

2022 Feb26 Chris Hedges on the End(s) of Empire, liberals vs white working class, and more.. - YouTube (2018)

In these days of pandemic, climate crisis, obscene income gaps, skyrocketing arms sales domestically and internationally, a new Cold War being announced with rockets' red glare and boots on the ground, an anti-democratic surge at all political levels in a country divided almost 50-50 on basic issues of governance, and so forth;

when we again find (and maybe, some of us, "find ourselves") facing street-level us-them choices, having to decide which side we're on not only in the comparatively easy terms of hierarchical power vs the rest of us, but within that down-home category "the rest of us" finding that in our city and county councils, in our school boards, in our clubs and neighborhood associations we are faced with self-defining decisions about our notions of civil society, questions of whether factions can come together amicably to cooperate or, instead, draw the line; in these days when demographic differences easily devolve into name-calling (e.g., most recently in this neck of the woods, members of the educated and semi-literate classes reduced to epitaphs like ignorant, backwards, superstitious, unqualified, elitist, condescending) . . .

— in these times when we need to fight the growing resort to authoritarianism and neofascism at all levels from personal to geopolitical, I keep coming back to questions of practical politics (questions of how we make democracy work on a person-to-person not just ideological or ballot-box level, how to find compromises — always the means to peace in democratic societies — of equal advantage to factions apparently increasingly at odds) and keep hearing old saws and aphorisms in my head: Tip O'Neill's *All politics is local*, Saul Alinsky's *Do you want to make a point or do you want to make a difference?*, David Brower's *Think Globally Act Locally* — this last of which takes me again to the Big Picture vividly depicted by Chris Hedges in the 2018 presentation linked here, in which he advocates that the (center-left) mainstream take up the kind of revolutionary actions which are already being used effectively by rightwing neopopulists.

As usual, Hedges' talk is full of pithy quotable bits. Here are a few from this one:

"The role of the liberal elite is to discredit the critics on the left. . . . the legitimate rage of the white working class that was betrayed particularly by Bill Clinton. . . . Every promise of [the utopian ideology] of neoliberalism has turned out to be wrong. . . . The collapse of the ideology is crucial. . . . the security and surveillance state. . . has created. . . a revulsion toward the elite. . . .

"We have to address hunger, we have to address despair, but at the same time we need to educate Rosa Luxemburg. . . was right where Lenin was wrong. . . .

"the Anthropocene. . . . this time in history is different. . . . our whole system begins to destroy itself. . . . we have to create a new system the belief that technology will save us is as specious as climate change deniers. . . .

"We have to stop asking ourselves if we will succeed. We have to enter into the realm of faith. . . .

. that what we are doing is right. . . . The most important existential issues are not even being articulated. . . . The people who have total control are blinded by. . .profit

"We have to begin to build a consciousness to overthrow the corporate state. . . . The Democrats will not save us. . . .

"We don't need leaders, we need movements. . . . It is our job to make power frightened of us. . . . never to trust in power. We have to build movements to pit power against power. . . ."

<https://youtu.be/Aj1-47VqgOs>