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Hillary Clinton's dishonest, empty acceptance speech

By David Walsh
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Hillary Clinton accepted the Democratic Party nomination for president Thursday night at the Wells Fargo Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in a nearly hour-long speech that was profoundly dishonest, empty and unconvincing.

Everything about the final portion of the Democratic National Convention rang false. With Bill Clinton mugging and stage-acting in the audience, daughter Chelsea Clinton introduced her mother, as though this sordid dynasty represented something significant in American political history. The Clintons are primarily notorious for their corruption and venality. The couple accumulated \$230 million from 2001 to 2014 through their relations, above all, with Wall Street financial firms and giant corporations.

There was an obvious effort under way Thursday evening to humanize and “soften” Hillary Clinton. Her miserable poll numbers—a 38.4 percent favorable rating and 55.6 percent unfavorable—are only slightly higher than Donald Trump’s. These are two widely disliked and distrusted candidates, perceived by millions of people to be representatives of a wealthy elite.

Chelsea Clinton described her mother in glowing terms, as “wonderful, thoughtful, hilarious.” One wondered who she could be talking about. The degree of exaggeration only made the comments absurd. The banalization of American politics has reached a new level. Even some of the crowd at the convention looked embarrassed.

A fawning video presentation, inevitably narrated by actor Morgan Freeman and purporting to tell the story of Hillary Clinton's life, continued the fraud. It mentioned the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the assassination of Osama bin Laden, but omitted any reference to the millions of deaths in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria for which Hillary Clinton bears a large share of responsibility.

Clinton managed to deliver a 56-minute speech without a single memorable phrase or sentence. Her assignment, of course, was one that would have confounded a far more clever and capable individual than she: to convince the American public, or that section of it watching on television, that this blood-soaked, big business party had the concerns of the people in mind.

She made various ritualistic references to putting "economic and social justice issues front and center, where they belong." Clinton assured Bernie Sanders, who obediently and appreciatively responded from his seat in the hall, that "Your cause is our cause. Our country needs your ideas, energy, and passion. That's the only way we can turn our progressive platform into real change for America."

At one point, she declared dully, "There's too much inequality. Too little social mobility." And later, she said she was in favor of "a country where the economy works for everyone, not just those at the top. Where you can get a good job and send your kids to a good school, no matter what zip code you live in. A country where all our children can dream, and those dreams are within reach." Did anyone in the viewing audience, or even in the hall in Philadelphia, believe a word of this?

"None of us can be satisfied with the status quo." But Clinton represents nothing on this earth so much as the status quo. She is the candidate of big finance, the military ("our national treasure," she called it) and security forces, and the most complacent upper middle class layers.

"And here's what I believe. I believe America thrives when the middle class thrives. I believe that our economy isn't working the way it should because our democracy isn't working the way it should." But every word, every gesture cried out that she didn't believe in any of it. It was all synthetic, contrived, patronizing. No thoughtful, socially vigilant viewer could be taken in by this transparent fakery.

Clinton promised that Wall Street would "never, ever be allowed to wreck Main Street again" and that she was going to fund various programs by making "Wall Street, corporations, and the super-rich" pay "their fair share of taxes." But this mouthpiece of the financial oligarchy would not lift a finger against the rich.

The speech was tedious and degrading, entirely unrelated to reality, including, of course, the record of the Obama administration that has presided over an acceleration in levels of social inequality. One could only feel lessened by listening to the speech.

Clinton made the predictable appeals to patriotism, chauvinism and economic nationalism. She pledged to "stand up to China" and "stand by our allies in NATO against any threat they face, including from Russia," although the real scare of the advanced preparations for war against

American imperialism's rivals and enemies was concealed in her speech. Clinton made numerous references to our "brave" police.

Nor could she avoid, also predictably, declaring her own candidacy to be a historic event: "Tonight, we've reached a milestone in our nation's march toward a more perfect union: the first time that a major party has nominated a woman for president." She went on to claim that "when any barrier falls in America, for anyone, it clears the way for everyone. When there are no ceilings, the sky's the limit."

This is a lie. There is nothing in the slightest socially progressive about Clinton's nomination. It does not represent any advance for the population—or women—as a whole. The growth in social inequality among women has risen more rapidly than inequality among men—the percentage of total female earnings accruing to the top female one percent has doubled since the 1980s. Clinton is a representative of this wealthy elite whose conditions of life have nothing in common with the tens of millions of women who work, often for desperately low wages, in health care facilities, restaurants, offices, schools and stores. Her political ascension will have absolutely no effect on their lives.

Whatever their gender or color, bourgeois politicians represent the interests of the ruling class. Clinton aspires to join the ranks of such notables as Margaret Thatcher, Golda Meir, Indira Gandhi, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, Isabel Peron, Corazon Aquino, Angela Merkel, Julia Gillard and Dilma Rousseff, enemies of the working class all.

The Democratic Party convention, like the Republican, was a spectacle of reaction. It married the politics of race and gender with militarism and nationalism. Neither party has anything to offer the mass of the population but inequality, authoritarianism and war.