A Vote for the Apocalypse

By Tom Engelhardt

It was August 2017 and Donald Trump had not yet warmed up to Kim Jong-un, North Korea’s portly dictator. In fact, in typical Trumpian fashion, he was pissed at the Korean leader and, no less typically, he lashed out verbally, threatening that country with a literal hell on Earth. As he put it, “They will be met with fire and fury like the world has never seen.” And then, just to make his point more personally, he complained about Kim himself, “He has been very threatening beyond a normal state.”

Only a year and a half later, our asteroidal President would, of course, say of that same man, “We fell in love.” Still, that threat by an American leader to—it was obvious—launch a nuclear strike for the first time since Hiroshima and Nagasaki were nearly obliterated in August 1945 was memorable. The phrase would, in fact, become the title of a 2018 bestselling book, Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House, by journalist Michael Wolff. Two years later, amid so many other threatening phrases from this president, “fire and fury” has, however, been left in history’s dustbin, largely forgotten by the world.

Too bad, since it seems so much more relevant now that California, Oregon, and Washington, not to speak of a Southwest already officially in a “megadrought,” have experienced the sort of apocalyptic fire and fury (and heat and smoke) that has turned daytime skies an eerie night-time orange (or yellow or even purple, claims a friend of mine living in the San Francisco Bay Area). We’re talking about a fire and fury that’s forced cars to put on their headlights at noon; destroyed towns (leaving only armed right-wing militants behind amid the flames to await imagined Antifa looters); burned millions of acres of land, putting hundreds of thousands of Americans under evacuation orders; turned startling numbers of citizens into refugees under pandemic conditions; and crept toward suburbs and cities, imperiling the world as we’ve known it.

Who Is Lisa?
Ranking-choice voting opens up Maine Senate race to an antiwar voice

By Dud Hendrick

A day doesn’t go by that we’re not reminded of those who have dictated our country’s course—the political decision-makers and the corporate elite who have gone wildly astray. Deliberate lies, propaganda, intentional policies for profit and power, and misguided reckless aspirations have not only put our country on life support but indeed put the entire planet in peril.

The threats facing all of humanity are climate disaster and war, especially the threat of nuclear war. Americans have a host of issues demanding attention—the COVID-19 pandemic, Black Lives Matter, militarized police, economic inequality (i.e. 20 individuals own as much wealth as the entire bottom half of the population), the highest incarceration rate in the world, endemic police brutality disproportionately experienced by people of color, inadequate health care (the life expectancy is 46th among all nations!). All a long way from the fantasy called “The American Dream.”

The deep-seated causal factors for all this are complex, but it’s not far-fetched to suggest that two over-arching realities lurk behind the many failures of our government to do better: money in politics and the duopoly—a system of two parties...
And So We Live

In 2018 over 38 million people lived in what is defined as poverty. Of these over 11 million were children. The ethnic group with the highest percentage of people living in poverty were Native Americans, followed by Black people, then Hispanics. Over 11 million were in what is known as “deep poverty,” meaning that their incomes (if any) were more than 50% below poverty level.

Social justice demands that everybody has access to adequate housing, food, and medical care; freedom of expression, etc. In the United States this is taken to mean sharing the (stolen) bounty that is the wealth of the nation or having equal access to what is known as the American Dream.

Maybe we should ponder what is “the good life,” what is the “American Dream,” and where it has led, because it has always been an illusion. Instead of living in natural harmony with the earth and other creatures, humans, out of fear, decided we had to control more, had to have more security, more comfort, more domination of nature. That very illusion, along with the concept of exceptionalism that goes with it, has led the whole world to a precipice, largely of American making.

I find it difficult to say this, but what is undeniable, except to the most self-deluded, is that we are fast heading toward the end of this relatively short human experiment on this planet. And the speed with which we are approaching the abyss is increasing. On a practical level, we do everything we can to slow it down in the hope that, if slowed enough, maybe, just maybe, the species can change course in time. Every one of us (I mean every person of conscience) needs to do everything we can in that direction. The ice caps are melting, fires are consuming our precious oxygen-giving trees, monster storms have become the norm, the planet is burning up. We’re not even mentioning the constantly looming threat of nuclear war, either by accident or intention. Within a decade, if we last that long, the precipice will be undeniably evident even to the most obtuse.

