

Undermining the American Dream

The Politics of Division

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When did Americans begin to hate one another? We live now, 2019, in a time of antagonism or outright hatred between North and South, between Democrat and Republican, between Coastal citizens and Heartland citizens. We are divided between rich and poor, the NRA and high school children, cops and African-Americans, pro-immigration advocates and those who want to kick everyone out who isn't a White, American-born male.

When did we become so dogmatic in our beliefs and so dismissive of the beliefs of others? And when did we begin to vote against ourselves, in favor of giving away what we paid for all our lives—like Social Security and Medicare? When did we designate working-class Americans, like teachers and nurses, as people who were motivated only by an eventual pension plus “entitlements?” Is that how you see well-educated hard working Middle Class citizens? I don't think so.

This great divide in American society was not an accident. And it wasn't the normal course of history. It was a deliberate plan, executed silently by enormously wealthy Right Wing individuals, people whose main hatred is not against other people. No, their hatred is against paying any taxes at all. They cynically use divisive hatreds among others to help them get what they want. They want control of the levers of political power, the power that controls who pays taxes and how much. The power that says whether their toxic corporations or their confiscatory

bank practices can operate however they choose, over the objections of the people.

The American people have been the object of a long propaganda campaign to divide us from one another and create a solid majority of voters who respond to lies and misstatements and innuendo. After a generation, they succeeded. They elected a total Republican Congress, a Republican President and a Supreme Court packed with men who have consistently ruled for corporations over the people. This is the story of how we came to this place, and who is responsible.

Americans have deliberately been set against one another. Working class men and women in private industry have been lied to and told that teachers make too much money and have exorbitant retirements. They don't. Nationally, they are paid an average of \$48,000 a year. In Illinois, for example, teachers pay 9% of their salary into a retirement fund that pays them about \$4,500 a month (That's all. They do not get Social Security.)

As a further example, groups like the Illinois Policy Institute, a Right Wing lobbying organization spread the lie to the public that teachers earn as much as \$100,000. Well, there may be a handful who do, maybe some high school principals who do. Who is the Illinois Policy Institute? It is one of many state "policy institutes" funded by billionaires like the Koch brothers of Koch Industries to spread lies and raise fears among the public encourage tax cuts. The Illinois Policy Institute is a sister organization of ALEC, the Koch brothers corporate lobbying enterprise, located in all 50 states. ALEC offers free vacations to state legislators to places like Palm Springs, California or Keystone, Colorado in return for their votes.

The fact is that teachers in every state, as we have seen from the recent marches in West Virginia and Arizona and elsewhere, earn very little compared to their responsibilities. They are demonstrating against the constant agitation among the wealthy Right Wing and their huge

propaganda network to earn a living wage. The propaganda from people like these State Policy Institutes and people like the Heritage Foundation and American Enterprise Institute, backed by Right Wing Radio and Fox News keeps the lie alive. The Right Wing rich do not actually hate teachers. But they are like gigantic dinosaurs. They want to eat all the leaves from all the trees, and as a result they must step on entire communities in order to do so. They are way up there at the treetops. They don't even recognize as people those on whom they step.

There are many, many examples of these oligarchs using propaganda in the media, funded by their giant fortunes to persuade people to cut taxes. In Kansas, where the Koch brothers are headquartered, budgets were balanced, schools were funded and government ran smoothly. Then came their propaganda campaign that said taxes were too high, schools were over funded, teachers were paid too much, and businesses would fail without more tax cuts. The result of the propaganda was a big tax cut. The result of the big tax cut was huge deficits, schools closing, and a governor, Sam Brownback, working on the Kochs' behalf, who literally resigned and ran away and left the people to fight over what was left of government.

But the solutions to the great Koch brothers/Brownback swindle of Kansas voters were not easy. Once the taxes are cut, more revenues do not suddenly appear and departments begin to function. First, people are laid off. School days may be cut. (These days school security may be reduced.) The fact is that it is always easier to cut taxes than restore them and a big political battle ensues, just to get back to normal. The Kochs don't go to jail. They are not charged for the damage they do. Brownback was not imprisoned...he got a job from Trump, a preposterous appointment as a special Ambassador at large for "international religious freedom." Meanwhile, back in Kansas, parents of children in schools suffer. Right Wing propaganda for not raising taxes continues. And the Koch brothers live happily ever after, doing their level best to destroy the Middle Class. The

dinosaur simply goes on, eating the trees.

None of this is new or even recent. It started as long ago as the Nixon era. In the mid-1960s, when Nixon was planning his run for the Presidency, his somewhat cold, suspicious manner had made him unpopular. He lost the race for governor of California in 1962. Throughout the 1960s a student revolution against the war in Viet Nam and a movement toward more Civil Rights for African-Americans, was causing unrest across the country. Nixon's advisors persuaded him to side with the older, more established and blue-collar elements of society against the newer, younger, anti-war movement and the civil rights advocates. Working class American men did not understand the complexities of the Viet Nam war. And Black Power tended to scare a great many White middle class voters.

In 1968, Nixon entered the campaign for President and claimed that he would win the war in Viet Nam. His stand was popular with normally Democratic blue-collar workers, who had themselves been subject to the draft prior to Viet Nam and felt that young men should do what they had done, and enter the draft willingly. Not to do so was unpatriotic. With the help of people like Robert Haldeman, a former Madison Avenue senior adman and Roger Ailes, the young wunderkind of the emerging and powerful new medium, television, Nixon exploited, in particular, the feelings of the "hard hats." He reached out to the construction workers and other union members who felt that college students should not be burning draft cards, desecrating the flag or running to Canada to avoid service.

By the early 1970s well over half of all Americans had begun to receive the news from nightly television. In fact, about 30% said that they got it exclusively from the nightly news, which was ABC, CBS or NBC. At the time, Roger Ailes, Nixon's television consultant, coached him on ways of changing his image. He advised Nixon to shorten up his speeches, keep ideas simple and

short and stick to patriotic values. He taught Nixon to smile and speak in sound bites. Nixon did, and he won in 1968 and again in 1972.

Later on, after his time in the White House, Roger Ailes hooked up with a Right Wing billionaire and anti-union Conservative Joe Coors, the grandson of Coors Brewery founder Adolph Coors. They created a news service called TVN. Joe Coors was an anti-union Conservative who had supported Barry Goldwater for President in 1964. After Goldwater won only five states...Arizona, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina...Coors dedicated himself to moving the Right Wing message further into the mainstream. TVN would offer legitimate news items to television stations but only selected news and presented from a Right Wing point of view—anti-union, anti-worker, and always anti-government.

Another of Nixon's key supporters and advisors was Lewis Powell. Powell was a Virginia lawyer, educated at Harvard Law School. Powell, like so many people in this long narrative, including his onetime boss Richard Nixon, was a man with a great intellect but no morals or ethics. As the key lawyer and strategist for the tobacco industry, Powell was as responsible as any one man for the proliferation of cigarette smoking that caused tens of millions of deaths from cancer in the United States and around the world throughout most of the 20th century.

With status as a major figure in the Republican Party, Powell, in 1971, sent a memorandum to the head of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce on what he determined was a tendency away from hard-core entrepreneurship, conservative business values towards Liberal values, which he saw leading to eventual Socialism and even potentially to Communism. Powell cautioned businessmen that Liberals, Leftists, mainstream college faculties, intellectuals, some in the media and radicals like Ralph Nader were turning the country dangerously Left. Without balance, he said, it was inevitable that the next generation would become Socialist and abandon free

enterprise, endangering individual liberty. The best and brightest of those in college were no longer interested in becoming Conservative businessmen. The solution, Powell said, was for wealthy business interests to invest time and money into universities and other academic sounding institutions to propagate more Conservative economic ideas.

