

The K.F. Stone Weekly

(Formerly "Beating the Bushes")



May 02, 2016

TRUMP AND CRUZ: THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A DIARRHETIC AND AN EMETIC

At least once a week for the past couple of months, some student in my "All Politics All the Time" class will say something like: *"You know, there are a lot of highly successful, supposedly well-educated retirees in my building who are supporting Donald Trump? How can this be?"* If I - or indeed anyone - had the definitive answer to this question, we would likely be in a league of our own. Then too, one wonders at the so-called "Anyone But Trump" movement which is supporting Texas Senator Ted Cruz. Why? Precisely



because . . . because . . . well, precisely because he is *not* Donald Trump. What a choice! Back in January - shortly after he had left the presidential field - South Carolina Senator [Lindsay Graham](#) described the choice between Trump and Cruz as a deadly no-win situation]. Said the sweet rose of the Carolinas: *"It's like being shot or poisoned . . . what does it matter?"* It must have meant something, because Graham eventually got around to

endorsing Senator Cruz - the man of whom he also said *"If you killed Ted Cruz on the floor of the Senate, and the trial was in the Senate, nobody would convict you."* The other day, former House Speaker [John Boehner](#) referred to Cruz as "Lucifer in the flesh," to which Graham responded that Trump ". . . would be hard pressed to beat anyone in an election — unless he was running against Lucifer himself." And of course, The Donald has continued to be up to his old tricks; one day telling the press that he is going to "be

so presidential that you'll get sick and tired of it"; the next day resuming the name calling and outrageous comments like "If she weren't a woman, Hillary Clinton wouldn't even get 5% of the vote," and [claiming](#) that "Bernie Sanders' supporters are going to join my campaign."

The difference between "being shot or poisoned?" No. How's about the difference between a diarrhetic and an emetic - i.e. that which causes "Montezuma's revenge" or that which makes one lose their lunch. Perhaps we should label the Trump/Cruz nightmare *vomirrhea* - coming out of both ends at once.

To be perfectly honest, there *are* successful, reasonably well-educated folks who wholeheartedly support Donald Trump. Why? Well, a letter which appeared in this morning's Ft. Lauderdale *News Sun Sentinel* spells it out about as well as anything I've read or seen:

I am really mad [that] the unemployment rate is really 20%, counting all those not looking for work anymore; mad that there are 45 million on food stamps and 93 million unemployed; mad that Obamacare premiums have doubled and deductibles have increased big-time this year and that the biggest insurer withdrew from the program because of unsustainable losses; mad that two states have raised the minimum wage to \$15/hour, which will lead many businesses to either go out of business or cut employees and curtail hours; and really disgusted that such a poor and reckless nuclear deal was made with Iran, who declare "death to American and Israel."

The letter-writer concludes with "Just some sensible and true thoughts from a concerned Republican, which is just why we need Trump to straighten out this mess."

Never mind that many of the facts propping up the writer's anger are open to debate; he nowhere explains what - if anything - Donald Trump has done or said that leads one to believe that he know how cure all these ailments - outside of telling us *ad nauseum* that he does. Isn't the writer aware of the fact that to put any of the above referenced problems or challenges on the road to recovery, it would take a strong bipartisan effort on the behalf of a Congress that has spent years not being able to agree that Thursday comes before Friday? What makes him think that Trump has anything in his makeup case which will permit him to finesse the disputatious Leviathans of Capitol Hill? The fact that he is rich and successful? Sorry, but Trump has all the makings of an out-and-out autocrat. And to all those who believe what Fox News and Rush Limbaugh insist - that Barack Obama is the worst autocrat to ever occupy the Oval Office - guess again; if (God forbid) Donald Trump were to be elected, he would take autocracy to a whole new level. And a question that no one - to the best of my knowledge - has asked: has The Donald considered the fact that were he to be elected, he would have to put his entire empire into a blind trust - a blind trust that will be examined and reexamined every day for four years? How can he relinquish control?

There are any number of great reasons why Trump scares the socks off of the Republican establishment; not the least of which is what a potentially lethal effect his candidacy would have on all the "down ballot" Republicans running for the Senate, House, Governorships, state legislative posts, etc. But what choice does the "anybody but Trump" crowd have except Senator Cruz? Yes, there has been quite a bit of chatter about Paul Ryan and a few syllables about Ohio Governor John Kasich. But Ryan has all but ruled himself out and Kasich - who personally is more decorous than Trump, and politically not as provocative as Cruz - may well be running for Vice President.

True, Cruz *is* picking up an endorsement here and there. But in total, they can all still fit into a four-door Honda. Truth to tell, Cruz is one hell of a lot scarier than Trump, because he actually *believes* what he says . . . sort of. When Cruz speaks about "taking America back," few ask the obvious question "taking American back from what or whom?" The answer to that question can be summed up in a statement Cruz made not too long ago: *I'm a Christian first, American second, conservative third, and a Republican fourth. . . . I'll tell ya, there are a whole lot of people in this country who feel exactly the same way.*" Egad! Can you imagine the contumely, the utter shock and horror if, say, Minnesota's Keith Ellison or Indiana's André Carson were to announce "I'm a Muslim first, an American second . . ." or Senator Chuck Schumer to proclaim "I'm a Jew first . . ." There would be absolute hell to pay; and in the case of Senator Schumer, much of that hell would come from fellow Jews. And what if Barack Obama had ever said "I'm an African-American first and an American second?"

Certainly, Christianity *is* at the center of Ted Cruz's core. But interestingly, many fellow Christians have taken him to task for not tithing - donating 10% of his income to charity - something which many religious Christians consider to be a sacred obligation. Many have accused him of being a "false prophet." Donald Trump appeals mostly to those connected with the Christian prosperity movement, a form of evangelicalism that celebrates the accumulation of wealth as a sign of God's blessing. Cruz, on the other hand, Cruz resonates with the evangelical culture warriors. He mixes what New York Times columnist [David Brooks](#) describes as political "brutalism" with a belief that he is engaged in a fight with the devil for the soul of the nation. It is only a matter of time before Cruz assumes the role of the Old Testament prophet Elijah and tries to cast down fire from heaven to destroy the "prophets of Baal" who oppose his campaign. This is truly scary stuff; it is the political version of ipecac - the surest way to induce vomiting.

So which is worse? Trump the diarrhetic or Cruz the emetic? For all those Republicans who find the idea of voting for either man repulsive, I have a simple either/or recommendation: either vote for Hillary Clinton or stay the hell home.

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