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Crisis and Opportunity

By Rob Urie
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The political establishment in the U.S. is rapidly moving toward a crisis of legitimacy as capitalist democracy is exposed as a system of insider dealing where war, manufactured social misery and environmental catastrophe are ever-more-implausibly posed as solutions to their own facts. With growing evidence, as if any more were needed, Democratic frontrunner Hillary Clinton spent her time at as Secretary of State filling the coffers of the Clinton family slush fund, the Clinton Foundation, with the tainted money of special pleaders, despots and global misery mongers as she went about launching wars-of-choice against some fair bit of the planet.

While the intersection of commerce and governance— capitalist imperialism, has long been the operating model of America's leadership class, the pretense of inclusion in the affairs of state

through nominal political participation provided a cleansing veil for a citizenry toiling to produce corporate profits in exchange for the modest give-back of living indoors and eating regular meals. More damning than corruption, about which Americans have rarely taken issue as long as they perceived it in their own interest, is clear delineation of class difference, the 'inside' from 'outside' which the trade in public-private funds of Clinton Foundation donors rendered evident.

The precise ratio of insiders to outsiders needed to achieve national political stability through manufactured global instability— the mission of capitalist imperialism, is soft science under the best of circumstances. The global griftocracy seen contributing to the Clinton Foundation hardly toiled for its keep outside the tedium of being born into political power. The structure of economic distribution seen through Foundation 'contributors;' oil and gas magnates, pharmaceutical and technology entrepreneurs of public largesse, the murder-for-hire industry (military) and various and sundry managers of social decline, makes evident the dissociation of social production from those that produced it.

For much of the last century the illusion of social progress sold through the New Deal, the Great Society and more recently through capitalist enterprise 'freed' from the bind of social accountability, if not exactly from the need for regular and robust public support, served to hold at bay the perpetual tomorrow of lives lived for the theorized greater good of accumulated self-interest. The Clinton's special gift to the people— citizens, workers; the human condition as conceived through a filter of manufactured wants to serve the interests of an intellectually, morally and spiritually bankrupt 'leadership' class, lies in the social truths revealed by their actions.

Being three or more decades in the making, the current political season was never about the candidates except inasmuch as they embody the grotesquely disfigured and depraved condition of the body politic. The 'consumer choice' politics of Democrat versus Republican, Hillary Clinton versus Donald Trump, poses the greater-evilism of an ossified political class against the facts of its own creation now in dire need of resolution— wars to end wars, environmental crisis to end environmental crises, economic predation to end economic predation and manufactured social misery to end social misery. Hillary Clinton's roster of donors is the neoliberal innovation on Richard Nixon's enemies list— government as a shakedown racket where friend or foe and policies promoted or buried, are determined by 'donation' status rather than personal animus.

That in most ways conservative Republican Richard Nixon's actual policies were far Left of those of contemporary Democrats, including Mrs. Clinton, is testament to the ideological mobility of political pragmatism freed from principle. The absurd misdirection that we, the people, are driving this migration is belied by the economic power that correlates 1:1 with the policies put forward and enacted by 'the people's representatives', by the answers that actual human beings give to pollsters when asked and by the ever more conspicuous hold that economic power has over political considerations as evidenced by the roster of pleaders and opportunists granted official sees by the political class in Washington.

To state the obvious, dysfunctional ideology— principles that don't 'work' in the sense of promoting broadly conceived public wellbeing, should be dispensable. But this very formulation takes at face value the implausible conceits of unfettered intentions mediated through functional

political representation that are so well disproved by entities like the Clinton Foundation. Political ‘pragmatism’ as it is put forward by national Democrats quite closely resembles the principled opposition of Conservative Republicans through unified service to the economic powers-that-be. That Hillary Clinton is the candidate of officialdom links her service to Wall Street to America’s wars of choice to dedicated environmental irresolution as the candidate who ‘gets things done.’

As historical analog, the West has seen recurrent episodes of economic imperialism backed by state power; in the parlance, neoliberal globalization, over the last several centuries. The result, in addition to making connected insiders rich as they wield social power over less existentially alienated peoples, has been the not-so-great wars, devastations, impositions and crimes-against-humanity that were the regular occurrences of the twentieth century. The ‘innovation’ of corporatized militarization to this proud tradition is as old as Western imperialism in its conception and as new as nuclear and robotic weapons, mass surveillance and apparently unstoppable environmental devastation in its facts.

Left unstated in the competitive lesser-evilism of Party politics is the incapacity for political resolution in any relevant dimension. Donald Trump is ‘dangerous’ only by overlooking how dangerous the American political leadership has been for the last one and one-half centuries. So the question becomes: dangerous to whom? Without the most murderous military in the world, public institutions like the IMF dedicated to economic subjugation and predatory corporations that wield the ‘free-choices’ of mandated consumption, how dangerous would any politicians really be? And with them, how not-dangerous have liberal Democrats actually been? Candidates for political office are but manifestations of class interests put forward as systemic intent.

The complaint that the Greens— Jill Stein and Ajamu Baraka, don’t have an effective political program approximates the claim that existing political and economic arrangements are open to challenge through the electoral process when the process exists to assure that effective challenges don’t arise. The Democrats could have precluded the likelihood of a revolutionary movement, Left or Right, for the next half-century by electing Bernie Sanders and then undermining him to ‘prove’ that challenges to prevailing political economy don’t work. The lack of imagination in running ‘dirty Hillary’ is testament to how large— and fragile, the perceived stakes are. But as how unviable Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump are as political leaders becomes apparent— think George W. Bush had he run for office after the economic collapse of 2009 and without the cover of ‘9/11,’ the political possibilities begin to open up.

The liberals and progressives in the managerial class who support the status quo and are acting as enforcers to elect Hillary Clinton are but one recession away from being tossed overboard by those they serve within the existing economic order. The premise that the ruling class will always need dedicated servants grants coherent logic and aggregated self-interest that history has disproven time and again. A crude metaphor would be the unintended consequences of capitalist production now aggregating to environmental crisis. Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump are both such conspicuously corrupt tools of an intellectually and spiritually bankrupt social order that granting tactical brilliance to their ascendance, or even pragmatism given the point in history and available choices, seems wildly generous. For those looking for a political moment, one is on the way.

