

The American Crisis, Part Two

Fascism by any other name? Understanding Trump and the thing that excreted him

by Kevin Annett



The dictator never forces himself on society against its will, for he expresses the frustrated longings of the 'little people' for absolute power. Every would-be Fuhrer must embody that desire and inflame the crises already ripening in society to gain power. - Wilhelm Reich, The Mass Psychology of Fascism, 1934

Rather than a quirk of history, European Fascism was the forerunner of today's monopoly capitalist system, where the oligarch is always waiting in the wings. - Chris Harman, International Socialism, 2002

My father Bill is the classic laconic American who is rarely fazed by anything. He's survived dustbowl and the Great Depression, endured World War Two and the Korean War, and seen tyranny come and go. But what's unfolding in his country nowadays has Dad, a lifelong Republican, genuinely spooked.

"It's like the last days of Weimar Germany down here," he told me last night. "King Donald the First is about to goose step his way into power. If I wasn't ninety-five, I'd get the hell out of America right now."

Dad's foreboding notwithstanding, to depict Mister Trump as a latter-day Hitler is something of a stretch. Donny Boy is yet another megalomaniac fat cat whose lack of political acumen is exceeded only by his infantile banality. His hordes of popgun-waving followers may give the impression of hardened storm troopers poised to strike, but like their petulant leader, the Trumpbots resemble *"a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing"*, like flabby weekend bikers.

That's the appearance, at least. Most people thought Adolf was ridiculous too, at first, and he began with none of the money or influence by which the Rump has bought his way into power. In fact, like carcinomas on a ravaged body, totalitarians like Hitler and Trump reflect a deeper plague metastasizing through their societies: a crisis brought on by the collapse of their country's power.

Like Germany in the 1930's, America has had its geo-political predominance usurped by other nations and yearns unrealistically to be "great again", even as its share of the global GDP is one third of what it was in the 1960's. Diminished to an indebted, second class economic power, America nevertheless expends two thirds of its annual budget on an arms industry that maintains 750 foreign military bases, clinging to its role as global policeman with the same suicidal militarism that brought ruin to the Soviet Union. Trapped in this military-industrial matrix, America cannot cure itself by itself, and so like pre-Nazi Germany is beset by a grieving and divided national psychosis out of which Trump has emerged.

That said, Donald T. doesn't fit the mold of the classic fascist leader since he has no ideology to speak of, no unifying program, and no political sense. He still thinks and operates like an omnipotent corporate CEO answerable to no-one: an obvious liability for any leader trying to mobilize masses of people to smash so-called liberal democracy.

Hitler's genius was his adeptness in appealing to all classes and uniting the conservative and revolutionary elements of the Nazi movement to seize state power. Trump has no such ability, as he demonstrated while operating the White House as his own private club, like a latter-day Richard Nixon on steroids. At the end of the day, Trump has proven to those with eyes to see that he's just another grasping capitalist without a concern or a program for the throngs of estranged Americans who vote for him.

Within the ranks of Trump supporters is the array of eclectic politics that typify American populist movements, from anti-corporate, quasi-socialist beliefs to racist hysteria and xenophobia. Trump's foot soldiers are the archetypal "*petit-bourgeoisie run amok*" (to use Leon Trotsky's apt phrase) along with working class people whose economic ruination is forcing them instinctively to seek a radical alternative to the status quo that neither the Democrats nor Republicans can provide, despite Trump's clumsy attempt to exploit and garner that sentiment. In the absence of such an actual alternative, the words of Antonio Gramsci, written in 1921 on the eve of Italian Fascism's triumph, ring true:

"The present crisis consists in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great many morbid symptoms appear."

For this reason, the American crisis remains and will only intensify, especially at the hands of China. While the contrived "Red versus Blue" domestic civil war that operates on Chinese subsidies is creating the impression of an ensuing fascist-like takeover by the Trump forces, such instability works against the long-term Chinese and corporate agenda regarding America, and for that reason is unlikely to happen.



There is no need for a Hitlerian coup in the USA today since the basic features of fascism are already in place, including a super-militarized and autocratic state, the abolition of the rule of law and dissent, and the merger of monopoly capital and government. The American ruling class is quickly becoming a junior partner and financial dependency of the Chinese bloc.

