

US Elections: From the “Lesser to the Greater Evil”. The Demise of Critical Liberalism

By [Prof. James Petras](#)

Global Research, November 03, 2012

Region: [USA](#)

In-depth Report: [Election Fraud in America](#)

Introduction

There is ample evidence that the Obama Presidency has pulled the US political spectrum further to the Right. On most domestic and foreign policy issues Obama has embraced extremist positions surpassing his Republican predecessor and in the process devastating what remained of the peace and social movements of the past decade. Moreover, the Obama Presidency has laid the groundwork for the immediate future promising a further extension of regressive policies following the presidential elections: cuts in Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare. Incumbents and their opposition compete over hundreds of millions of dollars in campaign funding from wealthy donors, which they will have to repay in the post-election period in billion dollar handouts, subsidies, tax abatements, anti-labor and environmental policies. Not a single positive proposal was put forth by the Obama campaign but numerous militarist and regressive social policies were articulated. The Obama campaign ran a fear campaign, playing off of the reactionary proposals of the Romney-Tea Party alliance: a cover for his own record of unprecedented military spending, sequential wars, immigrant expulsions, mortgage foreclosures and Wall Street bailouts.

In the process, critical liberals have crossed the line, surrendering their integrity by deflecting attention from Obama’s militarist-socially regressive policies to focus on “opposing Romney” as a “greater evil”: progressives and critical liberals have multiplied and magnified the duplicity of the Obama political apparatus. In the name of opposing the current ‘greater evil’ (Romney) they dare not enumerate and specify the wanton political crimes and monumental socio-economic injustice perpetrated by their “lesser evil” candidate (Obama). Will the “progressives” ever play honest and publicly state: we back Obama in “swing states” because he has “only” murdered 10,000 Afghans, 5,000 Iraqis, is starving 75 million Iranian’s via sanctions, gives \$3 billion for Israeli displacement of millions of Palestinians, personally oversees the arbitrary executions of US citizens and promises an extended kill list ... because Romney promises to be worse ... Expecting honesty from the proponents of ‘lesser evils’ is as farfetched as taking serious their criticisms between elections.

The political damage incurred by the social movements and US working class under the Obama presidency is unprecedented and has laid the groundwork for further social regression and greater imperial bellicosity.

Political Consequences of the Obama Presidency: Past, Present and Future

The Obama Presidency and the run-up to his past and present electoral campaigns have had a devastating impact on popular social movements, engaged in issues of peace, labor,

immigrant and constitutional rights and environmental regulation.

The peace movement virtually disappeared as its leaders urged its supporters to turn their activities to supporting Obama's election. He rewarded them by escalating military spending, and engaging in sequential wars, directly or by proxy, in seven countries, wreaking havoc and destruction. He faced minimum opposition as ex-peace activists, in dismay, turned away or grabbed a post and apologized for war. By 2012 the follower- less peace leaders repeat the same mantra to support Obama; but dare not repeat the past lie (in the name of 'peace') rather they claim in order 'to defeat Romney'.

The immigrant rights movements prior to the 2008 election of Obama mobilized several million.... till it was infiltrated and taken over by Mexican-American political hacks from the Democratic Party and turned into an electoral machine to secure elected posts for themselves and Obama. He rewarded the immigrants by setting a record: seizing, jailing and expelling 1.5 million immigrants over his tenure in office. The immigrant rights mass movement has been largely dismantled and now Democratic political hustlers hire canvassers to round up and register, highly disillusioned immigrant voters.

Afro-Americans were the most neglected sector of the US working class under Obama: they experienced the highest levels of unemployment and home foreclosures and the longest period of joblessness. They became politically invisible as Obama bent over front ways to appease rabid White racists seeking to label him a 'black president'. The established black leadership-political and religious - and the media celebrities went all out to block any expression of grass-roots opposition, claiming it would only "help the racists" - ignoring Obama's embrace and bail out of White Wall Street and showing his backside to millions of black households under water. Without movement or leadership, fearful of the problem (economic racism) and the solution (4 more years of invisibility under Obama) most black workers are left to abstain or hold their nose and vote for 'Oreo' Obama.

The Occupy Wall Street Movement, precisely because it was independent of the Democratic Party and fed up with Obama's total subservience to Wall Street, provided a temporary voice for the vast majority of Americans opposed to both political parties. The local and state Democratic officials applauded "the cause" and then repressed the movement.

A spontaneous movement without political direction, and lacking an alternative political leadership, was incapable of confronting the Obama regime: the movement declined and disintegrated, many sympathizers sucked up by the Obama 'lesser evil' propaganda campaign. The mass popular animus to Wall Street was defused by Obama's claim to have saved "the economy" from catastrophe by channeling \$4.5 trillion dollars into the bankers' pockets.

Constitutional rights were savaged by Obama's defense of military trials, Bush era tortures, expansion of arbitration executive power including the assumption of Presidential power to assassinate US citizens without a trial. While legal organizations fought the good fight for civil liberties, the vast majority of liberals were notable by their absence from any sustained democratic movement upholding the rights of 40 million Americans under police surveillance, especially Muslim citizens and immigrants. They chose not to embarrass their Democratic President: they placed the re-election of a police-state Democrat over and above their putative defense of constitutional rights. No mass marches for civil liberties; no protests against Home Land Security; no campus-wide free speech movements against the

abrogation of the right to criticize Israel .

For decades, the trade union confederation and senior citizen movements defended Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. With Obama in office, openly declaring and preparing major reductions and regressive clauses on coverage (raising age qualification) and indexing, there is no significant protest movement. Programs which for the better part of a century (social security) or half century (Medicare, Medicaid) were considered untouchable are now, according to Obama, “on the table” to be gutted (“reformed”, “adjusted”). The trade union millionaire bosses hire a small army of campaign workers and raise over a \$150 million to re-elect a President who promises to make huge cuts in medical programs for pensioners and the poor. Obama has legitimated the regressive social positions of the far-right while the Democratic Party neutralized any trade union opposition or mobilization.

Last but not least, the Obama regime has co-opted progressive liberal social critics via backdoor support. In the name of “opposing Romney” the progressive pundits, like Chomsky and Ellsberg, end up in alliance with Wall Street and Silicon Valley billionaires, Pentagon militarists, Homeland Security boosters and Zionist ideologues (Dennis Ross) to elect Obama. Of course, the support of the progressives will be accepted -but hardly acknowledged- but they will have no influence on future Obama policy after the election: they will be discarded like used condoms.

The Future: Post-Election Consequences

With or without the re-election of Obama, his regime and policies have laid the groundwork for an ever more regressive and reactionary social agenda: living standards including health, welfare, social security will be cut drastically. Afro-Americans will remain invisible except to the police and racist judicial system. Immigrants will be hunted down and driven out of homes and jobs: immigrant student dreams will become nightmares of fear and trepidation. Death squads, proxy and drone wars will multiply to prop up a bankrupt US empire. Unaccountable and hypocritical progressives will shift gears and criticize the president they elected; or if it’s Romney they will attack the same vices they overlooked during Obama’s electoral campaign: more cuts in public spending and climate change will result in greater deterioration in everyday life and basic infrastructure; more floods, fires, plagues and blackouts. New Yorkers will learn to detox their toilet water; they might be drinking and bathing in it.

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Prof. James Petras](#), Global Research, 2012

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Prof. James Petras](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants

permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca