

Hillary Clinton is Now a Victim of 'Socialists'

Hillary Clinton is incapable of coming to terms with her loss and now finds fault with greedy capitalists who are turning young people into socialists, as Paul Street explains.

By Paul Street *Special to Consortium News*



Hillary Clinton's take on "what happened" in the 2016 election is a running tale of victimization. She was the casualty of FBI Director James Comey and of Vladimir Putin and WikiLeaks. She was unjustly loathed by that "basket" of racist, sexist, nativist, and homophobic "deplorables" that is supposedly the American "heartland," white working-class and rural population – people she recently painted (at an elite globalist gathering in Mumbai, India) as a bunch of "pessimistic," slow-witted and retrograde losers. She was victimized by Bernie Sanders, who (Hillary complained) wasn't even a "real Democrat" but had the unmitigated chutzpah to let his primary campaign challenge her prearranged coronation as the Democratic Party's presidential candidate.

Never mind the series of stupid, arrogant, and largely unforced errors that crippled her uninspiring and policy-bereft insider campaign that was under her command. And never mind her own epic unpopularity before and during the campaign – disapproval earned over her many years of functioning as a cold and transparently elitist Establishment agent of the wealthy corporate and financial Few.

Now the endlessly put-upon (yet fabulously wealthy) and eye-rolling Hillary has found some more scapegoats for her epic fail: first, "socialists" in the activist cadres and primary and caucus electorate of the Democratic Party, then younger voters, and finally greedy corporate chieftains whose greed has turned good Democrats into "socialists." The "lying neoliberal warmonger" says she was victimized because of her identification as a "capitalist" after big business executives' have sadly given capitalism a bad name—especially with young people.

In an interview with *Time* Inc. brands executive Alan Murray this month, she said that her economic policies were "probably" a tough sell with primary voters: "It's hard to know, but I mean if you're in the Iowa caucuses and 41 percent of Democrats are socialists or self-described socialists, and I'm asked 'Are you a capitalist?' and I say, 'Yes, but with appropriate regulation and appropriate accountability.' You know, that probably gets lost in the 'Oh my gosh, she's a capitalist!'"

Take that, Henry Wallace.

Pity the plight of the poor enlightened capitalist, Hillary Clinton, whose position high in the American Oligarchy's permanent political class has permitted her to accumulate a net worth of at least \$45 million.

Earlier in the same day as her interview with Murray, Hillary complained to the posh "Shared Value Leadership Summit" that "the reputation of capitalism is pretty much in tatters for young people" since powerful U.S. companies are "disrupting our democracy" (what democracy?) by worsening income inequality.

The way to fix this problem? Vote Republicans out of office in 2018, Hillary said – and vote in the Democrats, who Richard Nixon's onetime political strategist Kevin Phillips rightly called "history's second most enthusiastic capitalist party."

Poor Hillary

Among the many things Hillary left out of her latest "poor me" whine, two deserve special mention here. First, the insufficiently regulated and excessively amoral business behavior that she says turned young people and a bunch of Iowa Dems into "self-declared socialists" is just capitalism being capitalism, not some weird aberration of the profits system.

Contrary to the Clintonian fable of "inclusive capitalism," an oxymoronic concept the Clinton campaign rolled out in early 2015, the United States' leading corporations and financial institutions have never placed workers and the public on an equal footing with investors and the bottom line. It was first and foremost the rise of a momentarily powerful and significantly Left-sparked industrial workers' movement – rooted largely in the special workplace bargaining power of mass-production workers, not some imaginary corporate benevolence – that created a new and rising floor for working-class incomes during the "Golden Age" of American capitalism that the faux-populist Donald Trump absurdly but effectively promised to restore.