That said, the tumultuous social forces being unleashed by “Trumpism” are a random, unpredictable factor to Beijing and its American quislings, just as the SA Brownshirts were to the early Nazi state. And so, as occurred after Hitler took power, the uncertainty of the “Red versus Blue” conflict and its mob politics must be replaced by a unitary totalitarian rule for America to become harmonized with and absorbed by the rising Chinese superpower. Thus, an imposed corporate fascism from above rather than a revolutionary version of it through a popular insurrection from below is the most likely scenario for America in the coming years, or even months.

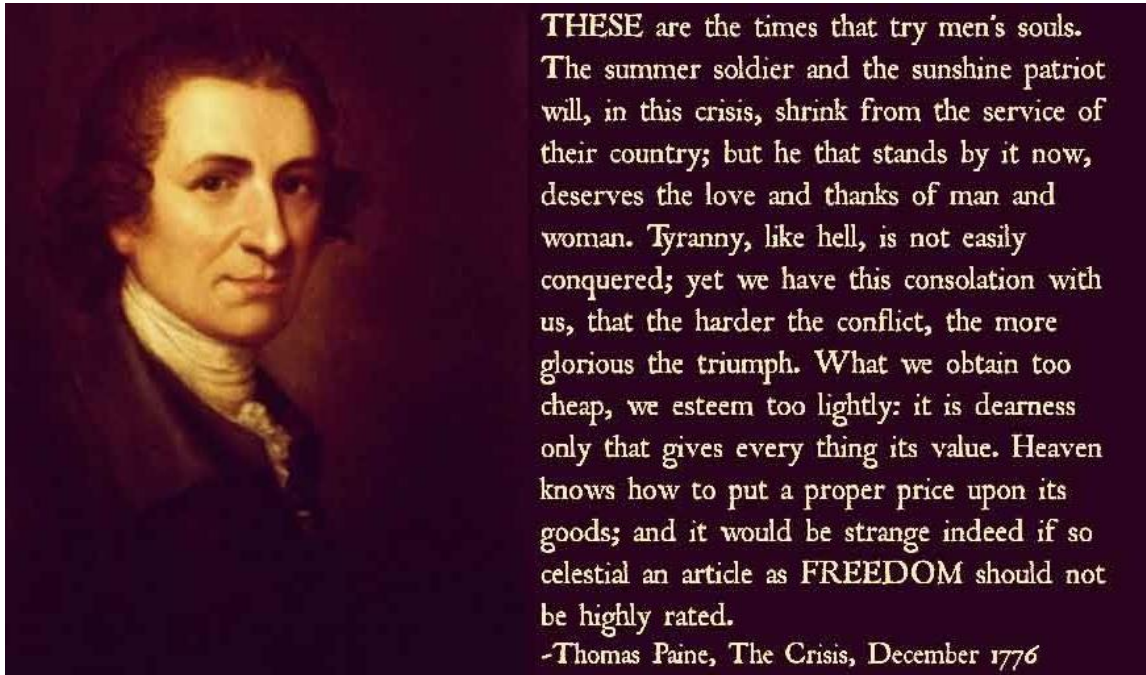
It took the Depression-era German ruling class several years to overcome its divisions and arrive at the consensus that brought Hitler to power. The American bourgeoisie is nearly at that point, but its choice will not be that of a single dictator - especially one as unsophisticated as Trump - but rather of a New Order client state under Chinese tutelage: one local province in a global Corporatocracy. The ruling class agenda, in short, is to return America to its previous subjugation as a colony of an omnipotent Empire. History has come full circle.

And so, as in 1776, it is time to shake off the lethargic habits of slavery and declare independence from tyranny. As we observed in our first article on the American Crisis, it is up to the people to overcome their false political divisions and re-establish their Republic where they live, through their own local courts and assemblies. This imperative is even more necessary in these twilight days as we face the greatest threat ever to imperil America.

In future articles we will explore the process of this revolution from below whose aim is to disestablish the foreign and corporate dictatorship at every level and make America again.

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This article is the second in a series entitled *The American Crisis*, written in the spirit of its namesake by Thomas Paine to revive the hearts and sharpen the minds of a struggling people. The first article in this series can be found here: [The American Crisis: Reviving the Better Angels of our Nature - Republic of Kanata](#) .



THESE are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives every thing its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated.

-Thomas Paine, *The Crisis*, December 1776