America the Exceptional has a narcissistic sociopath determined to remain in power despite what may be the will of the people. One of our most respected political philosophers, Noam Chomsky, recently said, “Trump is the worst criminal in human history, undeniably. There has never been a figure in political history who was so passionately dedicated to destroying the projects for organized human life on earth in the near future.” Chomsky, who is not prone to exaggeration, noted in another interview, “We have a sociopathic maniac in the White House.”

So what is to be done? How to face the very potential death of civilization and even life on this beautiful planet, along with the many species passing out of existence every day? More significantly, how to face all this and not sink into depression and become morose, defeated and even insane? We hope this issue of Peace & Planet News can provide a little hope.

Long-time social justice activist Lisa Savage is running for the U.S. Senate seat in Maine and standing up for the things in life that matter.Remarkably, with huge grassroots support and ranked-choice voting, she actually has a chance. The brilliant political philosopher and activist, Kevin Zeese, a giant for truth and justice, passed away recently, but his legacy as a cheerful warrior of integrity, wisdom, and courage will live on and grow. Mike Hastie in his article about the Proud Boys, gives a glimpse of what awaits us and why this election and the leapup to it are so important. Tom Engelhardt pulls no punches in exposing the truth of an impending Apocalypse, and we’ve included the very vital Ten Things We Need to Know to Stop a Coup by Daniel Hunter.

Perhaps, if we live every moment (or at least most moments) with integrity, radical honesty, empathy, and love, we don’t for freedom and have not given up—ever. As Frederick Douglas said, “If there is no struggle, there is no progress. … This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.”

And somehow, we come to understand that love, truth, and the courage to struggle for freedom will always be transcendent—even of death. And so we live.

—Tarak Kauff

‘There has never been a figure in political history who was so passionately dedicated to destroying the projects for organized human life on earth in the near future.’—Noam Chomsky

Peace & Planet News

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Passing of RBG Makes Democracy Harder, Again

By William Rivers Pitt

“...I fan opening comes in the last year of President Trump’s term, and the primary process is started, we’ll wait to the next election.”—Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC), on filling a Supreme Court vacancy right before an election, October 2018.

Right. Of Lindsey nearly broke both legs walking one back upon the passing of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. If Senate Republicans can seat a new justice before the election, they will do it. If they can seat a new justice before the end of January (in the event of a Trump loss), they will do it.

Of course Trump will win. Three right-wing justices in one single presidential term? Plenty of presidents have gotten two or three over two terms. FDR got eight in six years ... and gosh, d’ya think it had an effect on history?

Three in one term is ridiculous, and a full-scream nightmare turn during this gruesome administration.

Of course McConnell and the GOP will leap on this preposterously historic opportunity—combined with the 200-plus new federal judges they have stuffed into the lower courts—to lock in wealth protection and the white supremacist voting structure for at least another generation.

“Control the coinage and the courts,” counseled old Jacob Broom. “Let the rabble have the rest.”

Mitt Romney, Chuck Grassley, Lisa Murkowski and Susan Collins—four GOP senators who have piped up about the upcoming nomination brawl—will not be able to stand in the way of this tornado. One of them will buckle, and that will be that. Romney’s office already walked back his earlier commitment not to vote for a nominee until after inauguration.

I strongly suspect the placement of a new justice won’t happen before the election—too tight, too fraught, and that four might hold—but I am grimly certain we will be swearing in a new justice by bleak February.

I say this with love: If you doubt it, if you have hope for a different outcome, you have not been paying sufficient attention, or you’re letting your heart do the talking in your head.

This is about power: Raw, unmistakable power. This is the Republican Party grasping with both hands the last bulwark it lies to defend its eroding standing against the rushing tide of history. This is Mitch McConnell fulfilling his destiny, though he may be despised by tens and tens of millions, all the Right People in all the Right Rooms will sing his name to sainthood, and that is all he cares about.

