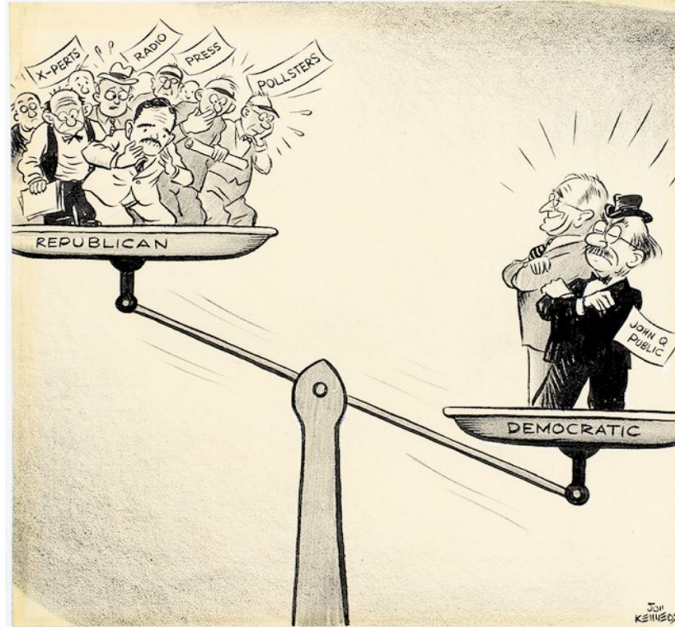


The American Crisis, Part Six
Recalling the Great Election Upset of 1948
and the Power of the People



The fundamental characteristic of war and politics is uncertainty. - Sun Tzu

It was a time much like now: a rising fear of war, a tenuous hold by the government on popular opinion, a hateful, vicious mood sweeping the country. And, then as now, a Democratic regime in Washington that looked like it was down for the count. But then, in the face of a seemingly inevitable Republican victory at the polls, an untried and unproven Democratic candidate for President stepped forward to turn everything around: Harry S. Truman.

It was the fall of 1948.

Much has been written about the biggest upset in the history of U.S. presidential elections, when Truman beat all the odds and polls and snatched victory from Republican Tom Dewey. But the lessons of that win are of special relevance today as we enter the latter stretch of the 2024 election. For we're already witnessing the miracle repeat itself.

Of course, Thomas Dewey was not a criminally convicted and impeached former President who had incited the overthrow of the American government. Nor was Harry Truman a White House neophyte like Kamala Harris. But the remarkable turnaround of voter support from Trump to Harris during the first two weeks of her campaign suggests that once again the American people are befuddling the political “experts” and writing an election chapter on their own terms.

History moves in cycles, not straight lines; and once again the political lineup is strangely like that of 1948. The Democrats are threatened by an ostensibly “liberal” vote-splitter in the person of Robert Kennedy, whose candidacy will play the same spoiler role that Henry Wallace’s Progressive Party did in 1948 when it stole two million votes from Truman that lost him New York and Pennsylvania, although with no effect on the election’s outcome. But this menace is more than offset by the fracturing that’s beginning among Republicans in the face of the dynamic Harris campaign; a splintering that will only get worse as Donald T. does his Adolf H. routine and collapses into thuggery and hysterics whenever he faces a setback.

Kamala looks like she’s having a lot of fun, while Mister Toupee increasingly resembles Big Dick Nixon during his final days. They reflect a sort of two-faced Janus on the same stumbling body politic of America during this time of its descent from world supremacy. As China buys up the entire continent and outstrips a declining American economy, Democrats and Republicans both know in their heart of hearts that their nation’s time is running out. But while the Blue Team calmly assumes there’s still a Republic to go home to, the Red Team acts like they know you can’t go home again, and in their outrage, they want to burn the entire house down.

But let’s remember 1948, and what Harry Truman’s tireless campaigning across America really demonstrated. Harry spoke to people face to face and treated them like equals. That not only won their hearts but showed up his opponent, the ice-cold, Wall Street demagogue Tom Dewey, who exhibited a Trump-like haughtiness common to those born with a silver spoon up their ass.

Kamala is making the same appeal to voters with the same result. If there's one thing Americans of every shade of politics want, it's to be treated seriously.

