

How Corporatist, Militarist and “Fascist-Leaning” are Today’s Candidates?

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Folks who aren't influenced by emotions, campaign propaganda or hype have their own methods of evaluating political candidates – and their parties – during America's seemingly endless campaign seasons. And when the mudslinging is finally over, comes the crucial time when they have to decide which candidates are the least bad for the future of the planet and the living things that share it.

Or at least that is what the ruling elites, the shadow puppeteers and hidden paymasters that have the actual control of most *American* politicians, want us to believe about elections. But that needs to be another story, one that is better told by astute commentators such as these two:

Chris Hedges, see his weekly columns starting at:

http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/the_american_empire_murder_inc_20160103

and

F. William Engdahl, author of “*Gods of Money: Wall Street and the Death of the American Century*”. Extended excerpts are available at:

http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Engdahl_F_William/American_Oligarchy_GOM.html.

Nevertheless, we do have a modicum of control over the election of whomever is being bribed or threatened to do the will of the plutocrats.

These political candidates are the ones that will be helping make the life or death decisions that determine the fate of the earth and the children of the 99% that the uber-wealthy and their amoral corporations (by which they acquired their ill-gotten wealth) have little or no concern about. They know very well that exploitation of the earth and extracting its non-renewable natural resources is the quickest way to enhance their wealth, even if the rape of the earth isn't good for it.

Comprehending the History of Fascism

The most important strategy that I use to evaluate candidates and political parties is fairly straight-forward, although it does require a little effort and some knowledge of history.

These are some of the questions that I try to answer before I vote:

1) "Where on the political spectrum would this candidate have been if he or she had run for political office in Nazi (fascist) or pre-Nazi Germany (an experiment in democracy that was destroyed by Hitler's right-wing political party and their powerful and very wealthy corporate supporters)? Would he or she have leaned leftist/pro-labor/antiwar/non-violent (= socialist), or would he or she leaned right-wing/militarist/corporatist/racist/xenophobic/anti-labor (=fascist)?"

2) "What are the political, racial, economic beliefs of this candidate and his or her party? In 1930s Germany, would those beliefs have made him or her, upon gaining office, a fascist-supporter, an anti-fascist resister or a fear-ridden, silent bystander? Is the candidate a demagogue or a fear-monger when it comes to dealing with foreigners, non-Christians, non-whites, etc?"

3) "Would this candidate have been recruited by the Nazi Party to serve Hitler's right-wing, pro-war agenda?" Or would he have had the courage (a la Minnesota's Paul Wellstone) to be willing to risk his life fighting against fascism and corporatism in the battle to overthrow Hitler and his war-profiteering supporters?

4) "What are the candidate's (and his or her supporter's) core theological, religious or philosophical beliefs?" Does the candidate's religion (and his supporters) – or lack thereof – preach hatred, fear and "holy" homicide against their enemies or their religion (like the so-called "Positive" Christians in Nazi Germany who, by the way, did not resist Hitler)?

Does the candidate's religion teach peaceful co-existence among the diverse nations of the world? Does the candidate have the courage to oppose tyranny by using nonviolent resistance?

Does the candidate's religion (or the religion of the supporters) teach that, contrary to all scientific evidence, that global warming is a lie, that the earth is only 6,000 years old, that the end of the world is coming soon (therefore making ridiculous the concept of caring for the environment for the benefit of future generations) or that those fingered as "heathen" (atheist or feminist or socialist or "green" or minority or Muslim or black or brown or GLBTQ or poor – and thus do not "share the faith") deserve being starved, imprisoned, tortured, murdered or "left behind"? Open-minded voters would like to know before they vote if the religion or philosophy of the candidate would have any problems with book-burning (often a prelude to burning such human "heretics" at the stake)?

Figuring out the answers to these questions would make voting decisions easier were it not for the fact that there are often only small differences between the candidates of the two major political parties when it comes to their stances on militarism and corporatism. But one must try if one is forced to decide which candidate is the least worst for the history of the world.

