

Election Outcome No Cause to Eat One's Words

Donald Trump is unfit to be President. So said Obama, so said Hillary, so did millions of Americans, including Marco Rubio and prominent Catholic leaders (“manifestly unfit” said the Catholics). If it was true, then Trump’s election hardly changes that fact.

What, then, are we to make of statements by Obama and Hillary calling for the country to unite behind Trump’s leadership? Obama says he’s rooting for Trump’s success, Hillary says we owe him the chance to lead. Really? If someone is unfit, shouldn’t you want to do whatever you can to thwart that person’s efforts? – especially if his unfitness is due less to a lack of competence than to dangerous demagoguery, defects of character, duplicitous deceptions, and delusions of grandeur? One who is merely deficient in knowledge or understanding might be capable of remediation, but one whose values and character are repugnant, cruel, and depraved can be expected only to succeed in multiplying harm and suffering.

None of us owes Trump anything more than perhaps a grudging acknowledgment that he exposed the pervasive racism, sexism, nativism, misogyny, and mean-spiritedness that infect American society. He also helped expose the stale neoliberalism within the Democratic party that failed to grasp why Bernie Sanders received such enthusiastic support in the primaries. It’s helpful to have an accurate diagnosis of what ails us if we’re ever going to realize anything like the promise of “liberty and justice for all.”

Here’s a host of things at which I do not want Trump to succeed: building a wall between us and Mexico; privatizing Social Security; taking away health care insurance from anyone; torturing a single soul; stacking an already politicized Supreme Court with more right-wing ideologues; deporting millions of mostly hard-working, family-oriented immigrants; enlarging the wealth and income gap by bequeathing billions in tax breaks to the wealthy; further entrenching the oligarchy by repeal of the estate tax; accelerating global warming with climate change deniers and fossil fuel industry predators. If Trump succeeds, millions if not billions of the planet’s inhabitants will suffer and die due to America’s failure to address the true crises before us.

I love this country and hope it can be a presence for good in the world. I don’t want to become increasingly ashamed of its leaders, their arrogance, and the abuses of American power. We need a loyal opposition to “tell it like it is” – not the Trump version, but the reality-based version. Trump’s version contained just enough truth to cover for the fact that it mostly scapegoated the disadvantaged while ignoring the real culprits. Yes, the real culprits are part of the establishment – an establishment to which Donald Trump is no outsider. He’s a charter member of the predator class, who has not hesitated to exploit his workers, stiff his contractors, defraud the students who hocked everything to attend his so-called university, you name it. Look at who’s on Trump’s transition team. He’s not “draining the swamp,” he’s stocking it with fellow predators. The white working class got played in this election, as many will soon realize.

Unless Donald Trump undergoes an astounding conversion of heart, mind, and soul, I can only hope and pray and do my part to see that he fails miserably. God help us all.

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