



Nobody for President: Voting Legitimizes a Fraudulent Democracy

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October 9th, 2020

Here's a bit of food for thought about why you should not, we repeat, *should not*, vote for anyone in November. Now, unlike the rabid pro-voters, there is no intention on our part to "vote-shame" those that choose to vote. If you really feel that strongly about voting, that's fine and that's your prerogative, have at it. However, we think there are a number of valid reasons why one should not participate in yet another spectacle of presidential elections masquerading as democracy.

No Individual Can be Trusted with That Much Power

The first consideration is the moral or ethical dilemma. Both Trump and Biden are war criminals due to the immoral and illegal warfare they've waged all over the Middle East, Central Asia, North Africa, and many other nations. Why should anyone willingly vote for a murderer? Why should any single person be trusted with that much power? Does that make any sense whatsoever? Now, one might quite correctly bring up the fact that through our individual resource use and consumer lifestyles we are complicit in this system; therefore we are all killers to one degree or another.

However, the difference is that most of us are coerced into this system at birth and have never really had a chance to democratically vote or change the nature of this capitalist-imperialist system. Think about this. Have we ever been given a choice to vote on whether the office of the presidency should still exist? Perhaps the idea of one person wielding immense military and economic power over 330 million citizens in addition to the world at large isn't the best idea, and should be viewed as an antiquated model birthed in an era when slavery was legal and only white, property-owning men could vote.

So, the question remains. Why vote to put in charge either of these two narcissistic, self-indulgent, sociopathic, blood-drenched psychos who will only exacerbate the festering sores of wealth inequality, imperial warfare, ecological devastation; and are guilty of crimes against humanity and the planet? You wouldn't have voted for Al Capone or Pablo Escobar for president, and Trump and Biden are directly responsible for far more death and destruction than either of those gangsters. The candidates are institutionally and socially-approved gangsters serving capital and warfare, carefully vetted to never sway from their masters.

It's not just that there are two bad candidates, but that they are sitting on top of a system that is undemocratic by design: a country that started out as a top-down social hierarchy that uses genocide and has never stopped murdering people for land and resources. At no point since then has there ever been a sea change. It's always been more of the same with retuned euphemistic

language. We live in an oligarchy, plain and simple, and no one person should have as much power centralized and consolidated into the office of the presidency.

To make a pop culture analogy, the presidency functions as the “Ring of Power” from J.R.R. Tolkien’s Lord of the Rings series. When we place so much power in one individual it inevitably leads to a situation where whoever holds the presidency is instantly corrupted by the desire of the “one ring to rule them all” and no longer has control over their own behavior. The power dynamics of capitalism block, preclude, and corrupt whatever good intentions any president might have. Even the most pure of heart would be tempted to use the immense power of the presidency and “commander in chief” for unseemly and malicious deeds.

The reason why centralized power inevitably becomes treacherous is that when faced with the challenges of maintaining itself, one will have to use authoritarian force including physical domination or the threat of it; otherwise people wouldn’t follow in lockstep. The leader can never see the externalities of their sweeping mandates and every action taken to try to fix the externality will have other unforeseen negative externalities within capitalism’s dog-eat-dog zero-sum model. It’s similar to the exponential relationship with telling lies, where every lie you tell you must tell more lies to cover all pesky details that don’t add up from the first lie told.

What Democracy?

Another question we can ask is: when did the country change from a non-democracy to the shining beacon of freedom we hear so much about? It certainly wasn’t before 1865 when slavery was abolished. It certainly was not before 1920 when women gained the right to vote, and certainly not before 1964 when the Civil Rights Act was passed. And certainly not today when African Americans are killed with impunity in the streets, where mass incarceration disproportionately affects people of color, where private for-profit prisons are built on former slave plantations and contract with the largest companies in America for what is essentially modern-day slave labor.

The fact is that both Trump and Biden are *true believers in the system*. They both will spin all sorts of bullshit in their own ways about American exceptionalism and the US being the “indispensable nation”, or a “global force for good”. The major commonality between them is they act as unquestioning goons for empire, and the least bit of doubt or skepticism about their murderous and criminal endeavors continually escapes their fragile and addled minds. They peddle bullshit but unlike the average con artist, they actually believe in their own con.