Developing Critical Thinking Skills is More Important This Year

In 2016, when some of the candidates have seriously high disapproval numbers, developing critical thinking skills is really important. (Thinking critically is the ability to "read between the lines" and resist the temptation to automatically trust what is being promised by politicians, political parties or corporations that want your vote, your money or your

neutrality.)

If the candidate's previous voting records are available, citizens need to vote against the candidate with the most proto-fascist qualities and/or the one that is being supported by corporations (inherently anti-democratic) with anti-democracy, pro-war or wealth-extracting agendas. (Alarming, the infamous Supreme Court "*Citizens United*" ruling in 2010 in which the 5 ultra-conservative, corporate lapdogs on the bench prevailed, allows unlimited, anonymous campaign contributions to political parties, political action committees and candidates that pay for multi-million-dollar attack ads and ensures that nobody will be able to find out who are the people or corporations behind the dirty tricks!)

The most dangerous candidates are firmly in the back pockets of the biggest business going, the mother of all deficit-spenders and the worst polluter on the planet, the Pentagon.

Every Republican and nearly every Democrat in Congress, and every president since the Vietnam War was finally de-funded, has reflexively voted for virtually every exotic and unaffordable weapons system that the corporate war-profiteers have demanded be built. In other words, the trillion dollar per year Pentagon budget, full of fraud, waste and abuse, is the major cause of America's fiscal quagmire.

How could the problem – and the solution – be more obvious? Ongoing fiscal crises are predictable when the Pentagon squanders its usual 2 billion dollars a day with no visible return on "investment". (It needs to be pointed out here that the Pentagon budget, plus special war appropriations spending, overly-generous, unending career military retirement spending, veterans medical benefits, the huge, unending interest payments on the war bonds, the rapidly increasing permanent service-connected disability costs and the costly – and often futile – attempts to treat the psychological and physical war wounds of the traumatized combat veterans.)

Pentagon budgets have been massive drags on the economy, starting with the Cold War, and then massively expanding during the Reagan era when military spending, especially on America's nuclear arsenal, went through the roof – as did the national debt, which rose to \$4 trillion dollars before Reagan's administration ended.

Too Many Politicians are Lapdogs for Pentagon Lobbyists

Our politicians have turned into obedient lapdogs for the bloated, too-big-to-fail (and too-big-to-criticize) 800-pound Pentagon gorilla that regards all critical-thinking, peace-promoting civilians with disdain. It must be said that if the US is ever going to be able to balance its budget, the warmongering politicians and pro-war political parties favored by the military-industrial complex need to be challenged – and voted out of office.

For those with some knowledge of world history, especially the history of German fascism, here are some additional questions concerning specific issues when preparing to vote: (Don't expect the mainstream media debate hosts to ask any of them.)

A Few More Similarities Between American and Germany

- 1) Do the politicians remind you of that cunning silver-tongued propagandist Joseph Goebbels (Nazi party sycophant and Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda), who had iron-fisted control over all aspects of the media, including the movie and radio

communications industries, never allowing opposition issues to be aired? (Recall that listening to the broadcasting of leftist information was forbidden by the liberal-hating Nazis.)

2) Are the candidates pro-militarist in their voting records or campaign promises, as was true for the ruthless WWI military hero and Luftwaffe-creator Hermann Goering, who was Hitler's second in command? (Recall that Goering had no compunctions about ruthlessly plundering the natural resources of the conquered and the colonized – especially their oil, the essential ingredient for conducting modern wars.)

3) Are the candidates (or their families) on the hidden payrolls of wealthy industrialists or corporations whose main interests are “free” markets (as contrasted to “fair” markets) and acquiring resources through wars, regime change, colonialism and/or imperialism, as was the method of Fritz Thyssen and many other Nazi captains of industry? (Recall that the multi- millionaire Thyssen was the industrialist who was an early and very generous financial supporter of the Nazi Party, as was the wealthy anti-Semite Henry Ford and even George W. Bush's grandfather. Thyssen made timely “investments” and saved the Nazi party from extinction following the 1929 US stock market crash and the resultant world-wide depression.)

