

# On the eve of the 2016 US election

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As the 2016 US election campaign draws to a close, an atmosphere of crisis and dysfunction pervades the entire political system.

On Sunday, two days before the election, FBI Director James Comey announced that his agency had found no new evidence in recently discovered emails to justify changing its earlier decision not to charge Hillary Clinton in connection with her use of a private email server. This followed by just nine days the extraordinary intervention of the country's top law enforcement agency, when Comey announced, without providing any details, that the FBI had discovered tens of thousands of emails that might be relevant to the investigation.

Comey's latest announcement comes amidst a bitter conflict within the ruling class and the state that has seen the use of scandals to fight out internal divisions and seek to influence the results of the elections. However, the population has grown so inured to the media barrage on one or another scandal that this latest chapter in the email saga will likely have little impact on the outcome of the vote.

The entire election campaign has plumbed new depths of filth and reaction, and there are mounting expressions of concern from politicians and the media that it has done lasting damage to the credibility of the United States, both internationally and at home.

Both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* ran front-page stories Sunday describing the worldwide revulsion at the US presidential campaign. The campaign has given America "a black eye," the *Post* wrote, adding that "political analysts worldwide said that never before have they seen a presidential campaign do so much to directly undermine America's core credibility." The *Times* wrote, "America's image stands tarnished in the eyes of its own people and the world."

The global impact of the campaign was summed up

by the cover of the German weekly magazine *Der Spiegel*, which portrayed the two candidates side by side, equally covered in mud and slime. A mood of foreboding prevails among many bourgeois analysts and pundits, who see November 8 heralding not a peaceful transition to the next administration, but a prolonged period of political and societal breakdown.

Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, appearing for the Trump campaign on the Sunday interview program "Meet the Press," said that if Clinton won the election there would be endless investigations spearheaded by her Republican opponents in Congress. If Trump won, he predicted "Madison, Wisconsin on a national scale," referring to the rebellion by Wisconsin workers in 2011 against Republican Governor Scott Walker's assault on public employees. It might take ten years or more to restore political stability, he warned.

Former NBC News anchor Tom Brokaw said, "I have never seen the country so fractured as it is now... We're in tribal warfare here... Newt Gingrich is right. We're in for a very difficult time whoever wins."

Polls continue to show that the contest between the two remains close. Clinton is mobilizing a coterie of celebrities to campaign for her in the final days, warning that a Trump victory would be a calamity for the entire world and everything therefore had to done to elect Clinton.

The arguments of the Democrats and those promoting Clinton ignore two facts. First, a Clinton administration would be committed to catastrophic policies, and, second, the very fact that Trump could win the election, and, win or lose, will receive tens of millions of votes, is an extraordinary indictment of the Democratic Party.

Incapable of presenting a program that is attractive to broader sections of the population, the Democrats have conducted their campaign on the lowest level, focused on scandalmongering and accusations that Trump is an agent of Russian President Vladimir Putin—that is, a

resurrection in modern form of McCarthyite red-baiting. This has been combined with increasingly hysterical slanders against the working class and all forms of opposition to the status quo.

Typical of the pro-Clinton campaign is the editorial published Sunday in the *New York Times* under the headline, “Imagining America on Nov. 9,” which portrays a potential Trump presidency as a “catastrophe” that is only “three days from landfall.” The editorial’s language in describing Trump is apocalyptic—an “ignorant and reckless tyrant... A sexual predator, a business fraud, a liar who runs on a promise to destroy millions of immigrant families and to jail his political opponent.”

The editorial acknowledges a connection between the mass support for Trump and “anger in the populace,” but provides no explanation for the broad and deep social discontent.

The previous day, the *Times* published an editorial lashing “Donald Trump’s Denial of Economic Reality,” because the Republican candidate describes “a horrifying alternate reality in which the recession that started at the end of 2007 is still with us.” Trump’s crime, in the eyes of the well-heeled editors of the *Times*, is “to insist that the economy is in terrible shape,” a view that is shared by tens of millions of American workers, which accounts for the persistence of Trump’s electoral support.

Supplementing the editorials, the *Times* continues to publish a barrage of reactionary commentaries libeling the American population—or more precisely, white working-class Americans—as incorrigibly racist. Sunday’s *Times* carries the latest installment of this filth, a commentary by Jill Filipovic that begins with gender and proceeds to race.

“For all of American history,” she writes, “white men have been...the dominant group,” thus managing to lump together Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis, Eugene Debs and J. P. Morgan, Donald Trump and Edward Snowden, all in the same meaningless category.

After eight years of the first African-American president, the prospect of the first female president is insupportable to the white males, she claims. According to Ms. Filipovic, “This, perhaps more than anything else, explains the rise of Donald J. Trump: He promised struggling white men that they could have their

identities back.”

While conceding that the working class has seen jobs destroyed, strikes smashed and wages gutted, she concludes, “That many white men are struggling surely contributes to Mr. Trump’s popularity, but the driving force of this election is not money—the median household income of Trump primary voters was about \$72,000 a year, \$16,000 more than the national median household income. It’s power, and fury at watching it wane...”

Actually, a comprehensive survey by the Gallup organization suggests that downward economic mobility, not the level of income, is a key driver of support for Trump. His voters are disproportionately those who have lost ground economically since the 2008 Wall Street crash, in both the working class and sections of the middle class.

There is little doubt that the median household income of Trump primary voters is far lower than median household income of Clinton apologists in the liberal media. The *Times* editors and their collaborators decry talk of a continuing recession because their stock portfolios have recovered and their six- and seven-figure incomes make them immune to such mundane concerns as feeding a family and keeping a roof over your head.

The hatred of white workers by this self-satisfied layer of the upper-middle class is itself a reflection of the deepening class tensions in America. It is the expression, distorted through the prism of racial politics, of the viciousness of the American capitalist class.



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