

The American Crisis, Part Seven

“We want a king to rule over us!”:

**How Trump’s totalitarian madness is snagging even ‘progressives’
as America teeters on the brink of judgement**



Americans cherish their individual liberty above all else, even before their civic responsibility. Therefore, as a people they are especially prone to tyranny, since their preoccupation with personal freedom requires that the nation’s political life is left in the hands of a few politicians: a condition that readily engenders an absolute dictator.

- Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1832

If the President does it, it’s not illegal. - Donald Trump, 2020

But the people refused to obey the voice of the prophet and they said, “No, we want a king to rule over us, so we can be like other nations.” - 1 Samuel 8:19

Even after all these years, there is no explanation for Adolf Hitler. Madness has no meaning. Hitler was a dark judgement on our people. - Anti-Nazi Resistance leader Wolf-Dieter Zimmerman, 1982

Recently, I found myself in the tranquil hills of central Pennsylvania. Stopping for gas in the town of Clearfield, I chatted with an old farmer who wore a Trump button.

“We need somebody strong to get us out of this mess,” he remarked. “And that ain’t gonna be a woman.”

“But Trump says he’s above the law and as the president he won’t be bound by the Constitution,” I replied.

“At least he’ll get rid of all the goddamned foreigners,” said the old man with a shrug.

The Clearfield farmer seems to be the embodiment of a stereotypical Trump supporter. If all of them are simply bigoted rednecks, Kamala Harris will have little to worry about next month. Unfortunately for the nation, normally progressive people are also being inexplicably drawn to Trump, as if he is something more than a grasping despot.

Over the past few years, America’s so-called “freedom movement” has been effectively lassoed and corralled by Trump, who has filled the political vacuum created by the disintegration of a statified “Left”. Like Hitler, Trump knows how to exploit revolutionary sentiments and turn them into steam for his engine.

Just ask my longtime Pennsylvania friends Bert and Elaine. Until recently, they were lifelong socialists on the left-wing of the Democratic party. Now they’re Born Again Trumpbots: a term I don’t use glibly, because to them, Donny Boy can do no wrong.

Like the “left-wing” Brownshirts of the S.A. who were convinced that Adolf Hitler would throw out the bankers and redistribute the wealth once he came to power, Bert and Elaine have blithely projected onto Trump their political hopes and endowed him with a glow he does not possess.

Once contemptuous of the man who would be king, Bert and Elaine would now have us believe that Donny has somehow changed his spots and developed a social conscience. Their guy will apparently wind down U.S. militarism, abolish poverty, depose the banksters, and restore our global preeminence - as if such things were even possible in these waning days of the American Imperium.

Of course, people see what they want to see, especially during elections. And projecting our light and shadow onto public figures isn't a practice confined just to the MAGA minions. But my friends' mind-boggling turnabout and cultic fervor is matched only by their hysterical intolerance of any criticism of their new savior-figure. When I asked them how Trump, as a criminally convicted felon who is guilty of treason under the Constitution, is allowed to run for the presidency, they attacked me in a shrill tirade of denunciations and then banished me from their home.

Leon Trotsky once observed that *"America is the world's mightiest nation, and also the most frightened one."* A deep fear runs through the Trump throngs, an apocalyptic mania that is stampeding them into the arms of a criminal demagogue.

My erstwhile friends Bert and Elaine are not unlike many "truthers" who for years have opposed the COVID regime and defended personal liberty. Inexplicably, many of them now equate the fight for freedom with Trump's re-election, despite his stated goal of abolishing the Constitution and the rule of law, deporting "undesirable" citizens, and purging America of his so-called enemies.

That kind of doublethink impulse towards both freedom and tyranny has always been a chronic part of the American political psyche, as Alexis de Tocqueville observed. But now a near-majority of U.S. voters seem to want put a proven dictator back into power.

At the war crimes trial of Nazi leader Adolf Eichmann in 1962, Hannah Arendt wrote, *"Appearances to the contrary, Fascism is not about a leader. It is about those who put him in power. It is the despairing cry of a society that is sick and dying."*

Or in the words of the Irish poet William Butler Yeats,

*Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is lost ...
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?*

That “rough beast” has indeed arrived. We have summoned it ourselves.

