

The war on truth

has been waged for longer than 4 years, dating from the beginning of Trump's 2016 campaign, and has continued unabated, with not so much as a cease-fire until the present day. There seems to be no hope that it will end.

Though it began with Trump himself, he has recruited most of the Republican party to his cause. Republicans have never been overly honest with their words, so they were well adapted to join in the all-out assault on factual reality. Their political task has long been defending the rich and corporate against the common people, while trying to convince the latter that they would somehow benefit from their policies.

Ruling that a corporation is actually a person with free speech rights, claiming that a fetus is more of a person than an impregnated woman, and that wealth will trickle down from the rich, while absurd and wrong, might have been seen merely as faulty ideology.

But then, as they watched Trump win nomination with a barrage of lies, even needless ones, they began to see the advantage in the tactic. Attack the truth often enough, and reality seems to become less important than whether it fits one's preference. It is no longer necessary to attempt rational argument. Just say what you want believed, and call the opposing facts "fake".

Some Republicans besides Trump have become enthusiasts in the war on truth. Others just refrain from contradicting useful lies. Both sorts will likely continue until it no longer works. It still seems to work for Trump. Normally after many tens of thousands of falsehoods in four years, almost the entire electorate would reject him, especially when deception about the pandemic has killed some 230,000 of them.

Around half of Americans no longer question whether something is true or false. They don't care whether it is or not. How do you rebuild a functioning society when that is the case?

--cosmicrat November 2020