

Trump's White Supremacist Factor

The darkest part of Donald Trump's presidential campaign is its white nationalist element with some white male supremacists seeing Trump as the way to protect their historical dominance of America, says Nicholas C. Arguimbau.

By Nicholas C. Arguimbau

America has been a nation of white male supremacists from Day One. They "bought" Manhattan Island from the Indians for \$24. They safeguarded slavery in the Constitution. They bought the Louisiana Purchase from the French but stole the land from the Indians, and then took the Southwest from the Mexicans. They settled what was left of the Indians on reservations in the most uninhabitable land on the continent where they live in poverty inconceivable to the rest of us.

White males have nonetheless done some great and noble things. When they declared our independence from England, they could have said, "Get out of our hair; we can make more money without you." Instead, they wrote, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

"-That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, -That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

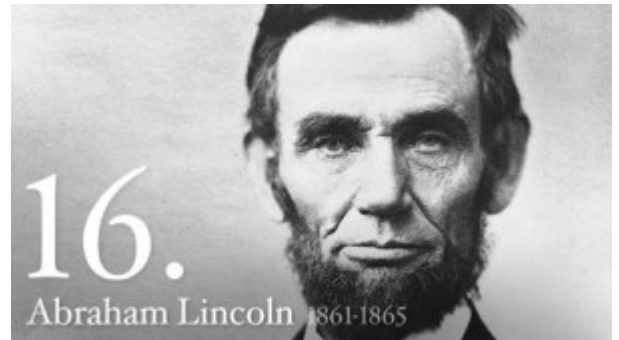
When 240 years later Sen. Bernie Sanders declared a political revolution, he could not have said it better, and not one word would have needed to be changed. Yet, the draftsmen in 1776 set the scene for their own demise should they fail in their duties and indubitably they have failed.

But who were the "we" who perceived that governments "derive their just powers from the consent of the governed"? Portrayed by the white male artist John Trumbull, the signers of the Declaration of Independence are a room full of white males. No exceptions. In other words, the "governed" at the time of the Revolution were white males.

Thus, governments in that world derived their just powers from white males, and there wasn't any dispute about it. It was just the way things were.

Lincoln's Racism

A few decades later, nothing had changed about the dominance of white males in America, and Honest Abe Lincoln spoke with unquestioned authority when he said in the Lincoln-Douglas debates in 1858:



“I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of ... making voters or jurors of Negroes nor of qualifying them to hold office nor to intermarry with white people; and I will say in addition to this that there is a physical difference between the white and black races, which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality. And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race.”

A clearer statement of the principle of white supremacy could not be made, and if it was good enough for Honest Abe – maybe he believed what he was saying and maybe he didn't, but he is perceived to have won the debates – who can doubt that such a racist attitude remains good enough today for a substantial portion of the white population.

Don't let yourself forget that Donald Trump didn't create the Trump phenomenon. The voters who gave him a clear victory in the Republican primaries did. And the Trump campaign, only weeks ago, was neck-and-neck with the Democratic candidate.

Honest Abe's support of white supremacy has lingered and festered these many years, although, slowly, legal protection of racial and ethnic and gender “minorities” has taken hold in America through such devices as the Equal Protection Clause and the Civil Rights Act.

But supporters of white supremacy have always had an ace in the hole that has preserved a tenuous constitutional support for white supremacy: a majority of the voting population. You might call it “constitutional white supremacy.”

Lost White Majority

But times are changing. Inexorable demography is taking over. Whites no longer

retain a majority of Americans under age 5. Soon they will be a minority of those under 18. And it is projected that the white majority of the population as a whole will be gone completely in 2044.

That is the date by which “constitutional white supremacy” will become an oxymoron and whites will have to make a choice between the Constitution and white supremacy. That is a decision that is unavoidable, and must be made soon. Either white supremacists will cede their supremacy or they will maintain it by physical force.

It is the ultimate choice between government by a minority against the will of the people and through force, or government “of the people, by the people, for the people.” Yes, that’s Honest Abe too.

