

Racial politics in the service of the CIA

New York Times columnist Charles Blow's McCarthyite rant on Russian hacking

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10 January 2017

New York Times columnist Charles Blow's latest piece, "Donald Trump and the Tainted Presidency," declares the Trump administration to be illegitimate due to alleged Russian interference in the 2016 election. It is the latest shot in the propaganda offensive spearheaded by the *Times* and based on completely unsubstantiated allegations of Russian hacking of the Democratic Party.

Blow is the personification of the union of racial politics, Wall Street and the military-intelligence apparatus under the aegis of the Democratic Party. Throughout the election campaign, he was one of the chief protagonists of the narrative that support for Trump was an expression of pervasive racism in the "white working class."

In the immediate aftermath of the election, Blow penned a column, "America Elects a Bigot," blaming Trump's election on this selfsame "white working class," a claim unsupported by voting statistics. "It is absolutely possible," Blow wrote, "that America didn't elect him in spite of [his bigotry], but because of it."

Last summer, he played a leading role in the media campaign against the film *The Free State of Jones*, which depicted a real life rebellion against the Confederacy during the Civil War that united escaped slaves and poor white farmers.

Blow's latest piece is hysterical, a revival of the scaremongering and witch-hunting methods of McCarthyism, now directed against Russia and Trump, Moscow's alleged agent in Washington. "The more we learn about Russia's hacking and the release of its electronic loot during our presidential election, the more it becomes clear that Donald Trump's victory and his imminent presidency are already tainted beyond

redemption," Blow writes.

"Donald Trump is as much Russia's appointment as our elected executive. The legacy of his political ascendance will be written in Cyrillic and affixed with an asterisk.

"Do not let this be buried in the pundits' blathering: A hostile foreign power stole confidential correspondence from American citizens—this is no different than physically breaking into an American office and carting off boxes of written letters—and funneled that stolen material to a willing conspirator, Julian Assange. The foreign power then had its desired result achieved on our Election Day. This was an act of war and our presidency was the spoil."

By calling the alleged Russian hacking an "act of war," Blow is aligning himself with the most rabid anti-Russian warmongers, such as Republican Senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham and former CIA acting Director Michael Morell. Only last week, during a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing, McCain attempted to extract statements from the heads of US spy agencies that Russia had committed an "act of war," in order to justify an American attack on Russia.

Blow does not explain how many tens of millions of people he is prepared to see annihilated in order to satisfy his war lust.

He lends his voice to the chorus of screaming pundits and politicians, led by the Democratic Party, denouncing as virtual traitors anyone who does not take the assertions of the FBI, CIA and NSA, agencies synonymous the world over with criminality and lies, as the gospel truth.

At the same time, Blow joins in the witch-hunting of Assange and WikiLeaks, whose only "crime" was

acting as genuine journalists by exposing the real crimes of American imperialism, which are systematically censored and suppressed by Blow's colleagues at the *New York Times*. By denouncing WikiLeaks' publication of leaked Democratic Party documents as an "act of war," Blow not only endorses the American-led international campaign against Assange, who has been holed up in the Ecuadorian embassy in London for the past four years, but attacks the principle of press freedom.

Blow is attempting to conceal the real reasons for Clinton's election defeat by declaring that Trump's victory was "tainted" by Russian hacking. Clinton ran a campaign bristling with contempt for the working class, in which she positioned herself as the champion and continuator of Obama's legacy of poverty and social inequality. She downplayed the social distress created by these policies, enabling Trump to exploit the seething popular anger against the entire political establishment and channel it in a right-wing direction. At the same time, on the question of foreign policy, Clinton attempted to outflank Trump from the right, attacking him as insufficiently hostile towards Russia.

Blow ignores all of this. He argues instead that Clinton lost because she was the "victim" of a "witch-hunt" orchestrated by Russia. "The American people cast their ballots in the fog of fake news and under influence of stolen property weaponized as a tool of propaganda," Blow declares.

But even as he contends that the damaging impact of the email leaks cost Clinton the election, Blow glosses over their actual content, writing that while "some of what was revealed about the Democrats in the hacked emails [was] disturbing," the emails as a whole "simply showed the unappetizing process by which the sausage is made."

In reality, the emails demonstrated the rampant corruption within the Democratic Party, including evidence that in the primaries, the Democratic National Committee did what Blow accuses Russia of doing—seeking to tip the election in favor of a preferred candidate. In this case, the DNC, working with the Clinton campaign, sought to undermine the primary challenge of Bernie Sanders.

"Some may hesitate to say that the American presidency was stolen, but it is irrefutable that the integrity of our democratic process was injured when

the sanctity of what we considered uncorrupted self-determination was assaulted. Donald Trump is Vladimir Putin's American 'president'—clearly his preference and possibly his product," Blow concludes.

"The sanctity of uncorrupted self-determination?" Please, Mr. Blow, give us a break! It was an election between the two most hated candidates in American history, both backed by billions in corporate cash, their campaigns dominated by mutual mudslinging and lies designed to conceal from the electorate the real issues and decisions to be implemented by the next administration. Your characterization of the massively manipulated, corporate-dominated US electoral process as some kind of political Garden of Eden, defiled by the serpent Vladimir Putin, brands you as a flunkey of the American plutocracy.

Blow's column expresses the extreme rightward evolution of an upper-middle class layer that has been corrupted by decades of stock market boom, fueled by the impoverishment of the working class at home and uninterrupted imperialist war abroad. On the basis of its embrace of racial and identity politics, a political cover for its selfish striving for privilege, power and money, this layer has moved openly and irrevocably into the camp of imperialism and reaction.

Blow's basic outlook is shared by a whole coterie of supposed "progressives" on the editorial pages of the *New York Times*, including Roger Cohen, Paul Krugman, Nicholas Kristof, Maureen Dowd and Thomas Friedman, who have made very lucrative careers out of promoting the crimes of American imperialism at home and abroad under the false flag of "human rights" and "diversity."



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