The famous Powell memo influenced or inspired the creation of the Right Wing movement. In 1973, a group of businessmen created the Heritage Foundation. Subsequently, they organized the Manhattan Institute, the Cato Institute, Citizens for a Sound Economy, Accuracy in Academe, and other powerful organizations. All these institutions and dozens more, like the Hudson Institute, the Hoover Institution, the Heartland Foundation, Americans for Prosperity would provide support and research for the Right Wing propaganda machine. Even many university economics departments inserted Conservative or Neo-Liberal economists to their business schools, or graduate programs ostensibly to balance the “Liberals.” In reality they only sought to introduce the perspective of a profit-oriented corporate point of view, especially that of the corporate boards and major stockholders. Many of the papers developed by those “think tanks” eventually provided popular justification for Right Wing Republican propaganda.

And what is that agenda? It could not be clearer that the Republican Party was to become the party of the ultra wealthy. One need only look at the amounts of money given to Republican candidates today, as much as \$500,000 by one individual to one candidate—and not one candidate but hundreds across the country, using financial leverage to force Democrats to raise huge sums to be competitive.

By the mid-1970s, corporate America had funded dozens of “Think Tanks” like the Heritage Foundation and Cato. The sheer number of these Right Wing institutions was beginning to overwhelm the message of moderates and progressives. For every one professor who would

declare that tax cuts would eventually bankrupt the country, a counter argument would be presented by five think tank “experts” plus a couple of Neoliberal theorists from someplace like “Liberty” University, the unaccredited Jerry Falwell religious college or Hillsdale college, the Right Wing college in Michigan funded by the DeVos family.

Nonetheless, in the 1970s, the economy was rolling along at above 3%.or more growth per year. In the media, both sides of the argument were being debated. Even in the late 1970s, however, the ideas coming out of think tanks and even the ideas of economists like Milton Friedman seemed to turn the clock back to the 19th (if not the 18th) century. They were considered somewhat eccentric. They seemed strange because they were illogical economic ideas that were being shoe-horned into propaganda paid for by billionaires or strong national and global corporations. But in the latter part of the 1970s inflation began to take hold, the economy faltered and Conservative propaganda was vastly expanded.

By 1980, the entire Republican propaganda program was in place. Then came the election of Ronald Reagan and his charismatic introduction of “supply side” economics, or as his eventual Vice President, George H.W. Bush called it, “voodoo economics.” The Republican Party had long sought to deliver to the voters the kinds of “Christmas presents” that they considered Social Security and Medicare, both of which had been created and instituted by Democratic Presidents. With Reagan, they felt that they had found their own “Christmas present.”

The Republicans, behind Reagan’s bright smile and confident demeanor, would offer the ultimate gift...lower taxes with no pain...at least no immediately observable pain. At this point, there were still only three major networks and opinions coming from both Right and Left on the Sunday morning talk shows. The key to change was Ronald Reagan. Reagan had learned in many years of speaking with employees of General Electric how to re-format and re-word the

arguments. Taxes could be made a “burden” and the IRS could be “confiscatory.” The government, which the Republicans had begun to blame for higher costs of living and inflation, was suddenly “the problem.” Reagan simply changed the dialogue by changing the terms and leaving out a little fact here or there. In other words, he lied.

Reagan used another technique, one he recalled from the McCarthy days—fear. He said, basically, that “the Russians are coming.” The fact is that if the Russians were coming in 1980, they would have had to borrow the money for the trip. What Reagan knew but didn’t tell Americans was that Russia was broke. Intelligence sources knew as early as 1976 that Russian equipment was not being repaired and falling obsolete while Russian soldiers were not being paid, resulting in many desertions.

In 1981, Reagan promised that no government losses would result from tax cuts like the cut in the top income rate from 74% down to 28%. Tax cuts on capital gains, primarily paid by the very rich and on corporate taxes would not result in deficits, he said, but increases. It was, in fact, all voodoo economics after all. Spending continued and the national debt tripled. It was a major watershed in the nation’s economic history.

After Ronald Reagan, after George H.W. Bush and after Clinton, the Bush-Cheney administration came in and once again promised to expand the economy by cutting taxes.

Because Reagan had conditioned Americans to believe that he could not lie, very few people understood the significance of these tax cuts. They were a disaster for the American economy.

After Reagan and the first President Bush, the national debt had risen to \$4.4 trillion, a 240% increase over the debt after Jimmy Carter’s Presidency. Measure that against Jimmy Carter’s 43% increase or Bill Clinton’s 32%. Clinton gradually brought the deficits down to about \$100 billion in 2001, virtually putting the government finances in balance.

The Bush-Cheney administration created a \$420 billion deficit in 2002 alone and more than \$5.8 trillion dollars in deficits over their term. They essentially doubled the national debt. Then Bush left President Obama a broken country with 10% unemployment and locked-in deficits of over a trillion dollars every year for almost 5 of Obama's 8 year term of office. The point is that all the deficit spending came as a result of the Reagan "big lie" about deficits, about which the constant deluge of Right Wing commentary lied to the American people, as did the myriad of "think tanks" which daily published white papers dismissing the debt as part of a growing economy. How could Reagan not be challenged or later how could Bush-Cheney not be challenged for these huge negative numbers?

One way was to end opposing debate on television. In 1987, Ronald Reagan ended the Fairness Doctrine. This was a regulation codified in 1949 that said all discussions of public interest in the media required an opposing view. If that didn't happen, citizens could appeal to the FCC. The FCC was obligated to see that radio and television programming was carried out "in the public interest." In other words, all discussions or debates or arguments would require the explanation of both sides. If not, the FCC did have sanction authority over broadcast media and the consequences could be severe. So no one wanted to challenge the Fairness Doctrine. Because it was about fairness and objectivity, no previous President had challenged it. But Ronald Reagan and his Republican supporters decided that this would be a good way to tilt public opinion their way. It was a fateful decision.

Up to that point, Right Wing radio had been sporadic. In New York City, Bob Grant would raise controversial issues, make racist comments, be fired and move on to another station. Morton Downey would make a racist comment or two. But he would soon be smacked down and would move on to a new local station. But in 1988, after Right Wing propagandists got the green light

to say whatever they damned well pleased, Rush Limbaugh was hired by ABC Radio, which later became Cumulus Radio to do a national program. With no Fairness Doctrine to impede him, he began to support gun owners and war hawks and oil drilling, and chemical companies refusing to clean up their toxic sites and pharmaceutical companies charging multiple times what drugs should cost. He quickly found corporate sponsors and was even given an underwriting of an estimated \$1.3 million per year from the Heritage Foundation.

Limbaugh's great talent was lying. He would take a small kernel of truth on some issue and transform it into a giant lie. Entire books and web sites have been set up to counter Limbaugh's lies. Lie or truth, he was arrogant, insulting, dismissive, ridiculing, and, of course, totally partisan, clearly on the side of corporations against the people. But his method was to join in on the side of corporations while declaring that any kind of regulation was a "job killer."

Some of the people who enjoyed his rude and insulting manner were undoubtedly racists and losers. But he was also popular with many of the skeptics on the Right, who felt that he made sense when he attacked the establishment, which in one way or another had treated them badly, usually for their own mistakes. He was extremely popular with middle aged White men with no education or experience and truck drivers. Truck drivers listened to him partly because, driving across country, the networks of radio stations that carried his show were so numerous. After Clinton changed the rules of broadcast ownership in the mid-1990s, one could scarcely go an hour when traveling across country without hitting another syndicated AM station carrying Rush Limbaugh.

But the late 1990s, Clear Channel alone put Rush Limbaugh on over 800 of their own stations and eventually on something like 400 stations of other networks. Limbaugh became rich, earning more than \$40 million a year with an 8 year contract. Because his great talent was persuading

people confidently that he was simply a reasonable man coping with idiocies, no one knew that, thanks to the repeal of the Fairness Doctrine, he was simply spreading the lies of the Right Wing rich for a huge amount of money.

By the mid-1990s Right Wing Republicans who wanted the latest talking points would simply listen to Rush Limbaugh and then repeat his propaganda without even bothering to edit it.

Limbaugh, with no callers allowed who were not “ditto heads,” that is, agreed with him, and with no contrary statements allowed, became the oracle for many people who did not want to think for themselves, or wanted validation of their own resentments. He was soon the most popular talk show host by far, and set the example for many others, some of whom would become even more vile and obnoxious, but who would push the unsuspecting American public further and further to the Right.

