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2016 America

Open Letter to President Barack Obama

To:
President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

From:
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President Barack Obama

Dear President Obama,

I am moved to write this heartfelt letter to you, Mr President, as I am deeply troubled about what is happening to my beloved country, the United States of America. My thoughts will unfold here from more than one perspective, as they emerge not only from sober, level-headed and rational reflection; but, from a seeming cauldron of mixed emotions that have been brewing for some time — excitement, enthusiasm, and hope; becoming swamped with heartbreak, disappointment, loss, insult, frustration and bewilderment; intermixed with justified outrage and righteous anger, fierceness and more.

With this letter¹ I wish to accom-

¹ This is not a short “presidential briefing”, but the sharing of a story—my story. So without apology, I don’t know at the outset how long it will be; nor do I have any illusion it will even reach your desk, let alone that you’ll find the time to read it. Nonetheless, I’ve promised so many people that I would eventually

plish three objectives: First, I want to express my sincere gratitude and respect to you Barack, on a personal level if I may, for running and serving as our first black president. I am proud that, after several earlier attempts America finally passed that political and cultural threshold. Second, I wish to share my continued and growing concern about our country and the deterioration of our democracy — in fact, the actual *disintegration* of democracy, if that means fracturing to the point of impairment in quality, functioning, and condition; indeed, now manifesting as an apparent farcical failure, a ridiculous and empty show of personal attacks lacking pertinence and substance. And finally in the midst of all this, I want to fan the flames of inspirational hope for healing in this bizarre era of polarized confusion over core values, which have been muddled

write something about my experience with this election and as a National Delegate, I have chosen this path and time to communicate my thoughts broadly.

and undermined by deceit, con, division and the cynical exploitation of ignorance, hatred and fear.

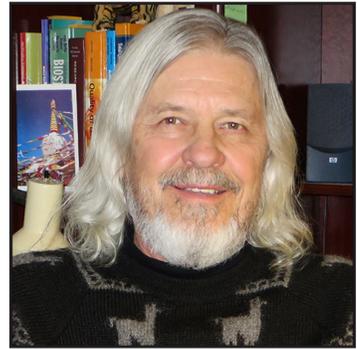
We are both witness and participant in an unprecedented presidential election cycle that, via a system of corporatized oligarchic “managed democracy”, has produced two of the most damaged, disliked and distrusted major party candidates in anyone’s memory, if not our country’s history — explicitly placing our country and our future at risk of devastating consequences. Never before have I viewed a presidential election as such an existential threat to our country as we now know it. The candidacy of the loser con-artist the Republicans have produced should not even rise above the level of absurdity. Yet, the loser has attracted a following of validly disgruntled Americans;

but whose gullibility, anger and ignorance he has easily exploited with a continual stream of negative memes that go to the heart of their most base emotions, duping and suckering this ill-informed group into believing the con of his imperial prowess, while lacking even a shred of substance. Whereas, the Democrats have produced and selected a candidate who, through her own actions, decisions and behavior, seems to be in a precarious struggle to even hold a majority of the electorate over the Republican loser candidate. How can it happen that such a candidate can be so despised by both the rightwing/alt-right *and* the progressive left, who understand that business as usu-

al will not save our democracy or planet?

Yet, as an active participant I have seen that even this system, even as it is, had the potential to deliver to us the valued qualities of dignity, honesty, integrity and moral strength by surfacing more than one inspiring candidate with such exemplary character — namely Bernie Sanders and Jill Stein — instead of the two that have exacerbated the polarization of the nation. But it failed to do that. It failed due to fraud, disempowerment of the electorate, groundless ideological absurdity, and cynical subterfuge that undermined the democratic process itself within the parties. Hence, that has further exacerbated disillusionment, apathy and disengagement of the American electorate. And it has precipitated an angry response for change, any change, regardless of how inept and disastrous it might be. The right in particular has abandoned all factual reality because they don't care about that; what they want is "something else" and to dominate by dictate from a morally and intellectually vacuous con-artist, a charlatan megalomaniac with a delusional mental disorder marked by infantile feelings and expressions of personal omnipotence and grandeur. He becomes their IED simply to wreck the system status quo.

The two-party system is corrupted, perhaps beyond recovery. Civic liberty is all about *fair* participation in political power; which our current system, in the end, continues to be unable to deliver under the oligarchic control of the democratic process by what I call the two-headed "Corporate R&D Party" serving only the concentration of wealth and power accumulation goals of



Root was an elected Democratic National Delegate pledged to Bernie Sanders, from Colorado Congressional District 3, (West Slope and SW Colorado), to the Democratic National Convention, Philadelphia, July 25-28, 2016.

the "Corporate Political Complex". It represents monopoly control of our corrupted politics, which is subservient to moneyed interests of the capitalist billionaire class, pushing the single paradigm of *capitalism* as the principal if not only ruling construct for society — a failed ideology that displaces true market economies and focuses entirely on growing and concentrating more and faster money for those who hold the most money; harvesting the wealth of our socioeconomic system, while delivering devastation to our culture, society and environment. It has even devolved from one focused on productive private investment, to say nothing about its inability to meet the needs of public investment, into an unhinged convoluted epi-device generating phantom wealth for a small few, extracted from real tangible wealth and built on an ever enlarging debt pyramid that is bound to collapse. This system is not designed to promote what's good for people or life; in fact, history teaches us if we will

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Herald (n): A messenger that conveys news, proclaims, announces or warns; one that supports or advocates, esp. for notable events or major change, often presaging what is to come. (Webster)

"We have it in our power to begin the world over again..."

"It is error only, and not truth, that shrinks from inquiry... The most formidable weapon against errors of every kind is reason... Reason obeys itself; and ignorance submits to whatever is dictated to it." —

Thomas Paine

only observe, it is sucking the life out of society, civilization and the planet, continually increasing the risk of irreversible catastrophic collapse.

Before I address the three objectives noted above in some detail, I want to share a bit of my background because it is important to understand where I'm coming from. So let me begin with some brief personal history regarding who I am; and bring it to the present with my active involvement in this election cycle.

Personal Background – Root Routledge

I come to this as a patriotic immigrant, Vietnam Veteran, and first time Democratic National Delegate who turns 70 years old, November 7th, the day before the election. My parents moved from British Columbia, Canada, to Chicago just prior to my seventh birthday in 1953, where I entered the second grade. They never applied for their American citizenship, so I remained a Canadian citizen as a “permanent resident alien” throughout all my schooling and four years of university. Fifteen years later, in June of 1968, every male who was graduating from college that year was immediately faced with an almost certain future of being drafted to go fight in Vietnam; including me, even as a permanent resident Canadian citizen. However, I could not be an officer without being an American citizen.