4) Are the candidates supported by corporations and individuals that benefit from war and military spending such as was the infamous family Krupp and their many war materiel factories? (Recall that the powerful Krupp family was the legendary German weapons manufacturer group that, for many generations prior to Hitler's reign, had made their fortunes by producing the best and most lethal high-grade steel weaponry that the world had ever known, which they then very profitably sold to all sides of whatever war was threatening at the time. Krupp Industries, which ruthlessly chewed up tens of thousands of slaves during WWII, had, over the centuries, been caught fomenting conflicts between nations in order to expand market share and sell their superior weapons to all sides.)

5) Do the candidate's political agendas discriminate against minorities and the working class and will the candidate blindly support wars or the illegal occupations of sovereign nations for their economic advantage (as did all of Hitler's supporters)?

6) Has the candidate shown support for the secret police, the use of torture, “preventive detention” policies or pre-emptive military strikes, which were popular with the likes of Heinrich Himmler and the many party functionaries and bureaucrats who made the concentration camps, prisons and transportation systems for the doomed run so smoothly?

7) Is there a history of disregard for human rights or the refusal to effectively deal with justice issues like war refugees, the abuse of prisoners of war, the maltreatment of minorities, degradation of the environment, the exploitation of workers and the withholding of adequate healthcare? Is there a disregard for displaced and impoverished people, those often labeled as “Untermenschen”, “vermin” or “cockroaches” who, through such stigmatization, become easy targets for all forms of violence – including genocide – as was so well exemplified by Nazi bureaucrats like Adolf Eichmann?

8) Is the religion of the candidate compatible with the mass slaughter and the enormous

wastage of precious resources that always happens during war? Is the candidate's god a violent, wrathful, punitive god (which blesses war and makes the slaughter "holy") or is the candidate's god an unconditionally loving, merciful, forgiving god? Does the church that the candidate belongs to, if he claims to be a Christian, follow and preach the ethical teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount? Or is the candidate a member of a church like the racist, nationalist and anti-Semitic "Positive German Christian" church that had destroyed the evangelical protestant church of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Niemöller? (Recall that Ludwig Müller, an inept Nazi army chaplain, was handpicked by Hitler to be the new bishop at the national synod conference in September of 1933.)

Many concerned observers of the current political scene in America have seen alarming trends in the noisy far right-wing, Neo-Conservatives that have usurped power in the once respectable Republican Party. And, of course, the quite similar, Neo-liberals in control of the Democratic Party have been a concern of many progressives. The power behind each seems to be as amorally militarist and amorally corporatist as that which brought Hitler to power.

Fascism could happen here (if it isn't already here).. The main thing that might be lacking for a future American-style fascist regime is a frowning, screeching dictator-type. The American form of fascism, which I call "Friendly American Fascism", will probably come about in a slow, rolling, bloodless coup by a diverse bunch of smiley-faced, attractive spokesperson. This group won't look anything like the Nazis we love to loathe.

Those of us who are barely, hopelessly clinging to an uncertain middle class existence, are being hypnotized by a group of misleaders that are allowed to spew their hate in the mainstream media, but those of us in the disappearing middle class haven't really experienced the racism, police violence and economic oppression, that the impoverished, the homeless, the jobless, the starving and the discriminated-against non-Aryans that have been suffering for centuries.

Simple suspicion that a candidate (or a Big Business) might be a devotee of extreme right-wing politics is a good-enough reason for me to withhold my vote and my purchases from that entity until I know more about their hidden agendas. I judge such suspicious candidates "guilty until proven innocent". Potentially ruthless people or organizations that might be my future oppressors do not deserve the benefit of the doubt.

For more information about fascism, check out Professor Lawrence Britt's important article, titled "Fascism Anyone?" originally published in *Free Inquiry Magazine*, Volume 23, Number 2. The essence of the article is posted *online* at: <http://tuccgary.org/files/Duty-to-Warn-Fascism-Anyone.pdf>

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Many of his columns are archived at

*http://duluthreader.com/articles/categories/200_Duty_to_Warn_and
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