Things became geometrically more difficult for Democrats and a windfall for Republicans in 1996 when President Clinton signed the Telecommunications Reform Act. This bill eventually enabled 6 companies, GE, Disney NewsCorp, VIACOM, Time Warner and CBS to own a total of 9,000 radio stations, 1,500 TV stations, and 2,400 publishers, basically turning over the control of major media outlets to this handful of companies. One of those companies, Clear Channel, began an network of stations across the country that would feature the worst (or perhaps the best if you are a White Supremacist) group of hate-spewing Right Wing radio hosts...Limbaugh, Sean Hannity Laura Schlesinger, Mark Levin that the country had ever seen. But that was just the beginning.

In 1996, Roger Ailes, President Nixon’s young television consultant and later Right Wing media consultant to Joe Coors began a new venture. He persuaded Rupert Murdoch, owner of the global media giant, Newscorp, to begin what was basically a televised Republican propaganda

outlet called “The Fox News Channel.” With the cynical slogan “Fair and Balanced” Fox News was, from the very beginning, not even close to fair or balanced. It was, and still is, Right Wing propaganda.

Fox News became one of key influences on those who either do not read a newspaper or are not interested at all in the truth. It reports news with a Right Wing bias and maintains a lineup of television commentators who constantly praise and promote Republicans and attack Democrats. Audience surveys show the audience to be overwhelmingly White, male, largely rural and over 60 years of age. In fairness to Murdoch and Ailes, their formula of sex and sensationalism and the pretense of being “Fair and Balanced” did create a large audience which converted to sizeable advertising revenues.

The problem with Fox News, however, was that it did not...and does not...tell the truth. Soon after its founding, organizations like Media Matters, a monitoring service begun by a former Right Wing propagandist, which tries to be objective but is forced by Fox and others merely to spend full time checking on their lies, which never seem to end. Politifact, the independent, Internet-based, fact-checking service recently published a response to a query asking them how reliable Fox News Channel has been. Politifact, without commentary, simply published their findings. Of all the statements made as definitive on political or governmental matters, 18% were considered to be “Half-true.” 21% were considered to be “Mostly False.” 30% were considered by Politifact to be “False.” And 9% were considered to be so false that they fell into the category of “Pants on Fire.” In other words, 78% of the news received by Fox News Channel viewers was either partially untrue or totally false.

By 1993, when Bill Clinton took office, with a political victory that surprised and alarmed the plutocrats and billionaires who had supported the Republican Party since the 1970s, the media

had become somewhat more relaxed about politician's lives. At one point, a Senator or Governor's personal life, unless he flaunted it in public, was largely off limits to the media. Presidential peccadilloes, like the rumors of JFK's activities, and Eisenhower's personal aide during the war, went unreported.

Then, in 1980, we elected a President who had not only been divorced but had been part of the Hollywood scene long before he had been a Conservative. Because his life as a celebrity and a movie star was pretty much an open book, mores moved a little to the Left as politics moved a little to the Right. In 1987, that same President abandoned the Fairness Doctrine, requiring opposing viewpoints to be aired on radio and television. This seemed to simultaneously lift the lid from the limits of good taste. At least for the Right Wing radio hosts like the vulgar and obscene Rush Limbaugh and Michael Savage. Normal morality and good taste were tossed out the window like old clothes, out-of-fashion and objects of ridicule.

As the Clinton era progressed and the Fox News Channel audience of white men over 65 years of age grew, attacks on the Clintons increased. In 1992, in his continuing effort to create division in the American public, Roger Ailes joined Rush Limbaugh to produce a syndicated television program in addition to the Limbaugh national radio show. While television advertisers were still reluctant to accept Limbaugh and Ailes' freewheeling combination of lies and insults and occasional salacious comments, the program did maintain itself for about 4 years with advertisers who would put up with Limbaugh's crudeness or totally supported it. During that time, the content was non-stop ridicule, lie and divide, attacking the Clintons and any of their supporters among the Democrats. The program was set up like an infomercial, with a pre-

screened audience of Limbaugh supporters. It was basically Limbaugh's propaganda in full view and the studio audience laughed and cheered on cue.

President Clinton continued suspect personal behavior did not help the Democrats defending him. Despite being the topic of many wild accusations and exaggerations (lies) Clinton's personal life did contain some truthful allegations or at least some that were never fully explained. With the revelations of the Monica Lewinsky affair, the atmosphere became totally toxic. Limbaugh and the other Right Wing radio hosts as well as Fox News Channel, were given a gift. They used it to make the Clintons' lives chaotic and sent the Democratic party into total disarray. The Republicans in Congress spent every single hour working to Impeach him.

At one point, the well known and acerbic, but until then well respected columnist, William Safire, with only limited information impulsively called Hillary Clinton, a "liar." At the time she was working diligently to come up with a solution to the price rises of 15% or more annually being charged by the insurance companies. That reaction began what would eventually become open season on calling anyone a liar by simply maintaining that on one day you said A and on another day you said B, which became the apparent standard for lying, according to the Right Wing radio and TV hosts. For the Right Wing, post Limbaugh and now post Safire, someone was a "liar" or implied that someone lied, merely by stating that on Monday he said it was raining and then on Wednesday, said that it might have been just misting.

Ridicule became commonplace in this era, testing the limits of civility. Rush Limbaugh, for example, referred to the 12-year-old Chelsea Clinton, who was somewhat ungainly in her younger years, as the White House "dog." Then, on television, while speaking of her, he literally showed a picture of a dog. He created the term "Feminazi" for feminists and every kind of

imaginable slur relating to a women's weight or age or appearance, calling some female activists, "thunder cows." He eventually became so emboldened with his self-importance that he referred to a young Georgetown law student and activist for the availability of birth control as a "slut" and a "prostitute."

As the Clinton economy gathered momentum and the "dot-com" technological revolution took hold, unemployment dropped below 5%, Republicans began to panic. They had never seen approval numbers like those for Clinton, even with numerous attacks on his morality from women in Arkansas and invented scandals, like the so-called "Troopergate" or "Whitewater," the investigation of a real estate investment by the Clintons, on which the Republican Senate spent more than \$200 million.

The economy progressed and the recession disappeared and a long-term climb in the economy became obvious. Despite Republican efforts and those of Right Wing radio, like Rush Limbaugh, Clinton became increasingly popular. With no end in sight for an economy growing at a record pace, the Republicans decided that anything was fair game. Rush Limbaugh, literally became the leading Republican by attacking the Clintons, or attacking Liberals, college professionals, gays, Lesbians, AIDS, women, even climate change. Limbaugh had a guaranteed radio audience of 10 to 15 million, in some cases the only program they could hear at that time period. He became popular with the disgruntled, and those who had no access or sought no access to the real television news media or most major newspapers. Limbaugh could attack people with comments of the kind that would make people cringe if they were in public rather at home or in the car. Clear Channel provided something like 700 radio stations and sold his syndicated program to hundreds of others.

The Rush Limbaugh television experiment, though brief, proved to Roger Ailes that there was a television audience for Right Wing television programming. In 1996, when the Limbaugh program ended, Ailes persuaded Rupert Murdoch to finance the Fox News Channel and to let him run it almost without supervision. Ailes hired a gang of misfit Right Wing television commentators whose only qualifications were that they would say anything for money. Ailes turned the news into sex, suspicion and sensationalism, airing every single conspiracy theory they could invent. Any little misstep or even a mistaken comment could cause a day-long harangue about that Congressman or Senator's loyalty or corrupt practices or morality. Fox News began as a "gotcha" entertainment program masquerading as a presentation of the news, just as Ailes had done with Joe Coors, and it has never stopped being that petty, often insane, presentation of the news, occasionally reporting events (like 9/11) but always presenting a follow up analysis that somehow implicated Democrats in the worst aspects of the situation.

