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Uri Avnery

politics

Uri Avnery January 28, 2017 President Kong

I KNEW HE reminded me of somebody, but I couldn't quite place it. Who was it who pounded his chest with such vigor?

And then I remembered. It was the hero of a movie that was produced when I was 10 years old: King Kong. King Kong, the giant primate with the heart of gold, who scaled huge buildings and downed airplanes with his little finger. Wow. President Kong, the mightiest being on earth. **SOME** OF us had hoped that Donald Trump would turn out to be quite a different person than his election persona. In an election campaign you say many kinds of inane things. To be forgotten the day after. But the day after has come and gone, and the inane things have multiplied. The incredible Trump we believed didn't really exist is here to stay—for four years, at least. On his first day in office, we saw the absurd sight of two boys in the schoolyard arguing about who had the largest. In this case, the largest inauguration crowd. He insisted that he had the greatest ever. As he should have expected, within minutes aerial photos appeared on TV, showing that Barack Obama's crowd was far larger. So did he apologize? On the contrary, he insisted. A spokeswoman appeared and explained that this was just a case of "alternative facts". A wonderful phrase. Pity I did not know it during my many years as a journalist. When I say at noon that it is midnight, it is just an alternative fact. (And is of course true—in Hawaii or somewhere.) **I HAVE** a very limited understanding of economics. But just a small

ing evidence. Sheer nonsense, but many millions of ordinary people seem to believe it. But if democracy is becoming obsolete, what is there to replace it? As Churchill intimated—there is no better system around. **SO THIS** is the harvest of the first week in office: more packs of lies, or "alternative facts", by the day. What about the substantive issues? If we believed that many of his policy promises were just election stuff, we were wrong. On issue after issue, Trump has started to faithfully fulfill his promises. Abortion rights. Protection of the environment. Medical insurance. Taxes on the super-rich. All going down the Potomac. This, too, is a sign of the modern age: the poorest vote for the richest, against their own most elementary interests. That is true in America as it is true in Israel. **AH, ISRAEL.** Israel is occupied with endless speculation about Trump's promise to relocate the US embassy in Jerusalem. One could have assumed that Israel has bigger troubles. There is the kind of civil war raging now between the government and the Arab minority, which constitutes some 21% of the citizens of Israel proper. There are casualties on both sides. And especially with the Bedouin (also in Israel proper) who volunteer for the army, but whose homes the government wants to destroy, to make place for Jewish settlers. And the occupation of the West Bank. And the blockade of the Gaza Strip. And the multiple corruption investigations of the Prime Minister and his wife, and the possible giant bribes to relatives of Binyamin Netanyahu for the acquisition