Pivoting towards the environment, it’s worth pointing out that sustainability can really only be achieved in a post-capitalist world. There cannot be political democracy without economic, social, and environmental democracy. The granular details of what that would look like are open to debate, but what’s not is that even most of Europe, more advanced politically and environmentally than us with varying forms of social democracy, is not sustainable either due to capitalism’s imperative for endless growth. According to numerous studies if the world consumed as much as the average European, we would need three Earths to sustain us all. The number is five Earths for the average American.

Elections are a Distraction from Deeper Community Work

We know what some might object to here. Voting only takes a few minutes, so how is it interrupting and impeding the local organizing which is also necessary and more vital to securing

a democratic future? Well, for one, the average diet of consuming media in regard to the upcoming election, and the fact that the campaign seasons start earlier and earlier every cycle, means that tons of time, energy, and brainpower are wasted on debating, promoting, canvassing, and setting up infrastructure for campaigns. Many voters are hypnotized and anaesthetized by the immense spectacle of a campaign that lasts well over a year and has devolved into a horse-race/personality contest where actual policy takes a backseat to identity and culture war issues.

It obviously isn't the act of voting itself, but the emotional and intellectual investment in a system that is bound to fail time and time again that becomes a distraction and saps time and energy from more important local community work. All the work that goes into state and local campaigning, canvassing, and phone banking could be much more productively spent advocating for increased funding for local projects, donating to important charities, fighting homelessness, and countless other issues.

Glorifying power and unequal class hierarchies only serves to reinforce the current system and its ways of thinking. Taking part in empire and the destruction of the planet by being restricted to a binary choice for most elected officials isn't a functional or caring democracy, it's one based in Orwellian language selling empire.

The Left Case against Voting: Elections Prop up a Collapsing System

There are various socioeconomic and psychological features which allow the system to maintain a veneer of legitimacy. At the most basic level voting pacifies the masses and provides a sense of contentedness. Even if a proto-fascist authoritarian like Trump is elected, who babbles about "law and order", things aren't as bad as those *other* countries (the poor and brown ones, so the racist and classist thinking goes) where there is no legitimate vote. In those nations, law and order is represented by an iron fist, yet here in the US somehow we've convinced ourselves that the velvet glove around the iron fist makes things that much better.

Voting functions as a release valve for social and economic tensions that have been bubbling under the surface. This will now boil and spill over as the US runs headlong into collapse no matter who is elected, unless fundamental change is initiated by mass movements. Electing professional liars who have been bought and sold from the get-go and running a sham democracy inevitably has the effect of tricking millions who feel that "their voice has been heard".

If the Democratic Party had any courage, and wanted the progressive and radical vote in order to win decisively, they would be pressuring Biden to promote things like a Green New Deal, free college, an end to student and private debt, universal health care, and a host of other policy proposals. If you want the vote, you have to offer the electorate policies that will help people's material conditions.

Unfortunately, it is totally predictable that the professional-managerial classes (PMC) who run for office and manage elections for both parties have been the most ideologically brainwashed, and therefore unwilling to offer economic democracy to the people. They believe the propaganda and their own lies, just like Trump and Biden. The more educated (and thus the more wealthy) are more likely to vote, but they are actually less intelligent when it comes to how politics affects the working classes and the poor. The PMCs have become a class of educated fools, court stenographers and apologists for the system.

The PMCs are true believers in the system. This was pointed out by Noam Chomsky and Edward Hermann in *Manufacturing Consent*. Also, both parties' political campaigns focus on cultural issues at the expense of economic benefits to the masses, which is a huge disservice to the American people.

Michael Parenti points this out, skewering conservatives in particular for their use of "wedge issues" whereby issues like gay marriage and abortion rights act as cultural signifiers and allow reactionary and culturally conservative forces to virtue signal their supposed moral superiority. As Parenti explains, the name explains it all: a "wedge" functions as a way to divide and thus conquer the populace by splitting liberals and conservatives, instead of allowing for class consciousness to expand and coalesce.

