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The Republicans: Party of Psychos

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6/2/2016



The American political party known as the Republicans has always been an extremely peculiar party. As the most capitalist and materialistic nation on earth, the United States, has always had an obsession with money, materialism and consumption, verging on a worship of the \$ and man-

made products akin to a religion with the big investment banks on Wall Street the citadels of this quasi-religion. Of the two major political parties it has been the Republicans who have embodied the greatest and most distasteful extremes and excess of this pathology. I have had Republican friends say to me: «*I actually get worried if I don't have to pay for something*», or «*No one has a human right to health care. You have to pay*» or «*The Company only gives me \$70 a day for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Can you believe it? As if that is enough!*» When you ask them why it is they support the Republican Party and which policies in particular they find most attractive you can see the tumbleweed blowing through their minds, with their eyes glazing over and reverting to glib and vacuous sound bites about keeping America great and strong in the manner of a salesperson attempting to flog a second hand car waffling on. With Republicans the more they talk, the less they actually say.

Donald Trump has taken it even one step further by simplifying into a sentence: «*You have to be wealthy in order to be great*». Really Mr Trump? Some of us measure greatness not on how much one earns or how big one's bank balance is. Remember Martin Luther King? Rosa Parks? Nelson Mandela? Mother Teresa? Even Jesus Christ himself was not a rich man and eschewed wealth. Not everyone is wealthy or wants to be wealthy, or in Mr Trump's case born wealthy, but anyone regardless of money can be great. The definition of the French term bourgeoisie is a group of two peoples: the middle class and the ruling class in a capitalist society and economy that mainly comprise bankers, corporations, manufactures and other employers.

The bourgeoisie owns the most important of the means of production, through which it exploits the working class as cheap labour. The bourgeoisie tend to be obsessed with money, acquiring and hoarding ever greater sums of it to ensure their dominance alongside indulging in some of the most base and animalistic instincts of human beings such as conspicuous and vulgar materialism and consumption. The bourgeoisie tend to be found in trade, banking and business and have little understanding of or appreciation for artistic and cultural values. On the whole, they also tend to be very un-intellectual if not outright anti-intellectual or even uneducated. That is why there has historically been such a disdain for and frowning upon the bourgeoisie by the aristocracy who practice a different set of values and greater discretion when it comes to money compared to what they term «new money».

Since the days of Ronald Reagan this growth of and celebration of the philistine bourgeoisie and its little brother the petite bourgeoisie has been at the centre of Republican Party political thinking, strategy and policy making. By promoting and institutionalising the absurd voodoo economics of «trickle-down», the hilarious idea that by further enriching the already richest 1-10% of society – somehow by magic it would literally «trickle down» to the middle, lower-middle and working classes – has been the mainstay of Republican economic orthodoxy. Due to the fact that so many people in America are desperate to get rich – indoctrinated from birth by their political leaders such as Ronald Reagan and bombarded by corporate mass marketing/advertising appealing to their most base instincts, and fascinated by grotesque «reality» TV programmes like the tacky Khardasians – a great many uneducated or poorly educated, mainly white, blue collar workers and lower-middle class suburbanites bought into the Reaganite idea or updated «American Dream» for the 1980s that you too can get rich if you pull yourself up by your boot straps, slog your guts out and never give up!

Of course it was just a ruse and con trick to get them to vote for the Republican Party, which unfortunately a lot of uneducated or poorly educated Republican voters failed to appreciate at the time. Now, some thirty plus years later a great many of them have finally woken up and can smell the coffee. They feel cheated, yet are still unable to come to the simple logical conclusion that their own economic interests are more closely aligned with the economic and social policies of the Democratic Party. Instead what the world has witnessed at Donald Trump's rallies has been the most extraordinary outpouring of anger and bitterness (in some cases outright violence) many of the Republican grass roots feel towards the elite Republican Establishment. Yet their embrace of the billionaire, populist, anti-Establishment madman Donald Trump signifies they do not seem to realise that Mr Trump is the greatest and most dangerous con artist of all selling them exactly the shtick that Mr Reagan did in the 1980s, just modified for different times.