At the same time, the gains enjoyed by ordinary working Americans were made possible by the uniquely favored position of the United States economy (and empire) in the post-WWII world – a reflection (among other things) of Europe's long suicide between 1914 and 1945. When that position was significantly challenged by resurgent Western European and Japanese economic competition in the 1970s and 1980s, the comparatively egalitarian trends of postwar America were reversed by capitalist elites who had never lost their critical command of the nation's core economic and political institutions. Working-class Americans have paid the price ever since. For the last four decades, wealth, income, and

power have been sharply concentrated upward, birthing a New Gilded Age of abject oligarchy and brazen plutocracy.

This “Great U-Turn” (By Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison) dates from the finance- and policy-designed onset of the neoliberal era in the mid-1970s. It goes back to the Carter years. And it marked a return to capitalism’s historical norm, as Thomas Piketty showed in his widely read *tour de force* Capital in the Twenty First Century (2014). The neoliberal era and its current New Gilded Age capstone is the profits system returning to its long and militantly inegalitarian pattern.

Second, the Clintons have long stood precisely in the vanguard of the neoliberal deregulation of capitalism – in the lead of the shift to savage inequality and ubiquitous economic insecurity (the ruthless “betrayal of the American dream”) that has pushed millions of U.S. Americans, younger ones especially, to the left. After graduating from the ruling-class training ground that is Yale Law School, the Clintons went to Arkansas to help “lay...the groundwork for what would eventually hit the national stage as the New Democrat movement, which took institutional form as the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC),” according to writer Doug Henwood. The essence of the DLC was the “neoliberal” abandonment of the Democratic Party’s last lingering commitments to labor unions, social justice, civil rights, racial equality, the poor, and environmental protection in service to the “competitive” bottom-line concerns of Big Business.

DLC: Origins in Attacking Arkansas Teachers

The Clintons helped launch the New (neoliberal corporatist) Democrat juggernaut by assaulting Arkansas’ teacher unions (Hillary led the attack) and refusing to back the repeal of the state’s anti-union “right to work” law – this while Hillary began working for the Rose Law firm, which “represented the moneyed interests of Arkansas,” Henwood wrote. When the Arkansas-based, community-organizing group ACORN passed a ballot measure lowering electrical rates for residential users and raising them for commercial businesses in Little Rock, Rose deployed Hillary to shoot down the new rate schedule as an unconstitutional “taking of property.” Hillary later joined the board of directors at the low-wage retail giant and union-busting, Chinese import platform Wal-Mart.

During the Clintons’ time in the White House, Bill Clinton advanced the neoliberal agenda beneath fake-progressive cover, in ways that no Republican president could have pulled off. Channeling Ronald Reagan by declaring that “the era of big government is over,” Clinton collaborated with the right-wing Congress of his time to end poor families’ entitlement to basic minimal family cash assistance. Hillary backed this vicious welfare “reform” (elimination),

which has proved disastrous for millions of disadvantaged Americans.

Mr. Clinton then earned the gratitude of Wall Street and corporate America by passing the arch-global-corporatist North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), by repealing the Glass-Steagall Act (which had mandated a necessary separation between commercial deposit and investment banking), and by de-regulating the burgeoning super-risky and high-stakes financial derivatives sector.

'Tell Me Something Interesting'

Hillary took the lead role in the White House's efforts to pass a corporate-friendly version of "health reform." Along with the big insurance companies the Clintons deceptively railed against, the "co-presidents" decided from the start to exclude the popular health care alternative – single payer – from the national health care "discussion." (Barack Obama would do the same thing in 2009.)