Ailes was a master of audience manipulation. He knew that pretty blondes with skirts up to the top of their thighs would get the attention of Middle Class white men. And it did. Not one audience member in a thousand could tell you the names or identify the other two "newsmen" on either side of the blonde in the Fox morning news lineup. The news portion was simply news delivered with some sex and some sensationalism, and always with some attempt to diminish the Democrats. It was astonishing that later in the life of Fox News that these female "newscasters" came out and complained that they had been sexually abused. It was somewhat surprising, as any woman who was not blind or deaf understood the Ailes' formula of "entertainment-first" TV. He hadn't changed the formula since his days with Nixon. Keep it short. Get to the point. Show a little sex. Above all, hold on to your non-thinking, white, male audience.

By the time the Bush-Cheney administration arrived, Fox News Channel was a broader, better directed effort at discrediting Democrats, always using the deliberately insulting term “Democrat” Party instead of the correct term “Democratic” Party. Almost immediately, Fox News Channel began to protect Bush and Cheney’s neglect of the Clinton anti-terrorist program leading to the 9/11 disaster.

Bush had ignored the daily anti-terrorist briefings from the CIA. He then ignored the special mid-August 2001 warning from the CIA and Clinton’s anti-terrorist Chief, Richard Clarke about heightened concerns from the Intelligence community about an attack on the U. S. Fox, however, used the aftermath of the 3,000 lives lost to make a special, if scurrilous and short-lived, attack on Clinton, who had set up the anti-terrorism watch and who, though unsuccessful, had tried numerous times to catch or kill Osama Bin Laden.

Fox News continued through the Bush Administration, pushing for the Iraq War. They promoted the idea of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and promoted the idea of going to war. At the same time, they supported Republican lies about the economy and deregulation of banking rules. Bush-Cheney deficits were draining \$400 billion a year over budget from the assets of government.

Because of the two Bush tax cuts, and lower revenues, much of the borrowing was from the government’s one strong income resource—Social Security. Americans continued to pay in to Social Security in the same amounts, providing about a trillion dollars a year. But to pay tax cuts for the rich, the government now borrowed \$400 billion a year. So the huge surpluses of Social Security began to dwindle, not because Social Security paid out more than it took in—it didn’t—but because Republicans borrowed from the annual net positive balance of Social Security. Over

time, those trillions of dollars were spent to pay for national budget deficits—basically taking money from Social Security and giving the money to the very wealthy in the form of tax cuts. .

During the Bush era, Fox News supported the Bush-Cheney Administration’s false accusation that Iraq had “weapons of mass destruction.” It promoted the idea of Iraq’s lawlessness and the brutality of its leader. Saddam Hussein was a bad and brutal dictator, but it would not have required a war, bombing innocent citizens, displacing millions, ruining the historic culture of a country and killing thousands upon thousands of people to remove him. This is what the rest of the world knew, but Dick Cheney ignored, having already drawn up a map of the oil fields and distributed it among major oil companies. Fox News backed Bush and Cheney and Rumsfeld—now regarded legally by some advanced countries to be war criminals—and called our allies, who would not support this crime—traitors.

Fox News even defended the leak of secret information about a CIA operative because her husband had said that it was very unlikely that Iraq had nuclear materials from which to make a bomb. It condemned other countries of the world who did not support our effort, which were almost all of the countries that had supported the earlier war by Bush Sr. against Iraq. French fries, Fox News commentators famously said, should now be called “freedom fries.” Fox News later in the decade worked against the people domestically, too. They ignored all the signs of heightened activity in real estate speculation and in laxity in regulation of the stock market that led to a financial collapse. They protected the Wall Street purveyors of fraudulent securities, minimized the Great Recession and supported both torture of prisoners and illegal wiretapping of U.S. citizens by the NSA. And while supporting a war that needlessly killed 4,500 Americans,

injured 25, 000 more, killed at least 250,000 innocent Iraqi citizens and displaced at least 5 million more, they promoted “Patriotism.”

After the Bush Administration totally devastated the U.S. economy with 700,000 jobs being lost every day, and companies closing and a bill of \$780 billion handed to Congress to keep the banks open, Fox not only did not praise President Obama for turning things around in 6 short months, then growing the economy every quarter for 8 straight years. On the contrary, Obama became a huge target of the Right and it was no-holds-barred, vicious and racist. But the Obama era is another story, a worse story of propaganda used to promote racism used to promote election fraud and Right Wing political dominance.

On the evening of the day that President Barack Obama was inaugurated as President of the United States, a group of Republicans met in a private room at a large downtown restaurant in Washington D. C. By this time, January 2009, very few facts about anything could be concealed any longer from any American who wanted to find them. Social scholars, however, were searching for new words to describe the outrageous and unprecedented manner in which the President and the First Lady were being verbally abused by others, not only committed racists, but racists among Republican politicians.

By now, this entire spectrum of vehemently insulting, ridiculing, haranguing radio and Fox News Channel hosts had been operating for a decade or more. All of the horrifically crude expressions common among anti-social elements of the lower class, the groups that Hillary Clinton would eventually refer to as American “deplorables” were being spewed out across the airwaves by those media slugs, Hannity, Limbaugh, Coulter, et al., all growing rich—tens of millions of

dollars a year--becoming themselves part of the rich Right Wing—by attacking the Middle and Lower Classes and affluent Democrats through racial attacks on President Obama.

These low brow, insidious, former disk jockeys, failed military, failed attorneys and failed academics, like—Hugh Hewitt, Dennis Praeger, Michael Savage, Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, Glenn Beck, Mark Levin, Ollie North, Bill O'Reilly and lesser clowns like Bill Cunningham and Charlie Sykes and Mike Gallagher and Chris Plante and even radical advocates of outright idiotic nonsense like Alex Jones—all became part of hate-radio. Almost none of them had accomplished anything before they latched on to the Right Wing radio meal train on the networks underwritten by the corporations owned by the billionaires who own the majority of their stock. These losers-turned-political hacks delivered regular rants on radio or Fox News attacking those whom they said wanted to live on the government dole. There was no way for their audiences to know that the super-rich who paid for this trash-talk would spend literally hundreds of millions to divide the people but nothing in private investment to create jobs for them.

The Middle Class, but even specific groups like Hispanics, would be caricatured as “Mexican Joe” holding a can of Dos Equis, not working, standing on a corner. Most of their racist jabs they tried to pass off as casual comments, but there was no mistaking the political intent--deliberate slurs against Mexican-Americans, Democrats. Or Blacks, also Democrats, or the elderly or union workers or teachers--anyone who could possibly organize into a group to fight their tax cut proposals. The audience for the Right Wing message was the largely White, high-school graduate and the unsuspecting truck driver who resented how his wages were not going up and looked (not unnaturally) for someone to blame. The Super-Rich and their subordinates, the

Republican Party, wanted to point the finger away from themselves and right back at the Middle Class.

The Koch brothers, Sheldon Adelson and Robert Mercer and their friends are—make no mistake about it—as dead serious as an AR-15 when it comes to wanting their taxes reduced. They will tell you, sir, when and where they will give their money away. But it won't be to the government. And it won't be to help workers. Workers are a commodity. The Super-rich pay them only as much as their technological or other skill demands. These kinds of Right Wing rich are not people you will ever meet. You will meet only their smiling, their public, face. You will never see the hideous side that pays the bills for all the propaganda meant to divide Americans. Astonishingly, all this effort at propaganda is just to reduce their taxes.

It is important to understand the reality of taxes. In order to prevent paying taxes, that is, whatever taxes they are currently paying—which they see as too much—the Right Wing Rich like the Koch brothers, the crude-oil polluters or Sheldon Adelson the Asian casino owner (but not other super-rich like Warren Buffett and Bill Gates for some reason) are willing to demean almost the entire U.S. population. What's more they would divide a country and suppress wages until a man without a college education can barely afford a place to live with the wages from an average job.

The Right Wing Republican Rich have spent huge sums to promote images of a government "out of control" (although smaller as a percentage of population than in many decades) or anti-immigration policy only to help divide us. They look to use hate speech or denial of rights against anyone they can find who is "different." And, using their radio host propaganda outlets they have found that a large number of Americans can be turned into people who ridicule others

and even have a real distaste, in some cases real hatred, for others (whom they know only from the depictions of the Right Wing hate mongers who win them over simply by telling them lies on the radio about people who in reality are almost the exact same as they.