Without any disgrace or embarrassment, I could have morally and legally returned to my country of origin to avoid the fate of the Vietnam War. In fact, even though I ended up serving in the military, I have respect for those Americans

who made the difficult moral decision to move to Canada to avoid fighting in Vietnam. But, as it might be with many of the Dreamers who have been here since childhood, even though our parents arrived under different circumstances, I grew up identifying as an American, not as a Canadian. I didn't want to leave America; by then I really didn't feel like a Canadian and I grew up to love my country, the United States, as I know so many immigrants do who adopt America as their own country and desire citizenship. So, I obtained my citizenship in February of 1968 in order to become an officer and fly in the United States Air Force, where I served proudly with honor. My 22nd birthday, my first presidential vote, and my commissioning as a 2nd Lt, all occurred within a day of each other. Less than a year later I received my wings as a navigator, top security clearance, and over the next four years flew a total of 2360 hours, 630 combat flight hours and 170 combat missions in Vietnam, earning the DFC and several Air Medals and Service Medals, as an officer in the 8th MAS of the Military Airlift Command and the 360th Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron in Vietnam.



Captain Root Routledge,
USAF, 1968-1972

I've actively voted ever since that first election, where in 1968 you still had to be 21 years old in order to vote. Most millennials today, I dare say, scarcely know that it took massive student protests to demand a constitutional amendment allowing those 18-to-20 year-olds being drafted to fight a war to participate in selecting politicians for or against the war — culminating in the 26th Amendment to the Constitution, on 7/1/1971; making the amendment the quickest to be ratified by the states. Voting and ongoing participation in our democracy is part of taking responsibility for our country; which is why I'm so passionate about what is happening to it. Until this election, I've been an actively engaged lifetime independent and not a party member; it took Bernie Sanders, also a lifetime independent, to bring me into the Democratic Party when he chose to run for president as a Democrat.



Senator Bernie Sanders

Although I've written lots of public letters, essays and op-ed pieces over the years, I never actually engaged the inside nitty-gritty of the democratic process until this election. Only because I had to be a Democrat in order to vote in the primary election for Bernie Sanders did I join the Democratic Party, of which I'm still a member. My intent

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — *Thomas Paine*

was merely to vote in the primary caucus; but true to my nature I had to speak out on behalf of Bernie, so



Over half of our 46 Colorado Bernie Delegates and alternates attended our 2-day planning retreat at delegate Dave Levy and his wife Diane's farm in Berthoud, Colorado

got elected by my precinct to be a County delegate; then to the Colorado State Democratic Convention as a State Delegate; and finally, I worked to get all the way to Philadelphia as a pledged National Delegate for Bernie Sanders. All the effort to get there, our pre-convention Bernie delegate retreat, lots of Facebook posting, as well as the experience being there, of course, was an incredible lifetime experience, for which I'm grateful and will never forget or regret.

Barack Obama — First Black President of the United States of America

Barack, you deserve immense respect and credit for becoming and serving America as our first African American president for a full two terms. It amazes me how positive

you've remained throughout your presidency, at least from outward appearances, even though you've been viciously attacked and vilified by Republicans the entire time, who even made it their primary goal to torpedo your presidency and make you a "one-term" president with no significant accomplishments, rather than focusing on the good of the country. It must have been very difficult working with most of these backward and ir-

rational politicians, many of whom could scarcely hide their hatred and vitriol toward you. I hold you in high regard for your ability to do that; especially as a black man.

You have a lovely family, with your wife and First Lady Michelle Obama, and your two lovely children, Malia and Sasha. Although



First Lady Michelle Obama

I disagree on many areas of policy and staffing decisions you've made, I think overall you and your family have made a significant and

positive contribution to America as our president and First Family. Disagreements aside, I really like you Barack; I like your energy and the friendly way you interact with other people at all levels of life. You have a great sense of humor, which I'll bet you drew on lots for sanity.



The Obama family - Malia, Michelle, Barack, and Sasha with pets Sunny and Bo

It would be an honor to meet you and your family in person someday.

As an aside, I have a 21-year old mixed race African American grandson, Kinjah; who like you has a black father and white mother, my stepdaughter Molly, and he was raised primarily by her alone; although they lived with me and my wife Suzanne as a family for most of the first five years of Kinjah's life, where as his grandfather I was the primary male in his life as "Poppy Root". Even though Molly's mom and I divorced, we are all still good friends and Molly and Kinjah will always be part of my life.

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — *Thomas Paine*

Later on I married a young Oromo Ethiopian woman from western Ethiopia, in Addis Ababa on May 27th of 2001, and brought her to America where Tikdem earned her nursing degree and American Citizenship. We had a wonderful several years together until she found a nursing home job she really wanted in Denver; but I wished to remain in Durango, so we did a difficult but amicable path-split, but remain each other's best friend to this day. As time went on she met a very nice Ugandan man in Denver, who runs his own business there. They have two lovely little girls, 5 and 2 years old. With both sets of genetic grandparents in East Africa, I have become their "American Grandfather" as "Poppy Root", who they adore, and I love them dearly.

Barack, I wish you, Michelle and your children a wonderful, healthy and safe new life as you "retire" from the highest office in our land. May life's path bestow many more blessing upon you all. I look forward to seeing how you all engage your lives as time moves on.

Democratic National Convention — Personal reflections on Bernie, Barack, Hillary and family

Let me say a few words here about my experience and what I witnessed at the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia. These conventions may be old-hat to many party stalwarts, but as a first



Root - Day 1, Monday, Democratic Party Convention Center

time convention participant it was an amazing lifetime experience. I attended the Black Caucus, my first



Jesse Jackson speaking at the Black Caucus

convention meeting that Monday morning, where I got to hear from many of our national black leaders, including Jesse Jackson, Ben Jealous, Keith Ellison, Donna Brazile and others to famous actors like Danny Glover, and meet several attendees. Of course the highlight

of that first day was watching Bernie Sanders give his speech that evening. It was such a bright moment in American politics, but replete with mixed emotions since Bernie, who earned 46% of pledged delegates from 13 million votes, was edged out in a process the Democratic Party should be ashamed of; but which Hillary's team and the DNC and its leadership actually colluded to undermine. This is NOT what democracy should look like! Nonetheless, the political fix was in and even though I was bound and determined never to support Hillary, I remained open to how the convention

unfolded and learned a great deal from perspectives I had not really paid attention to previously.

Bernie had thrown his support to Hillary and by the end of the third



Senator Cory Booker speaking Monday at the Black Caucus

day I found myself moved by what I had observed and heard, and what had transpired; including what was said and presented by many party stalwarts and dignitaries, as well as invited ordinary Americans. I was moved by the excellent speeches of Joe Biden, Cory Booker, the Black

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Congressional Caucus, Congressional Women’s Caucus and Women Senators, Gold Star families, Black



Vice President Joe Biden

Lives Matter mothers, Police Chiefs, Veterans and so many others. I was particularly moved by Michelle’s speech and that of yours, Barack. By the morning of the last day that



Thursday, amidst the continuing sadness, anger and resentment of



Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders speaking Monday evening, Day 1, at the Democratic National Convention

many of our Bernie delegates continuing to protest the convention results, and after a heart-felt plea by Bernie delegate and highly respected Colorado State Legislator Joe Salazar to now support Hillary as Bernie had asked us, I made a brief statement in a private gathering of our 41 Colorado Bernie delegates. While expressing my empathy for the feelings in the room, especially by the younger delegates since as an avid McGovern supporter I shed the same tears when I was their age, I said: “Okay, let me admit I’ve been moved by what I’ve witnessed over the past three days [giving some details]. So, at this point, perhaps we can vote for Hillary and then HOLD HER FEET TO THE FIRE in order to manifest all the progressive improvements we’ve managed to get into the platform; and thus kill the fraudulent candidacy of the con-artist.”