But even more basically, the Truman campaign was in every respect like a spiritual revival. Harry drew crowds of millions of people in the big cities, and Democrats and Republicans alike, they were all yelling the same thing at him: *"Give 'em hell, Harry!"*: "Give hell to those big money boys and all the pollsters who are saying you don't have a chance, Harry: the same guys who treat us like shit, too. You're proving them wrong because you know us better than they do." The same spirit that is infusing the Harris campaign with a cyclonic force.

*Plus ça change, plus c'est la meme chose.**

As dark as the American horizon is, it's in these times that the nation rises above itself and finds those better angels of our nature that Abe Lincoln described on the eve of the Civil War. People talk blithely about a "new civil war" these days. Whether that's calculated propaganda resting on Chinese subsidies or simply sensationalist media crap, it's also a projection of the fragmented group psyche that had always gripped America: one bending towards liberty and the other towards servitude, like the homes that display both the Stars and Stripes and the Confederate flag. We've never overcome that dissociated group mind, but times of crisis and war give us the chance to do so. Maybe now is such a time again.

American elections are never about the candidates, for we always get who we deserve. They're a reminder of something every American should know: that this blessed experiment called self-governance is something that, to paraphrase John Adams, is still hated by every tyrant and monarch in the world, including those corporate oligarchs like Donald T. who see you and me as cattle and grist in their mill.

It is time to remember and put into practice what Thomas Paine wrote at Valley Forge in 1777:

“Democracy does not consist of choosing our masters, but of having none.”

Carry it on.



Kevin will be on an American speaking tour during August and September, 2024.

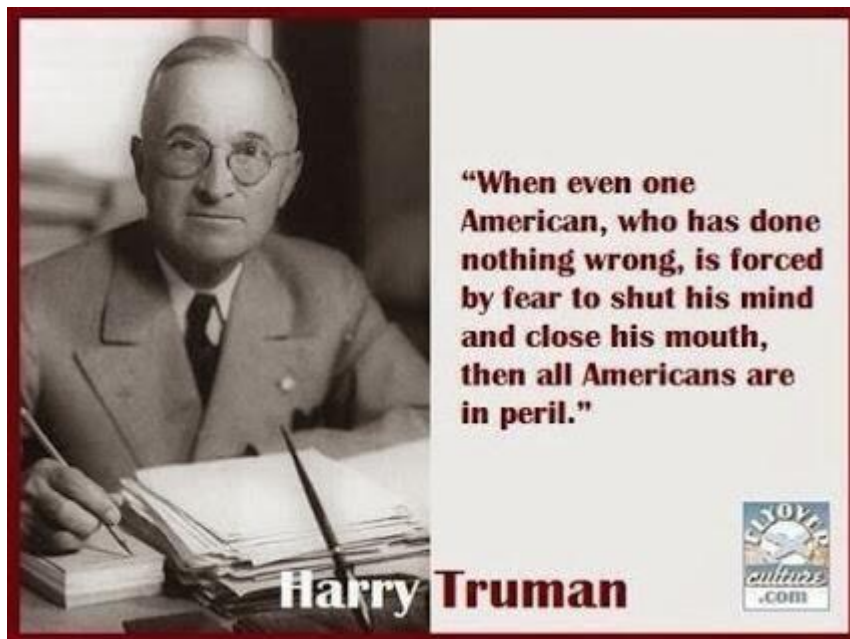
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This article is the sixth in a series entitled *The American Crisis*, written in the spirit of its namesake by Thomas Paine to revive the hearts and sharpen the minds of a struggling people. The other articles in this series can be viewed at www.republicofkanata.org under Breaking News.

The more things change, the more they stay the same.

Trailing in the polls and written off, Harry Truman won the 1948 election against all the odds and the experts for a simple reason: he got out among the people and campaigned relentlessly to the very last day. His unflagging courage and faith in the people tipped the scales.



All the Republicans' slick maneuvers and fear mongering couldn't overcome the impact Truman had by this contact with ordinary Americans. In that sense, the election was not just Truman's victory but a triumph of the power of the American people to make up their own minds unaffected by the vested interests and unswayed by the so-called political experts.