Regardless of who grabs the presidential throne in November, a judgement lies on America that cannot be denied or avoided. By that I don't mean the obvious blow back from a blood-soaked history of genocide, war, racism, slavery, and rapacious capitalism, or the fact that America's control of the world economy has fallen to a third of what it was in 1970, as we languish in the shadow of China. The existential gloom gripping America comes from something that many of us sense but cannot express: the fact that, as a people, we have betrayed ourselves and our founding purpose.

America was established on a sacred and binding covenant that was first promulgated in the Mayflower Compact of 1620 and echoed in every subsequent constitution. That pristine covenant established our Republic as something never known in the world: a union of equal, sovereign citizens under the authority of God and Natural Law rather than worldly rulers like kings and popes. If Americans turned their back on this divine covenant and surrendered their self-governance by enslaving or ruling over each other rather than living in justice and equality, disaster would befall the nation.

Similarly, the Biblical prophet Samuel warned the people of Israel against having a king to rule over them. Not only will such a monarchy replace God, said Samuel, but a king will force you to work harder and surrender more of your crops, and will send your sons to die in the king's wars and your daughters into servitude. *“Nevertheless, the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel and said, “No, we want a king to rule over us, so we can be like other nations.”* The people turned their backs on God to follow an earthly ruler, and their nation was soon divided and conquered.

Ironically, for all their Bible quoting, the MAGA crowd cannot see that they too have abandoned God by shunning the American covenant and choosing a king. But Trump's aim of a one-man government is just an extreme version of the sickness that has placed power in America in the hands of a few super-wealthy individuals.

If we believe our own founding Biblical creed and historical witness, when a covenanted people reject divine authority for a human one, the covenant is ended; God also turns away, and disaster strikes the nation. That judgement is playing itself out now.

There are no “sides” in this judgement, no winners and losers, good guys and bad guys. All are guilty and suffer the same fate. Abraham Lincoln expressed this verdict near the end of the civil war when he described that conflict as God’s judgement on an entire nation that had violated the American Covenant by profiting from human slavery. As he said in his second inaugural address in 1865, shortly before his assassination,

The Almighty has His own purposes ... Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said 'the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'

If kingship wins in November because a few Trump-appointed Supreme Court judges unconstitutionally allowed him, as a convicted felon and traitor, to be placed on the ballot, it will be yet another death knell on America. But that ending has been coming for years, as a Corporatocracy of, by, and for the billionaires has supplanted our Republic and laid the basis for the Trump dictatorship. Many Americans, especially the poorest among us, understand this, even as they ritualistically vote and believe that doing so will change things. But now is not the time for illusion and denial. We need only take our own experience seriously to know what has died and what must be born.

The fight to restore the American Republic is not about which party “wins” on November 5. It is about how we must rebuild the sacred covenant that is America, within our own local assemblies and common law courts, across the false divisions of “Republicans” and “Democrats” and without the self-serving leaders who pit us against each other. That is fundamentally a spiritual as well as a political battle. It runs through the soul of every American who loves our constitutional Republic and its covenant with heaven, and who refuses to let either die.

It is time to leave the present insanity and find our way back to those better angels of our nature that we hope and pray have not forsaken America.

In that sacred trust, let us remember the words of one of America's greatest bards, the Harlem poet Langston Hughes, who spoke from our great heart when he called for each of us to reclaim and restore our Republic:

*Let America be America again! Let it be that great, strong land of love and liberty,
where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme that any man be crushed by one above.*

*O, let my land be a land where Liberty is crowned with no false patriotic wreath, but
opportunity is real, and life is free, and equality is in the air we breathe!*

*Say, who are you that mumbles in the dark? And who are you that draws your veil
across the stars?*

*I am the people, humble, hungry, mean, and beaten today, despite the dream. I am
the man who never got ahead. I am the poorest worker bartered through the years.*

*Yet I am the one who dreamt our basic dream, in the Old World while still a serf of
kings,*

*Who dreamt a dream so strong, so brave, so true, that even yet its mighty daring sings
in every brick and stone and every furrow turned that's made America the land it has
become.*

*Out of the rack and ruin of our gangster death, the rape and rot of graft, and
stealth, and lies,*

*We the people must redeem the land, the mines, the plants, the rivers, the
mountains and the endless plain,*

And make America again!

Excerpts from *Let America be America Again* by Langston Hughes (1935)



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This article is the seventh 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*.