Although the Clinton camp, in an amazing lack of sensitivity, respect and strategic thinking, made it difficult to throw our support behind her with enthusiasm, given the negative treatment Bernie delegates received throughout the con-

vention, as well as the enthusiastic embrace she gave to the despised former DNC chair and now her campaign head, who was fired just before the convention due to her biased undermining of Bernie’s campaign, I struggled to set all this aside. In the midst of the steady stream of political and

personal negativity from all sides of this campaign, however, I was again moved by learning more about Hillary’s life story and by



Bernie delegates Sarah Moore and Giselle Herzfeld protesting at the Convention



Colorado State Legislator and Bernie delegate Joe Salazar talking to fellow delegates Kona Morris and Giselle Herzfeld

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her acceptance speech. It was indeed a treat to learn more about how Hillary's personal, profession-



al and political life developed; and to hear Hillary's family tell about how proud they are of her and how



much they love her. Chelsea was warm and sincere, telling us about what a great mom she had even liv-



ing in a political cauldron, and even though her mom was despised and constantly under political and personal attack by Republicans. Per-

sonal stories, like that of Chelsea and Bill made this all more real and genuine, which I like very much. Since I'm about the same age as Bill and Hillary, Bill's personal sharing of their first meeting in the library and their mutual courting took me back to that time when my first wife, Darlene, and I had met in late August of 1970, when I was in the Air Force and we were later in college together in 1972 after I got out.



Bill and Hillary, Yale Law School, early 1970s

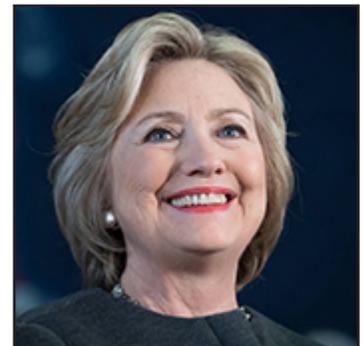
This brings to mind another little personal aside, if I may share this as well Barack. Although Darlene was a young 20-year old college student and I a 23-year old 1st lieutenant in the Air Force, we did not meet in college. In fact, we were magically introduced with the angelic intervention of four little matchmaking girls, ranging in age from about 6 to 11 years old. Barely old enough to drive a boat it would seem, they pulled up in a motor boat to my dock where I was sunning, 3 beers into a six-pack, and said, "Hey! There's a girl across the lake who wants to meet you. Come on; get in!" They clearly had this planned out on their own, because when they arrived with me on board at Darlene's family cabin dock in the midst of their private gathering, the youngest hopped out even be-



Root and Darlene, December 18, 1970

fore they tied up and ran up to the house, telling Darlene, "Hey Darlene; there's a guy here who wants to meet you." Of course, neither of us knew what was going on; but Darlene's dad Frank, a beer salesman, welcomed me putting a can of Olympia beer in my hand. Less than 4 months later, Darlene and I were married on December 18, 1970; and 2½ months after that I was shipped to a new assignment in Saigon for a year, a difficult interruption for newlyweds.

Hillary Clinton is a very accomplished professional woman and politician and I believe her heart is in the right place on many issues, if not her priorities. I'm impressed



about her lifetime focus on women, children and families, and all the good she has accomplished there. Although I did not vote for Bill (3rd party candidates Perot in 1992, and Nader in 1996 instead), I supported Hillary's active involvement in Bill's administration and her effort to take on the health insurance industry with a plan for universal coverage. It was the right thing to do; although she sure had to learn how to go about it differently and how fierce and embittered the corporate-backed opposition was. Hillary has made some bad decisions as her political career progressed, which she has learned from in my opinion, and has some character flaws like we all do; but she is certainly a strong, qualified and competent woman to be president and Commander in Chief; whereas the Republican loser candidate is anything but that, presenting himself as a blithering bag of offensive hot air with no substance whatsoever. There's no comparison, of course; which is why it's so appalling that the race between them seems to be so close.

After Philadelphia and staying that weekend in Washington, DC, with Tikdem's sister and her husband, Baby and Melaku, I returned home with this bag of mixed feelings, but a sense that I could yet vote for Hillary. However, I still felt democracy was being ill served by the fraudulent freeze out of valid third party candidates from the presidential debates. So, while not publicly committing after Bernie to any one particular candidate, I posted lots of articles and my comments about opening up the debates to the Green Party's Jill Stein and Libertarian's Gary Johnson, *regardless of who you support for president*. That's simply calling for a fair democratic

participation in our election so voters can know who they get to vote for.

But, as time went on, I found Hillary's actions speaking louder than her words, especially regarding staffing of her transition team with



Massive No TPP protest at Convention, Colorado upper left, PBS photo

the chief person, former Senator and Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar, an avid resource extractor, believer in fracking, and corporate supporter of TPP and other disastrous trade agreements. Regardless of any trade wording, these agreements aren't really trade agreements, *per se*, but corporate empowerment structures that forever enshrine the sovereignty of corporations over



Colorado Bernie delegates joining the massive NO TPP protest

national, regional and local governments on global economic affairs across the planet, regardless of impact. Incidentally, this is something *you* never speak of, Barack, of which your silence on this says volumes

about the disaster this agreement would be not only for us, but sovereign nations and governments everywhere. You're a brilliant politician with a law degree, so I know you are well aware of this; why no comment when only seven or so chapters out of a couple of dozen actually relate to trade? Is this what you really want for the world — permanent corporate oligarchic dominance over governments of, by and for the people? Why? Even the U.S. has recently been sued for \$17 billion under Chapter 11 of NAFTA over the XL pipeline, *because* you correctly stopped in its tracks due to environmental and climate concerns. TPP is NAFTA on steroids. Salazar would, it seems to most of us, fill the administration with corporate political executives representing the antithesis of what is needed for a viable future. Then more and more damaging revelations keep coming out, including a long and cynical DNC and Clinton camp campaign to undermine Bernie Sanders primary campaign and insult his supporters, as well as Jill Stein and the Green Party.

Man, does that make it hard to continue to support Hillary! The attitude seems to have been, "We don't need you... until we need you. Then we *expect* you to give us the votes we think should already be ours." Wow! What insensitive political arrogance! You know what? My vote is mine, until you earn it!

America and the Deterioration of Our Democracy

Republican Party

It is amazing to me that so many people don't see through the Republican Party. The party speaks as if they support people and democracy, but works hard to actively undermine both through voter suppression and disenfranchisement, blocking voter registration, limiting voting polls, and outright election fraud. They do everything they can to make it harder to vote, because they know their ideas and programs can't bring in the majority of thinking people since they are antithetical to the interest and needs of ordinary people. That is why these politicians want to "pick their own voters" through gerrymandering in order to obtain and hold unrepresentative seats in congress; and they love the "pay to play" billionaires and "corporate persons" enshrined by a politically bigoted Supreme Court with the disastrous Citizens United pronouncements. The policies and legislation they support are written by and for the oligarch lobbyists in support of their overarching goal of growing more and more money for those who already hold the most money; while eliminating their responsibility to society and any means of societal oversight and regulatory control; and undercutting public goods and service, to add insult to injury.