When it comes to paying taxes, the rich do pay more in absolute numbers. But who hurts more after paying their taxes? In the year 2000, the top 400 earners in the U.S. made approximately \$174 million each. The tax rate was...let's just say...40%. (It was 39.6) But those 400 after deductions and miscellaneous discounts, paid an average of 22 percent out of pocket to Uncle Sam. That is still a lot of money. They paid an average of \$38,280,000 and they kept \$135,720,000. That was what taxation looked like under that horrible man—remember him—Bill Clinton, who gave this country (over the vote of every single Republican in this country) the “highest tax increase in the history of”—well, everything and all time, according to the billionaires. So that was what the largest tax increase in history, according to Republicans, looked like for the super-rich. They somehow survived.

Now, let's see what happened to others who happened to have at least some income at that time. Let's just take an average American salary which would have been between \$40,000 and \$50,000 in or around the year 2000. Let's be generous to the rich and take the higher figure-- \$50,000/ An average family in 2000, making a household income of \$50,000, would have paid an average income tax, the amount they finally write the check for, of 15.3% or about \$7,650. Leaving them \$42,350, which sounds like a reasonable amount. But let's kick out a few key monthly expenses to see how much they eventually end up with. Mortgage at least \$1,000, auto insurance, at least \$50, health insurance \$800, electric, heat, gasoline another \$200 at least. So what do we have left for food and clothing? About \$370 a month. For food, clothes, school costs,

entertainment and anything left out, like household insurance or life insurance and—
emergencies.

Let's also stipulate that average (white) Americans mostly live in decent circumstances, often in reasonably good neighborhoods, often with good schools—but they live relatively modestly. Still, you can see the problem. A family with only \$370 left over each month is in drastically different circumstances from a family whose net after taxes is \$11,310,000 per month and who can afford to spend almost unlimited amounts on mortgage, cars, insurance, travel, education, health and, of course, food and clothing in virtually any combination. The point is this: the very rich do not need more tax breaks. The corporations do not need more tax breaks, because those same rich own fully 65% or more of all corporate stocks and bonds.

No, the problem is not that we pay too much in taxes. And it is not that we spend extravagantly. We do not have costs of living that are outrageous. We do not have governments that burden us with rules or wasted administration. Our problem is that over the last 40 years, then 30 years and then accelerating over the last 20 years the money that comes in from everything...cars, guns, oil, food, pharmaceuticals, health care, toys, clothing, meat, buildings, tires, golf clubs, travel...everything we buy and sell as Americans or American businesses...goes as, if by some magic chimney, swooping up to the top, to the top income earners. And the amounts are huge.

The fact is that 50% of the annual income, the money we make from everything that we do, statistically, goes to the top 10% of Americans. And while that ten percent--31 million people--is a lot, the amount of money that encompasses 50% of all U.S. income is staggering, simply beyond the imagination of most Americans. And remember that the rest of us, the 300 million people in the bottom 90% share the other half.

Worse yet is that fact that the top 1 percent and then the top .1 percent do not share that money evenly and so on down the chain. For example, the top .1% average ten times or twenty times what the top 1% average. And so it goes until you get to the person who is the final member of the top 10 percent. And while still in the top 10 percent, that person's income is enormously reduced from that of the top 1%.

What Americans have learned is that people can apparently, with almost no evidence, be made to believe by Right Wing radio that others in society, average working families, are lazy and stupid and dependent on the government. In reality, the average American driving a truck, working construction, teaching grade school, assisting and cleaning up after the disabled or extreme elderly, fixing brakes on cars, stocking groceries, behind the counter at the drug store, working in a bakery, transporting patients from the operating room to their recovery room, washing cars at an auto dealer, selling cars at an auto dealer, waiting on tables in a restaurant, making coffee at a coffee shop or a hamburger at a fast food restaurant—or hundreds of thousands of other jobs—make this country work for the rich to enjoy.

And they suffer far more from taxes than do the rich. For example, when, in fact, it was these average Americans who did pay most of the taxes, paid for Social Security, Medicare, military expenditures—and sent their sons and daughters to die in the service while the rich hid their children behind the walls of gated communities. Or maintained that a heel spur was debilitating enough to keep a man who is now President from being drafted but not bad enough to keep him from playing baseball.

One final point on taxes is one that was made by a more recent study done by the independent Congressional Budget Office regarding distribution of 2013 income and taxes by quintile. In that

study, the top income quintile (top 20%) earned an average of \$265,000 and paid an average of about \$70,000 in income taxes. The bottom quintile earned \$25,000 (which is comprised of only an earned income of \$15,800, but also government ‘transfers’ of \$9,600, meaning food stamps or unemployment insurance, Medicaid perhaps, during the year.)

In this CBO study, the people in the exact middle made about \$70,000 and paid \$9,000 in taxes. The point here is that, yes, the top income group pays slightly more as a ratio of income to taxes than the ratio of income-to-taxes paid by the next lower group. At the lowest quintile, however, you are basically homeless returning an average of \$800 to the government in return for subsidies. At the second quintile up, you are barely making an existence but have a longer term residence. In the second lowest quintile, the income is only \$31,000 but the assumed government transfers now (2013) are an additional \$16,000 to supplement that income. And while those assumed government services are not always used or always available, that quintile pays an average of \$4,000 in taxes per year.

Returning to the attacks on President Obama by Fox News and national radio networks they were so racially vicious for a particularly disgusting reason. They were completely gratuitous. For example, the Fox News hosts Bill O’Reilly and Sean Hannity as vicious and racist as possible on air were both raised and educated in the New York/New Jersey area. They were both products of civilly and morally conscious Roman Catholic families. Yet, for huge sums of money, underwritten by those who merely wanted to drive a wedge between members of the Middle Class to form an anti-tax political movement, they used race in the most despicable and cynical way. Both were raised in neighborhoods and schools where racists and bigot would actually be shunned and avoided by neighbors. But when Obama became President and Roger

Ailes said that Fox News would now embrace racism and use it to attract Southern and border state and rural bigots to their audiences, O'Reilly, and Hannity and others, jumped on the gravy train, literally earning tens of millions of dollars a year merely for telling gigantic lies with racial overtones, especially to an audience composed of those who were ignorant of the facts and particularly susceptible to propaganda.

The goal was always to tell a small lie and then expand it into a bigger lie. Let's say that the small lie is the "small lie" that gun control has not worked. The truth is that gun control has worked in many places, and especially where it has been effectively integrated. In those places, deaths from misuse of firearms are a mere fraction of the percentage of gun deaths we experience nationally. The bigger lie is that...since gun controls don't work (the lie)...we need to have more "good guys" with guns to take care of the "bad guys with guns." In other words, we need more guns. So the first statement is a lie. The fact is gun controls do work. And the second lie is even bigger—"good guys" with guns will stop "bad guys" with guns. This idea is not only wrong; it is foolish and dangerous, and it is only promoted by the NRA to sell more guns.

Right Wing radio propaganda is even worse. The first two lies become assumptions. After all, no one is allowed to come on the air to contradict them. So, soon, a Rush Limbaugh will begin to wonder—since gun controls don't work, and since "good guys" with guns can overcome "bad guys" with guns—why aren't more schools arming people with guns. Soon after that others are coming on the air to ask why this or that Congressman has not done his or her job—namely promoting legislation to get more "good guys" with guns into schools. And so it goes on and on.

It is difficult to characterize the kind of radio and television commentary that is so gratuitously insulting and racist and crude as began to take place in the early Obama years. As one very small

example, Glenn Beck was removed from Fox News for claiming that President Obama was, of all things, a “racist” who “hated” white people. What? A man who idolized his white mother, his grandfather and grandmother, and had far more close, white, educated, cultured colleagues than even most white Ivy league graduates?. Yet the problem is best understood by realizing that this was, by far, not the worst or even close to the worst insult experienced by the President of the United States in the first two years of his Presidency. For those, we’ll need a little more time.