The legitimacy of white supremacy within a constitutional framework has been finessed for 240 years, but demographics dictate that it can be finessed no longer. The November election has chosen itself as the forum in which the choice between constitutionalism and white supremacy will be made once and for all.

So let it be made, and made decisively, for constitutional government, which has served a changing majority probably as well these many years as any other form of government could have served.

There is an entire genre at this point of writing about the connection between Trump’s candidacy and the impending end of the white majority. See, for instance, “Donald Trump Is Winning Because White America Is Dying,” a summary of an interview with Noam Chomsky in which the author notes that “many say the business mogul is capitalizing on their fears about the perceived decline of white dominance in America” – a point that Chomsky argues is true but there is more including the seemingly unstoppable decline of the health and financial welfare of white males.

(Also see “Trump: A Presidency Befitting White Minority Rule?”; “Welcome, White Americans, to Your Future: This is What it Feels Like to be a Minority”; and “The End of White America?”)

Constitution or Supremacy

But seldom is it mentioned that white supremacy and constitutional government are fundamentally at odds (and that much of the strategy to protect white supremacy comes in trying to restrict the democratic and constitutional rights of minorities).

We recognize that states are widely attempting to cut off minority voting rights, that “antiterrorism” is a not-very-veiled process going back two decades

to deprive non-whites of constitutional safeguards (see, e.g. the US “Anti-terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act” of 1993); that conduct of the “war on terror” gives the President unfettered power to do virtually anything without prior authorization and with no apparent participation by the public or even Congress, presumably under his war powers; and indeed that Trump walks and talks like a World War II fascist dictator.

Yet we somehow avoid saying that abandonment of constitutional rule is part and parcel of the preservation of white supremacy. But the reality is that we simply can't follow the will of a minority and lock out millions of people based explicitly upon race, ethnicity and religion, and maintain that the Constitution rather than the white race reigns supreme. It's either or.

As fate has decreed, the representative of white supremacy is Donald Trump, and the representative of constitutional government is Hillary Clinton.

This writer doubts that a real majority of Americans are white supremacists willing to sacrifice constitutional government. But they have every reason to believe that Hillary Clinton, with long-lived ties to fictitious corporate “persons,” will do little more than Trump to “derive her just powers from the consent of the governed.”

Nevertheless, constitutional government will not win a decisive victory – and likely not a victory at all – unless Hillary Clinton makes a clean break with her all-too-well-known past and offers a full restoration of constitutional government (committed to the noblest sentiments regarding “We the People” as expressed in the founding documents and subsequent amendments).

If she does that (and she is at least giving lip service to it), she can offer not only preservation of the Constitution but a path towards recovery from the decline of white health and financial welfare discussed by Chomsky, a crisis that many whites (under Trump's tutelage) wrongly attribute to other races and immigrants.

However, if Clinton wins and fails to restore constitutional governance (by continuing to be the representative of the corporate class), Trump's followers may be justified in perceiving that they aren't killing the Constitution because it is already dead.

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Hillary Clinton's 'Pivot' or 'Spin'?

To stave off Bernie Sanders, Hillary Clinton became a born-again progressive, critical of trade deals and tough on fracking, but her preparations for a presidential transition presage a pro-corporate and hawkish administration, says Norman Solomon.

By Norman Solomon

Like other Bernie Sanders delegates in Philadelphia a few weeks ago, I kept hearing about the crucial need to close ranks behind Hillary Clinton. "Unity" was the watchword. But Clinton has reaffirmed her unity with corporate America.

Rhetoric aside, Clinton is showing her solidarity with the nemesis of the Sanders campaign – Wall Street. The trend continued last week with the announcement that Clinton has tapped former Senator and Interior Secretary Ken Salazar to chair her transition team.

After many months of asserting that her support for the "gold standard" Trans-Pacific Partnership was a thing of the past – and after declaring that she wants restrictions on fracking so stringent that it could scarcely continue – Clinton has now selected a vehement advocate for the TPP and for fracking, to coordinate the process of staffing the top of her administration.