To accomplish that they run a strategy of "sustainable ignorance" and have, until recently, gotten their gullible followers to simply memorize and regurgitate, with the fervor of religious belief but without conscious reflection, their creed of "privatization, small government, less regulation, tax breaks for the rich, and less services for ordinary Americans (austerity to reduce the deficit)." Of course, government is

supposed to be where people can participate in the management and policy choices affecting our society. But, "small government" doesn't mean more "freedom" for people; it means less power for the people, and more control of society by large multinational mega-corporations — inherently *undemocratic* institutions. It's not about small versus big government. It's highly concentrated corporate aggregation of resources and control over the economy, society and our culture, supported by a corporate media propaganda system playing tunes in harmony; all of which undermines the proper functioning of a true market economy ("free market" is a code word for evermore corporate consolidation, concentration and control; the opposite of Adam Smith's notion of market competition in local economies run by the owners of small businesses). This fraudulent ideology is juxtaposed against a viable future notion of a resilient local and dispersed "Main Street" economy and democratic engagement of people in their socioeconomic lives through more local ownership and local stakeholder involvement. Of course, the paradigm of capitalism is founded on the notion of unlimited growth and it is becoming ever more clear that it has had to create a massive debt pyramid to keep the extraction machine running in that direction.

The Republican Party and their notion of conservatism has always been made up of an inherently unstable three-legged stool, requiring a bailing wire strategy of sustainable ignorance to hold it together. One leg represents the rich business oligarchs and the establishment elite; the one-percenters who have all the money but essentially no votes on their own. So, they have

had to coopt the two other legs for their voting blocks in order to even keep the stool upright. One of those other legs represents a conglomeration of authoritarian alt-right, older white male "tea party" types, who have until now drunk the establishment cool aid waiting for better results. The third leg consists of the ultra-rightwing religious groups, who basically want to control society and mold people into their own belief system, exercising their own "supreme authority" of dominion over all others. The only thing these three factions really have in common is an authoritarian sense of domination and control. Anything that upsets this precarious assembly, like fossil fuels and anthropogenic climate disruption, is rejected outright.

They've all been told for decades what to believe and how to pledge their allegiance to the establishment creed; in turn, the oligarch elite pretend to care about their social and religious issues. And they stretch a meaningless label over these disjunctive factions called "conservatism". But these folks, who have legitimate complaints about the establishment system that is not working for them, yet no clue about viable solutions, have finally woken up to realize they've been left holding an empty bag after supporting the establishment's dogma all these years. What's in it for them?

For these reasons, there is no internally consistent definition of "right wing" or "conservatism". And irony of all ironies; the Republican Party itself has produced this Frankenstein-ish monstrosity that has helped to literally obliterate any sense of a coherent "right wing" notion of "conservatism"; it's gone.

The remnants of the fractured amalgam that was the Republican Party will never get glued back together now that their voting base has woken up holding an empty bag sold to them by establishment oligarchs—the oligarchs get everything while regular people get little to nothing; and the people have to pay for the largess the establishment bestows on itself. The people are fucking pissed; and rightfully so! Bernie offered a viable alternative to that model; whereas Hillary offers only more “business as usual” establishment ideas, keeping corporate and financial power in the driver’s seat.² That is why these low-information voters have gravitated to a charlatan who, while actually belonging to the oligarch establishment class and reaping its private benefits, has bamboozled them into believing he will deliver something different. With their authoritarian view of the world, these two factions—the alt-right and morally challenged religious dominionists—simply see the opportunity to “throw out the old system and take over” by gathering around this phony loser candidate. Even the vacuity of his intellect—indeed lacking any pretense of intellectual curiosity, vocabulary or attention span—fits perfectly with their own alienation and lack of any in-depth understanding. They are suckered by the illusion of the “successful businessman” meme. Let’s be clear; anyone who’s supposed “success” comes from screwing his lenders, suppliers and workers, let alone the American public by not paying any taxes, and running away from busi-

² Well of course this is the same model of the “center-right” Democratic Party as well. See Nomi Prins’s insightful analysis in her recent article: “Waking Up in Hillary Clinton’s United States: Wall Street in the Saddle,” Truth-Out, October 27, 2016.

ness failures he has caused, is the antithesis of success. It’s the mark of a lying scoundrel.

Even if the big loser happens by some fluke of fate, karma or their perpetration of election fraud, to become our next president, the Republican Party is finished as a pseudo-coherent viable party. Once awakened, the crony-capitalist elite will never be able to pull the wool over the glazed eyes of these followers again and will lose its grip on the levers of power it has maintained through a compliant “right-wing” voter base, perhaps while society descends into chaos. In the long run, if this psychotic egomaniacal con-artist, ever out of touch with reality, takes control of our country and remakes it in his own image, endeavoring to make himself great again and be dictator to the world, he will become known as the “Greatest Loser Ever” by generations of civilization out over time into the future. A “Greatest Loser Ever” who will be despised and hated for all time. That is because he will make our country a loser country, our future a loser as opportunity for its viability slips away, and the planet a loser of finality. All the ignorance will come home to roost on the Republican Party of Stupid and the narcissistic loser they have themselves created and gathered around. His “thwimpie” family name will be lost in time, becom-

ing but an historical footnote to the disaster perpetrated by the *Greatest Loser of All Time*. That’s the name that will stick, given the horror show he would engender. How is it we’ve come this close to catastrophe?

Democratic Party

Barack, the Democratic National Convention was a great production! And so many of the words presented were beautiful, even poetic at times, and forceful and fierce at other times. Given that the great loser had arrogantly claimed he knew more than all the generals about ISIS, most of whom he would fire since that’s the lens through which a little man with little hands sees as his most important little lever of power, I loved it when about 40 or 50 retired senior officers who have actually served our country in uniform stood on stage with General Allen when he delivered such a



General Allen with several dozen retired senior military officers supporting Hillary Clinton as a strong, solid and steady Commander in Chief

stirring speech. Allen gave a forceful indictment of the loser candidate’s foreign policy and his igno-

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — Thomas Paine

rance of anything military, while proudly supporting Hillary Clinton who would be, he proclaimed, a competent Commander In Chief. I even stood up and saluted the generals and admirals on stage at the end of Allen's speech. But of course it leaves open the policy questions of militarism and open-ended wars, which were the valid concerns of convention delegates who protested the general's speech.

