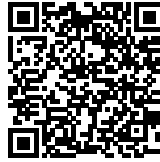




# POPULISM VERSUS TRUMPISM - THE WAY FORWARD

*Posted on February 1, 2021 by C.B. Forde*



One of the greatest ironies, or perhaps tragedies, of history is that whenever a people seek freedom, they end up forging their own chains. For populists, one such chain is Trumpism. Not the man, of course, who has been made into a caricatured strongman syllogism by the media - but the catch-all phrase itself, which is used to demonize, belittle and humiliate all those whom the elite do not like, those who are the wrong kind of people, decried as being unfit for "modern society." Labels, as we all know, are very helpful when it comes to categorizing people, especially the "undesirable," who must either be retrofitted or silenced, lest they besmirch the pristine majesty of "progress." And this process of refurbishing humanity is then presented as the highest form of morality. You see, the elite must always be better than us.

I had hurriedly spoken of all this [in my previous article](#), which the *Postil* was so very kind to actually publish, and I must also here thank the many, many kind souls that responded to what I wrote, both positive and a few negative as well. I had expected simply to be ignored! And many wanted me to expand further on my brief remarks about heroism, remarks that I had made within the context of populism. What follows, then, is about heroism of the people - and here I must acknowledge Beethoven who set the precedence, when he wrote the *Eroica*, his Third Symphony.

But first there is need for clarity. What does "Trumpism" actually mean? First, it is nothing more than a convenient way to express condemnation or hatred for anything to do with Trump - because he is the Boogeyman of anyone deemed "cultured," "learned," "sophisticated," "refined," and all those moral things that the elite seek to be but are not. Second, and more importantly, Trumpism is the grand fable of evil itself, hence the four years of endless hysteria (an apt term for a hyper-feminized world). Thus, Trumpism means racism, provincialism, idiocy, vulgarity, and so forth - but it has also wrongly come to mean populism and nationalism.

Of course, "Trumpism" is a term not defined by Trump himself; rather, it is a term created to define him. It is the *Wunderwaffe* in the hands of those who hate him. Nothing will ever change this narrative. That is his legacy. And in it has been swept up into populism, so that Trumpism is also defined as "populism."

Thus, the immediate challenge is to untangle populism from Trumpism, because the one has nothing to do with the other. Certainly, Trump has mentioned, "the movement," "our movement," or even "the movement we've built." But he has never really defined what he means by "the movement." Perhaps, he has his own version of "Trumpism," one no doubt tied up with wanting to see America "great again," but

only under his leadership. Fair enough. But such a “movement” is not populist, because Trump is not a populist, even though he often uses populist rhetoric (for political gain). He is a neoliberal who wishes to do what all neoliberals do - manage from the top down.

For those of us who actually are populists, the real “movement” has nothing whatsoever to do with Trumpism, and is, in fact, a very old one. This means that emotional attachment aside, populism must break clean from Trumpism, no matter how alluring the siren-song of the “Office of the Former President” and Trumpian “think tanks.” Why? Very simply because populism fails whenever it is tried up with the fortunes or ambitions of one man. Populism must remain with the people - it must remain organic, from the ground up.

So, let us get rid of the notion that somehow Trump invented populism and that populism “belongs” to him, as his “movement.” Populists supported him because he said he would further their cause. That never happened, of course. To highlight the necessary distinction between Trumpism and populism, let me quote extensively from an article by [William A. Pfeffer](#), the Kansas Populist (People's Party) Senator. The [article dates](#) from 1898.

First, Pfeffer speaks of why populism is necessary:

*“The suspension of specie payments forced the government to adopt a new monetary policy, and the ignorance and prejudices of lawmakers afforded bankers a tempting opportunity, of which they promptly availed themselves, to use the public credit for purposes of speculation. Our currency was converted into coin interest-paying bonds, the word “coin” was construed to mean gold, and the minting of silver dollars was discontinued. The general level of prices fell to the cost line or below it, and the people were paying seven to ten per cent, annual interest on an enormous private debt. Personal property in towns and cities was rapidly passing beyond the view of the tax gatherer. Agriculture was prostrate. Farmers were at the mercy of speculators; the earth had come under the dominion of land lords; forests and mines were owned by syndicates; railway companies were in combination; wealth and social influence had usurped power, and the seat of government was transferred to Wall Street.”*

Sound familiar? The syndicates of our age are the tech giants, the crony capitalists, the supranational agencies. Pfeffer continues...

*"These abuses were fruits of our legislation. Congress had forgotten the people and turned their business over to the money changers. Both of the great political parties then active were wedded to these vicious policies which were despoiling the farmers and impoverishing the working classes generally... a new party was needed... And hence it was that the People's party was born. It came into being that government by the people might not perish from the earth. It planted itself on the broad ground of equality of human rights. It believed the earth is the people's heritage and that wealth belongs to him who creates it; that the work of distributing the products and profits of labor ought to be performed by public agencies; that money should be provided by the government and distributed through government instrumentalities so that borrowers might secure its use at an annual charge not exceeding two per cent., which is equal to two-thirds of the net average savings of the whole people."*

Peffer then describes where populism belongs on the political spectrum...

*"[The People's Party's]... principles were essentially different from those of the other great parties on every fundamental proposition. Republicans and Democrats were given to old ideas in politics and law. Formed for altogether different purposes, they did not take kindly to any of the proposed reforms that would change established policies... in case of resistance [their]... right may be enforced by the use of military power, if need be."*

And, then, Peffer gives the definition of what populism is all about...