They will do this, because they can, full stop.

Parting thought: Anyone who needs a refresher course on the profound fragility of our democracy need only look at how very much depended on one extraordinary individual from the Bronx. Democracy just got harder, again. Stout hearts.

William Rivers Pitt is a senior editor and lead columnist at Truthout. He is the author of three bestselling books: War on Iraq: What Team Bush Doesn’t Want You to Know, The Greatest Sedition Is Silence and House of Ill Repute: Reflections on War, Lies, and America’s Ravaged Reputation. His fourth book, This is about power: Raw, unmistakable power. This is the Republican Party grasping with both hands the last bulwark it has to defend its eroding standing against the rushing tide of history.

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10 Things We Need to Know to Stop a Coup

By Daniel Hunter

Coup attempts are not a time to just watch and wait until “someone else” figures it out. You can be a part of choosing democracy. In all the research on preventing coups, there’s one common theme: People stop doing what the coup plotters tell them to do.

We have a president who has openly said he might not respect the outcome of our election. We have to be ready if he claims victory before votes are counted, tries to stop counting, or refuses to accept a loss.

1. Don’t expect results election night.

Election season 2020 is shaping up to be very unusual. Many mail-in ballots may not be counted until days or weeks after Election Day. Since Democrats are expected to vote more frequently than Republicans, voter tallies are expected to swing toward Democrats post-election night (they call it a “blue shift”). A wave of confusion may unfold starting election night.

During this time expect false flags and outrlandish claims. Be very cautious with news. Don’t simply pass along what you see or hear. It seems to be dramatic examples of wrong-doing—but take the time to check if it has been verified, already debunked, or from a source you don’t trust.

Encourage people in your community to prepare for some uncertain weeks. As election results start coming in, the message needs to come through loud and clear: Count all the votes.

2. Do call it a coup.

People who do power grab always claim they’re doing it to save democracy or claim they know the “real” election results. This is to use the words frequently to undermine the opposition to be arrested.

We can know it’s a coup if the government:

• Stops counting votes;
• Declares someone a winner who didn’t get the most votes; or
• Allows someone to stay in power who didn’t win the election.

In any scenario, if any of those three principles are violated, we have to declare a coup. But if the results are being contested, governors and state legislatures may each send in different results—one reflecting the results from voters, the other claiming “it’s a fraud” and “we know best”—undermining the integrity of the voting process.

This set of differences has to get resolved on Jan. 6 by the new Congress. And if the House and Senate don’t agree about the result, then a convoluted process unfolds where the newly seated House selects the President (one-state-one-vote) and the Senate votes for the new Vice President (by majority). (#ShutDownDC provides a very helpful breakdown of these steps.)

3. Know that coups have been stopped by regular folks.

Coup attempts have happened all over the world, and over half have failed. That’s because coupes are hard to orchestrate. Because they are a violation of norms, they require quick seizure of multiple levels of institutions with a claim that they are the rightful heir. Coupes tend to fail when government institutions (like elections) are trusted, there is an active citizenry, and other nations are ready to become involved.

The role of citizenry is crucial. That’s because during the period right after a coup attempt—when the new government is claiming it is the “real” government—all the institutions have to decide who to listen to. A failed coup in Germany in 1920 gives an example. The population felt beaten down by defeat in World War I and high unemployment. Right-wing nationalists organized a coup and got the help of a few generals to seize government buildings. The deposed government fled but ordered all citizens to obey them. “No enterprise must work as long as the military dictatorship reigns,” they declared.

Widespread nonviolent resistance quickly began. Printers refused to print the new government’s newspapers. Civil servants refused to carry out any orders from the coup. And leaflets calling for an end to the coup were spread by airplane and by hand.

4. Be ready to act quickly—and not alone.

Typically power grabs are organized in secret and launched suddenly. Most campaigns that defeat coups do so in days: Soviet Union in 1991 took three days, France in 1961 took four days, and Bolivia in 1978 took 16 days.