To be honest, I don't know where to go with the Democratic Party. Had the primary election fracas been fully legitimate, open to independents across the board, and so many millennials not been mysteriously removed from the voter registration lists, Bernie would have won by a wide margin. We *would* indeed be wiping the mat with the Republican loser with maybe a 90-to-10 showing, instead of a neck-n-neck race; and we would have brought tens of millions of new wildly enthusiastic young voters into the party, because in Bernie they saw hope for a viable future that they didn't see in Hillary. We Berners wanted so much for progressives to take over the Democratic Party and rejuvenate it as the party of the future. But that's not what happened; and now it is just hanging on, due in part to how much of a loser the Republican candidate is. But, there's a non-trivial risk the loser could beat Hillary simply because of the enthusiasm of his followers and the deflated spirits of the Bernie crowd. Much of my public postings during the primary focused on this fact, encouraging super delegates to ponder the question of electability in a time of low Democratic voter turnout during a broad-scale populist uprising and the rightwing exploitation of raw, base emotions of fear, bigotry, hatred and racism. I

posed the question directly to super delegates on my National Delegate business card: "Will you stand with an inspired generation's future (Millennials favor Bernie 4-to-1 vs HRC); or risk losing the greatest political enthusiasm in ages?"

It begs the question why Democratic Party and DNC operatives not only failed to court this new crop of young voters; but why they so arrogantly tried to dis them (and all Bernie delegates, including me). And now Hillary is scrambling to reach and hold on to the millennials. Regardless of how inner party operatives actually feel about Bernie supporters and the younger voters, it seems the height of strategic stupidity to act and speak that way toward them. I don't understand it. This all takes away from the strength Hillary could have; in fact, in the face of an onslaught of disgusting insults during the debates, Hillary was remarkable in her poise, steadiness and professionalism. She took the hardest he could throw at her, smiled, and countered with a solid and forceful focus on what we need to do for our country, spiced with some excellent zingers in response. She was believable; the loser was not.

So to me on the one hand, Bernie could be a real political powerhouse with a Clinton administration in charge; assuming they would be true to the Democratic

Platform and not give Bernie a cold shoulder. That's where a breakdown in trust erodes support. We know what Hillary says; but we don't know how strong her convictions are and what she'll actually do once elected.³

For example, regarding pipelines and alternative energy, she's really



Standing Rock - Massive armed militarized response to peaceful unarmed protesters/water protectors attempting to stop DAPL

Photo credit: Redhawk of Standing Rock Rising

a late convert and still a fracking supporter. What about DAPL? In fact, where are *you* on DAPL when we need you, Barack? We have an army of heavily armed private security and militarized police, not protecting peaceful Native Americans on their own tribal treaty lands, but actively attacking them with dogs, clubs, rubber bullets and pepper spray in order to force acquiescence to this corporate rape of their lands, sacred sites and water resources, and will exacerbate global warming (while a militia group gets off scott-free for doing an armed insurrection and takeover of federal land facilities while the FBI lackadaisically allowed them to stay, get their water, electricity and even mail for

³ See the article, "Few (If Any) Progressives on Clinton's Transition Team" (Bill Black, The Real News Network, 8-17-2016)

over 40 days!). This is a horrendous déjà vu of our nation's historically hypocritical racist treatment of First Nation people; while appeasing armed militias actually threatening violence to get their way. I recently posted a piece in our "Elected National Sanders Delegates" group stating:

"The Hillary tribe can't even come out against DAPL; and her staff wouldn't even take a hand delivered letter from indigenous people asking for her involvement. Finally, just a single staff press release in effect only saying in the most patronizing way, 'Now, now, children; let's just have everyone be heard and then we'll do the right thing for the greatest good for most of the people and corporations involved', as if they are the 'only mature adults' in the house — literally nothing about DAPL, as Bill McKibben pointed out. This is a major arrogant FU to all of us. They think they can have it all: continuing to slide right to become the new home for the disgusted Republican establishment (keeping corporations and financial institutions happy), while keeping Berners in tow. The karma for this strategy might be enormous; and they will have no one, not Jill Stein, Johnson, or anyone else to blame but themselves. I'm sick of it..."

"But actually in the bigger picture that one can read in their 'say-nothing' statement, it says volumes; guess what that statement portrays about her eventual response as president not only to oil pipelines, but to fracking and fossil fuel in general—for international sales and profit taking by the oil giants—let alone when her transition and staffing 'extractor in chief' Ken Salazar loads up her administration with pro-TPP, TTIP, etc executives. Even Al Gore, 'whose advice I will follow,' she says, has come out against DAPL."

"I [Root] too am yet undecided; ...but it may be the continual unfolding repugnance of her campaign's behavior that finally swings my vote away from both of these two massively disliked candi-

dates who are trying to win simply by increasing the hate, disgust and fear of the other. Will my vote swing altogether toward something much more positive for a viable future—something to vote FOR, as opposed to AGAINST? We Americans deserve so much better than what the closed establishment "Corporate R&D Party" monopoly has managed to present us—without any REAL debate involving at least the two other perspectives from Greens and Libs. The loser is a horror show unfolding and would destroy our country and future, to say nothing of the entire planet, should he seize our nation's top office. Regardless of her policy positions, Hillary is at least qualified, whereas the loser is not. Where to turn? Got just a few more days to decide."

Green Party, Ralph Nader and Jill Stein

Let me be perfectly frank, Barack; I did not vote for you in 2008—but I did in 2012 and saw Michelle here in Durango. In fact, not only did I vote for Ralph Nader in 2008, as I did in 2000, I wrote a 17-page essay



Ralph Nader, 2008 Election

supporting him and this same fight to fix our democracy as I am right now. It was titled: "[Fury at the Polls — for Democracy's Sake in 2008](#)", dated 8 years ago, October 31st, 2008. I wrote of the peril our democracy faces, the *Corporate R&D Party*, the *Corporate Political Complex*, and

how we got to where we were then, which seems close to where we are right now; only the names have changed.



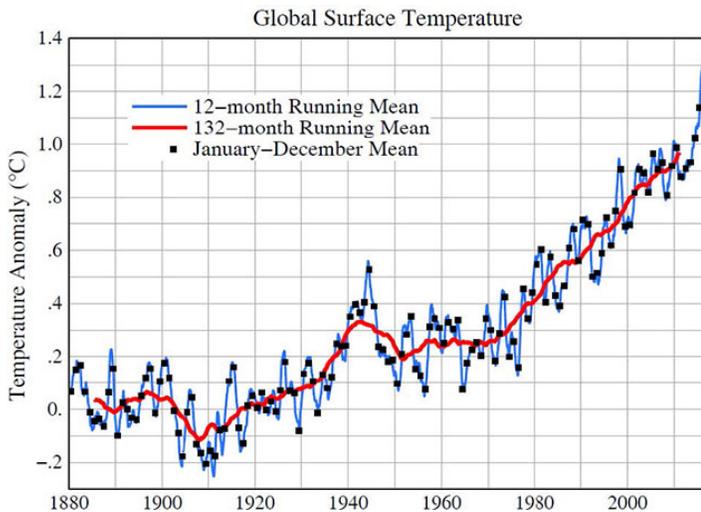
Ralph Nader, 2000 Election

I felt corporations and financial institutions would overwhelm and consume you, which they did; and I've given you and "F" in Staffing for that. If we face another economic collapse like we did in 2008, knowledgeable experts like Nomi Prins point out that we are no better prepared to handle that than we were then, perhaps worse off with the big banks even bigger and harder to control. We've had eight more years of Middle East wars and the situation seems only to get worse. Climate disruption is increasing and global warming occurring at a much faster rate than even the worst scientific scenarios thought possible. Business as usual spells doom for our planet and most of the species on it.⁴

Having lost Bernie, it is not Hillary who has picked up the progressive torch of the future; it is Jill Stein. Whether or not one votes for her, or whether or not she wins, we need to look that direction for a viable strategic vision for the future, backed up by well-grounded policies with funding sources that focus on people, peace and the planet over corporate profits. In fact, the

⁴ See the latest article by Dar Jamal: "Climate Disruption's Legacy: Megadrafts, Extinctions, Obituaries for Reefs", *TruthOut*, November 6, 2016.