Mainstream, establishment liberals have picked up and run with this type of polarizing and divisive politics, siloing left-of-center and progressive sub-groups into smaller and smaller single-issue, narrow, and shallow ways of thinking and organizing. This is commonly referred to as "identity politics" and led by "social justice warriors" (SJW), a term used by the right wing to disparage liberals who supposedly act perhaps too sentimental, hysterical, or irrational for those with conservative sensibilities.

However, it is not the liberal stereotypical activist SJW or even the faux-populist "moral majority" conservatives who are in charge; but rather global capitalism which is the driving force behind the shallow and vapid policy debates as well as the neoliberal model of Biden and the reactionary, arch-authoritarian "law and order" model of Trump. These two political models are totally predictable outgrowths of capitalism's need for endless economic growth and commodification of the entire planet.

Biden and Trump are the two perfect candidates for capital because they distract from material issues and allow the media and the public to frame every issue as differences in temperament and personality, which allows fringe issues surrounding the "culture wars" to dominate political discourse. At this point talking about voting for either candidate and debating the merits of each without a real anti-capitalist alternative amounts to rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.

Cognitive Dissonance Regarding the Vote

One of the main reasons people vote in the US is to feel better about oneself; or conversely, to not feel a sense of guilt if one decides not to vote. However, we never ask ourselves why we don't feel guilt *for* voting for a president/elected official after he/she makes some enormous blunder or disastrous choice which lead to immense death, suffering, or what have you. If one accepts the premise that we are a democracy and the people are the government, then the voters are responsible to a degree for the psychotic policies of their dear leaders. Yet, as citizens who vote we never really do that. We don't take responsibility, just as politicians don't; and we're all passing the buck on to someone else, making scapegoats out of everyone.

The reason we don't take responsibility and feel such pride in our unjust government comes down to psychology. Multiple studies have shown that cognitive dissonance is at the heart of the problem as to the reality and the perception of voting. When one votes for a candidate and then is faced with the negative actions and reality of nothing fundamentally changing, dissonance occurs.

What voters do to ease their mental tension is to rationalize the elected officials' mistakes and explain them away as less severe and negative than they really are; which allows people to become numb to the scales of our problems and forms a sort of hallucinatory collective amnesia.

This is a coping mechanism for mass society which stems from a natural part of human psychology which allows us to adapt to a "reality principle" regarding social situations and pressures; however, in this example cognitive dissonance is a predictable reaction which happens to people facing "surplus repression" and enduring trauma and abuse from our leaders, our government, and our economic system. Thus the country operates in a collective form of Stockholm syndrome and every four years narcissistic, sociopathic politicians gaslight the public all over again into convincing us voting for them.

The Dumbest Election in History

We've all heard that this is the most important election in our nation's history. Yet there are quite objectively a whole lot of reasons to abstain from this election if we take into account how unjust and systemically fraudulent it will be. The most obvious being that we are stuck with an Electoral College system which is at its core undemocratic. So one's vote really only has an impact in a swing state. That is a crucial issue that the establishment has never been able to explain away. Why participate in something that flies so fundamentally in the face of popular will, where artificial state boundaries take precedence over common sense. To be proud of a system that is so arbitrary and to willingly engage in such nonsense is a fool's errand.

Another reason not to bother voting involves the mail in ballots which will likely take weeks to count after November 3rd. By this time the nation will be so polarized and gridlocked that it isn't even likely every vote will actually be counted, which will actually work in Trump's favor.

If the election is contested it gets even more insane. Republican governors and legislatures could choose to invalidate the Democratic electors and replace them with their own hand-picked Republican electors. The Supreme Court could get involved as in 2000. Or Congress could decide by voting as state delegations which is called a "contingent election". Again, there is no common sense involved and very little democracy, just a bunch of Byzantine procedures and political artifacts which should have no bearing on how to determine a government in the 21st century.

There are many other issues to consider. An electronic voting machine can be hacked quite easily and going back to 2000 there is evidence of vote tampering in every presidential election cycle. The difference between exit polling and the actual vote count in numerous states, which happens every election in our country, would be cause to call elections fraudulent in many other nations. This has happened many times in recent history all over the globe, but apparently these quite obvious discrepancies are no cause for alarm in the good ole' USA.

