

Trump: What Changes and What Remains the Same



by ROBERT FANTINA

It was recently reported that the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus will close, and this is the last year that it will perform. It's no secret why: with the new circus that is coming to Washington, D.C. in just a matter of hours, there was no way it could compete. So, what will we have in the circus that pass for governance in the United States? Let's take a quick look at some of the changes, and some of the constants.

- For Secretary of Education, we have one **Betsy DeVos**, from one of the country's wealthiest families (net worth: \$5.5 billion), who never attended public school, or sent her children there. She has continually sought to weaken

teachers' unions. At her confirmation hearing, she wouldn't commit to continued government funding of public schools.

- For Housing and Urban Development (HUD), who could be better qualified than a neurosurgeon? Yes, none other than **Ben Carson** is president-elect Donald Trump's nominee. The fact that he has no experience in housing was apparently not a consideration. When asked if he could assure the public that no policies under HUD would benefit the Trump real estate empire, Mr. Carson demurred.

- Health and Human Services nominee **Tom Price** would also seem to be less than a clear favorite. As a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, he introduced a bill that would have delayed a regulation damaging to a company called Zimmer Biomet, which provides knee and hip implants. By some bizarre coincidence, this bill was introduced one week after Mr. Price purchased stock in the Zimmer Biomet company, which had also donated to his election campaign. Additionally, while he will be a key participant in any replacement of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (i.e. Obamacare), he does not wish to answer any questions about it.

- South Carolina Governor **Nikki Haley**, Mr. Trump's pick for Ambassador to the U.N., opened her confirmation hearing with the puzzling statement that she doesn't "claim to know

everything” about the United Nations. She also brings to the table no foreign policy experience. She continued to confound, when she said this: ““We (the U.S.) contribute 22 percent of the U.N.’s budget, far more than any other country. Are we getting what we pay for?” One wonders what it is Ms. Haley expects the U.S. to ‘get’, and what it is she thinks the U.S. is paying for. Should the U.S. get its way every time, because of the amount of money it pays to support the U.N.? Does she consider the United Nations simply another arm of the U.S. government?

The disturbing list continues, but let us take comfort (?) in knowing some things won’t change.

Violence against people of color in the U.S. will remain a constant. The racial profiling, harassment and killings of unarmed black men will continue, and probably get worse. While we could review the seemingly endless names of unarmed black men who have been killed by white police officers in the last year or so, let us look at one encounter that didn’t end fatally.

In October of 2015, **Lawrence Crosby**, a black Ph.D student in Evanston, Illinois, not far from Chicago, had fixed something on the roof of his car, using a crowbar. A local resident ‘saw something’, so she apparently decided to ‘say something’, as all law-abiding U.S. citizens are encouraged to do. The police stopped the car Mr. Crosby was driving. Dashcam video of the encounter shows Mr. Crosby stepping out of the car and raising his hands above his head. He is then attacked and brought down by five police officers. The scream at him to ‘stop resisting’, although he can be heard saying “I’m

cooperating". Once the police ascertained that the vehicle did, indeed, belong to Mr. Crosby, they arrested him for disobeying officers and resisting arrest. A judge eventually dropped the charges, and Mr. Crosby has filed suit. However, while the fact that charges were dropped is good news, it is by no means the norm in these situations.

Since the Democratic Party is anything but, and its members are as corrupt, out-of-touch and only in it for themselves as much as the Republicans, one must not look for much relief from that quarter. No, the U.S. will plod along, increasing suffering at home and abroad, as it is wont to do, as the rich get richer and the poor, poorer.

• Violence against people around the world will continue and, in all likelihood, increase. As Mr. Trump continues to demonstrate his ignorance of the world, the concept of peace will be a fleeting dream. He is calling for an increase in nuclear weaponry, and has asked why the U.S. has such weapons if it's not going to use them. If he moves the U.S. embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, as he has pledged to do, he will anger the entire international community, especially countries in the Middle East. That area is already a powder keg, and Mr. Trump is not one to pour oil on troubled waters. He is more likely to pour gasoline on burning embers.

The police force and the military are two key elements of the state power of the U.S., which serve to keep the population in check, and the ruling capitalists (see Cabinet nominees, above) exactly where they want to be. They have been constant since the nation's earliest days, and there is nothing to indicate that any change is in the winds. Police power did not increase to deter 'rising crime'. As Eugene Puryear points out: "It took several generations and a lot of propaganda to

inoculate the population with the belief that the police were a neutral force protecting 'law and order' in the abstract. In nationally oppressed communities, of course, where generations of passed-down experience show otherwise, that lie is often met with instinctive opposition."

And the U.S. has a Department of Defense (renamed from the Department of War in 1949; see George Orwell and 'Newspeak'), which proclaims the 'heroism' of men and women who go around the world to kill. Their work is referred to as 'service', rather than murder, and the government public relations network talks about the benefits they receive as a reward for such 'service'. Yet a disproportionately high number of veterans are homeless, and their rates of suicide, domestic violence, divorce and crime are also higher than the national average. One wonder how such 'heroic' acts bring such demoralizing results.

Let us summarize. The inmates, indeed, will soon be running the asylum (this writer begs the reader not to infer that he felt the U.S. lived under a peaceful, utopian society during the administration of outgoing President Barack Obama. Hardly! But that is a topic for another essay). Unqualified people will be responsible for administering billions of tax-payer dollars that impact health, housing and education for the majority of U.S. citizens. The United Nations will be treated like an unwanted step-child, tolerated only because the neighbors know it is there, so it can't be completely discarded.

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Is there any hope? Well, perhaps a little, but this is an

optimistic view. If Mr. Trump causes so much suffering in the next two years, it is possible, only barely, but still possible, that more reasonable people will be elected to office in the 2018 mid-term elections. **Yet that is like a bandage on cancer; it may provide some short-term relief, but the entire capitalistic system simply doesn't work.** Unfortunately, this writer doesn't expect to see it changed during his lifetime.

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Robert Fantina's latest book is [Empire, Racism and Genocide: a History of US Foreign Policy](#) (Red Pill Press).

MAIN IMAGE: Betsy DeVos, sister of notorious shady character and Blackwater funder Erik Prince, is a diabolically bad pick for Secretary of Education. Many cabinet choices are downright indefensible, but this one is simply an abomination. DeVos was born Elisabeth Prince on January 8, 1958.^{[7][14]} She grew up in [Holland, Michigan](#), the daughter of Elsa (Zwiep) Prince (later, Broekhuizen) and Edgar Prince, a billionaire [industrialist](#)^{[15][16]} of [Dutch](#) ancestry. Edgar was the founder of Prince Corporation, an automobile parts supplier based in Holland, Michigan, which at one time employed almost one-quarter of the town's population.^{[11][15]}

Who the hell is advising Trump?

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