It’s rare for any country leader to publicly admit they might not respect the results of an election. There’s some good news in that—because people who stop coupes rarely have the chance to get training, warning, or preparation. In that way, we’re ahead of the game.

A group of DC insiders called the Transition Integrity Project ran multiple simulations on Trump attempting to hold onto power no matter what. In every simulation they concluded that a “show of numbers in the streets may be decisive.” Regular people make the difference.

To start preparing, talk to at least five people you know: people who would go into the streets with you—the safest way to take to the streets is with people you know and trust. Talk to people you know in civil service and various roles about how they could non-comply with coup attempts. Use this time to get yourself ready to act.

5. Focus on widely shared democratic values, not on individuals.

In Argentina 1987, a coup got started when an Air Force major, resenting attempts to democratize the military and bring it under civilian control, organized hundreds of soldiers at his base. While the civilians opposed the coup, they quietly negotiated a settlement, people took to the streets. Against the government’s pleading, 500 regular citizens marched to the base with the slogan “Long live democracy! Argentina! Argentina!” They could have spent time attacking the major. Instead, they were appealing to their fellow citizens to choose democracy.

The major tried to keep them away with a tank, but the protesters entered the base anyway, and he knew that open firing on nonviolent citizens would cause him to lose more credibility. Soon 400,000 people took to the streets in Buenos Aires to rally in opposition to the coup.

This gave strength to the civilian government (which had largely been absent). Civic organizations, the Catholic Church, business groups, and labor unions united under a pledge to “support in all ways the constitutional, the normal development of this institutions of government and democracy as the only viable way of life of the Argentines.” The coup plotters lost their legitimacy and soon surrendered.

This approach is different from protest- ers going in the street with a list of issues or a grievance against a vilified leader. Instead, it’s elevation to the common good—democratic values. In our project we use the

President...
6. Convince people not to freeze or just go along.

Imagine that at your job a corrupt boss gets fired and a new one is brought in. Instead of leaving, your old boss says, “I’m still in charge. Do what I say.” A bunch of your coworkers say, “We only take orders from the old boss.” At that point, doubt arises.

That doubt is how coups succeed. Enough people freeze. Even when only a few people go along with the coup and act as though that’s normal, people may reluctantly accept it as inevitable.

In all the research on preventing coups, there’s one common theme: People stop doing what the coup plotters tell them to do.

In Germany, from military commanders to secretaries, they refused to obey the orders of the coup. In Mali they called a nationwide strike. In Sudan protesters shut down government-supported radio stations and occupied airport runways. In Venezuela all shops were closed.

Coup leaders around the world are counting on us to do violence to the other side. But to swing to our side, that uncertainty has to be convinced that “we” represent stability and “the coup plotters” represent hostility to the democratic norms of elections and voting.

We prevent that possibility when we dehumanize potential defectors, make sweeping statements like, “the police won’t help,” never encourage people to join our side, and create chaotic scenes on the street.

Historically, whichever side resorts to violence the most tends to lose. In a moment of uncertainty, people pick the side that promises maximum stability, respects democratic norms, and appears to be the safer bet. It’s a contest of who can be the most legitimate.

Mass resistance to coups wins by using walkouts, strikes, refusing orders, and shutting down civil society until the rightful democratically elected leader is installed. For mass movements to succeed against coups, they should refuse to do violence to the other side.

7. Commit to actions that represent rule of law, stability, and nonviolence.

Stopping a coup is dependent on the size of mobilizations and winning over the center. It is really a fight for legitimacy. Which voice is legitimate? Some people will have already made up their minds. The aim then is convincing those who are uncertain—which may be a more surprising number than you expect.

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8. Yes, a coup can happen in the United States.

It may be hard to imagine that a coup could happen in this country. But whenever there is an order to stop counting votes, we call it a coup.

