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# COMMON SENSE II

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*Capitalizing on the familiarity and influence of Thomas Paine's "Common Sense" pamphlets that provided American colonists with exposure to the conversation of great thinkers in the pre-Revolutionary period, this paper assumes the name COMMON SENSE II. Similarly, today's series of pamphlets strives to give a direct response to great political events and ideas of our time.*

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October 2020

Pre-Election Issue

Vol. 15 Issue 10

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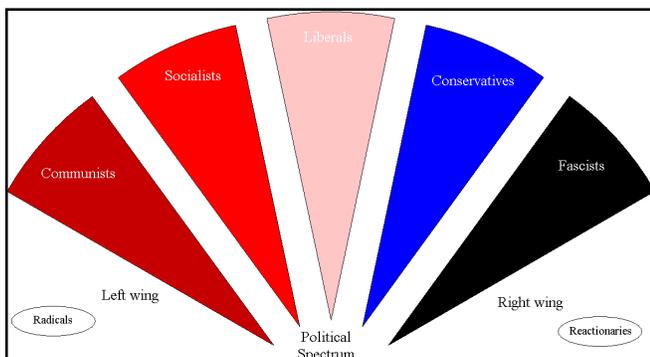
## What about Socialism?

*By Stephen Fuller*

For most of the summer I have been listening to Trump rail about the "radical left" and socialism. During one town hall a questioner even asked Biden about his position on socialism. I thought his answer didn't really answer the question. This is how I think Democrats should respond to the question of socialism:

Socialism or communism as an economic system hasn't been successful as shown by the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which after 70 some years totally failed. Then there is China, which has evolved so that today it looks more like an autocratic dictatorship with capitalistic opportunities than a communistic economic system. Communism and socialism are the extreme, and they clearly have not been successful.

Moving more to the center of the spectrum, you find socialism on a smaller scale; you see socialism in its basic form as people coming together to accomplish some common goal. For example, the



people or citizens agree to establish a fire department whose goal is to protect the wider community in the case of fire. This is for the common good. There are a lot

of other examples: the public school system and law enforcement are examples of the people creating institutions that individuals can't. Labor unions also allow employees to establish better wages, benefits, and terms and conditions of employment for all, something individual workers couldn't do equably on their own. Even churches, synagogues, or temples—regardless of the creed—are examples of people coming together to accomplish a common goal.

This is when you pull out a copy of the Constitution and read the Preamble, "We the people of the United States in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity do ordain and establish this Constitution of the United States of America." The men who wrote this and ratified it in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century were leftists who believed in joining together to accomplish a common goal of a more perfect Union. If you define socialism as an activity where people join together to make life better, most of us have socialistic tendencies.

That is the answer I'd like to hear from someone, but I'd also like to hear about capitalism and its warts and the fact that unfettered capitalism was the cause of the Great Depression and the Great Recession. I'd like to hear about regulations, which are really protections of the common against the abuses of the powerful. I'd like to hear that hybrid governments which mix socialism with regulated capitalism are very successful, and that their citizens are the happiest on the planet. You can't fit any of that on a bumper sticker, so it'll be hard to get the word out.

# Occupying Army

By Bob Passi

Think about COVID-19 as an alien army that has invaded the planet—it might as well be from outer space—and each nation decides how to



<https://www.sagepub.com/resources/servlet.com?wp-content/uploads/2018/10/>

repel that invasion as best it can using the resources at its disposal. All these nations often use new weapons the health providers have been develop-

ing as well as the strategies that have been proven to be effective against similar attacks in the past. For thousands of people in their populations, those decisions make the difference between life and death. Besides those who die in this invasion, there are even larger numbers who are casualties requiring medical resources and hospital time and space. The goal of the national leaders is about how to save as many lives as possible and to limit the casualties. Eventually the goal is to irradiate the invading virus or to make its continuing stay very difficult.

There are, unfortunately, some nations whose leaders do not take the invasion seriously. Those leaders tend to see it as a natural phenomenon requiring little attention. Their general approach is to allow the invasion to continue pretty much unabated, willingly accepting the deaths and casualties as long as they are in the more powerless classes. They may even see it as a positive occurrence, a kind of survival of the fittest. It is like culling the herd to get rid of the weak and unimportant.