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — Thomas Paine



Latest Global Temperature Graph by James Hansen, 9/26/2016

major milestone for the Green Party is to reach 5% of the vote, which gives them automatic ballot access for many states in the next election as well as millions of dollars of public funding, both of which are a real game changer for the future. We need a viable third party in the political mix to break down the barriers of oligarchy.



Jill Stein, Green Party
Another woman for president
2016 Election

Of course this brings up charges of “being the spoiler,” which I find a repugnant politically bigoted claim. I was even insulted by a local Democratic former elected official who, when in discussion I told him I voted for Nader in 2000,

angrily barked at me: “You’re the reason we got George Bush!” How dare any one party claim they have a right to not have competition from the left, as if they own all of it; or that they have a right to votes where the voter decided to exercise their choice for a third party candidate?! First of all, this perceived problem could be eliminated entirely at the stroke of a pen with ranked choice voting, where if your first choice does not win outright, you don’t lose your vote; it simply goes to your second or third choice. Then we could eliminate this “fear voting” for the “lessor of two evils” where we still end up with some level of “evil”.

Now where is all this going to go regarding the candidacies of Jill Stein (especially as a progressive) and Gary Johnson (who is anything but a progressive) if by some fluke Hillary ends up losing to the Republican loser? Let me say it again, loud and clear: If this happens, the Democrats will have nobody to blame but themselves! I’ve been making this point throughout the primary season as well.

On June 9th I posted excerpts and a link to an interview that Amy Goodman did on Democracy Now! with Jill Stein about her reflections regarding voting and this primary election process. After that I got asked if I was now supporting Jill Stein and her Green Party for pres-

ident. So I posted a clarification on June 14th to make it perfectly clear that I was not supporting or campaigning for Jill Stein and that “my loyalty as a bona fide Democratic National Delegate was only supporting a Democratic candidate for president, and that Democratic candidate is Bernie Sanders.” Taking a strong stance and owning my Democratic Party membership, I further pointed out that I shared the link and comments about the interview “because it’s important we Democrats have our heads outside of our own sandbox in order to know what others are thinking and faithfully rise to the challenge it presents to the core substance, principles and values of the Democratic Party. If that causes the DNC fear and trepidation, I have no control over that and certainly have no intention of censoring my own free speech rights or surrendering my rights as an elected Democratic National Delegate in order to assuage DNC anxieties about Bernie Sanders; which is something they have to deal with in the democratic process, flawed as it is.” I went on, pointing out the obvious:

“POLITICS OF FEAR: Fear voting has been a bane for the Democratic Party over multiple election cycles, causing the party to continually shift to the right and abandon its progressive base and policies (and people); and hence its integrity. Examples are legion. Further, there has been so much election fraud and voter disenfranchisement in the Democratic Primary process at all levels, with the DNC from the start trying to ‘stack the decks’ and impose its favored establishment candidate on everyone, Bernie has had to struggle not just to get his message out; but against well-documented systemic corruption all the way. Our primary election process has been disgraceful, if one expected a democratic process that reflects the involvement and will of

the people.

“It is important we do not succumb to Party-manufactured fear (or our own fears), and simply allow ourselves to be persuaded to vote against what we fear—like a ‘scary’ Republican candidate, who is nothing but a foolish buffoon—because the Party Elite tells us to vote for their establishment candidate in order ‘to be safe’. That kind of thinking has a high risk of backfiring and losing the newly inspired enthusiasm of millions of independent and new voters; with potentially severe political blow-back in the November election. The core principle we need to hold is to stand strong and vote for what we believe in.

*“SO MUCH AT STAKE: There is so much at stake, including the future of the Democratic Party; while the Republican Party self-immolates. We have the opportunity with BERNIE SANDERS to transform and expand the party and bring on these new millions; or we can risk leaving it broken and embittered with a candidate so despised she rivals the Republican candidate for the highest negative ratings of any major candidate for president—ever—six out of ten; facing an election pitting a candidate under possible indictment against a candidate being sued for fraud. That’s what was brought out in this interview and why I am a strong Democratic Delegate for Bernie Sanders. **The DNC and its Superdelegates are facing a high potential of seizing defeat from the jaws of victory; and they will have no one to blame but themselves.***

“OUTSIDE POLITICAL PARTIES: Outside political parties, like the Green and Libertarian Parties in interviews like this one, are pressing the Democratic Party about who it really is and what it really represents and stands for, if not a viable future for ALL of the American people. And, they are calling out the hypocrisies of the Party, as are so many Democrats themselves, in terms of funding from corporate billionaires; privileged access to power and control; election fraud and voter suppression and disenfranchise-

ment. Our democracy has been hijacked by corporate and financial interests—and these are in control of both party’s ‘presumed candidates’...

“We’ve never had a better candidate than BERNIE SANDERS to take on the political challenges of our times and lead us into a transformative, prosperous and promising future FOR ALL OF US—with visionary wisdom, integrity, dignity, and trust. That’s why I became a registered Democrat and National Delegate.”

On June 22nd, as part of my post regarding an interview Amy Goodman did with Thomas Frank (author of *Listen Liberal: Or, Whatever Happened to the Party of the People*) on Democracy Now! Frank stated:

“The problem with establishment Democrats is not that they have been bribed by Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley and others; but that long ago they determined to supplant the GOP as the party of Wall Street.” Frank explains in the interview that it goes back to at least the 1970s; “[The Democrats] didn’t want to be the party of the working class any longer. They didn’t want to really be the party of the middle class... And by the 1990s, that had really come into full flower with the Bill Clinton administration, and they became—you know, they actively courted Wall Street... There was this sort of natural alliance between the Democrats and Wall Street... And the Clintons and Barack Obama all had a hand in this transformation of the party... Look; for a lot of people, the promise of American life is over. It’s gone. And this is only going to get worse under a Hillary Clinton presidency. And, well, it would get much, much worse under a Republican presidency; but what I’m getting at here is that this phenomenon, inequality, is going to get worse. All the problems that we’re looking at today, our economic problems, are going to get worse.”

Frank goes on, “...When you think about it, what Sanders is saying is very deep in the Democratic tradition. It’s not radical. It’s not strange. It’s straight out

of the New Deal... I think, for our modern-day Democratic Party, Bernie Sanders represents this [FDR] past that they think they have put behind them, that they don’t think they should need to deal with anymore. I mean, there’s something about their reaction to him that was just so strange. It’s like—you know, like he’s the bad conscience, the guilty conscience that they want to put behind them. They never want to have to hear that stuff again.”

