

Release of Living History

Hillary Clinton “tell-all” book leaves “right-wing conspiracy” in the shadows

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With the release this week of her autobiographical book *Living History*, Hillary Rodham Clinton has embarked on a new phase in her political and professional career. The former First Lady and current US senator from New York is widely seen as the most prominent standard bearer of what passes for a liberal wing of the Democratic Party. Her book, however, makes clear the prostration of this political layer before what she once accurately described as a “vast right-wing conspiracy.”

The book is being marketed as the ultimate insider account of the Monica Lewinsky affair, the major enticement being Mrs. Clinton’s account of her reaction to husband Bill’s confession to a sexual dalliance with the White House intern.

There are no doubt powerful financial motives behind this packaging of Clinton’s memoirs. Publishers are convinced that sex sells and believe that the public will be more interested in a rehash of a tabloid scandal than a political analysis of the machinations that nearly brought down an elected president. Mrs. Clinton, who is getting \$8 million for the book, is collaborating fully with this approach, giving a series of celebrity-style television interviews recounting her marital woes.

This method of presentation, however, serves a definite political purpose. It focuses public attention once again on the personal foibles of Bill Clinton, rather than the agenda of a right-wing cabal that seized on the Lewinsky affair to consummate its years-long conspiracy to effect a political coup.

In the early stages of the Lewinsky scandal—when the media were circulating the most prurient rumors and predicting the fall of the Clinton presidency—Mrs. Clinton made one of the most explicit denunciations of the attack on the administration. In a January 1998 interview on the *Today* show, she described the scandal-mongering over her husband’s relations with Monica Lewinsky as “an effort to undo the results of the last two elections.”

She added that the story that really deserved coverage was the existence of a “vast right-wing conspiracy that has been conspiring against my husband.” She referred to Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr, who dredged up the Lewinsky affair after failing to make charges related to the Whitewater real estate investment and other matters stick, as a “politically motivated prosecutor who is allied with right-wing opponents of my husband.”

Media coverage of *Living History* has focused on Mrs. Clinton’s sense of “betrayal” upon hearing her husband’s confession concerning Lewinsky, with the suggestion that the “vast right-wing conspiracy” statement was merely a product of marital deception. According to the absurd logic of the media, Clinton’s admission of an extramarital tryst “disproved” the existence of a political conspiracy to topple his administration.

The book itself does not say this, but Mrs. Clinton has sought to round off the edges of her original statement. She writes that the Clinton administration was targeted by “an interlocking network of groups and individuals who want to turn the clock back on many of the advances our country has made, from civil rights to women’s rights to consumer and environmental regulation.”

In an interview with *Time* magazine published this week, she was asked whether the “vast right-wing conspiracy” was “bigger than you thought when you brought that term into our vocabulary.”

She replied: “I wouldn’t know how to judge it. That may not have been the most artful language because it’s not really a conspiracy, which seems to suggest something that is done under cover of darkness or in secret. It’s a very open agenda that’s being pursued.”

In her interview with Barbara Walters on ABC’s “20/20” program, Clinton noted that she had since established political ties with some of the most right-wing Republican members of Congress who were at the center of the impeachment conspiracy in 1998-99.

“We can disagree, and of course we do disagree, but I have found allies on all kinds of issues,” she said. “I’ve even begun working with [House of Representatives Majority Leader] Tom DeLay on adoption and foster care—an issue we both care deeply about.”

Indeed, Mrs. Clinton has established a record during her first two-and-a-half years in the Senate that belies her reputation as a leader of the Democratic “left.” She has established close ties to the Democratic Leadership Council, the conservative faction that backed her husband, and was one of the Democratic Senators who voted to give the Bush administration a blank check for waging a war of aggression against Iraq.

The reality is that the “vast right-wing conspiracy” of which Mrs. Clinton spoke five-and-a-half years ago today holds all the essential levers of power in Washington. Far from being unartful, the phrase “conspiracy” was quite appropriate for a Republican right zealot of a prosecutor working in league with right-wing foundations and think tanks to find something—anything—that would serve to bring down the elected president of the United States.

Because its political goals were at odds with the interests of the vast majority of the American people—and designed to further those of a narrow, predatory financial elite—it could not confront the Clinton administration openly, but had to work by conspiratorial means.

Having narrowly failed to accomplish this mission, the same political forces rallied for the 2000 elections. They employed similar conspiratorial and gangster methods to stop the ballot count in Florida and install by means of a Supreme Court decision a candidate who had failed to win the majority of the vote.

Mrs. Clinton never spells out either the identity or the politics of the conspirators she described in 1998 or the “interlocking network” that she mentions in her book.

When the then-wife of the president made her original statement in 1998, the *World Socialist Web Site* commented that the right-wing vendetta against the Clinton administration was not merely a matter of subjective hatred. It insisted that “powerful and objective social forces” were expressed through the whipping up of political scandal.

“The forces seeking Clinton’s ouster want to press ahead more systematically and ferociously with the destruction of social programs, the elimination of all taxation on wealth, and the unrestrained use of American military power around the world,” the WSWS warned. “Such policies inevitably take on the character of a conspiracy against democratic rights, because they are deeply anti-popular and opposed by the vast majority of the American people.”

The coming to power of these forces with the installation of Bush has fully vindicated this analysis. The methods of

conspiracy have played an ever more prominent role from September 11, 2001 onward, elaborated under the mantle of a global “war on terrorism” and used to launch a war of aggression based on false pretenses. At the same time, the Bush White House has pushed through the most sweeping cuts in taxes for the rich in history, as well as a frontal assault on civil liberties and democratic rights.

As the WSWS explained at the time, Mrs. Clinton’s reluctance to “name names” and expose the political agenda of those conspiring against her husband’s presidency was no accident. The Clinton administration and the Democratic Party as a whole were fatally compromised with precisely these right-wing elements. Having accommodated itself over the course of its first term to the demands of big business, and carried forward much of the right’s political program—the destruction of welfare, tax breaks for the wealthy and the continuation of military aggression in the Persian Gulf—the Clinton administration was in no position to confront the “right-wing conspiracy” politically.

In the final analysis, the attack on the Clinton presidency was a conflict within the country’s ruling elite, conducted in such a way as to conceal the real political issues from the American people and undermine its basic rights. The drive to topple the administration expressed the refusal of a reactionary financial elite to tolerate the slightest foot-dragging on the transfer of wealth from the poor and working population into its own deep pockets.

Five years on, Hillary Clinton, now the senator from New York, has accommodated herself even further to the political forces that sought to impeach her husband. Even before her \$8 million book deal, she and Bill Clinton faithfully represented the interests of the financial elite of which they themselves are members. Her book, like her record in the US Senate, stands as another milestone in the putrefaction of liberalism and the rightward march of the Democratic Party.



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