These nations allow the virus invasion to be something to embrace and to allow it to establish itself as an occupying army. To operate in this



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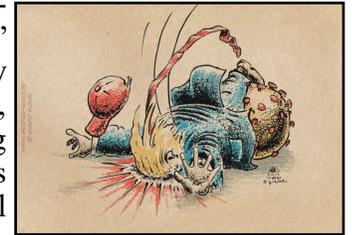
fashion, they see the invasion of the alien virus as something to accept and around which to form a society, much like Vichy France after the Germans overran France and occupied it, setting up their own government. Those who accepted this arrangement were collaborators,

willing to allow the society, especially the weakest and most vulnerable, to pay the price for that occupation with what were seen as acceptable deaths, oppressive restrictions, and a change in the national character.

Some of our present leaders see this as an opportunity to express their absolute power over their citizens who, for a variety of reasons, have no

option but to follow the dictates of their leaders. Some leaders may even be under the illusion that their vision and their will can force reality to conform to their wishes: a kind of magical thinking.

Here in this nation, the course Trump has chosen is to allow the virus to have its way with the citizens. His priority seems to be to salvage the old economy and Wall Street by infusing the corporate world and the wealthiest citizens with stimulus funds. His solution for the ordinary citizens is that they must return to jobs in order to receive any benefits from stimulus money. The other element of this “return to work” push is to insist that schools open so parents will be free to work. This is clearly an “economics is a higher priority than people’s health” strategy. There is money to be made and, by God, we will support anything that makes money. That is what capitalism is all about, isn’t it?



[https://www.anecdoticamagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/Guido-K%](https://www.anecdoticamagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/Guido-K%27)

So, the result is that the most vulnerable are required to face the full force of the viral occupation, taking their chances with their own health and that of their families and communities with little support or resources. They will be sacrificed on the altar of capitalism. This somehow seems right and appropriate to Trump and those who profit most from such a strategy. Others who find a way of supporting such a strategy see it as a way to get rid of those they see as undesirable or unnecessary: those of different races or skin color or religion or ethnicity, immigrants and foreigners, liberals, the old, the weak and the helpless. This clearly feeds the frustration, bigotry, and racism of a sector of our population.

The reality, however, is that such a strategy is unsustainable. Other nations will simply isolate us a pariah. Those who are so willingly sacrificed will rebel. Without some solution to the spread of this virus and other viruses which will follow, we will remain a vulnerable species, finally weakened and overcome.

We are still faced with the entire business of transitioning to a society that is willing to deal with the troubling environmental challenges. Considering this, we can ill afford to simply allow an invading virus to set up shop as an occupying army. We certainly cannot allow the sacrifice of a large part of our society in the pursuit of wealth.

Finally, we will need to insist that human life matters and that any policies that are not based on that ultimate truth will only lead us into a dystopian future and eventually to the demise of the human race.

## An Election like No Other

By Vicki Andrews

Many people believe that this may be the most important, the most consequential election in our country's history. It's currently looking good for Joe Biden, but it is not a done deal. On *Meet the Press* on October 18, 2020, moderator Chuck Todd stated that in 2016 the national polls showed Hillary Clinton ahead of Trump by 10 points at approximately this date; current national polls show Joe Biden ahead of Trump by 11 points. Polls are not always reliable. Even in this case where many influential Republicans are publicly turning away from Trump, we just can't take things for granted.

The upcoming election features a mentally unstable incumbent who is intent on retaining power and won't go down without a fight. According to Frank Schaffer in a recent article in *The Atlantic*, "The Election That Could Break America," "Well-supported arguments have made the case that Trump fits the diagnostic criteria for psychopathy and narcissism. Either disorder, by its medical definition, would render him all but incapable of accepting defeat." During an interview with Chris Wallace on Fox News in July 2020, Trump said, "I have to see. No, I'm not going to just say yes, I'm not going to say no," when asked if he would accept the election results. At the Republican National Convention on August 24, 2020, he said, "the only way they can take this election away from us is if this is a rigged election."

Unfortunately, Trump has a huge base of people who listen and believe his every word and would probably be willing to go to battle for him if they thought he were cheated out of the Presidency. Consider the recent situation in Michigan, when a well-armed, well-trained militia attempted to kidnap the governor for standing up to Trump; they intended to try her for treason and possibly execute her. These militias do exist throughout the country, building up guns and ammunition and preparing for conflict, especially to defend "their" President. I believe that is the real danger looming after this election.

