore of his observing and his *thinking*.

Ford wrote these words over two months ago, in early July, and if anyone can show them any less accurate or valid now than they were when written, I'll give *them* five bucks. Ford writes that "The list of qualifiers and impediments to a quick exit from Iraq lengthens with each Obama lurch to the Right." He then says of such "qualifiers," "Most important [is that ]

the U.S. must emerge from the withdrawal (or reduction, or draw-down, or other conjure-word) in a position of "respect"—a total impossibility, unless respect actually means evoking terror throughout the neighborhood at the very thought of ever again provoking the Americans into violating the laws of modern civilization.

And he continues, putting Obama's performance in a broader context of deception:

Such is the endless elasticity of terms like "peace" and "withdrawal" when mouthed by Barack Obama, a master of bait-and-switch, a game he apparently believes he can play indefinitely on the people of the United States and the planet. The general debasement of language in the U.S. political culture—a degeneration that devalues meaning and facts, cause and effect, in favor of bells, whistles, hype and prettily-packaged but hollow "hope"—provides a perfect soundstage for Obama's politics of vapidness, in which no term has reliable, lasting definition. Only in a flim-flam market culture, in which old products are packaged as "new and improved" and senile reactionary farts like Ronald Reagan are deemed "revolutionaries," could Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton and Democratic congressional leadership masquerade as proponents of peace—even as virtually the entire senatorial Party endorses another \$162.5 billion for [Iraq-Afghanistan war funding](#).

The double-talk—as in the U.S. at large—is everywhere in Obama's candidacy:

Obama is confident he can retain the "peace candidate" label while erecting successive obstacles to actual, physical withdrawal from Iraq, and while simultaneously pledging to add [92,000 troops](#) to the U.S. Armed Forces in order "to fight two wars and defend our homeland." His confidence is well-placed, not just because he is the [Big Money Candidate](#) in the current historical shift of corporate dollars from Republicans to Democrats—money that *buys* a mass version of reality—but because generations of two-party homogenized gibberish has rendered millions of Americans incapable of distinguishing between fact and fantasy, between waging war and pursuing peace.

On the other hand, Ford continues, "The true voices of peace speak clearly, in simple language. 'The U.S. should withdraw all troops and mercenaries from Iraq in as orderly a fashion as possible,' says former Georgia congresswoman Cynthia McKinney, candidate for [now nominee of] the Green Party's presidential nomination."

When McKinney speaks, she speaks with

No flim-flam, no equivocations, no inventing of excuses to prolong the crime against peace (a Nuremberg capital offense). McKinney speaks as both a former U.S. Representative and a movement activist, one of the architects of the Reconstruction Party's Power to the People Platform, which declares:

“We need an end to all wars and occupations by U.S. forces, including in Iraq and Afghanistan. We need an immediate cessation of funding for war. We need prosecution for all individuals guilty of violating the law, including having committed or authorized crimes against humanity, crimes against the peace, torture, or war crimes. We need a complete renunciation of the pre-emptive war doctrine. We need an end to all wars and war's utility. We need to dismantle the apparatus that implements schemes of regime change around the world, and that instead assists in self-determination of all peoples.”

So cynical are we, so jaundiced, so thoroughly *propagandized*, and so deeply *indoctrinated* into adopting those qualities of cynicism and jaundice as the only true or adult or “responsible” or “realistic” way of seeing life, or of seeing the actual nature of life in the world—so depraved as we all been made by the apparatus of the American media, the American propaganda machine that's everywhere—in the media, in the schools, in the universities—*that we no longer give credit to plain talk as a true, viable, or even respectable means of expression.*

And that's the truth that lay beneath Glen Ford's own words when he said earlier not only that “money. . . *buys* a mass version of reality” but that “generations of two-party homogenized gibberish has rendered millions of Americans incapable of distinguishing between fact and fantasy, between waging war and pursuing peace,” in great part because those “generations of two-party gibberish” *couldn't have taken place or even existed* if Americans hadn't *already* been turned into cynical and jaundiced—however *superficial* within their cynicism and jaundice doesn't matter—non-thinkers, non-readers, non-judgers, and, in short, into compliant dupes *destined* to live lives of the damned and the betrayed.