I added these comments:

“But the Democratic Party must deal with it; because BERNIE SANDERS is not going away and neither is the massive movement that supports him. ‘Winning over the voters’ is not merely a challenge that political operatives might perceive as simply wooing a frivolous ‘youthful culture’ (who ‘didn’t do their own research’) to their side; but of core democratic values and policies that undergird them—and today’s millennials are authentically wise to this. The DEMOCRATIC PARTY under a BERNIE SANDERS ADMINISTRATION would grow and flourish, with the opportunity to permanently transform and heal our country. Under Business As Usual (BAU-HRC-DNC) politics, at best the Party will languish and lose the enthusiastic support of millions and millions of millennials and independents, putting the November election (and our country) at risk. This is the profoundly moral dilemma facing Superdelegates and their voting decisions at the Convention in Philadelphia.”

If the Democratic Party really wants to renew itself and hold onto, if not increase, its membership, the last of the old guard now in charge needs to go through a serious self-reflection and heal what ails it. Even assuming that got started with Bernie’s influence, especially for a more progressive platform, that won’t come by following the Republican paradigm of “trash and blame the other,” including Bernie, Bernie delegates and progressive

3rd party candidates like Jill Stein. I seriously want to slay this false allegation that Democrats lose because some third party candidate shouldn't have "taken their votes away"; whether it's Ralph Nader before or Jill Stein now.⁵ So, let's dig into this blame game a bit further. Although it's part of our political lore of blame repeated over and over, including by a current crop of party media hacks already sharpening their knives to attack Jill Stein, the general message has been echoed by legions of Democratic partisans who never think it's time for a progressive third-party presidential candidate to run because the Republican candidates are always worse. Do Democrats want to be progressives or neoliberal corporatists. Let's be clear; Ralph Nader did not cause Al Gore to lose the 2000 election!

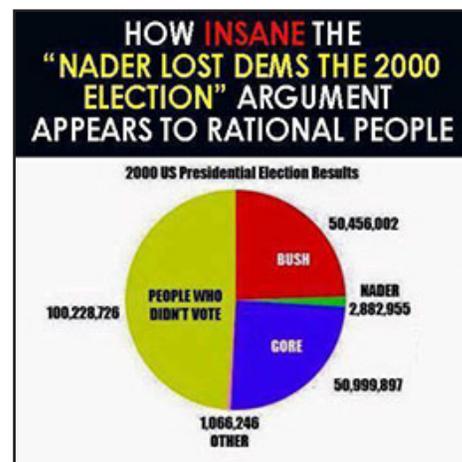
For one thing, Al Gore could have had the backbone to continue to demand a full recount. The U.S. Supreme Court violated the 10th Amendment by intervening and overriding the Florida State Supreme Court to stop a full count; they had no business sticking their nose into the Florida election process, except that the Republican candidate George Bush asked them to. Right out of the anti-democratic Republican playbook (suppressing, ignoring, or preventing votes and an accurate tally of them), the five rightwing members of the Court ordered a halt to the recount that was proceeding smoothly, and which

⁵ Quotes and facts identified here come from these articles and their references: "Debunked: The Myth That Ralph Nader Cost Al Gore the 2000 Election" (Disinfo.com, November, 2010); "The Ralph Nader Myth" (Daily KOS, 12/6/2013); "Ralph Nader: I was not a 'spoiler' in 2000. Jill Stein doesn't deserve that insulting label, either." (Ralph Nader, 9/2/2016, The Washington Post)

was ordered the previous day by the Florida Supreme Court. They did this at the request of Bush's legal team. Incredibly, Antonin Scalia wrote that the counting threatened irreparable harm to Bush "by casting a cloud upon what he claims to be the legitimacy of his election." So, the Republican point is not to take accurate measure of what the people actually want by their vote and implement it; but to sustain the claim of their own candidate's legitimacy, to hell with an accurate tally of whatever the voting results from a valid election say. Does this resonate with some of what we've heard from the Republican loser candidate? You yourself explicitly noted in a recent speech, Barack, that people would lose their faith that the election system is valid and fair if candidates were to charge that it was rigged and therefore didn't accept the results. Indeed, I point you to the Democratic Party and its own well documented "rigging" of the primary election against Bernie Sanders. Why do you think it's so difficult to get all those "sometimes self-righteous ideologues of Bernie's to feel that they have won something and go home happy and enthusiastic in working their asses off for Hillary" (paraphrased from one of the many leaked DNC emails)? It's hypocritical to make a statement like that Barack, and not look at your own political party's misdeeds.

To continue, Bush was declared the winner even though thousands of valid votes had not been counted. Not only that, only 537 votes separated George Bush from Al Gore. *Every 3rd party candidate got over 537 votes, which means that if any one of those 3rd party candidates had potentially dropped out*

and those vote had gone to Gore, he would have won too. For instance, Monica Moorehead, the Worker's World Party candidate, got 1,804 votes; David McReynolds of the Socialist Party, collected 622 votes; and James E. Harris, of the Socialist Workers Party collected 562 votes. Further, almost half the Democrat-



Shared on Facebook by Fort Lewis Students for Bernie Sanders

ic Party voters stayed at home. Not only that; polling numbers showed that more registered Democrats voted for Bush than voted for Nader (more than 300,000 registered Democratic voters in Florida voted for Bush)!

CNN's exit polling showed Nader taking the same amount of votes from both Republicans and Democrats: 1 percent. Nader also took 4 percent of the independent vote. Had Nader not run, Bush would have won by more in Florida. In actual votes, Gore lost 191,000 self-described liberals to Bush, compared to less than 34,000 who voted for Nader; the assumption that Nader's votes would simply go to Gore if Nader hadn't run is wrong (just like the exit polls said). In fact, Gore lost seven-and-a-half times more Democrats to Bush, than he

lost Democrats and Independents combined to Nader; and about 76% of Nader voters in 2000 were not Democrats. They were largely independents. Not only that(!); it was discovered that the Diebold voting machines produced tally errors on the order of a 24,000 vote change in favor of George Bush, including a mysterious negative tally for Gore in one county of 16,022 votes; which, although caught and changed, places the entire tally mechanism in question. To go on, thousands of voters were fraudulently removed from Florida's registration lists when Gov Jeb Bush unlawfully purged thousands of Democratic voters from the state's rolls. Gore could have won his own state, and on. This of course doesn't even address the absurdity that the Electoral College threw the election where Gore won the popular vote handily with more than a 540,000 vote margin. Let's fix out election system, America!

And yet Nader, and people like me who voted for him, get blamed by Democrats for George Bush winning by a few hundred votes. Notably, Al Gore has not scapegoated the Green Party for his loss. Al Gore himself and the Democratic Party are to blame for Gore losing Florida. If Hillary Clinton loses, it will be Clinton, the DNC, and the Democratic Party who are to blame. I categorically reject the myth that progressive 3rd party candidates are responsible for Democratic losses. Nader states:

"Such discrimination counters a candidate's civil liberties... Shamefully, the decaying Democratic Party works to block millions of voters from having a choice of progressive third-party candidates. No country in the Western world places more obstacles to third-party and independent candidates getting on the bal-

lot than the United States. Democrats and Republicans built this exclusionary duopoly... Without a competitive democracy, our political system cannot attract better candidates. A political monoculture with safe, gerrymandered incumbents serving myopic commercial interests is systematically undemocratic. It helps explain why the Democratic Party has been unable to defend this country from the worst Republican Party in history at the congressional and state levels.