Even by the strictest definition of coups, there has been a militarized coup in the United States. In 1898 after reconstruction in Wilmington, N.C., seeing the rise of a prosperous and successful Black population, white racists organized a coup. They used rallying cries like, “We will never surrender to a ragged raffle of Negroes, even if we have to choke the Cape Fear River with carcasses.”

Despite a terror campaign before the election, Black turnout was high and a slate of Black candidates was voted in. Black power was met with white supremacist violence, with white squads killing 30 to 300 people, including newly elected officials. Over 1,000 Blacks fled this extreme violence, and the era of Jim Crow began.

9. Center in calm, not fear.

It’s scary to believe we’re having to talk about a federal coup in the United States. And we know that fearful people are less likely to make good decisions. Let’s aim for calm and avoid hyperbole. Be a reliable source by double-checking rumors and spreading high-quality facts.

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10. Prepare to deter a coup before the election.

The best way to stop a coup is to never have one. People are doing lots of good work on issues of voting rights, urging turnout, stopping repression, uncovering fraud, and getting people to commit to democracy. That may be enough.

One of the easiest things you can do is to sign the pledge to Choose Democracy and get a lot of people across the political spectrum signing the as well!

Because the best way to stop a coup is to deter it.

This article has been edited for length. It was originally published at wagingnonviolence.org.

Daniel Hunter is the global trainings manager at 350.org and a curriculum designer with Sunrise Movement. He has trained extensively with ethnic minorities in Burma, pastors in Sierra Leone, and independence activists in northeast India. He has written multiple books, including Climate Resistance Handbook and Building a Movement to End the New Jim Crow.
Kevin Zeese: A Life Well Lived

Kevin Zeese died unexpectedly on a hike in the Adirondacks on May 28, 2020, at the age of 60. He was a political organizer, writer, and activist who fought for social and environmental justice. His legacy lives on through the work of those he inspired and who continue to fight for a better world.

Kevin was a co-founder of the Drug Policy Foundation and the Drug Policy Alliance, and he served as the executive director of the Drug Policy Foundation. He was also co-founder and executive director of the Popular Resistance, an organization that promotes grassroots actions to achieve social change.

Throughout his life, Kevin was a champion of social justice and human rights. He was a tireless advocate for the rights of marginalized communities and he worked tirelessly to bring about positive change in the world.

Kevin was a true leader and a true inspiration. He will be deeply missed, but his legacy will live on through the work of those he inspired. We will continue to fight for a better world in his name.

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Apocalypse

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In the wake of the hottest summer on record in the Northern Hemisphere, we are, in other words, talking about the sort of apocalyptic conditions that the President undoubtedly had in mind for North Korea back in 2017, but not even faintly for the U.S. of A.; we’re talking, that is, about a burning season the likes of which no one in the West has ever seen before, a torching linked to the overheating of this planet thanks to the release of fossil-fuel-produced greenhouse gases in ever greater quantities. In fact, as Washington Gov. Jay Inslee pointed out recently, we shouldn’t even be talking about “wildfires” anymore, but about “climate fires” whose intensity has already outpaced by years the predictions of most climate scientists. (Or, as Inslee put it, “This is not an act of God. This has happened because we have changed the climate of the state of Washington in dramatic ways.”)

Significant hunks of the American West have now been transformed into the natural equivalent of furnaces, with fires even reaching the suburban edges of Portland, Ore. (which, for days, had the worst air quality of any major urban area on the planet), and promising a future in which cities will undoubtedly be swept up in such conflagrations as well. Admittedly, Donald Trump didn’t threaten to launch “fire and fury like the world has never seen” against Portland (though he did send federal agents there to snatch出了 dedicated to quite literally destroying this planet as a livable place for … well, us? (Hey there, Jair Bolsonaro!)

Our Very Own Firenado

An almost unimaginable near-half-century ago on a different planet, I lived in San Francisco. I can still remember the fog rolling in daily, even during summer in one of the coolest, breeziest cities around. Not this year, though. On Sept. 6, for instance, the temperature there broke 100 degrees, “crushing” the previous record for that day. In Berkeley, across the Bay, where I also once lived long, long ago, it hit 110. As a heat wave swept the state (and the West), temperatures near Los Angeles soared to a record-breaking 121 degrees (almost challenging overheated Baghdad, Iraq, this year), while reaching 130 degrees in aptly named Death Valley—and that’s just to start down a list of soaring temperatures across the West from the Canadian to the Mexican border.