Who can ever forget Hillary's weary and exasperated response – as head of the White House's health reform initiative – to Harvard medical professor David Himmelstein in 1993. Himmelstein was head of Physicians for a National Health Program. He told the First Lady about the remarkable possibilities of a comprehensive, single-payer "Canadian-style" health plan, supported by more than two-thirds of the U.S. public. Beyond backing by a citizen super-majority, Himmelstein noted, single-payer would provide comprehensive coverage to the nation's 40 million uninsured while retaining free choice in doctor selection and being certified by the Congressional Budget Office as the most cost-effective plan on offer. "David," Hillary said as she dismissed Himmelstein, *"tell me something interesting."*

Mrs. Clinton's service to the rich and powerful continued into the current millennium. As a U.S. Senator, she did Wall Street's bidding by voting for a bill designed to make it more difficult for consumers to use bankruptcy laws to get out from crushing debt. As Secretary of State (2009-2012), she voiced strong support for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) – a secretive, richly corporatist 12-nation Pacific "free trade" (investor rights) agreement that promised to badly undermine wages, job security, environmental protections, and popular governance at home and abroad.

Out of Step with the Majority

There's nothing new about Mrs. Clinton and other neoliberal Democrats standing to the de facto moderate, Republican right of "socialist" (well, progressive and left-leaning) public opinion that has long been exhibited, not just by most Democrats but by most people in the U.S. Poll after poll in the current

millennium has shown that most U.S. citizens are egalitarian social democrats, not capitalists, and certainly not neoliberals. Majorities have long backed single-payer health insurance, seriously progressive taxation, the restoration of workers' right to organize powerful unions, collective bargaining rights, sound climate policy, strong environmental regulations, major reductions in the "defense" (empire) budget, and an expansion of the public social safety net.

This is the majority sentiment that Bernie Sanders ran in accord with in 2016. He would have won the Democratic presidential nomination and very possibly defeated Trump but for big-money Hillary's corrupt and advance control and rigging of the Democratic National Committee, the primary race, and the Democratic National Convention.

Hillary is likely no longer a threat to poison the waters with another presidential run. The bitterness of her recent, Middle America-shaming remarks in India suggest that she's finally thrown in the towel. Even a political figure as arrogant and removed from ordinary working people as Hillary Clinton must know that such comments (which Senate Minority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) had to rush to distance his party from) do not square with another run for the White House.

While Hillary may be political history, however, the Democrats are still ruled by the same neoliberal and Clintonite ideology that Barack Obama was able to channel and sell in charismatic and outwardly likable ways that icy Hillary could not match. Under the cover of Russia-gate, launched by Clinton and Obama Democrats to provide an external, conspiratorial, and neo-McCarthyite explanation for the failures of their own right-wing corporate and imperial politics (and to keep the fires burning under the New Cold War), the party's leadership continues to stand well to the starboard side of majority progressive ("socialist") opinion. The dollar-drenched Dems' candidate roster for the upcoming Congressional mid-terms is loaded with right-wing Democrats (including an unprecedented usual number with military and intelligence backgrounds) masquerading as progressives.

Another Fake Progressive Leader?

Do the corporate and imperial Democrats have another Obama or young Bill Clinton in the wings, someone with the silver-tongued charm to manipulate populist sentiments on behalf of corporate and financial elitism? If so, their next faux-progressive pretender has yet to make his or her identity known.

Iowa progressives should start keeping an eye out Democratic Senator Kamala Harris, backed by neoliberals Clinton, Obama and Nancy "We're Capitalist and That's Just the Way It Is" Pelosi (net worth of \$83 million) The money is on

Harris, I am told by people in-the-Wall-Street-know. She should attend this year's Iowa State Fair, where she can talk about Ethanol subsidies and listen to hog and soybeans farmers' issues.

Young people, meanwhile, must deal with the ferocious economic disparity, abject plutocracy, permanent imperial war, and deadly environmental destruction passed on by older corporate and imperial, capitalist Democrats as well as radically reactionary and regressive capitalist Republicans – “two wings of the same bird of prey” (as Upton Sinclair said in 1904).

No wonder a majority of 18 to 29-year-olds tell posters they do not support capitalism.

Paul Street is an independent radical-democratic policy researcher, journalist, historian, author and speaker based in Iowa City, Iowa, and Chicago, Illinois. He is the author of seven books. His latest is They Rule: The 1% v. Democracy (Paradigm, 2014).
