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Ruling Class's Hatred of Trump is Different Than Yours

By Paul Street
October 14, 2016



Much, maybe most, of the nation's corporate, financial, and imperial establishment loathes Donald Trump. When's the last time one of the corporate media's presidential debate moderators *actually argue* with one of the two major party presidential contenders, as did the wealthy ABC News reporter Martha Raddatz (enraged by Trump's lack of enthusiasm for a United States military confrontation with Russia in Syria) last Sunday?

More than fifty Republican "national security" "elites" have joined several top Republican office-holders, a good number of typically Republican newspaper editorial boards, and the "liberal" *New York Times*' editors in proclaiming Trump too stupid, sexist, juvenile, racist, volatile, ignorant, and vicious to be trusted with the keys to the White House.

The master class's fear and loathing of Trump – one of their own, sort of – can be detected in the normally Republican-leaning corporate elite. A recent *Wall Street Journal* report finds that not a single solitary Fortune 100 chief executive has endorsed Trump or donated to his campaign. Hillary Clinton has accepted campaign contributions funds from 11 of these corporate captains. Four years ago, just five F-100 CEOs gave to Obama while a while nearly a third donated to Mitt Romney.

In a recent *Times* editorial, the Wall Street executive Steve Ratter (the slimy financier Obama put in charge of his Wall Street-friendly auto bailout) noted the “paradox” of the super-wealthy business mogul Trump's stark unpopularity with those in his own exclusive class:

“He has spent his entire career among business executives and yet that constituency is voting with hard cash that he should not be president...no Republican presidential hopeful in memory has been so unpopular in the business community...At a board meeting two weeks ago, I chatted separately with two prominent Republican businessmen, One, the chief executive of a Fortune 100 company, said that he had never voted for a Democrat but couldn't support Trump. The other a private equity investor who had voted Democratic only once, said that he was so scared of a Trump presidency that he has donated ‘every cent possible’ under the campaign finance rules to Hillary Clinton” (S. Rattner, “Trump, The Next Big Short,” *NYT*, October 10, 2016, A21).

Apparent in campaign finance data, big capital's preference for the neoliberal and de facto moderate Republican Hillary over Trump is evident also in global stock market. “As Mrs. Clinton's dominance of the first presidential debate became apparent,” Rattner reports, “investors cheered: markets around the world rose and the dollar strengthened...[reliable forecasters estimate] that a Trump victory would cause stocks to lose 7 percent, while a Clinton victory would lead to a 4 percent increase.”

You hate Donald Trump too my fellow lefty (I assume that broad descriptive term covers at least 90 percent of the people who read this essay) and for some very good reasons. I'm no exception. Anyone who doubts my disgust for Trump – not to be confused with admiration or even “lesser evil” tolerance for Hillary Clinton (accurately described as a “right-wing fanatic” and a “lying neoliberal warmonger” even by left thinkers arguing for progressives to vote for her on “lesser evil” grounds) – can go read a recent *teleSur English* essay in which I attributed Trump's rise in no small part to the “the vicious culture of neoliberal mass idiocy.”

There's a big difference, however, between our portside, bottom-up contempt for Trump and the Establishment's top-down and intra-elite scorn for the Republican presidential nominee. There are probably more than a few members of the United States ruling class who are genuinely offended by some or all of Trump's worst attributes: racism, nativism, sexism, climate-denialism, and authoritarianism. Still, most folks in the nation's unelected and interrelated dictatorships of money and empire would certainly be willing to put up with the prospects of a viciously sexist, racist and classist Trump presidency *if they didn't think it would be really bad for business, for U.S. global power, and for the legitimacy of American authority at home and abroad*. It isn't they who would be most victimized by a Trump presidency, after all, and it's a

really big reach to think that any but a few of them could care less about those who would suffer most under a (highly unlikely) Amerikanner-Trump administration.

At the same time, Trump has earned equal if not greater disdain from the richly bipartisan ruling class and power elite for saying some curiously accurate and even sensible things that left progressives have reasons to agree with. Here are some of the statements for which Trump cannot be forgiven by a financial and imperial super-class that has never really accepted him as a fellow member despite his wealth:

- + “Free trade” (really untrammelled global investor rights) ala Bill Clinton’s North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and Barack Obama’s proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) has cost untold masses of “forgotten” working class Americans their livelihoods.

- + The American political system is “broken” by big money special interests that undermine and distort democracy – something Trump says he knows all about because of his own history as a deep pockets funder of politicians, including the Clintons.

- + The nation is in horrific shape under the rule of corrupt, dollar-drenched “free trade” Democrats and Republicans. Much of the country’s infrastructure is crumbling, for example. Urban Black America is in a terrible state whatever the skin color of the current U.S. and U.S.-born president.

- + Hillary’s done nothing, or close to it, across thirty years of not-so “public service” to protect ordinary U.S. citizens against hard times – quite the opposite in fact.