Once you have committed a crime, it is easier to do it again. That is why gangs initiate their newest young members by having them commit a crime. Their guilt binds them to the group. Gang leaders know that such a person can be made reliable, an unquestioning follower. He, or she, will become a cipher, a slug, an unimaginative, cowardly menial who can be manipulated.

In 2009, when Mitch McConnell told his gang, the Republican Party, that his goal was to make Barack Obama a one-term President, he already knew that he had hundreds of greedy, malevolent Republican politicians ready to do his dirty work. For over a decade at least, he had been the main fundraiser for the Republicans in the Senate, sucking up to the Super-Rich, offering them irresistible deals—tax breaks, reductions in environmental regulations, free rein in handling their depositors money, unlimited interest rates, the creation of transitory health insurance and highly speculative investments. He had a whole group of Republican politicians who had already proved that they would do anything for money.

How else do you think a small-time Senator from one of the smallest, poorest states in the country could become Republican leader in the Senate? Mitch McConnell made friends with the Super-Rich, and then found enough venal gang members—House members and Senators, both in the obdurate Confederate southern states and eventually throughout the country and initiated

them into criminally scandalous political behavior. McConnell could take money from the Koch brothers and other billionaires, give it to his mindless Republican followers, buying votes like penny candy—against the American people--until or unless the money ran out.

Eventually the Kochs and the rest of their billionaire pals cut out the middle man and began to elect their own gang members, farther to the Fascist Right than the standard McConnell Republican. The Tea Party Republicans know on which side their croissants are buttered. They vote against any kind of health care, public services and, most of all, relentlessly against taxes and for tax cuts. The Tea Party are the Fascist robots of the Super-Rich.

The Republicans won. They succeeded in defeating the Obama Presidency and the Middle Class, just as McConnell swore to do. His leadership in slowing the recovery from the Great Bush Recession, prevented good jobs and small business from returning, despite the huge suffering it caused. By the time President Barack Obama passed through the White House door, 16 million people had lost their jobs, millions of them for more than two solid years. The Republican-controlled Congress refused to help restore the economy.

Even after years of obstructing jobs bills and small business incentives from receiving a vote in the House or passage in the Senate, the Republicans, in a final malicious act, denied unemployment insurance to a group of 1.3 million families, who though constantly seeking work, were still unemployed and pushed them onto welfare in 2012. McConnell claimed all this was to defeat President Obama. In fact, it was only a continuation of their marching orders from the oligarchs, the Super-rich and the global corporations that they owned. The Fascist Republicans had decided that campaign money was more important than their constituents or average American families.

After a brutal two years of layoffs and foreclosures and bankruptcies, President Obama, with not only no Republican support but active resistance at every turn, passed the Affordable Care Act by one single vote in the House and one vote in the Senate. Only one Republican a House member from Louisiana, voted to make health care delivery for all Americans more reliable and affordable. Every other Republican voted with the health insurance industry.

The Koch brothers joined their brothers-in-arms, the other anti-Middle Class lobbying groups to get out and lie for the insurance companies. They started something called Americans for Prosperity and another called FreedomWorks, repurposed remnants of old tobacco lobbying groups. They traveled throughout the country spreading lies, backed up by the Right Wing radio groups and by publicity from constant favorable coverage by Fox News. The result was total confusion about Obamacare, which the Republicans were happy to call it, because, controlling most of the media, they could characterize it as a disastrous Communist or Socialist policy designed to destroy individual choice of doctors and hospitals...which, of course, it was neither.

By 2012 many people of a certain age would never work again at the kinds of work they had done for a lifetime, thanks to McConnell's successful use of lies and propaganda to elect his now Republican/Fascist followers. As a result, many people began to think about early retirement. By 2014, a full six years after the crash, after long years without the kinds of wages and benefits they had built up over a lifetime, some having spent a year or more unemployed, often having exhausted savings, 401k plans, equity in their homes, many people decided to retire. After retirement, finding that Social Security would not cover all their costs, and with ever-increasing Medicare deductions and higher prescription costs, they returned to part time work, bagging groceries at Jewel, Publix, Kroger or clerking at Walmart or Target. The Fascist Right Wing

radio hosts praised and commended these people for their work ethic and claimed that it was proof that Social Security was not the answer and that people wanted to continue to work.

By 2016, thanks to many non-congressional initiatives by President Obama to improve domestic economic activity (for each of which he was regularly excoriated by the Right Wing) and the natural business cycle, the economy had slowly, gradually picked up, climbed over 2% GDP and under 5% unemployment. Wages had not gone up. Corporations moved jobs to right-to-work states where unions could not exist and therefore workers had no “right” to collective negotiation for higher pay. The Republican/Fascists and their corporate sponsors fought increases to the minimum wage on every occasion the issue was raised.

In 2014, Volkswagen built a plant in Tennessee, and, accustomed to favorable relations with unions in Europe, offered no resistance to one in their plant. In fact, they encouraged it. But the Republican Party of Tennessee and that state’s billionaire governor said that, if Volkswagen had a union (God forbid Tennesseans should be able to negotiate better wages) then many of the incentives for Volkswagen would be dropped. After gigantic union busting methods were applied by political operatives, the vote to unionize was dropped.

It is not surprising Tennessee workers sought to increase their wages. The minimum wage in many areas is still \$7.25. In some states it is higher and in some, mostly Southern states it is lower. While the minimum wage is not livable, producing a maximum of only the \$15,000 per year, things are far worse than that. In the late 1960s, the minimum wage was only \$1.50, but that was the equivalent of \$10 in 2012 buying power. By 2017, the minimum wage of \$7.25 was worth less than \$5 of buying power. The point is that...if you thought you were poorer than you used to be on a higher income...you are right. In addition, the rich, because their taxes are

becoming a smaller and smaller percentage of their gross income, are getting richer and the poor, poorer.

Certainly by 2016, the Fascists--McConnell, the Koch brothers, the Super-rich and global corporations --had won. Americans were being told by the Republican/Fascist propaganda arm, through Right Wing talk radio and Fox News that people would have to work longer. That there was no reason that people should be able to retire at any age under 70. People lived longer, were healthier, and actually “wanted” to work longer bagging groceries, instead of playing with the grandchildren, going to the beach or playing golf.

Meanwhile, no Republican/Fascist ever brought up the growing national debt except to offer the suggestion that we cut Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid services. No Republican/Fascist ever even whispered the idea that we should trim the military budget in the slightest. When Democrats complained that continuing to cut taxes on the rich was the real reason that we had deficits, they were blasted on Right Wing radio for wanting to return to “tax and spend” Democratic policies. The Big Lie, since Reagan, is that tax cuts actually stimulate the economy sufficiently to grow it enough to increase tax revenues larger than the cost of the tax cuts to the Treasury. One only has to look at the Treasury department historical tables to see that every tax cut created deficits and the accumulated debt (over 90% under Republican Presidents and Congresses) has reached almost \$20 trillion. The evidence is also undeniably clear that the top 1% of American households have benefited from this and the rest of us have suffered from it.

Of course the bigger lie was that tax increases would reduce jobs and the economy, which simply did not happen. Under George W. Bush, we had the lowest tax rates in the last 50 years and we had extremely high unemployment followed by a crash and the highest unemployment, for a

period, since the Great Depression. President Clinton raised the top income tax rate by a mere 4.6% over Republican screams and howls and not one Republican vote. The result was the longest sustained period of economic growth in our country's history, a balanced budget and record low unemployment.

The Republicans used the Obama Presidency to turn their party from Conservative to Fascist. The Republicans vowed to use propaganda to lay all the problems of the Bush/Cheney Recession—all the foreclosures, all the lost savings, all the lost companies and jobs and 401K plans at the foot of the Democrats with a non-stop propaganda campaign for 8 solid years rather than doing one single solitary thing to help American workers and families.

And it worked. Despite the fact that President Obama did not enter office until after the crash and major corporate failures and huge job losses, Republican Right Wing radio and Fox News were able to use a nightly barrage of lies, written by Roger Ailes, Frank Luntz and the Republican National Committee to pin all their mistakes on President Obama. For whatever reason, a rapidly expanding era of liberal thought and progressive government out of the 1950s and 1960s came to a halt with the Reagan Administration and the south gave way politically to the turncoat Democratic Segregationists, like Strom Thurmond and Jesse Helms and our current Attorney General, Jeff Sessions, who became Republicans.