As those fires filled the skies with smoke and ash, turning day into the eeriest of nights, a smoke cloud the likes of which had never before been seen appeared over the coastal West. Meanwhile, firenades were spotted and the ash-filled air threatened terrible things for health. As has been true for the last 46 years, I’m thousands of miles away from my old Bay Area haunts. Still, I regularly check in with friends and TomDispatch authors on that coast, some aged like me and locked in their homes lest the smoke and ash, the air from hell, do them in. Meanwhile, their ears are packed to go, their evacuation checklists ready.

My heart goes out to them and, really, to all of us (and, above all, to those to whom we oldsters will be leaving such a continued on next page …
If the Powerful Lie to Us

Julian Assange and what he’s being charged with

John Pilger gave this address outside the Central Criminal Court in London on Sept. 7 as the WikiLeaks editors extradition hearing entered its final stage.

By John Pilger

When I first met Julian Assange more than 10 years ago, I asked him why he had started WikiLeaks. He replied: “Transparency and accountability are moral issues that must be the essence of public life and journalism.”

I have approached a publisher or an editor invoke morality in this way. Assange believes that journalists are the agents of people, not power: that we, the people, have a right to know about the darkest secrets of those who claim to act in our name.

If the powerful lie to us, we have the right to know. If they say one thing in private and the opposite in public, we have the right to know. If they conspire against us, as Bush and Blair did over Iraq, then pretend to be democrats, we have the right to know.

It is this morality of purpose that so threatens the collusion of powers that want to control much of the world into war and wants to bury Julian alive in Trump’s fascist America.

In 2008, a top-secret U.S. State Department report described in detail how the United States would combat this new moral threat. A secretly directed personal vendetta against Assange would lead to “exposure [and] criminal prosecution.”

The aim was to silence and criminalize WikiLeaks and its founder. Page after page revealed a coming war on a single human being and on the very principles of freedom of speech, freedom of thought, and democracy.

He forced us in the West to look in the mirror. He exposed the fraudulence of wars promoted by the media and the homicidal nature of America’s wars, the corruption of dictators, the evils of Guantanamo.

Assange shamed his persecutors. He produced scoop after scoop. He exposed the fraudulence of wars promoted by the media and the homicidal nature of America’s wars, the corruption of dictators, the evils of Guantanamo.

Every time I have visited Assange in Belmarsh prison, I have seen the effects of this torture. When I last saw him, he had lost more than 10 kilos in weight; his arms had no muscle. Incredibly, his wicked sense of humor was intact.

As for Assange’s homeland, Australia has displayed only a cringing cowardice as its government has secretly conspired against its own citizen who ought to be celebrated as a national hero. Not for nothing has pointed out, that was refined by the Nazis because it was most effective in breaking its victims.

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… continued from previous page blazing, tumultuous world). Sad to say, the endless scandals and horrors of the Trump era, the greatest one by far scandalized all too few for all too long among those who officially matter on this beleaguered planet of ours. Even in 2016, it should have been obvious enough that a vote for Donald Trump was a vote for the apocalypse. Give him credit, though.

He made no secret of that fact or that his presidency would be a fossil-fueled nightmare. It was obvious even then that he, not George W. Bush, anointed the Australian prime minister his “deputy sheriff.”

It is said that whatever happens to Julian Assange in the next three weeks will diminish if not destroy freedom of the press in the West. But which press? The Guardian? The BBC, The New York Times, the Jeff Bezos Washington Post?

No, the journalists in these organizations can breathe freely. The Judases on The Guardian who flirted with Julian, exploited his landmark work, made their pile, then betrayed him, have nothing to fear. They are safe because they are needed.

