

HOW SHOULD WE THINK ABOUT TRUMP?

Larry Sanders, former Green Party County Councillor and brother of Bernie, who is campaigning for the US Democratic nomination, spoke to Faringdon Peace Group in June about Trump. He described Trump as a racist, a sexist, a bigot, a liar and the most despicable president the US has ever produced, but spoke more about why he got elected and what impact he is having on the US, the UK and the world.

Larry blamed the rise of Trump on the redistribution of wealth over the last 40 years, with the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. The problem has not been addressed by any political party, leaving the poor without voice or hope, particularly in post industrial areas where it is so difficult to earn a decent living. They feel disrespected and neglected by those in power and feel that the rich see them as ignorant and bigoted.

The USA under Trump has taken several backwards steps. As a climate change denier, Trump has stopped all national carbon reduction schemes, though these continue in individual states. Consequently pollution has increased, with deadly consequences for humans and the natural world. Racism underlies the banning of Muslims and the disgraceful treatment of Mexicans, with children being removed from their parents. Killings of black people and Jews have escalated. Inequality and poverty have increased. New jobs have been at a low level, tax cuts have been mostly for higher earners and any improvements in health, social care and housing have not helped those who need them most.

Trump has had a very destabilising effect across the world. While there have been no wars yet, there are reasons to be fearful in Iran, North Korea and Venezuela. There is a huge build up of US forces in the South China Sea and tariff and trade wars could have unpredictable consequences. The more desperate countries become, the more migration and conflict there will be. The far right have been encouraged by Trump's leadership in the UK, Europe and Brazil.

Larry is worried by the potential breakdown of the Conservative party in the UK, allowing Farage and the far right to rise up in its wake. The 2 party system, although greatly flawed, has also kept the far right at bay, but is now looking vulnerable with a divided and weakened Labour party and a disintegrating Conservative party. There are real divides opening up across society and Larry believes we are more fragile and vulnerable than we think.

Larry encouraged us to overcome our complacency and self satisfaction and participate in the huge revolutionary force which, through democratic means and communication between those from all walks of life, can bring about a better world for our children and grandchildren. His brother Bernie is trying this approach in the USA and we will follow his campaign with great interest.