Undemocratic with Bad Faith at Every Level

Biden and really any neoliberal establishment candidate can promise a lot of things, but can any of them deliver? Not really, in an antiquated bicameral legislature where all sorts of procedural delays and tactics can be used to kill legislation that can actually help average people. The Senate is undemocratic inherently; being disproportional in terms of population and continually upholds the privileges of the rich, white, older men who dominate it. The Supreme Court will probably have a 6-3 conservative advantage if Trump's appointee passes the vote before the

2020 election. The federal and appeals courts have been packed with right wing ideologues masquerading as judges who intend to block substantial challenges from progressive causes within the legal system.

So in every way, any politician who actually wanted to do some good within the system would be completely hamstrung at every turn. The hurdles are too high and the legislative and judicial branches are dead-set in preventing any uprising against the rule of capital and private property.

Another problem that occurs is the inevitable swinging of the political pendulum after every election. All the blame of the countries' ills goes to the incumbent, and the incumbent blames everything on the predecessor. Conversely, the incumbent takes all the credit for the good policies of the previous administration due to the lag-time of economic effects in response to policy changes.

Politicians are certainly greedy, power-hungry, out-of-touch narcissists, but they also make excellent scapegoats when things go wrong, and get to function as heroes when things are relatively well. The truth is they are essentially puppets and figureheads of the real ruling classes; the billionaires, owners of multinational corporations, and real-estate barons who squeeze a little more from us commoners every year.

The US Government is Not a Force for Good in the World

No matter who is put in charge the situation is going to go from bad to worse. Our economic and military empires are collapsing. The ecological and climate crises are intensifying. Now, certainly Biden would be an improvement over Trump considering he actually believes in global warming. However, Biden does not support a Green New Deal, which is already a compromised framework for addressing climate change. He supports continued fracking. He is not going to dismantle the 750 billion dollar a year military empire and its 900 military bases around the globe, which relies on absolutely absurd amounts of fossil fuels. For instance, in 2017, the US military burned through 5.5 billion gallons of oil. That's higher than three quarters of the nations on the planet. Is Joe Biden going to take a substantial chunk of our defense money and move it towards renewable energy to reduce carbon emissions? No.

Our history is absolutely blood-soaked; even a casual glance at our post-WWII actions globally confirms our worst fears without a shadow of a doubt. Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan are the most obvious cases of our imperial and genocidal intent. There are numerous covert actions, coups, and installation of dictators our country is responsible for which easily can put a death and casualty count into the hundreds of millions of people in the past 75 years. So expecting either Trump or Biden to somehow reverse that trend of untold human and environmental suffering is beyond comprehension. They simply do not have the mental capacity to understand the scale of destruction our nation was and is involved in; and they certainly aren't smart or courageous enough to fight against it.

We often hear liberals haranguing non-voters that voting Democrat will lead to "harm reduction". Yet one cannot disentangle domestic policy from foreign policy, and one of the under-reported reasons that Trump was able to carry the Electoral College in 2016 is that he sometimes came across as the less bellicose candidate compared to Hillary Clinton, landing heavy blows to Clinton for her support of the second Gulf War in Iraq. Of course, we know Trump is a complete hypocrite and expanded the drone war. The fact remains if Biden wanted to

court undecided and independent voters, he could easily position himself as a more peaceful candidate. Yet he can't even be bothered, because as we all know he was a proponent of Obama's covert drone and Special Forces warfare model. He voted for the Iraq war and stated that "NATO got it right" for bombing Libya into the Stone Age.

We all know politicians lie. We all know we can be fooled by good actors. Yet every election season politicians give promises they never deliver on and fail to solve easily solvable problems like food insecurity and housing, and every election season the poor get poorer and the rich richer. There is no way that ends, as long as our system is structured the way it is now.

Further, any legislation or international climate agreements can be undone or rolled back by the next Republican administration. Action on global warming needs to be rapid and iron-clad so future presidents can't simply undo and unravel renewable energy policies that are essentially to our survival as a species. The Democratic establishment is so incredibly feckless, cowardly, corrupt, and ineffectual that it can't even back the two most popular liberal proposals: a Green New Deal and universal health care.