Yes, betrayed. *Blind* and betrayed. Betrayed into *repudiating* what's honest and plain, and into *embracing* what's fraudulent, fancy, empty, and fake. Glen Ford again:

The platform on which McKinney runs is straightforward, eminently understandable, and in conformance with the substance and spirit of international law. It is what Barack Obama used to *pretend* to say, in front of progressive audiences, only without his mitigating language designed for ease of reversal—commonly called flip-flop, but more accurately, betrayal—terms that ultimately smother peace in a pillow of words like “respectable, responsible and honorable.”

This is how Obama uses his impressive language skills: to lure constituencies that seek peace into the maelstroms of war; to assault the integrity of language itself with his relentless tinkering with meanings, until finally, his original peaceful promises turn into their warlike opposites.

It seems to me that Glen Ford, in his impassioned essay, sees and speaks and spells out nothing more nor less than the truth. And how extraordinarily painful it is to

hear truth of this kind—so painful that Americans by the million simply *refuse* to listen, *pretend* they can't hear, or blind themselves into the absurd belief that in spite of what he *says*, Obama is different *underneath* the words, or that he'll reveal his *true* self and agenda once he's safely in office, or. . . .

Glen Ford won't stand for it.

He tells us that “On not one major foreign policy front does Obama any longer advocate positions consistent with peaceful planetary development. Not one!” And he's right.

And in plain language he counsels us about those now lost virtues of principle and honor:

If progressives cannot bring themselves to vote honorably, they can at the very least go to McKinney's <http://votetruth08.com/> campaign site and send money. Even a little principled behavior is better than none at all.

## 2

If I were to write and publish *A Nation Gone Blind* again now, it would be necessary to give it the title *A Nation Gone Mad*. Insane. Mad in a way far from entirely unrelated to the nature of the madness that Paul Levy identifies and describes so well—and passionately—in his essential book, [\*The Madness of George W. Bush: A Reflection of our Collective Psychosis\*](#) (you can read about Levy's ideas on this supremely important subject [in article form here](#)).

Levy, like with Walter A. Davis in his [\*Death's Dream Kingdom: The American Psyche Since 9/11\*](#), has a complex and penetrating psychological knowledge and understanding that allows him to discuss and describe the nation's madness on every level from the simple experience of daily life on down to the deepest symbolic levels of the unconscious self—and to make clear what the relationship between them is, as opposed to what that relationship must *become* if we're to survive as a nation that's anything other than sickly, diseased, and ruinously—*uncontrollably*—destructive.

I have neither the psychological training nor the vocabulary of a thinker like Paul Levy, but I'm convinced enough of the accuracy and *importance* of his work to make this flat-out statement: *Anyone* who's leaning toward a vote for Obama, and *everyone* who's committed to a vote for Obama, should read [\*The Madness of George W. Bush\*](#) without delay. Immediately. If this wish that everyone read the book is a pipe-dream, so be it. In fact, I'm sure it *is* a pipe-dream, but I'll go on wishing and thinking it anyway. And I'll add this to it: *Anyone* committed to, or leaning toward, or in the most, most distant realm of possibility even so much as *entertaining* the notion that he or she *might* vote for McCain and the Moose-Killer-in-the-Mini-Skirt—all such people [must read Paul Levy before November fourth](#).

Oh, sure. Fat chance. Larsen, be *reasonable*.<sup>1</sup> After all, what do you suppose most people voting for McCain and the Moose-Killer are likely to read *at all* between now and November? Or *ever*?

Get a *grip*, old man.

All right. But what about decay, madness, blindness *elsewhere* in the population? What about decay, madness, and blindness in the *upper* reaches of the population? What about decay, madness, and blindness in the *intellectual, academic, and artistic* reaches of the population?

We're doomed *there* too, so far as I can tell. Maybe even *particularly* there. I got a drop-me-from-your-list letter from a nationally known teacher-writer who, many years ago, I'd known fairly well. This is another person of high intellectual stature and intensive professional training—like [the person back last spring](#) whose response to the [NYC 9/11 Ballot Initiative](#) tumbled me into despair. *That* person had written me this:

As for the ballot initiative. . . . I can not sign the petition. If the investigative commission—whoever or whatever it is—finds no conspiracy, the conspiracy theorists will add that finding to the conspiracy. . . [sic] and so it goes with such theories. . . [sic] everything becoming grist for the mill.

