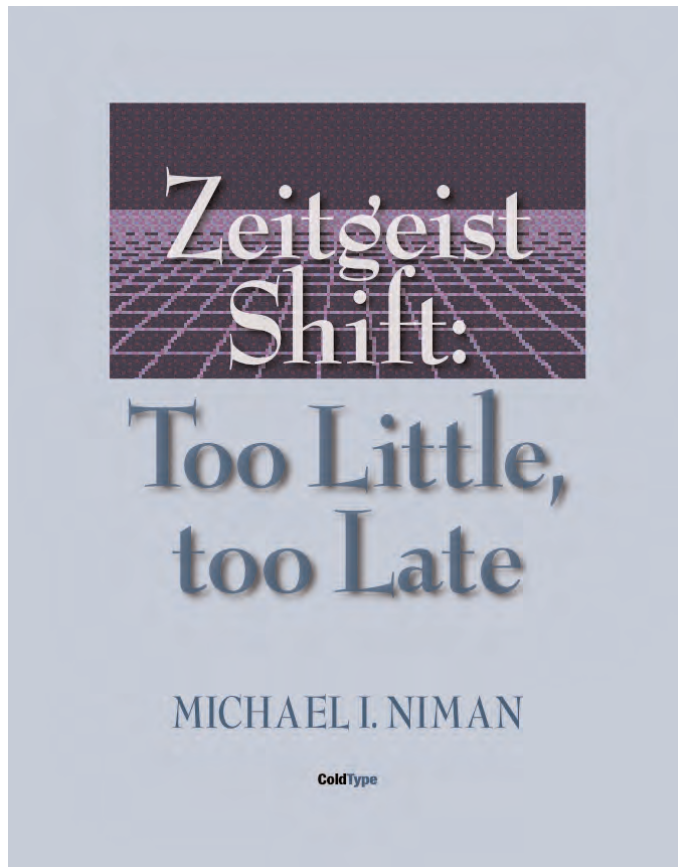




Too Little,
Too Late

MICHAEL I. NIMAN

ColdType



Dr. Michael I. Niman is a Professor of Journalism and Media Studies at Buffalo State College.

His previous columns are archived at www.mediastudy.com

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The times certainly appear to be changing. In December 2000, when I first put an “Impeach Bush” bumpersticker on my car, it was an oddity. Likewise, in October 2001, when I first flew my “No War” banner, the neighbors gave me the hairy eyeball.

Today things are different. I’ve grown accustomed to being passed by honking, waving motorists reacting to my anti-Bush bumper sticker, just like I’ve gotten used to a steady stream of strangers photographing each other in front of my anti-war sign. Then there’s the chorus of “right-on”s lobbed at me whenever my fashion statement comes at George W. Bush’s expense. I didn’t even know people still used that phrase, or what they’re talking about, until they point to my “Save the Bill of Rights – Impeach Bush” sweatshirt.

So I guess we can say there’s been a quantum shift in social conscience. Bush-hating has gone mainstream. Only hard-core sociopaths still have “Bush/Cheney ’04” emblems on their bumpers or windows. Everyone, it seems, wants out of Iraq. Peace is in vogue. Government-bashing is hip. We’re no longer living solely in the “post 9-11” era. We’re also in “Post V for Vendetta” America. Everything is on the table. We can think for ourselves. Or can we?

Let’s look at the numbers. For what it’s worth, the latest Zogby polling numbers have four percent of the US population giving Bush two thumbs up for doing an “excellent” job. By contrast, 49 percent list his job performance as “poor.” Many of

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these folks are now sporting “01.20.09” fashion gear, counting the days until Bush is scheduled to leave office. The remaining 47 percent are walking around with their thumbs up their asses, counting off the days until Black Friday.

For me, the fact that only 49 percent of the American people see this criminal presidency as deserving a “poor” rating should sound alarm bells about the state of civics education in the country. That alarm is somewhat tempered by the fact that only four percent of the population identify as out-and-out fascists who rate this treasonous junta as doing an “excellent” job.

These numbers have flipped since Zogby had 45 percent of the country rating Bush’s job as “excellent” and only four percent rating it as “poor” in early 2002 in the wake of his first major assault on the US Constitution. By that time in his presidency, he had already moved to “privatize” Social Security, rekindle the Cold War by unilaterally negating ABM treaties, declared his right to detain people indefinitely without charges, opened 60 million acres of protected national forests to logging and logging road development, nullified occupational health and safety rules, allowed oil companies to write the nation’s energy policy, pulled us out of the Kyoto accords, declared arsenic safe in public water supplies, gave the richest Americans a \$1.35 trillion tax cut and issued orders to bar the release of presidential records tying his father’s administration in to crimes against humanity in Central America.