*"Populists... believe that every child has exactly equal rights with those persons who were here when he came; that he is entitled to a place to live, and that, equally with his fellow-men, he is entitled to the use of natural resources of subsistence, including a parcel of vacant land where he may earn a livelihood. Populists believe that the interests of all the people are superior to the interests of a few of them or of one, and that no man or company of men should ever be permitted to monopolize land or franchises to the exclusion of the common rights of all the people or to the detriment of society. They believe that what a man honestly earns is his, and that the workman and his employer ought to have fair play and an equal showing in all disputes about wages. They believe that railways and canals, like the lakes and navigable rivers, ought to belong to the people. They believe that money, like the highway, is made to serve a public use; that dollars, like ships, are instruments of commerce, and that citizens ought not to be subjected to inconvenience or loss from a scarcity of money any more than they should be hindered in their work or their business by reason of a shortage in the supply of wagons, cars or boats. They believe that the people themselves, acting for themselves through their own agencies, should supply all the money required for the*

*prompt and easy transaction of business; that in addition to silver and gold coin, government paper, and only that, ought to be issued and used, that it should be full legal tender and that there should be no discrimination in favor of or against anything which is allowed to circulate as money... It will be seen that every proposition in this code is intended to be in the interest of the great body of the people and in opposition to class distinctions."*

Lastly, Peffer looks beyond 1898:

*"Conditions will not improve under the present regime. Times will get no better. Stringency and panic will be here on time again and again as of old, for neither Republicans nor Democrats offer a preventive. They do not seem to know what ails the country and the world. High tariff is but heavy taxation, and free silver alone will not give work to the idle nor bread to the poor. The case needs heroic treatment, just such as the People's party proposed."*

All we have to do is replace "free silver with "universal income," and the populist message is no different.

This little exercise is simply meant to show that Trump does not own populism - and when he wore its mantle, he did not value it, and let it drag in the swamp of political corruption. Perhaps he could never distinguish populism from "popularism."

But, along with Trumpism, there is another chain that binds populism- that of the left-right paradigm which is hawked by the hucksters of the elite to forever sow dissension among the people. It is liberal against conservative, communist against capitalist, left against the right... and so goes the cant. But notice that in the "grand struggle" between Antifa and the Patriots - Jeff Bezos keeps making more and more money. We hate - they profit.

Another populist, [Huey Long](#), had this to say about all this in the 1930s: *"God told you what the trouble was. The philosophers told you what the trouble was; and when you have a country where one man owns more than 100,000 people, or a million people, and when you have a country where there are four men, as in America, that have got more control over things than all the 120 million people together, you know what the trouble is."*

Thus, the great "themes" of populism have remained unchanged over the past 120-plus years since Peffer put pen to paper. What he spoke of is what we still speak of, namely:

- Nations are people; nations are not political systems
- The people are holders of true power
- The socio-economic clamp of the elite over the people must be loosened
- The people must stop tolerating their slavery

A word here also needs to be said about "nationalism," a term that is also much-maligned, as it is wrongly associated with "Nazism" (but that is a discussion for another time). Nationalism means tending the welfare of the nation. Why is that wrong? And a nation is the collective of the people who consent to tend the territory they inhabit. That link with Nazism was fabricated by academics after World War Two. So, should we let academics define and control how we are to live?

But when the elite deploy phrases like "Trumpism," "nationalism," "populism" they are effectively stripping people not only from the human community but from the territory of the nation itself. This disenfranchisement means that the academically imagined place that is "America" (the land of endless progress) has no room for anyone classified as a follower of Trumpism, because such a person has no legitimacy in public space. But this argument is also the Achilles' heel of the elite (some may call it their arrogance) - for whenever people are denied legitimacy that is precisely the strength of populism, which solely exists to right this wrong. Nations need righteous anger - and lots of it.

Now, here is where heroism comes in. How is populism to be divested from Trumpism? The latter has no future because it is tied up with one individual; the former has a strong future because it is the very life of the people. Some might, at this point, object that I am making assumptions about a monolithic entity that I call "the people." So, let me clarify.

The world as we now know it is vertical - there are those at the top, and those that live "below the salt," as it were. It is no longer about management of the political arena, with two teams that call themselves the "left" and the "right," and may the best man win. Rather, as Peffer observed long ago, "people are superior to the interests of a few." This is why I say that the distinction between the left and the right is no longer valid, let alone relevant - for the elite (those at the top) treat both the left and the right the same way, even though it may not seem like it. Thus, for example, the massive destitution that now lies

before us, because of the Covid lockdowns, which the elite very effectively manage ("for our own good"), makes no distinction between the left and the right. Joblessness and despair are not party players. Left or right, we are all poorer and the more hemmed in by relentless social engineering, that is, "the Great Reset." Left or right, our humanity is dissipating because we now prefer to deny each other's humanity - and we call that "morality."

And once again a few things to consider:

- Do not think voting will make you free. It cannot. It only empowers those perpetually entrenched in the system.
- Do not tie your hopes and expectations to the political fortunes of one man, or even one party.
- Do not believe anyone who tells you that change can happen from the top down. That is always a lie.
- Do not trust the government. It has no interest in you. (Now with technology and voting machines, it does not even need your vote).

Society is all about consent. When a citizenry finally learns to withhold it from the elite - and also abandons all their institutions created to enslave us - only then will the people break free. But withholding consent requires high heroism, because often it means fighting all alone, without recognition, without praise.

If you are ready to fight many Goliaths, with whatever you have right now, no matter how meager your strength or ability, without reward, you are a populist. You are the real hero. Do not let the media label you. Be fearless, for the future will never belong to Goliath.

*C.B. Forde lives in a rural area, where he still practices what he preaches.*

The [\*featured image\*](#) shows, "The Village Dabce," by Pieter Breughal the Elder.

