


Substantial Disruption



Welcome to the Boomtown

By Mike Tully

*Welcome, welcome to the boomtown
All that money makes such a succulent sound
Welcome to the boomtown*

- David and David, "[Welcome to the Boomtown](#)" (1986)

The Czar was exuberant. He was in his favorite place, the Winter Palace on the Florida shore. How he loved the giant, gilded ballroom, the gold-plated sinks, and the purloined [coat of arms](#) he modified by covering the Latin word for "integrity" with the word "Trump." The Winter Palace was warm, inviting, and gleaming with gold from every angle, in accordance with the Czar's demand for an auriferous environment. It was so unlike the official residence; that place is a [real dump](#). No wonder the exotic Czarina avoided it for months while Little Lord Barron finished school. She's about Madison Avenue, not Madison's china. Then there is the swamp surrounding the official residence, teeming with suspect life-forms like politicians, bureaucrats, hangers-on and leakers. How he loathed them, even while he grinned and preened with them to celebrate a victory. Let them bask in his sun-like presence. Why not? Reptiles need to bask in the sun. The Czar had done as much as he could to buffer himself from the swamp creatures, even bringing family members into his new government. His daughter, the Czarette, has an office just off the throne room. He appointed her husband Minister of Miscellany.

The Winter Palace is far from the swamp and its self-righteous invertebrates. When the Czar is at the Winter Palace, he is among the people he loves most: wealthy, adoring sycophants. The proletariat is out of sight, except for the work staff. And most of them fade into the scenery, save one nervous looking fellow with sallow skin and a twitch. "What's with that guy?" asked one guest of another. "He's the Czar's food taster" came the reply.

The Winter Palace combs out the riff-raff with an initiation fee of two hundred thousand dollars and annual dues of fourteen grand, resulting in a membership that runs the gamut from hoi to polloi. But the cost is worth it. Members enjoy the gilt delights of the Winter Palace and occasionally bask in the resplendent presence of the Czar himself. The favored ones share a dinner table with him, always exciting because you never know what he might say or do. One day he and the Japanese Prime Minister were briefed on a Korean missile test [in full view](#) of his amazed guests. Not even the Queen puts on that kind of a show!

But this time, at this holiday dinner, the Czar had something special to say. "You all just got a lot richer," he [told his delighted guests](#). And he meant it. The Czar and his favorite swamp-creatures had passed a new law that takes a trillion and a half dollars from the treasury and gives most of it – nearly all of it – to people like those at the dinner table. What a wonderful time to be rich! Your personal wealth is [70 times](#) that of somebody in the

working classes. Your corporations have banked trillions of dollars, [much held overseas](#), while [paying little if anything](#) in income taxes. Times are already good and the Czar is making them much, much better. He knows what his dinner guests know: prosperity is to be hoarded, not shared.

The Czar also knows the proletariat must not hear that, so he tells them the new law will give them more money, that their taxes are going down. He is gambling that they will see enough of an increase in their take-home pay to reward his supporters in the next election. Since most of them will see at least a minimal increase in 2018, his scheme might work. No matter that their [paltry increase is temporary](#) while the larger benefits for the wealthiest individuals and companies are permanent. They are unlikely to see through the scam. Most of the proletariat is not all that smart. They made him Czar, after all, and most of them believe anything he says. Tell them their tax increase is the biggest in history, even though it isn't. Tell them the tax cuts accrue mainly to the middle class, even though they don't. Tell them you will make the country great again and that they will win so much they will develop winners' fatigue. They will believe anything but, just to be safe, [change communications law](#) so that your media drowns out the opposition. He will pick the rubes clean and they will love him for it.

The Czar finishes his second dessert and walks onto the veranda, where wave-tops glisten with the reflection of the Winter Palace's lights. Life is good. The new tax law will [put millions into his pockets](#) and those of his family, as well as his dinner guests and major donors. Former political critics are now his [wind-up toys](#). And the Special Counsel, the FBI, congressional investigators? They can't lay a finger on him.

Not here. Not in the Boomtown.