Freedom of the press now rests with the honorable few: the exceptions, the dissidents on the internet who belong to no club, who are neither rich nor laden with Pulitzer’s, but produce fine, disobedient, moral journalism—those like Julian Assange.

Meanwhile, it is our responsibility to stand by a true journalist whose sheer courage ought to be inspiration to all of us who still believe that freedom is possible. I salute him.

John Pilger (johnpilger.com) is an Australian-British journalist and filmmaker based in London. In 2017, The British Library announced a John Pilger Archive of all his written and filmed work. The British Film Institute includes his 1979 film, Year Zero: the Silent Death of Cambodia, among the 10 most important documents of the 20th century.

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Climate change was the “hoax” and that this planet would suffer in unique ways from his (administration).

And in every way imaginable, Donald Trump delivered as promised. He’s been uniquely fiery and furious. In his own fashion, he’s also been a man of his word. He’s already brought “fire and fury” to this country in so many ways and, if he has anything to say about it, he’s just gotten started.

Don’t doubt for a second that, should he be losing on Nov. 3 (or beyond, given the mail-in vote to come), he’ll declare electoral fraud and balk at leaving the White House.

Don’t doubt for a second that he’d be happy to torch that very building and whatever, at this point, is left of the American system with it before he saw himself “lose.”

Since he is, in his own fashion, a parodist of everything: a politician, a Republican, an autocrat, even a human being, he sums up in some extreme (if eerily satiric) fashion human efforts to destroy our way of life. It’s a hell on Earth of a sort still only faintly imaginable today.

Tom Engelhardt is a co-founder of the American Empire Project and the author of a history of the Cold War, The End of Victory Culture. He runs TomDispatch.com and is a fellow of The Type Media Center. His sixth and latest book is A Nation Unmade by War.
Who Is Lisa?

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ties that, despite real and pronounced differences between them, agree on far too much, as vividly exposed in nearly all congressional deliberations. Most telling, the Republicans and the Democrats are in accord that:

- The military and the “defense” budget enjoy sacred cow status;
- Major corporate interests, essentially, rise above all other interests, such as the welfare of citizens and the planet.

Faced with this bleak picture, people in Maine found some hope in ranked-choice voting, which enables those who have concluded that neither major party serves the people to cast a vote for an independent or third party candidate who truly does. We can now do so without being accused of enabling a spoiler.

However, in an electoral landscape dictated by the major party, deep-pocketed, duopoly that controls all aspects of the process—most significantly media exposure, alternative campaigns have to fight hard to gain traction. It’s an uphill climb.

As an example, the progressive-minded social justice activist running for Senate, Lisa Savage, has been practically iced out of the conversation while the Republican incumbent, Susan Collins, and her Democrat challenger Sarah Gideon, with over 20 million of party dollars, dominate print and broadcast media.

Finally and surprisingly, after months of grassroots work and the rising clamor of a growing population of informed citizens the Bangor Daily News, Portland Press Herald, and News Center Maine committed to sponsor a debate on Sept. 9 to include Lisa. As it turned out, Lisa was both calm and brilliant in the debate and stressed out, common citizen. Lisa Savage’s slogan, “People, Planet, and Peace,” resonates. People get it that we have problems that will not be solved by militarism, wars, or corporate greed.

Progressives have a lot to say that resonates with the overworked, common citizen. Lisa Savage’s slogan, ‘People, Planet, and Peace,’ resonates. People get it that we have problems that will not be solved by militarism, wars, or corporate greed.

The Plowshares Movement during the 1997 action at Bath Iron Works in Bath, Maine. From left to right: Susan Crane, Steve Kelley, Philip Berrigan, Mark Colville, Steve Baggarly, and Tom Lewis-Borbely. (Photo via nuclear-news)
ranked-choice voting has another remarkable virtue: everywhere it has been adopted, it has replaced the politics of personal destruction with positive coalitional politics.
They all believed that America was the greatest country that ever existed on the face of the Earth. None of them realized that while America prays for peace, our economy worships war. None of them realize that the U.S. government is a global empire. The word fascism, means absolutely nothing to them.