The Reagan Conservative, Neo-Conservative and then Fascist Republicans in the south became the reliable voting bloc against gun control, against radical anti-abortion, against unions, higher wages, banking regulations, stock market manipulation—they became the reliable source of votes to pass these anti-Middle Class laws. The Confederate states, and some fringe states, became statistically the last out of 50 states in income, education, health care, pollution and

mortality rates. They were good as gold for the Koch brothers, who were undoubtedly laughing all the way to the bank.

One example of the way propaganda has put the Fascists in the driver's seat is health care. Long before Trump was elected, in late 2014, a Republican/Fascist Senator by the name of Marco Rubio, a man of limited intellect but a favorite of all the old Batista Cuban exiles down in Miami, discovered a way to insert something into legislation that would de-fund the supports for health insurance companies that had been built into the Affordable Care Act as security for health insurers in case of some sudden unexpected cost increases. These "price corridors." Guaranteed a certain amount of support for a company like, say, United Healthcare until the government and insurers could determine how prices could be brought down naturally. Rubio's amendment, or whatever it was, to an appropriations bill, killed those payments. It simply de-funded an essential part of the Affordable Care Act in a way that the President finally could not veto.

The result of Republican/Fascist Rubio's action was that insurance premiums started to shoot way up. He had simply pulled the rug out from under tens of millions of unsuspecting Americans. Within six months people were finding it harder and harder to get affordable health care. By 2016, some insurers, no doubt in cahoots with the Republican/Fascists had decided to drop coverage altogether from parts of the country, leaving no health care insurance available at all.

Scores of regional health insurance companies that were set up after Obamacare was passed, were bankrupted, including a number of cooperatives only created to sell affordable health insurance. By mid-2016, the Koch brothers' lackey, Paul Ryan, was claiming that Obamacare

was “spiraling down” implying that it was the Affordable Care Act itself that was responsible (a complete lie and total mischaracterization of the problem.) Having tried and failed to repeal health care for all Americans 61 times before, the Republican/Fascists finally came up with their own plan to “repeal and replace” Obamacare.

In May of 2017, after Trump had taken office, they passed the bill in the House. The Senate simply took a few passes at amending it and then dropped it, leaving the Affordable Care Act quietly in place. The Republican/Fascist Senators realize that it would have been a death knell for any Senator who voted it for it. As it was, the GOP/Fascist House members were being overwhelmed with so many threats by constituents that the more cowardly ones, like insurance industry favorite, Peter Roskam of Illinois, simply hid out and refused to have any Town Hall or any meetings with constituents at all.

So we now have a weakened Affordable Health Care, with no mandate for anyone to have health care, which is essential for all universal health care plans, because that part was dropped through an amendment inserted in the Trump Billionaire Tax Cut Bill.

All the while, night and day on radio and television during the 2017 debate, we had heard the Right Wing Fascist commentators urging Americans to dump Obamacare before it was too late. Too late? What was the alternative? Nothing. They had finally attempted to repeal the ACA without any alternative...as Trump demanded. That would have been the ultimate disaster for an estimated 150 million Americans with pre-existing conditions who would lose health care. Fascists don't care. Fascists work for the big industrialists, the banks, the global corporations and the Super-Rich. They think that they control you because they have controlled you until now.

They see that Americans have elected a total Fascist government from top to bottom, so why would they expect anything else?

As a reminder, the Fascist propaganda portrays President Obama as an ineffectual President but we know now that he was instead a very competent and strong President. From day one, the daily Trump lie machine began to criticize every aspect of the former Democratic President's administration. Trump tried to make us overlook the 410 filibusters of jobs and economic bills in the Senate that would have accelerated the restoration of the economy after the Republican Recession. In the House, during the Obama administration, not one single jobs bill or other economic bill--after the initial stimulus to stem the flow of jobs ruining the country from the Bush Recession-- was ever allowed to reach the floor of the House of Representatives for a vote.

At the same time, the Fascists in the House voted to repeal the ACA over 60 times to please their campaign supporters in the health insurance industry. During and immediately after President Obama's term the Fascists used the Koch-Brothers-McConnell-Paul Ryan controlled Fox News and AM radio to generate racial bias, using the basic propaganda technique of attacking with racist insinuations and then attaching blatant lies to his character or intentions and to subsequent legislation. Like associating Obama with Nigeria--because he is half-black--and then saying that he planned "Nigerian style" universal health care. Of course it is nonsense unless you are dealing with voters who are racists whose racism you want them to use against themselves, to vote against their own best interests and in favor of health insurance companies.

These kinds of media-supported schemes are traditional Fascist approaches, used repeatedly in Europe in the 1930s, leading of course to the great world-wide catastrophe of the 1940s. One technique was to continually lie about the Jews, lie relentlessly, about their morals and character.

Then, when the Nazis would decide to attack newspaper offices and beat up people, they would accuse the Jews of having done it, or when they set a fire in a competing political office would blame the Jews. Of course, it was perhaps the most unlikely thing one could imagine...unless one had been constantly bombarded with lies about the character of the Jewish people.

Ultimately Germans believed the lies and 6 million Jews were murdered.

The attacks on President Obama were no less vindictive and deceptive but they were done with 70 years' greater experience in the manipulation of language and audience. There was no need for trucks filled with gangs of club-bearing thugs. The personal attacks on President Obama, the ridicule by acerbic and openly racist talk show hosts like Rush Limbaugh ("Barack the Magic Negro") and Hannity and O'Reilly and Beck (who said Obama hated "white people.") These and others by Praeger and Hewitt and Savage and Levin and North and Plante and Sykes and Ingraham and on and on...tens of dozens, were really attacks on the Middle Class on behalf of the billionaires, and therefore ultimately attacks on all Americans—anti-American attacks, couched in "mere" racist language.

The lies worked, as propaganda often does, as Republican after Fascist Republican took office and voted as the billionaires told them to vote--against health care, against Social Security but in favor of lower taxes on corporations and the rich.

While the Republicans were not able to prevent the people from receiving a more reliable and less expensive health care system during the Obama administration, they were able, for half a dozen years, to prevent them from finding better jobs and higher wages. None of the jobs legislation President Obama or the Democrats ever submitted found its way even to the floor of the House. Later on, encouraged by his ability to completely shut down any kind of agenda for

the public, Mitch McConnell would violate every ethical and moral code of the Senate (perhaps forever ruining Senate comity) by holding up the nomination to the Supreme Court for one entire year. This appointment should have been filled by the sitting President and the one-year postponement had never been done before. In addition, this was done despite the fact that the Obama nominees who were ignored were moderate Republican Judges. They simply were not Fascist Republicans, as is the Supreme Court Justice who was eventually appointed, Neil Gorsuch.

The worst aspect of the McConnell-Ryan era in U.S. politics is that we may never know what the true potential of the U.S. Presidency in conjunction with a rational Congress could be. President Obama, took office in late January and put a stimulus program in effect by March. Staggeringly high unemployment continued to grow alarmingly for six months, then in October began to decline. It continued to decline every single month, every year, even until today, June 2018. Not only did Republicans refuse his request for stimulus funds in the amounts that depression area expert economists like Ben Bernanke, the Fed Reserve Chairman recommended, but they actually demanded that a large part be a tax-cut stimulus that had previously failed under George W. Bush. So the Republicans who had caused the Great Recession were already working against the President and against a Middle Class that was struggling to hold a job or find a job or keep a mortgage or hang on to a few dollars of savings.

President Obama's next legislative initiative was to attack the rising cost of health care and lack of access to health care by a huge number of Americans. Prior to Obamacare, about 50 million Americans had been excluded from health insurance or paid exorbitant rates, either because they were self employed or worked in minimum wage jobs or where health care was not available.