Schaffer's article paints a dark picture of a potential for disaster for our country if the election is not

decided in a landslide or at least with sufficient authority that the losing candidate will be forced to yield. He goes on to say, "in this election year of plague and recession and catastrophized politics, the mechanisms of decision are at meaningful risk of breaking down...there are warnings that conditions are ripe for a Constitutional crisis that would leave the nation without an authoritative result."

Many people are concerned about Trump's stealing the election and/or refusing to leave office and are considering methods to counteract a potential coup. There are some interesting articles in [www.WagingNonviolence.org](http://www.WagingNonviolence.org) including "The Things You Need to Know to Stop a Coup" by Daniel Hunter, which states that "we have to be ready if he [Trump] claims victory before votes are counted, tries to stop the counting, or refuses to accept a loss." According to the article, some of the things to remember are to understand that:

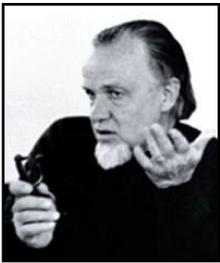
- ◆ Coups have been stopped by "regular folks";
- ◆ Citizens must act quickly and not alone,
- ◆ They must focus on widely shared democratic values;
- ◆ They must commit to actions that represent the rule of law, stability, and nonviolence.

Another article in this newsletter is "Here Is a Proven Formula for Protecting the Vote While Keeping the Peace" by Maria J. Stephan. This article describes situations in other countries that have had attempts by authoritarian leaders to steal elections and how citizens rose peacefully to reclaim their countries. Stephen states that, "The only way a real

or would-be autocrat can steal an election—at home or abroad—is if ordinary people allow it." The article also describes civic groups which are training thousands of people to "resist an executive power grab or coup and preparing activists for disciplined nonviolent action." There are also peace groups leading trainings in violence de-escalation, active bystander intervention and unarmed civilian protection. In addition, a network of peacebuilding organizations and data scientists, called the Trust Network, is developing an early warning and early response platform to help communities prevent and mitigate election-related violence.

It is comforting to know that people around the country are preparing in the event of election fraud and/or violent reactions to the election. On the other

(Continued on page 4)



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(Continued from page 3)

hand, it's very disturbing to know that this is something that must be considered.

This could indeed be an election like no other. This election could be a catalyst for violence, and we must be aware and prepared. Read the articles mentioned above as well as others on the topic, pay attention to what is happening around the country, and be prepared for the possibility of violence during election season and beyond. Our country is not immune to civil unrest; we've experienced it before, and it certainly could happen again. We need to be aware and alert and ready to stand up for our democracy, and we need to work for peace.

## Character Counts

By Valerie Conner

One of the basic tenets of democracy is that no one is inherently better than anyone else. By that I mean that those higher on the social, economic, or talented ladder cannot lay claim to being better than others because of where they started out in life. What they do with their born position makes a difference. We call that character. Character is what makes us want to do better for others as well as ourselves. It gives us the understanding that when everyone has a chance and is free from inhibiting challenges, we all profit. Or as Paul Wellstone said, "We all do better when we all do better."



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Leaders of good character improve the character of the entity they lead. In the case of nations, national leaders of good character improve their nation's standing in the world. They do this through moral authority. Leaders without good character diminish their nation's standing. We have seen this these past four years. How effective—not necessarily good—a leader is determines how dramatically that nation's standing is affected.

As we peer through the fog of these past four years of Republican deceit and misrule, we can be comforted that Trump and his sycophantic minions have not been as effective as truly effective leaders could be. We have a lot to undo and mend and make up for before we can begin to move forward. But we can move forward. It'll take focus and hard work, but it is possible.

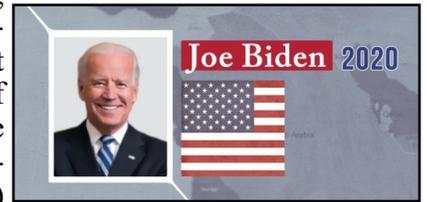
Assuming a Democratic victory next week, Biden

first needs to do restore our international standing. Domestically, the need is threefold:

- ◆ to the extent possible reverse the harm done to our institutions and their reputations,
- ◆ attempt to solve the real problems of the pandemic, the economy, the climate damage, and the civil unrest,
- ◆ begin to make progress toward a better world.

