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## *The Republicans and Democrats: Two Wings, Same Bird*

The Republican and Democratic conventions are still to come, but the election is already well underway. That is obvious from, among other things, the amount of solicitation emails this writer is receiving from Democratic candidates and organizations. These are all basically the same, and follow a pattern which clearly shows that these people and groups are only interested in the recipients money, and not their opinion. Here are the commonalities:

+ They start with some really stupid question. For example: “will you vote for Donald Trump, Joe Biden, or are you undecided?” That, of course, is a question this writer can’t answer. He’s not voting for either of the aforementioned candidates, but is not undecided. He will cast his vote for Gloria La Riva of the Party for Socialism and Liberation. The option of ‘other candidate’ is not offered.

+ Additional questions are based on the assumption that this writer selected ‘Biden’ from the first one. Once that false selection is made, there are usually other questions, asking about Biden’s vice-presidential selection, mail-in voting, the need to flip the senate to the Democrats, etc., etc.

+ There is a great, and false, sense of urgency. Often, there is an imploring statement saying, “unless 300 people donate \$10.00 by midnight, we will not make our goal!” So what? What dire thing is supposed to happen if the goal isn’t met? Sometimes there is a financial match that won’t be realized, but generally this is just an abstract threat, implying that some unspeakable thing will occur if a self-set goal is not met.

+ Responses can only be submitted if a donation is made. For that reason, this writer's thoughtful, cogent responses are never sent.

This writer ignored these ridiculous emails until he decided to reply to all of them in the same way. He is not so naïve as to believe anyone looks at his replies; all they are interested in is any money that might be attached to them (none ever is). But it is possible that someone might happen to glance at his standard reply, and if so, this is what they will see: "Unless and until the Democratic Party supports the human rights of the Palestinian people, and condemns Israel's constant violations of international law, this writer will not donate to, or vote for, any Democratic Party candidate."

Now, there are those who criticize this writer, saying that there are other issues besides Palestine. Yes, he agrees that is true. But if a candidate does not support the people of Palestine, there are many things that can be inferred about the candidate:

+ Disdain for international law. The settlements, blockade of Gaza, checkpoints, separate laws for Israelis and everyone else are all examples of Israeli violations of international law. If a candidate does not condemn Israel, he or she obviously has no regard for international law.

+ Hypocrisy. When candidates proclaim their support for the self-determination of people around the world, but then systematically and constantly deny that basic right to Palestinians, their hypocrisy has reached astounding levels.

+ Ignoring basic human rights. The Palestinian people are denied their right to the basics of food, shelter and clothing, due to the blockade of the Gaza Strip and the occupation of Jerusalem and the West Bank. Refugees are denied their right of return. Palestinians are prevented from farming their own lands, obtaining needed medical attention, travelling even from one part of Palestine to another, let alone internationally; they have limited access to potable water. So for candidates to support Israel and ignore Palestine, they show that they don't care about human rights.

Today it is Palestine that is ignored; what peoples might it be tomorrow? Of course, we know that it isn't just Palestinians today: the abject repression and related suffering of the Kashmiris do not seem worthy of the attention of U.S. officials and candidates. Some Myanmar government officials experience some minor, individual sanctions due to their genocidal policies against the Rohingya people. But basically, their suffering isn't worthy of any attention.

So this writer has no problem with being a ‘one-issue’ candidate, since that one issue is indicative of so many others that are of great importance.

And what will the hapless U.S. voter be faced with come November? The incumbent, President Donald Trump, lives in a fantasy world of his own, declaring that the U.S. has overcome the coronavirus problem, even as tens of thousands of new cases are reported every day. As the U.S. seems to finally be facing its racism problem (please don’t expect any major legislation to address it; the will of the people is hardly forefront in the eyes of those they elect to represent them), Trump calls the Black Lives Matter movement ‘a symbol of hate’. He continues to proclaim how he has done whatever better than anyone has ever done it before, and that he knows more about whatever than anyone else. He apparently doesn’t even have a nodding acquaintance with reality, let alone an intimate relationship with it.

And then there is Joe Biden, a man who has been around the Washington establishment for decades and is a charter member of it. An aging Zionist with a knack for misspeaking, it’s possible that Trump will annihilate him in the debates, simply because, unlike the president he served as vice-president under, he can barely speak.

Barack Obama was forty-seven when he was inaugurated; Trump, to date, is the oldest person ever to become president, and Biden would take that crown from him should he be elected. Is there no one in the U.S. qualified to be president who isn’t an old white man? Howie Hawkins of the Green Party is sixty-seven, and Gloria La Riva, 65: mere children by comparison.

A Biden presidency will bring in some changes, but some things will remain the same: hostility towards the government of Venezuela; restricted health care; carte blanche for Israel to steamroll over international law and human rights; Black lives not mattering in the U.S., and U.S. bombs dropping onto innocent people all over the world.

When the U.S. citizenry recognizes the power it has at the ballot box, and rejects the candidates of the two major parties, real change will finally happen. However, it is not to be looked for in 2020.

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