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www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

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by EVAGGELOS VALLIANATOS

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The Waters of American Democracy



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The year 2018 is coming to an end with a deeply divided government and people. The Democrats won the House, promising to paralyze the remaining two years of the highly contested reign of Donald Trump. The government may shut down just before Christmas because Trump wants money for a wall to keep Mexicans and Latin Americans out of the USA.

The American schism

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afgazad@gmail.com

Trump, a hotel and gulf-course businessman, has been spearheading the schism in America. It's as if he welcomes confrontation and controversy. His connections with Russia, China, the immigrants, the media, North Korea, and his staff at the White House and the government are generating enormous corruption and chaos.

Trump caters to interest groups like the Evangelicals, pistol-carrying NRA enthusiasts, impoverished and confused coal miners, and, of course, registered Republicans and the very wealthy.

In fact, the tax cut he engineered earlier this year bribed the largest corporations and the very rich, sealing the class war he is heading. In addition, he filled the Supreme Court and is stacking the lower courts with judges who share his oligarchic politics.

The fact Trump was elected president shows the precarious and hazardous nature of American political institutions. They resemble those of the Roman empire, which was governed by emperors with absolute power. Some of those emperors grabbed power through civil wars. Occasionally, monsters like Caligula, Nero, Commodus, and Caracalla run Rome.

Trump acts like a Roman emperor. He is grooming his daughter and son-in-law to inherit his throne.

However, Trump is unfit for holding political power. He has little if any knowledge of how the government works. His sole concern is to enrich himself and his family. His crude behavior mirrors questionable upbringing, education, and undemocratic values.

Trump is under the delusion, shared by the Republican politicians in Congress, that degrading and risking the life of Americans by poisoning their food, drinking water, and the natural world is an externality with no consequences.

This kind of treatment – dosing the food of millions of Americans with known neurotoxins, forcing the extinction of species, and causing global warming should be a criminal and genocidal act. The fact it is not says our civilization is very much underdeveloped, if it is a civilization at all.

Professor Amato Evan of the Scripps Research Institute said: “winters are getting sick and we know why... it's climate change; it's rising temperatures.”

But try saying that to Trump.

Obviously, the Renaissance and the Enlightenment have left no footprints in American political culture, including Europe where they were born.

This is not the first time I say this. I said much more in my book, Poison Spring. My 25 years at the US Environmental Protection Agency shocked me beyond belief. Sometimes I thought the experience was a living nightmare. Sometimes I thought it was science fiction. But there's little doubt Trump and the zero point one percent of the oligarchs supporting him personify pollution. These guys are like dark age landlords. They live in a cocoon of ill-earned wealth and military security, not knowing the meaning of life, save for promoting their personal interests. Their bestselling product is pollution.

Just look at EPA. Trump's EPA is about to open the gates of water pollution even wider in order to satisfy farmers, real estate developers, and petroleum and mining companies.

The agribusiness-academic-government complex doesn't want any oversight of the farmers spraying neurotoxins. They have bamboozled the country with weaponized science making sprays harmless.

These lethal chemicals, however, are causing ecocide. They are wiping out honeybees, other insects and birds relying on insects for their food. They also contaminate food and drinking water, cutting short a healthy and happy life for millions of children and adults.

Developers and mining and petroleum companies don't want government oversight, either. They like their license to pollute and doing whatever they please in wetlands, streams and swamps.

Andrew Wheeler, acting EPA administrator, justifies this increasing pollution on the ludicrous assumption the protection of streams, swamps and wetlands was a power grab by the Obama administration against farmers and property owners. Not a word from him about the millions of human victims of increasing pollution, much less the death of countless honeybees, Monarch butterflies, birds, endangered species and other forms of wildlife.

If there ever was a doubt about our decline as civilized human beings, this behavior by Trump and his class of oligarchs should dispel that doubt. They care less about civilization.

Resurrecting democracy

Our hope is that the House Democrats can use their substantial powers to dam the Trump imperial reach, including the polluters' protection agency masquerading as the Environmental Protection Agency. Europeans are leading the way to poison-free crops. They are rethinking their addiction to the global weed killer glyphosate.

The House can follow through this European path of health and sanity. Investigate how the money of industry has made the Trump administration the monster it has become,

especially in its outright attack against public health and the environment. Reveal how the industry has captured the government; bring to light how the corporate funding of the land grant universities has made these schools the brains of agribusiness.

Knowledge is power. In fact, revealing the secrets of how the industry has been operating against the public good is the oxygen of democracy. It guarantees the Democrats winning the White House and the Senate in the 2020 elections.

And at that moment, with the Democrats in charge of the government, there should be a rethinking of how this country elects a president.