And in turn, *I* wrote, in "[Frank Rich, Arianna Huffington, & Dwight Garner Are Liars, Deceivers, And Traitors \(Part One\)](#)" this of *her*:

This adult, professional, practicing American literary intellectual, in other words, can't or won't be bothered so much as to glance [at a web site](#) before slurring "whoever it is" she'd find out about there. Slur first, do your homework second. No. Correction: Do your homework not at all. This kind of prideful, blind, cavalier bigotry is all too often met and expected in some of the lowlier regions of our graceless and anti-educated so-called society. But to find it in the most *highly* educated and most thoroughly trained is to despair at once of the American character *and* of American education.

As for the example that came more recently, on the heels of "[Report on Obama, Part One](#)," I don't know whether the person who wrote me was someone who'd read only the subject line of my email, or who'd read subject line *and* the email, or who'd read the subject line, the email, *and* the essay. Nor am I likely ever to find out. This person, whom I once knew, as I said, fairly well, introduced his letter with the sentence, "You and I have been friends for a long time." His closing, however, reverted to a stiff, "Sincerely," followed by both his first *and* last names.

Whoosh, pretty formal, don't you think, for an old pal, someone I've been "friends" with "for a long time." But you do have to understand that this person *is* a

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<sup>1</sup> VLADIMIR: "I'm beginning to come round to that opinion. All my life I've tried to put it from me, saying, Vladimir, be reasonable. . ." (Samuel Beckett, [http://samuel-beckett.net/Waiting\\_for\\_Godot\\_Part1.html](http://samuel-beckett.net/Waiting_for_Godot_Part1.html) *Waiting for Godot*, Act 1)

“professor,” and that that estimable title *does* tend to go to a person’s head—that is, to the head of the person whose title it is—in backwoods America (which, I come more and more to believe, is the absolute and complete entirety of all American territory).

Further, this poor professor has been blessed with great laurels, and that undoubtedly can’t help. My old friend wrote that he “[knew] a thing or two about climbing mountains against long odds.” Why? Well, having worked for a living, having also had a family, *and* having been granted acclaim—this achieving of success against “long odds” made him feel parallel to Obama, though in no way equal. He himself had, “in a much more modest way than [Obama], lived the audacity of hope.” Making sure that I not miss his intensity of purpose in using that line, he added that “It’s not a catch phrase. It is real, and it belongs to rare, wonderful people like [Obama] in far greater measure than it belongs to me.”

The words that raise an alert, of course, are “rare” and “wonderful.” You might ask how so powerful or emotional a sense of association as this between my old friend and Obama began. The answer, apparently, is that, all the way back in *college*, my friend “roomed across the hall from Barack Obama’s future brother-in-law.”

Oh.

Like Obama, my one-time friend also went to law school and afterward, for a time, practiced law. He thus assures me that, as a result,

I think I know something about the caliber of mind required to become Editor-in-Chief of the Harvard Law Review. I assure you, it takes a degree of brilliance that neither you nor I possess.

Shall we let the insult go? I don’t know how much my old friend does or doesn’t know about his own “degree of brilliance,” but I’d thank him kindly to keep his mitts off mine unless he can demonstrate that he knows what he’s talking about. Does anyone doubt that in days of old, *duels* might have been fought over presumptions or insults less than that one? But, it needs no saying, that’s hardly the point. The point is that the writer of the drop-me letter *would appear to have no idea of what he’s saying*.

Or, more important still, of what he’s *not* saying. That is, the most interesting thing about the letter is that *it’s devoid of any political content whatsoever*. It argues that Obama is brilliant. It argues that his *character* is good, then sums up with the assertion that

Barack Obama has more brains, heart, and spirit than I will ever have on my best day. I deem him, in every sense, the best hope for our country.

The statement, like the letter, is in no way political, but, instead, it’s in *every* way reverential unto the near-idolatrous. What, one may justly ask, does Obama’s being *smart* have to do, per se, with the worthiness of his candidacy? It’s perfectly possible that he *is* “the best hope for our country.” But in a country as far advanced toward death and ruin as

ours is, that very possibly about the same as saying that a single drop of rain after a five-year drought is the best hope for our land. It's our best hope, but what is *that* saying?

Do you suppose that Obama-mania exists not only in the realms of young girls not yet out of college or barely out or maybe not even *aimed* there, but that it exists also all the way up through the population to the level of highly trained professionals, whether academic or otherwise? Do you suppose that people really will vote for Obama with their eyes closed to everything political, however wide-open they may "be" toward everything *personal*? If people are going to do that, isn't it correct and fair, then, to call them *blind*? And what would such people answer if you drew their attention to writers like Glen Ford—as I tried to do in my email? Would they simply dismiss Glen Ford's arguments and examples showing that "On not one major foreign policy front does Obama any longer advocate positions consistent with peaceful planetary development. Not one!"? What would they say if they themselves couldn't come up with even *one*? Would Obama still be our "best hope"? And if so, would he or would he not be like the single raindrop after five years of drought?