- + “Crooked Hillary” Clinton is backed by super-wealthy financial elites who reasonably expect her do their bidding even as she deceptively claims to want to serve the people against the wealthy Few.

- + Hillary talks like a friend of working class folks on the campaign trail but tells elite backers behind closed doors that her actual and “private” positions on policy are often quite different and more Establishment-friendly than her (vote-seeking) “public” positions.

- + Hillary holds much of the nation’s white working and middle class populace in sheer aristocratic contempt, calling many such people “deplorable” and “irredeemable.”

- + The corrupt Goldman Sachs-backed Clinton campaign and the Democratic National Committee used dirty tricks to undermine and defeat Bernie Sanders.

- + Hillary ran a corrupt “pay nfor play” game with foreign and multinational nations and investors through the Clinton Foundation during her time atop the U.S. State Department.

- + Hillary “Queen of Chaos” Clinton (she of the leading U.S. ruling class think-tank The Council on Foreign Relations) has been a recklessly imperial foreign policy disaster, from her support for the disastrous regime-changing invasion of Iraq, her leading of the charge for calamitous regime change in Libya, her determined advance of blood, regime-changing (she hopes) madness in

Syria, her (and Obama's) advance of the Islamic State, and her heedless upping of the ante of geopolitical confrontation with nuclear Russia in Eastern Europe and Syria.

+ S. policymakers who were serious about wanting to defeat the Islamic State and other barbarian, radical-Islamist jihadists in the Middle East would step back from their saber-rattling against Russia and Syria, both of whom are dedicated to "crushing ISIS."

To be sure, my paraphrasing of Trump's more sensible and accurate statements make them sound more coherent and leftist than they are. I doubt that Trump could be bothered to read more than one page of the left foreign policy analyst Diana Johnstone's indispensable book *Queen of Chaos: The Misadventures of Hillary Clinton* (AK Press, 2015). It's way too much to expect him to include Honduras (see the opening chapter of Johnston's book for a useful history) in the list of nations that Hillary has helped ruin. Still, the bullet-pointed language above is close enough to what he's actually said during this election cycle for the nation's Deep State owners (the real masters behind the marionette theater of electoral politics) to hate him – this for reasons different than the ones that inform lefties' disdain for Trump. Even as it leads publicly and in politically correct fashion with the problems of Trump's sexism, racism, boorishness, and temperament, the thing that the Establishment really finds most reprehensible about Trump is his unpardonable penchant for telling true tales out of ruling class school – tales that many of us on the left have been telling from less privileged vantage points and without the white-nationalist and sexist venom that leaps off Trump's noxious persona and out of his mouth. The terrible aspects of Trump that we find most horrific are different from what the ruling class finds most inexcusable about him – though it must be added that smart elites understand that his sexism, racism, nativism, and buffoonery threaten to spark popular uprisings and foreign derision that do not serve elite business and imperial interests. That last is a key point. A Trump presidency could well spark rebellions and resistance the ruling class would very much prefer to avoid

Does Trump mean the things he says that overlap with left critiques of Hillary Clinton and of the broader U.S. domestic and imperial order? I have no idea what really goes in the sociopathic brain of "the Donald." The fascistic right (and Trump may be partly neo-fascist at some level) has a long history of mimicking certain parts of left rhetoric (the Nazis advanced national "socialism" after all) to gain mass appeal. Some of Trump's more seemingly left-friendly rhetoric strikes me as part of a calculated strategy to win disaffected Bernie fans along with working class votes. Another source could be intra-elite spite, highly personal bitterness at an Ivy League-minted aristocracy that has never really accepted the crude man-child Donald Trump into its inner and upper circles. Whatever the motivation behind his jabs at the ruling elite and its imperial policies, an American ruling class that is still quite far from embracing fascism even in a mild and Trumpian form is not about to pardon Trump for giving crude voice to such critiques from within the top .01 percent and on a vast public stage.

Meanwhile, Trump – now 11 points behind *actually crooked Hillary* in national polls and with just a one-in-six chance of winning – is useful to the ruling class in a curious and dark way. Nearly three months after the predictable (and predicted) surrender of the somewhat sincerely populist, social-democratish Bernie Sanders campaign, Trump aids and abets the reigning corporate media and politics' culture's longstanding project of slandering populism as a reactionary and backwards instinct of the foolish, unwashed masses – the "bewildered herd."

Elite commentators love to mock and marginalize the childish mindset of those who think that everyday people (the “rabble”) should actually be in charge of their own societal and political-economic affairs (imagine!) and thereby deprive elites of their supposed natural right to rule. Linking such populism to right-wing cretins like Donald Trump – a recurrent habit at places like *The New York Times* and CNN – is one of the ways in the slander is advanced, helping clear the way for more politically correct neoliberals like Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton to seize the nominal reins of executive branch power at least in Washington.