

# They Do Protest Too Much, Methinks

by Michael Curtis

The ongoing protests, now in their eighth day, against the election of Donald Trump as President of US can be seen in benign fashion as democracy in action, illustrations of the exercise of the right of free speech. Some of the protestors may be sincere, open minded critics of what they perceive are Trump's policies and intentions. They do not deny the validity of his election, nor seek to disqualify it.

But the protests must also be seen less kindly as undemocratic and indeed reactionary in their refusal to accept the validity of the democratic election result.

The United States today has nothing in common with the Communist regime in East Germany in the 1950s. Nevertheless, it is well to remember the bitter remark of the German poet and playwright Bertolt Brecht after the failure of the uprising of June 17, 1953 in East Germany against poor economic wage and working conditions, an uprising that was put down brutally by Soviet Union troops.

In his poem *The Solution* critical of the brutality, Brecht ironically wrote it was easier for the Communist government to maintain control by dissolving the people and electing another. The present day U.S protestors, whether choreographed or not or organized by groups said to be sponsored by billionaire George Soros, in their refusal to accept the will of the people want to dissolve the American people and demand both the reversal of the election result and changes in the Constitution.

Ostensibly, based on the fact that Hillary Clinton, defeated in the vote for the Electoral College but obtained a slim

majority in the overall popular vote, the protestors call for the Electoral College to be abolished. They appear ignorant that 2016 is not unique. Five times before in American history, a presidential candidate has been elected by winning a majority in the Electoral College but not the popular vote in the country. Nevertheless, the protestors argue for the Electors on December 19, 2016 to ignore the votes of their states and vote for Hillary Clinton.

Protests by American citizens have been part of political theatre in American politics for some time but it is surprising that some of the present actors seem unknowingly to be playing the end of Shakespeare's *King Lear*. The present day protestors overplay their role in viewing the election of Donald Trump as U.S. President as "the weight of this sad time." No supporter of Trump has ever claimed that he is, like Abraham Lincoln or Oliver Cromwell, the instrument of divine purpose.

Some protestors, whether from the Democratic Party, believers in identity politics, African-Americans, Latinos, Environmentalists, and LGBT, genuinely differ from President-Elect Trump on many policy issues. It is true that at this point Trump has disclosed a few general views on economic policy, on a global political system, the renegotiate trade agreements, and taxation policy.

But even more true is that the details of his intended policies remain unknown. The wisest words on this so far come both from Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and President Barack Obama. Lavrov asserted it is sensible to wait for Trump's actions and not focus on his rhetoric. Obama correctly referred to Trump as pragmatic, not ideological.

In contrast, the ideology of the protestors unwilling to accept the democratically expressed will of the people has

affected well known celebrity figures as well as the irresponsible *New York Times*, acting as a short sighted detective in pursuing its quarry. That irreponsibility and lack of objectivity in reporting is evident in reading some stories in just one day's issue, that of November 15, 2016. Trump's victory rattles Greece as it seeks stability. Trump's victory leaves Mexico mired in a state of fear and paraysis. Trump turns on the Hate. The omniscience of the NYT and the protestors it influences is staggering in its divination of a world that is hostile to Trump.

The usual celebrities take front stage. The always dramatic Yoko Ono uttered a well publicised public high pitched scream on announcement of Trump's victory. Lady Gaga displayed her charms outside Trump Tower in New York City by brandishing a placard that told us that "Love trumps hate." Robert de Niro, who felt as bad after the election result as he had done after 9/11, wanted to punch Trump in the face. Not to be left out of the theater, Barbra Streisand, Lena Durham, Cher, Amy Schumer. Chelsea Handler, among others have given way to tears.

Some of these celebrities are said to be seeking safety from the anticipated tyranny of Donald Trump. For them a few words of advice. They should take advantage of one newly published analysis of the world. They should avoid exile in the world's most dangerous countries, Syria, Afghanistan, Libya, Darfur, Somalia, apparently more dangerous than Beverly Hills or East Hampton. They should be warned they will find violent crime, communal, sectarian, and racial violence. an absence of government, law and order in large areas of the country, or government services barely functioning. They might experience considerable difficulties, inadequate health care, gastric problems, possibility of Zika virus, and high level of road accidents.

Edmund Burke once wrote that democratic government is founded on compromise and we need to balance inconveniences. Trump's victory obviously means changes in internal affairs and in US

foreign and military policy. Differences are inevitable on multiple issues: Obamacare; North American Free Trade agreement (NAFTA); immigration; Syria; Iran; NATO; cooperation with Russia. Fair and desirable comment on these and other issues should await publication and implementation of policies. So far, on one issue, it appears agreeable that Trump and Russian President Putin have agreed on a major priority, fighting Islamist and international terrorism, in what seems an atmosphere of mutually beneficial cooperation.

Protestors should be aware that Trump, warts and all, is not Daniel Ortega, prepared to rule for life in Nicaragua with a family holding key positions. They should not let genuine political differences lead to violence, communal, sectarian, racial, or to civil unrest or the absence of government law and order in areas of the country. They might not view Trump as a lovable admirable personality and have little personal chemistry with him, but his election is to be respected as it should be in democratic systems.

Genuine criticism of the Trump presidency is wholly desirable and necessary but absurdity and lack of proportion is not. Perhaps many of the protestors would disagree that the election of Trump is, as Hollywood actor Patrick Stewart said, one of the worst things in the last 100 years. Present day protestors should refrain from dogmatic statements and displaying supercilious disdain on the basis of imperfect information. They should respect the democratic system in which they live.