I have no intention of even *trying* to answer that question. But I have every intention of wondering out loud what on earth it is that people are *thinking* when they continue to behave as though there really *were* a two-party system in the U.S. Skip this if you feel like it, but I'm going to quote at some length here from an article by Timothy V. Gatto, "[The Issues and the Constitution Obama Ignores](#)," dated August 29, 2008.

Here's how it opens:

I am sick to death of the Democratic Convention and all that they have brought to the table in their feeble attempt to show that they are worth considering in this election. They have dodged the questions about the loss of our civil liberties, proposed different battlefields instead of ending these wars that have destroyed America's credibility and wrecked our economy. In this war of words for the votes that will put them in power, these Democrats have failed to address the true concerns of those whom they court. They have played the corporate-controlled media games that are supposed to enable the American people to become a "knowledgeable, well-informed electorate". This has resulted in the nomination of people that don't have the American people's best interests at heart.

The truth is that the Convention in Denver shows us how gullible and naïve the majority of Democrats really are. It sickens me to see tears streaming down the faces of people that honestly believe that the first African-American to seek the nation's highest office is something grand, something that will help heal the scars of racial intolerance and bigotry. While the nomination of an African-American is long overdue, to see these people put their dreams and aspirations into the hands of a corporate controlled, shameless sociopath that has turned his back on old friends and colleagues in order to seek higher office is enough to put tears on the face of many Americans. The tears I speak of are not the tears that come from joy and hope, but they are tears of anger and disillusionment that come from seeing how this man can use the hope of the people's desire for change, into a tool that he can wield to suit his own agenda.

What is that agenda? I don't believe that there is anyone that can answer that question. I don't believe that Mr. Obama can answer that question himself. In the beginning of this, during the primaries, he seemed to desire an end to America's military

adventure in Iraq that has caused, directly and indirectly, the deaths of over 1.2 million Iraqi men, women and children. We see that now he wants to shift the war to Afghanistan and increase the size of the military by 65,000 soldiers. Where is the peace candidate that debated with the likes of Dennis Kucinich and Mike Gravel along with Chris Dodd? Was this just a tactic? If this was just a tactic, should the Democrats that believed in his rhetoric forgive him because he did it out of political expediency and that this is “just how the game is played”? In fact, is this just all a big game, a kind of national spectacle that we participate in every four years just so we can pretend that we actually have the power to change this nation’s direction?

*There’s* writing about *politics* for you. *There’s* writing that’s built out of brick and mortar, out of actual facts, out of concrete political questions, and out of *politically central ideas*. I wish I knew, of all the people who have written “drop-me” letters over the past two-and-a-half years, how many knew *anything* about the subjects or issues I’d written about that they’d found sufficiently contemptible or offensive to want to quit hearing about them. My guess? Pretty close to zero.

It’s difficult either to understand or believe how ignorant and uninformed Americans are—and how ignorant and uninformed they have been purposely made and kept. If there are readers still with me who disbelieve the truth of what I’m suggesting, I wish they’d [get themselves to the reading page](#), incomplete as it is, and start on their educations. Time is short, haste essential. As another means of expediting this necessary education, I have prepared a page consisting solely of [links to valuable articles](#) written by unimpeachably perceptive, conscience-driven, and truth-seeking authors, prominent among them but not alone Timothy M. Gatto, a writer whom I think everyone interested in the truth, however grim it be, should follow and follow [closely](#).

In fact, let’s follow him a little bit further right now. “Let me take a moment,” he writes, “to address the questions that haven’t been asked [of Obama]. Whether these questions should have been asked or not, I’ll leave up to you. I put these questions before you in the hope that you may find them important as to the direction that we as a people find ourselves heading.”

And here they are. The numbers are mine, not Gatto’s. I hope he doesn’t mind my adding them:

- 1) Will there be an investigation into the numerous signing statements and the Presidential Directives that George W. Bush used during his presidency to determine whether or not they were legal, and will Mr. Obama ask that Bush be prosecuted if it is found that he violated the law?
- 2) Will the use of weapons of war such as napalm, white phosphorus, cluster bombs and depleted uranium by our military against civilian targets be investigated to determine if International Law and treaty obligations were violated?
- 3) Will the Executive Branch review The Military Commissions Act of 2006, The John Warner Defense Bill (the re-vamped Insurrection Act that does away with Posse Comitatus), the revamped FISA Bill and the Patriot Acts to determine if they are Constitutional?