These are all interrelated, but the most elemental one is to reduce the anger, the malice, the civil unrest that has developed. Everyone seems to be angry and not without cause, but acting on that anger only exacerbates the situation.

Once the new administration takes over, (I'm hoping and assuming it'll be a Biden Administration, but even if—horrors of horrors—it'll be another Trump exercise in ineptitude) the country must be given a reason and a chance to heal.



<https://geostrategicmedia.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Candidate->

I once gave a speech at a National Honor Society induction. Speak on the aptitude of character, I remember saying that unlike intelligence, character is developed—not given—otherwise we would just pin the NHS pin on a child's diaper. We have to work on developing character. Joe Biden is a man of good character that he has developed over a lifetime of public service. Donald Trump has spent a lifetime deliberately refusing to acknowledge the value of good character.

Despite our exhaustion from these past four years, now is not the time to give up. We must summon the moral energy to develop the necessary character to make the world and our place in it a truly better place. To accomplish our goal of a better world, we must elect a President of good character.

That person is Joe Biden.

*COMMON SENSE II* is published by the Itasca Progressive Caucus in Grand Rapids, Minnesota

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# ITASCA DFL



**Every Wednesday & Friday  
September & October**

**Time: 3:45 – 5:15 pm (or later)**

**Place: Central School Grounds  
Grand Rapids, Minnesota**

**“It is what we make it”**

**Making friends • Sharing opinions  
Voting assistance • Finding resources  
• Meeting candidates •**



## Fair Job Market

By Valerie Conner

I recently received a political flyer fear-mongering about how giving amnesty to 11 million illegal immigrants would let “them **compete for American jobs,**” [bolding theirs]. Let’s look at that more closely. Just who really benefits from keeping undocumented immigrants undocumented? Certainly not the undocumented, nor the person competing for that “American job.”

The real competition for “American jobs” is from undocumented work-seekers who are willing to work for less and off book, *i.e.*, without Social Security contributions and other workplace protections. If the undocumented immigrants were allowed legal status and a pathway to citizenship, they would rightfully expect to get the same pay as “true Americans,” which would lessen their job-seeking competitiveness.

Obviously, if an immigrant were documented, he/she could demand fair wages and benefits, so he/she should be in favor of “amnesty.”

If every worker were documented, every job applicant would be on an even playing field of costing the employer the same in wages and benefits, so citizens and documented workers alike should favor “amnesty.”

Ask yourself who really benefits from off book



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undocumented work-seekers who are willing to work for less and off book, *i.e.*, without Social Security contributions and other workplace protections. If the undocumented immigrants were allowed legal status and a pathway to citizenship, they would rightfully expect to get the same pay as “true Americans,” which would lessen their job-seeking competitiveness.

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<http://images.huffingtonpost.com/2015-06-03-1433319897-2887734-DREAMact.jpg>

employees, certainly not the employee nor the on book job seeker. That leaves an unscrupulous employer who only wants to save labor costs.

And about the claim that they now receive “Free Medicare and Social Security”: The only people who receive Social Security and Medicare benefits without having contributed are contributors’ spouses who have never been in the workforce.

Those who are so afraid of someone else getting something for which they’re not entitled need to really look at what they’re so afraid of and who benefits. .

## Just Who Will Be after Your Guns?

By Michaela Raymond

THEY followed Ceausescu, and THEY followed



<https://www.pressenza.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/trump-mussolini-720x377.png>

Mussolini—for a while. If I were Trump and were able to take over our country with the assistance of the militias he is embracing at

this time, the first thing I would do after filling key positions in the military and our intelligence agencies is DO AWAY WITH THE SECOND AMENDMENT!

All you militia folks had better read world history and go play paintball this winter.



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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS: GET INVOLVED AND GET IT DONE!

### Event

### Date /Time

### Location

DFL Headquarters Open (326-6296)  
 Itasca Progressive Caucus (259-4490)  
 DFL Central Committee Meets  
 DFL Social Club & Lunch  
 DFL Pot Luck (Open to the Public)  
 Working Families Alliance  
 Earth Circle  
 Circles of Support  
 Haven: A Place for All  
 Deadline for *Common Sense II*

Tues, Wed, Thurs 2:00-5:00  
 Suspended  
 4th Monday  
 Suspended  
 Suspended  
 Suspended  
 Suspended  
 Suspended  
 Suspended  
 November 12, 2020

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