But wait, there's more – much more than Salazar's record – to tell us where the planning for the Hillary Clinton presidency is headed.

On the surface, it might seem like mere inside baseball to read about the transition team's four co-chairs, described by *Politico* as "veteran Clinton aides Maggie Williams and Neera Tanden" along with "former National Security Adviser Tom Donilon and former Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm." But the leaders of the transition team – including Clinton campaign chair John Podesta, who is also president of the Clinton-Kaine Transition Project – will wield enormous power.

"The transition team is one of the absolute most important things in the world for a new administration," says William K. Black, who has held key positions at several major regulatory agencies such as the Federal Home Loan Bank Board. Along with "deciding what are we actually going to make our policy priorities," the transition team will handle key questions: "Who will the top people be? Who are we going to vet, to hold all of the cabinet positions, and many non-cabinet positions, as well? The whole staffing of the senior leadership of the White House."

Black's assessment of Salazar, Podesta and the transition team's four co-chairs is withering. "These aren't just DNC regulars, Democratic National Committee regulars," he said in an interview with The Real News Network. "What you're seeing is complete domination by what used to be the Democratic Leadership Council.

"So this was a group we talked about in the past. Very, very, very right-wing on foreign policy, what they called a muscular foreign policy, which was a euphemism for invading places. And very, very tough on crime – this was that era of mass incarceration that Bill Clinton pushed, and it's when Hillary was talking about black 'superpredators,' this myth, this so dangerous myth."

Black added: "And on the economic side, they were all in favor of austerity. All in favor of privatization. Tried to do a deal with Newt Gingrich to privatize Social Security. And of course, were all in favor of things like NAFTA."

A Calculated Pivot

As for Hillary Clinton's widely heralded "move to the left" in recent months, Black said that it "was purely calculated for political purposes. And all of the team that's going to hire all the key people and vet the key people for the most senior positions for at least the first several years of what increasingly looks likely to be a Clinton administration are going to be picked by these people, who are the opposite of progressive."

In that light, Salazar is a grotesquely perfect choice to chair the transition team. After all of Clinton's efforts to present herself as a foe of the big-money doors that revolve between influence peddlers and government officials in Washington, her choice of Salazar – a partner at the lobbying powerhouse WilmerHale since 2013 – belies her smooth words. That choice means the oil and gas industry just hit a political gusher.

On both sides of the revolving doors, the industry has been ably served by Salazar, whose work included arguing for the Keystone XL pipeline. His support for fracking has been so ardent that it led him two years ago to make a notably fanciful claim: "We know that, from everything we've seen, there's not a single case where hydraulic fracking has created an environmental problem for anyone."

Salazar is part of a clear pattern. Clinton's selection of Tim Kaine for vice president underscored why so many progressives distrust her. Kaine was among just one-quarter of Democrats in the Senate who voted last year to fast track the TPP. When he was Virginia's governor, Kaine said that "I strongly support" a so-called right-to-work law that is anathema to organized labor. A few years ago he faulted fellow Democrats who sought to increase taxes for millionaires.

Clinton announced the Kaine pick while surely knowing that many progressives would find it abhorrent. A week beforehand, the Bernie Delegates Network released the results of a survey of Sanders delegates showing that 88 percent said they would find selection of Kaine “unacceptable.” Only 3 percent of the several hundred respondents said it would be “acceptable.”

The first big post-election showdown will be over the TPP in the lame-duck session of Congress. Clinton’s spokesman Brian Fallon reiterated a week ago that “she is against the TPP before the election and after the election.”

But her choices for running mate and transition team have sent a very different message. And it’s likely that she is laying groundwork to convey anemic “opposition” that will be understood on Capitol Hill as a wink-and-nod from a president-elect who wouldn’t mind “aye” votes for the TPP.

Blessed with an unhinged and widely deplored Republican opponent, Hillary Clinton may be able to defeat him without doing much to mend fences with alienated Sanders voters. But Clinton’s smooth rhetoric should not change the fact that – on a vast array of issues – basic principles will require progressives to fight against her actual policy goals, every step of the way.

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