Axis of weasels

Following his infamous “Axis of Evil” speech in January of 2002, 44 percent of the American population were still holding firm, rating Bush’s performance as “excellent.” Despite having just undermined the pro-Western Iranian reform movement and propelling North Korea and Iran toward membership in the nuclear club, only six percent of the American people rated Bush’s performance as “poor.” I guess that would, uh, be me and my extended family?

Polling numbers, however, are just that – numbers. The Zogby data, however, is backed up by water cooler chatter, supermarket banter and barroom blather, not to mention horn-honkers and “right-on”ers. There’s clearly been a zeitgeist shift in the US. But that’s the real problem. Gore Vidal’s “United States of Amnesia” is still alive and well. As a nation, we haven’t really changed our ways. We haven’t hit the streets to demand a restoration of democracy or our lost civil rights – not to mention social justice at home and abroad. We haven’t started combing the Web en masse looking for real news we could use. We’re not even in the least bit repentant for letting Bush happen.

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All we're really experiencing is a mob changing direction. Propaganda theorists call it the "Bandwagon Effect." Nobody likes a loser – hence we all support winners. And the Bush junta, plagued by defections and resignations, are losers. Ticket sales tank when a team is losing. They sell out when it's winning.

And if this team has lost anywhere, it's in Afghanistan and Iraq. It's that military loss in the arena of war that has birthed these newfound public displays of anti-Bushism. It's the same force that ultimately felled the Argentinean dictatorship after their defeat in the Falklands War and, more recently, put the Israeli government in the hot seat after their botched invasion of Lebanon. It's not that what they did was wrong – it's that they couldn't pull it off.

Let's roll

I can't help but speculate what the political zeitgeist would have been in this country had the neo-cons been successful with their Mideast schemes, militarily subduing first Iraq, then Syria and Iran. By now they would have marched over Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia, with most of the water cooler crowd cheering on the carnage as if the battles were NFL playoff games – with Armageddon being the Superbowl. And for those of us with our anti-empire bumper stickers – well, as the man said, you're either with us or against us.

The hard question for the good Germans among us is where the hell were you when all of this could have been prevented? Showing up when the shit hits the fan isn't good enough. It was quite clear that the shit was going to hit the fan, and it could have been prevented. The same holds true for global warming. Yeah, it's a problem now that we're seeing millions of environmental refugees right here in our own country as cities flood and suburbs burn while other regions delve into unprecedented drought. Where were folks a generation ago when environmentalists warned that runaway population growth coupled with hyperkinetic consumerism would bring on an environmental cataclysm? Did we really have to wait until we went over the tipping point to react?

And where was everyone when economists, sociologists and social justice activists warned that the Clinton free trade agenda and the Wal-Mart retail model would put American workers and the American economy into a race to the bottom? Did we really have to wait until we emerged as the most overworked population in the industrial world with the dollar in freefall to say, "Duh"? And healthcare? Did y'all really believe the pharmaceutical industry had your best interests at heart despite SEC rules mandating that they maximize their return to shareholders?

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In 1944, suddenly there were no Nazis; no German had ever been a Nazi. But Kristallnacht happened because the German people stood by and let it happen. They elected the Nazis – or at least stood by and let them seize power. And they waved flags and called themselves patriots as tens of millions of innocent people died in their name. Then, when the Thousand Year Reich collapsed, suddenly there were no Nazis.

Oh, yeah. Sorry

People can be against the Bush junta now, but their words are meaningless since it was ultimately their acquiescence that allowed these people to hijack our nation, soil our Constitution, start “endless” wars, further trash our environment and bankrupt our economy. “I changed my mind” just ain’t good enough. “I voted for him twice, but now I want him impeached” is no different than saying, “I started this raging wildfire, but now I want to see it go out, so please extinguish it for me and pick up the tab – I’ll be off shopping.” Or how about telling the judge, “Yes, I murdered once in 2000 and once in 2004, but I don’t feel like murdering now. I’ll be off at the country club – please have the jury call me when they reach their innocent verdict.”

This feel-good anti-Bushism just doesn’t cut it. It’s cut from the same fickle, follow-the-crowd mentality that forms the backbone of fascism. If people don’t think for themselves and take responsibility for their actions, then the future isn’t going to look too bright. A recent Zogby poll sums it up, claiming 54 percent of the US population now supports bombing Iran.



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