A common refrain among democrats is that a Biden presidency would represent a return to normalcy and, again, lead to harm reduction. This is certainly possible although the evidence for this is slim. One has to reckon with the fact that the vote for the prior president (Obama) and his failures and ineffectual leadership led directly to Trump. Trump's base is not going to go away; the worst tendencies may dive under the surface but the Pandora's box of right-wing brutal authoritarianism and post-truth Orwellian leadership has been opened and is here to stay. Only anti-capitalist resistance can change that.

Letting go of a Toxic System is Necessary for Real Change to Occur

The fact that our system is dependent on brutal social hierarchies and divisions of labor dividing the rich from poor, the bourgeoisie from the proletariat, should dissuade most sane rational people from active participation in the criminality our system structurally imposes on each other and the world. And to a good degree this is already true. About half of the voting age population makes a choice not to vote. Not choosing to vote is still a choice.

So every four years, the runaway winner for president is nobody. The people quite literally want neither candidate for president. The multitude might be incoherent as to how their arguments are formulated and might not wear suits and have fancy degrees to plug their commentary on TV and in the mainstream media, but this is undeniable.

The fact is that the poor are much more likely to not vote than the rich. There are, of course, myriad structural reasons for this, as in lack of access to nearby voting and inability to secure time off work, but mostly the poor and working classes do not see much difference between the two parties. For the most part they are right to conclude this. It really is basic common sense, and only smug chattering class and elite interests (both liberal and conservative) try to convince people otherwise, that the poor and uneducated are, in fact, too stupid to see where their own interests lie.

Having to compromise every four years in a two-party system is ridiculous, especially when other examples like ranked-choice voting are better models for voting. Further, the Electoral College thwarts the democratic will of the people in such a fundamental way that people just

check out. Only accepting the basic illegitimacy of the system can allow for a new governing model to spring from its ashes.

Money Equals Power

Absolutely no one believes the average voter has as much influence as the average billionaire, and even further, not many believe the average millionaire has as much influence as the average person with 10 million dollars. Money buys power and influence in our system, everywhere from lobbyists writing our laws, to corporations having the rights of individual free speech in order to spend unlimited amounts on campaigns, to corporate vampires deregulating public institutions, to think tanks churning out policy agendas, to private groups such as the NRA manipulating gun laws, to billionaires like the Koch brothers who fund far-right organizations such as the Heritage Foundation, the Federalist Society, the Cato Institute, etc.

When banks and nation states control the money supply, creating artificial scarcity among the vast majority of the population while a few elites profit tremendously, this creates wealth and power inequalities and creates class division. Corporate and capitalist propaganda obfuscates class distinctions and uses a divide and conquer strategy to split up the electorate based on race, gender, culture issues, and peripheral socio-economic issues such as minute changes in taxes rather than questioning the entire structure as a whole.

How can a system based on capitalism be democratic? It's fundamentally impossible. One can't have political democracy without economic democracy. Society can only progress and evolve with democratic control of the means of production. It's absolutely stone-cold that simple.

Our political system will continue to devolve into a 21st century fascism which may be softer in some ways than the original version, but the similarities are obvious. A techno-feudalistic society is already forming with absurd monopoly control in nearly every industry and sector of society, and the populace pushed further and further into debt with various forms of rent that must be paid to landowners, corporate utilities, rising food costs, insurances, and taxes and fees to Uncle Sam who offers very little in return.

All societies that use money have inequality and war as core, primary features. There are no examples of long lasting peaceful societies that use money. The more centralized control is lessened and the more ideas of sharing are incorporated the better chance they have of not quickly becoming authoritarian. It's an eventuality that wherever money is used, unnecessary suffering will be sure to follow.

The sad truth of the matter is that the vast majority of us are servants of the whimsical, parasitical and ravenous appetites of the rich. An authentic way to think about escaping from this colonization of our minds, bodies, and souls is to picture it as a prison break. Are you going to petition the warden and the guards to allow for a vote on whether you and your fellow prisoners should be free? Especially when you're allowing the warden and prison employees to vote, and they use all violent and coercive methods at their disposal to dominate the conversation while punishing you and your fellow inmates when you attempt to talk amongst yourselves and organize and agitate for freedom.