Moving on from economics, the Republicans have not only been the party of stupid and extreme neoliberal economics of the Von Hayek and Freidman school of thought, they have also been the nasty, divisive party on social issues. Ever since the United States Supreme Court passed Roe v Wade in 1973 which in effect legalised abortion – the Republican Party consisting of mainly white men – have been obsessed with overturning it and restricting a woman's control over her own reproductive rights. The Republican Party platform of 1992 vowed to ban abortion even in cases of rape or incest. The circus of Republican candidates running for President in 2016 held to this line with some even stating abortion should be banned altogether, even in cases concerning the mother's health. Mr Trump himself has stated there should be some form of «punishment» for a woman who has an abortion.

The reason the Republican Party today so dominates the southern states of the USA is because a lot of white voters did not like the Democrat Party of Lyndon Johnson pushing through the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act which effectively outlawed racial discrimination and segregation against African-American, so they left the Democrats on mass and turned to the dog whistle racism of the overwhelmingly white Republican Party. Now, not content with demonising black Americans or women who choose to have an abortion (or who prefer to pursue a career rather than be a stay at home mother), they have set their sights on branding Mexican-Americans as «criminals», «rapists» and «drug dealers». Throw into the mix their implacable opposition to gay marriage, civil partnerships, laws protecting LGBT people from institutionalised discrimination in general, their adherence to creationism and a literalist, (un)-Christian fundamentalism and a picture starts to emerge of an extremely backwards, antediluvian, embarrassing political party full of ignorant psychopaths. That is even before we get to the subject of guns and foreign policy.

Ah, yes – Guns! The Republican Party does seem to have the most perverted obsession with these killing weapons. The Republican Party obsession with guns is symbolic of how many impotent, powerless people inhabit the Republican Party. The gun after all is a weapon which holds the ultimate power – to play God and take away life. You can make people do a lot of things against their will with a gun, things they would not normally want to do. You can play God with a Gun and make yourself feel very powerful with a gun. Despite the fact that the United States clearly has a severe gun problem with mass shootings occurring on an almost monthly if not weekly basis – and from 2001 to 2013 406,496 people died by firearms on US soil

compared to 350 US citizens killed overseas during the same period in incidents of terrorism – the Republican Party and its ally the National Rifle Association will not countenance even the slightest piece of common sense gun safety legislation, even in the wake of the Sandy Hook School massacre and viciously target politically those brave advocates of common sense gun safety laws.

This militaristic worship of the killing machine – the gun – extends to foreign policy. With the advent of the neoconservative takeover of Republican foreign policy thinking and making, the Republican Party has advocated a militaristic international posture of almost perpetual warfare. Whether it was Ronald Reagan spending recklessly on building up what was already a bloated military budget (tripling the national debt in the process) and taking the world to the brink of nuclear confrontation with the USSR in his first term or George W Bush unilaterally invading and occupying Iraq without so much as a plan for dealing with the consequences in the bloody aftermath, the Republican Party has been addicted to a testosterone fuelled love of war and destruction rather than diplomacy and development. The rank nationalism of the USA First brigade exemplified in the likes of nationalist hawks such as Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney or the naive, Middle East obsessed, dangerously hare-brained neo-conservatism of the likes of Paul Wolfowitz is probably one of the greatest threats to world peace and security. In many ways the Republicans have done more to damage the social fabric of America internally and the security and harmony of the world externally than Osama Bin Laden has ever achieved. As Sir Winston Churchill once remarked: «*When there is no enemy within, the enemies outside cannot hurt you*». It is clear to me that the Republican Party is the enemy of every decent, tolerant and thoughtful American. The sooner it is disbanded and banned forever, just as the Nazi Party was after the end of World War II, the better, for Americans and the rest of the world alike.