- 4) Will a criminal investigation into the events of 9/11 be conducted?
- 5) Will the investigation into the outing of CIA covert agent Valerie Plame be continued?
- 6) Will there be an investigation of “extraordinary rendition” and allegations of torture that have been leveled at the CIA and other intelligence agencies? If it is determined that U.S. and/or International Laws have been broken or circumvented, will there be prosecutions for the violators?
- 7) Will there be an investigation into the allegations of the charges that Iraq held Weapons of Mass Destruction prior to the invasion of that country by the U.S.? If it is determined that the Executive Branch knew that they did not exist and used this as a pretense for the invasion and the war that followed, will the people responsible for these violations and those that covered it up be prosecuted?
- 8) Will allegations of voter fraud in the last presidential election be investigated? Will this administration review any charges of voter fraud or try to find new ways to combat it?
- 9) In the latest crisis in Georgia, the mainstream press reported for weeks afterwards that the Russians invaded Georgia without provocation. We have now learned that it was Georgia that invaded South Ossetia that started the conflict. Will Obama look into why the media in the United States either cannot get the true facts out to the people or why many events that occur in the world are not reported on by the American media?
- 10) Will your administration look into lost funds, overspending and no-bid contracts given to corporations linked to the Bush administration? If wrongdoing is found will you authorize prosecutions for the law-breakers?

“These are just a few questions that come to mind,” says Gatto, and then come some more:

Why don't we hear the questions about how the [Bill of Rights has been stripped away](#) from Americans since this “Global War on Terror” started? Who is the Federal government at war with exactly, is it us, the American people? How many more of our freedoms will be given away to this new breed of corporate shills that have infiltrated every branch of government? Why must they be allowed to wiretap and spy on us? Who exactly are they worried about and why?

And a conclusion:

The American people have a large task in front of them if they wish to stop this slide into a fascist police state that looms large before us. Waving the flag and cheering on the Democrats and Republicans that have been complicit in moving us in that direction will only reinforce their belief that we are incapable of critical thought and therefore true dissent. We can continue to turn a blind eye to the treacherous game these people are playing with us and wait until our lives become regulated beyond what we can endure and revolt in a bloody struggle, or we can wake up from our slumber now and strip them of these powers that they have managed to gain through fear and deceit. This is something we must decide, and decide we must. We can either reform this government through the ballot box by rejecting both major corporate-funded and corporate controlled political parties. . . or [we can] wait can wait until the boot of oppression becomes unbearable.

Tim Gatto: “When a nominee for the highest office in the land is not asked questions about the loss of our freedoms, when our press no longer holds them responsible for doing anything about it, then it’s time we replaced that press.”

A rephrasing: “When a nominee for the highest office in the land is not asked questions *by the people* about the loss of their own freedoms, the loss of their own constitution, and the loss of their own republic—when *the people* through this failure no longer hold *either* their candidates *or* themselves responsible for rescuing their very republic from the single-party corporacracy that stands only for perpetual war for resources abroad and perpetual repression of the people at home—then it’s time to replace that people.”

And just how, I should wish to know, are we supposed to do *that*?<sup>2</sup>

Vote for McCain and Honey Hot-pants-for-War-and-Terror. Or vote for [Biden](#) and [Obama](#). Or vote for Nader. Or vote for [McKinney](#), my <http://www.countercurrents.org/gatto270808.htm> own choice. But don’t do it blind, the customary way it’s done in this pitiful, tragic, dying country. You owe it to the rest of us, at the very, very least, to *know what you’re doing*—and to know, even more importantly, what’s being done to *you*.

—Eric Larsen

—September 20, 2008

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<sup>2</sup> “‘Good sir,’ said the Jewess, shaking up the feather bed, ‘the Poles cut his throat, and he begging them: ‘Kill me in the yard so that my daughter shan’t see me die.’ But they did as suited them. He passed away in this room, thinking of me.—And now I should wish to know,’ cried the woman with sudden and terrible violence, ‘I should wish to know where in the whole world you could find another father like my father?’” (The closing lines of [Isaac Babel](#)’s story, “Crossing into Poland,” [The Collected Stories of Isaac Babel](#), introduction by Lionel Trilling, New American Library, 1960, p. 43.)