No, if you want freedom you have to take it and keep it. Petitioning the lords of the manors while we toil as serfs and give away our labor for a pittance while the super-rich parasitize off of a

system that reinforces their socio-economic privileges ultimately will lead to fascism at home just as colonialist and imperial policies have been in place abroad for centuries.

Again, we must ask: who holds control over most of the money? Banks and nation states do. So if money is power and the banks and nations states do, in fact, have primary control over what money is allowed to do and who has the most of it, then how does capitalism translate to democracy?

The idea of living without the thing that is killing us all, meaning money itself, seems fanciful to capitalists and most minds in modernity. Much like ending war does, or quitting meth at the height of a prolonged binge. Ending the addiction isn't on the table as a possibility, just managing the addiction while scheming ten different ways to score more of it. If there were a global trail map of emotional health the "you are here" marker would be planted on the addicted-self indulgent-narcissist campsite.

The use of money will always mean security is needed to guard the money. Someone will always attempt to steal it and/or use it to manipulate other people to do things they wouldn't ordinarily do in a different type of society. If an authentic society based in love instead of competition is what we want, then it makes a lot of sense to start to try to see if we can live without money.

Ending money is just the start, though: the end of money would only allow for a more authentic relationship to form, and we don't have much of those now. So if we were to end money and allow for a rebirth of the human social contract, we would prioritize real "pro-life" stances where we treat nature with respect and dignity.

Summing Up

The old rallying cry from every campaigning politician ever is that this election is the most important in history, and we don't disagree this election may be one for the books, you are about to see the most corrupt utter farce of an electoral process you have ever witnessed, with the two most sold-out politicians ever to run against one another.

The US is just another outgrowth from the principles installed long ago in Western civilization. Arguably we are the most disastrous nation ever. This system was always a demeaning master-servant system. It once featured conduits to gods as its rulers, or at other times supposed the divine itself was anointed to power. If a great amount of inequality exists, it's because groups of people are intentionally being put in a lower class where they will build and do things that serve the interests of the rich. In our "free system" the people are free to think of their own creative ways to serve the rich, where the rich don't directly dictate what the people are to spend their time doing, only partially so. Only a small segment is free to creatively find new ways to honor and please their masters.

Would anyone say that this way of life is based in love? Meaning that by having these institutions and nation states that they make us more loving, more courageous, or more creative? We would argue it's not based in cultivating love or human connection. Rather it's based on the principle that "work will set you free." Serve your masters endlessly and they may reward you with enough currency that one day you won't have to be a slave for money. They make money from nothing, and then command people around after we've been made desperate for it.

Money literally buys the earth in our system, and the people who create money are holding the planet hostage. Anywhere money is accepted as exchange means you can own that area and tell everyone else to get the hell off. We are taking part in an election for people who think it is okay to own people, animals, and the planet. Does this election not seem rather irrelevant in light of the fact that the foundations of the beliefs of this society cannot continue if we are ever to see a better day?

Domination and control for the sake of a vengeful, vain, egotistical drive for more is no way to run a planet. We are the furthest thing from being good stewards at this moment. The sentiment may be out there for many but the reality is that cycles of abuse and despoliation of the planet are intensifying. This is mostly happening abroad which leads many affluent suburban and metropolitan Westerns into a very naïve framework of how real change can be instituted.

The truth is no one is really evil in a metaphysical sense, and no one is beyond hope of redemption or engaging in some meaningful act to atone for the grievous injustices done in the name of serving our country or capitalism. However, there are a lot of people, mainly capitalists but also authoritarians of all stripes, with emotional inertia behind them that would find it difficult to quit hurting others because it materially benefits them.

The only way this cycle ever ends is when the people demand not for our captors to change, but that we stand up to them, reclaim our collective agency as equals, and demand centralized power step down. We've seen enough. Only by understanding the trap can we avoid falling into it directly again, and it's quite intricate because the teeth of the trap lie buried within our own collective psyche. The transition will not be easy and the path will be treacherous, but relying on voting and asking nicely for our dear leaders to change has gotten us nowhere. So we're going to have to escape this trap we find ourselves in, let it go, and choose a new way of being based in love, local community, and cooperation.