Health insurance premiums were making insurance companies rich because they a) denied health care to the sick or b) simply often denied claims for a myriad of reasons, real or invented. Even though the government subsidized health care for the employed through corporate deductions, working families were being forced to pay premium increases of 10%-15% per year, or asked to pay an increasing share of their employer's health care costs.

Obama immediately began to address this situation in early 2009, while trying to jump-start the economy. The Republican party refused to participate, offered no alternatives and allied more and more with the pharmaceutical companies, hospitals, the health insurance companies and the American Medical Association who all contributed huge amounts (in addition to the traditional Koch brothers allies, like the Chamber of Commerce and the NRA) to elect Republicans who would vote down the health care plan. Only one Republican member of either the House or Senate had the courage or decency to vote for access by 50 million Americans to health care.

Only after the Affordable Care Act had been passed did Republicans offer an alternative. Even then, their plan simply called for the repeal the ACA, eliminating taxes on medical equipment, and eliminating the possibility of personal liability for physicians and hospitals in cases where physicians or hospitals maimed, or killed patients.

These same Republicans, who supported a plan that would return U.S. citizens to a devastating health care environment, would, nevertheless, be elected and re-elected to office repeatedly during the Obama years. As health care costs under the ACA were reduced --even as Republican/Fascist governors continued to find ways to prevent the poor from getting health care, 30 million more Americans were able to buy health care that could not be taken away.

How was it that these Republican/Fascists could continue to be re-elected? After all, these were House and Senate members who were on record—who had voted—to obstruct health care for children, to pollute rivers and streams, to make student loans more expensive and to make the poor and the elderly jump through hoops just to register to vote. How could Americans vote repeatedly for those who would not only allow corporations to send their jobs to China but also created *incentives* to send manufacturing to China? Or Republican/Fascist legislators who continually voted against raising the minimum wage while one out of every six people employed by Walmart was forced to go on food stamps to survive? How could Americans vote for such cretinous, cruel people as these uncaring Republican/Fascists?

One word. Propaganda. The Koch brothers were hugely successful in using the Republican Party to destroy the United States middle class for their own purposes. They proved that, by spending hundreds of millions of dollars on “think tanks” and advertising to support Right Wing radio hosts and buying television networks and offering media exposure to crooked politicians, they could fool the people into voting against themselves.

The Koch brothers and their Republican/Fascist followers could spread propaganda that the poor (many of whom are Black or Hispanic) are vermin and that the rich pay too much in taxes to support them and that Christians—that is, those who are against abortion—are the only good people in the world and that it was secretly the illegal aliens who caused the Great Bush Stock Market Collapse and Recession.

It was the Kochs and the Mercers and the Uihleins and the Adelsons and the Anshutzes and the Friezes and other billionaires who bankrolled the campaigns that lied about the Democrats being the big spenders and taxers. A simple review of the Treasury Department web site provides the

facts. Clinton balanced the budget in his second term—eliminated deficits while creating affluence. It was Reagan, Bush I and then Bush II and Cheney and now Trump (by over \$1 trillion more this year alone) that first took us \$14 trillion into debt, then left Democrats and President Obama with 700,000 people a month losing their jobs, and a huge Recession resulting in another \$5 trillion in debt over the next 7 years. After taking office, and stabilizing the economy, President Obama presided over 75 straight months of economic growth—despite all the Fascist obstruction—in fact, even much more than we described.

Yet people still listen to the vicious propaganda. Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, Laura Ingraham and many others, describing, for example, the children who survived the Marjorie Stoneman Douglas shooting alternatively as “crybabies” then “terrorists” and “thugs.” How many weekly Trump lies must we hear before the ignorant or the deaf or the complacent or the monstrously ignorant catch on that the ultimate message is merely greed and self aggrandizement.

This is the American way...unless we change it... let a Vice President (Dick Cheney) enrich himself to the tune of \$80 million by demanding that one company—Halliburton, in which he owned huge numbers of shares--get a minimum of \$12 billion in no-bid contracts. Or enable a crooked high government official (Donald Rumsfeld) force the FDA to approve a product that they had said was unsafe from a company that he would later head as CEO, earning \$100 million in compensation.

The only good Republicans are dead Republicans. This does not mean that we should go out and shoot Republicans or anyone else. That would be illegal and some think immoral. But the dead Republicans in question, like Abraham Lincoln and Teddy Roosevelt, and Dwight Eisenhower, and Ulysses Grant and Robert La Follette and literally thousands of other Republican politicians

would not recognize the Republican/Fascist Party of today. Today's Republican/Fascists are not the "small business" Republicans of the post-war era, who supported veterans who went to school on the GI bill and took their skills and built small businesses and created the post-war technology boom and became the core employers of the 1960s, 70s and 80s. Today's Republican/Fascists are very seldom, if ever, veterans, and none have the moral courage to refuse a bribe.

Who are the modern day counterpart of the Jews of Europe's last century, the victims of the Nazi's "big lie," the scapegoats and the victims? We know from Trump's actions that some are the Illegal Immigrants who have been coming to this country for generations now, working in the fields, on the streets, in the packing houses and the assembly plants and small manufacturers, or in the back rooms of restaurants, landscaping, building, cleaning and doing all the other jobs passed on to those who have few skills or English words. Others are the Blacks, African-Americans, undereducated, often disliked, impoverished, and abused by both Whites and other Blacks or by the police. And finally, there are the Liberals, those who fight for equality and education and better wages...these are the truly dangerous people to the Fascists because they see clearly what is happening and because many of them have the education and affluence to fight back.

To the Fascists, blacks will always be "troublemakers." Progressives and Liberals will always be called "elites" no matter their income and position. Hispanics will always be "suspicious." And anyone else who does not agree with their Fascist agenda "naïve" or "foolish" or "dumb" or "unpatriotic." Or one of hundreds of other words that Frank Luntz has put on the tip of the tongue of the Right Wing radio propagandists who simply mouth what their bosses tell them.

If you support Republicans, you support politicians who voted repeatedly against affordable health care for Americans. You voted to tell your neighbor that his daughter cannot have an abortion under any circumstances. You voted to make elderly widows who lived in the same house for the last 40 years go find a place to register and then get a photo ID before they will be allowed to vote. You voted to keep your college age daughter from voting where she goes to school. You voted to kick her off your health care program. You voted not to deduct your property taxes from your income tax, to double your deductible, and pay it all back through tax increases in about 3 years, by which time the national debt will be \$3 trillion higher and Social Security, which you will rely on, will be cut by 25%. You voted to take children from their mothers and put them in cages. You voted to limit the amount of money the country will give to Puerto Rico because they are Hispanic and mostly Democratic. You voted for more pollution and more expensive Internet and cable television and higher drug costs and more expensive foreign cars and more...much more...of someone else's religion being taught in your children's schools.

Those are Fascist family values and if you voted Republican, just as if you supported Nazis, you were a Nazi, when it came time for retribution, then you are a Fascist. If you don't like Fascist family values then don't vote Republican.

The former governor of South Carolina found out what Fascism is all about recently. He, and many others, do not toe the new party line. The new party line is that you have to really hate the opposition and you must never, ever depart from Republican/Fascist policy. No taxes, a giant wall between the U.S. and Mexico, military action first and diplomacy second, friendship with dictators, arm's length from countries with strong social networks, good education and unions.

Mark Sanford and some of the other Republican candidates this primary season did not go along with the Tea Party agenda of more tax cuts, reducing Social Security and Medicare benefits and returning to health care the way it was before Obamacare. The new Trump/Republican/Fascist alliance lied about him and propagandized him right out of office. This was a former favorite in South Carolina, a former popular governor, a man who had survived a very public affair and divorce, so popular in fact that after all that he still won a seat in Congress. But you can't beat the expert propagandists who, under our current laws, can accuse you of whatever they want and spend unlimited dollars to obliterate your reputation and drown in television commercials any attempt to respond.

It is the end of the American Dream, a sort of nightmare scenario, like Orwell's "1984" when the world is a dark and dismal place, run by those with the least intelligence, education and compassion. Fascism is the nightmare, not the dream. If we cannot vote it out, it will be the end, as it is already the beginning of the end—possibly--of the great American Dream of Democracy.