"Scapegoating, besides debilitating its practitioners, has a grotesque and vindictive tail, harassing lawful competitors while ignoring self-renewal and external reforms. Ms. Stein will not abandon the Green Party's resistance to Wall Street's disastrous attack on our economy, the bipartisan expansion of the war-making empire and the bipartisan backing for bloated military and corporate welfare budgets that starve monies for public works and services. She opposes both parties, indentured to the craven demands of moneyed interests. Let's stop the chronic censorious whining and work to secure fair, competitive elections for all candidates."

It is this arrogance of the Democratic Party that makes it hard for me to wade through all the Bernie and Jill insults and stick with Hillary, because, "If she doesn't win we'll have a nightmare on our hands." I resent being told to vote for Hillary as a protest vote against the great loser.

However, all that stated; *I am yet undecided how I will vote.* Hillary will probably win and I will support her as my president if she does... while HOLDING HER FEET TO THE PROGRESSIVE FIRE! In that scenario, presuming Democratic control of the senate, Senator Bernie Sanders better have a major role! But the vitriol on the progressive left has not settled down and is fiercely against her among many, although

feelings are widely mixed, judging from comments I see in the many Bernie Group pages I've been a member throughout.

My ideal ticket would be Bernie and Jill — *leading the Democratic Party.* Since that's just a fantasy muse, I may just end up voting for the candidate who I think at the time is best focused on fixing democracy for the future of the people. That is the candidate who deserves to win. Can we depend on the Democratic Party to do that? It could, but it's a tall order. First, they have to accept they have a problem; and then quit trying to "slide right" to appease and gather in more Wall Street Republicans, while ignoring or belittling the progressive wing of the party. Democratic Party operatives have only themselves to blame if this election turns into a nightmare.

Let's Fan the Flames of Inspirational Hope!

Although I actually took out my citizenship and joined the military to go to war as an officer for my adopted country of America 48 years ago; since I have dual Canadian/American citizenship, I've been actively musing about moving to Canada and living my retirement years back in B.C. should the greatest of all losers actually seize control of our country. But then, would I not be abandoning my country just when it would suffer most severely? Maybe; maybe not. Who is abandoning our country to the greatest electoral hazard it's faced in modern times? The Democratic Party, for all the reason I've noted above, has brought us to this precarious precipice when they didn't have to. I've seen some Berners even argue that, as disgusting as the loser can-

didate is and as much as they don't want him to win, nothing would bring the Democratic Party to its knees more quickly and thoroughly than losing to the great loser. That would surely devastate the party and do great damage to our country and our future as well. It might shift the composition of the party power brokers in a much more progressive direction; but it could be 20 years before it would recover, if at all. The backlash would be immense; but too late. That's also a nightmare scenario.

The focus of most of our Colorado Bernie delegates has moved away from the contentiousness of the top of the ticket to down-ballot candidates and issues. I know many of them are working very hard on those items that could become the progressive basis of our future democracy, and I surely support that. Bernie is of course crisscrossing the country not only fighting for Hillary, but for many of those progressive candidates and initiatives. There are several progressive organizations, including Bernie's "Our Revolution" and "Brand New Congress", waking up to the fact that no one is going to do this for us and we need a movement. I want to see the awoken millennials engage their future with vigor and action.

Inspirational hope must stay present in the face of the adversity before us. It's a matter of deciding which path you're going to walk, regardless. It would easily be there were Bernie our candidate. But that's not who we have; so we need to make the best of this situation to keep the path open to a progressive future.

Here's how I understand it at this late moment before the election. I definitely want to see the Green

Party come out of this election as the viable 3rd party of the future; which means Jill needs to exceed 5% of the total vote, which is very achievable. Everyone in a "safe state" should vote for her for that reason, if no other. Only with a viable progressive 3rd party will the Wall Street Democrats finally feel the pressure they need to feel from the progressive left and go through a serious values assessment and decide whether they want to *truly* be the party of the people, or the party of corporations, financial institutions and crony capitalism of the billionaire class. It would be very healthy for democracy to have Democrats and Greens as the two major parties who gain in strength, as the Republican Party disintegrates beyond recognition. We would then have the potential for *real* democracy.

But it is unlikely that the Green Party at this point, without having gotten the exposure they should have gotten from participation in the presidential debates, will manage to pull off a majority win. The electorate needs to take away control of the presidential election debates from the self-serving monopoly control of the Corporate R&D Party — that corporation known as the "Commission on Presidential Debates."

Let me reframe my thoughts on Hillary Clinton. As with you Barack, although I disagree with Hillary's stance on lots of issues, I like Hillary; especially after having learned so much more about her, including from the recent Frontline special that chronicled in parallel her life's path and that of the rich pampered loser. Somewhere I even read that she and Bill were McGovernites in 1972, like me and



Guess who's with who in 1972?

Darlene were; but that wasn't stated in the special, so I'm not sure if it's true or not.

Hillary has demonstrated the ruggedness and inner fortitude to withstand decades of relentless personal attack and an onslaught of severe criticism from people who have been out to destroy her by turning over every stone they could find, even making lots of stuff up. Yet there she stands; she did not wither away and recede into the shadows of political life. Who can say *they* could withstand that? And yet still, she now stands proudly, competently and joyfully at the door of being our first woman president in history. Throughout her life, she has faced challenges, insults and doors slammed in her face; but, I believe she has demonstrated the capacity to learn from difficulties, as well as her own mistakes; and that weighs heavily for me. Emails, Benghazi, Clinton Foundation; that's basically all the Republicans have had to dig through a thousand times over, without really turning up much. Let's not lose perspective here; these things pale before the enormous problems we face for the future; and that seems to be where Hillary is properly focused.

I like strong powerful women. And in Hillary I see the potential for her to be a uniquely powerful lead-

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — Thomas Paine

er; one who will be moved to do a lot of good as president, not only on her own accord, but by responding to the pressure we will continue to keep up starting November 9th. She will be a leader who will command the respect of other world leaders, private sector leaders, public leaders, religious leaders, education leaders; and most importantly, ordinary American people... *if*—she has learned to listen and respond positively from being challenged by the most remarkable politician of integrity in our country—Bernie Sanders. She must be open; she must be caring; she must be strong, steady and stable. None of these things can the Republican loser candidate muster.

The future will not abide our country going down the dark path of the great loser. Our precious America deserves to be protected, preserved, cared for, and looked after so it can flourish. Hillary Clinton can and will do that. Our moral imperative is to ensure we survive this election so the opportunity to flourish into the future does not irrecoverably dissipate before our very eyes. Vote!

Sincerely,



Root Routledge, PhD
Democratic National Delegate
for Bernie Sanders

