DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS

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When I worked in politics (for three years I covered the Wisconsin State legislature as a newspaper reporter), I found that most legislators are loyal to their party first and to their religion second.

Generally speaking, Republicans are interested in power, not ethics. And their primary interest is not even power; power is a means to their real interest: money. They are the party of capitalists, and their primary purpose is to maintain capitalists’ economic advantages. The Democrats used to be the party of laborers. That the Democrats allowed the Republicans to co-opt labor is tragic. Republicans have convinced workers that they will fare better under Republicans; it’s a recurrent lie.

Republicans change their rhetoric over time, but their purpose stays the same. In the days of Ronald Reagan, they reassured laborers that, if labor would just trust them, then “trickle-down economics” would take care of them. Get rid of regulations, cut taxes on the wealthy, let us do what we want: the increased wealth of the capitalists will “trickle down” to the workers. Reagan assured them, “A rising tide lifts all boats.” And what has happened? Wealth inequality has drastically widened since the 1980s.

Now the Republicans reassure the workers, “Climate change is a hoax! We’ll defend your coal-mining jobs.” “We’ll get those manufacturing jobs back from China for you.” “We won’t let Mexicans take your jobs.” Etc. Meanwhile the rich get richer. Always the recurrent lie.

Why are Republicans called “conservatives”? Because they want to conserve the status quo. Why are Democrats called “liberals”? Because they want change (brought about by the *liberum*, the “will” in Latin, which seems to derive from *liber*, “free”). Capitalists want to prevent change because they’re sitting on top of their wealth and don’t want to lose it. Laborers want to bring about change, since they’re being sat on and want the wealth shared.

So it is natural for the party of the capitalists to resist change in non-economic matters as well (abortion, same-sex marriage, etc.). And it is natural for the party of the workers to promote change in non-economic matters as well. It is also natural for the Republicans to be the party of the older generation and the Democrats to be the party of the younger generation. The older generation has established itself economically and has the most to lose by change; also, their mores were learned a generation ago and are old-fashioned. The younger generation is trying to establish itself economically and has the most to gain by change; also, their mores are experimental.

Hence the Republican correlations of: low taxation, low government regulation, climate-change denial, anti-abortion, anti-gender deviations, etc. Hence the Democratic correlations of: higher taxes, more government regulation, environmentalism, pro-abortion, same-sex marriage, etc.

My bottom line is this: I genuinely fear for our democracy if the Republicans continue to concentrate power. The same right-wing populism that Trump represents has appeared in Poland, Hungary, Brazil, India, the Philippines, etc. And all of these countries are sliding toward fascism. Germany lost its Republic in the 1930s; look what its all-powerful state then mandated. If power continues to concentrate in fewer and richer hands, we will become a plutocracy.

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The Inchworm

The inchworm secures its head; its body folds in two as the back half moves forward. Only then does the head yield and allow the back half to push it forward.

That is an image for our two-party system. The Republicans attach their head and resist change: “Conserve! Conserve!” they cry. The Democrats pull their tail forward: “Liberate! Liberate!” they cry.