

“Everybody Knows The Boat is Leaking”: Do They? “It Only it Were a Different Country, But It Isn’t”

By [Edward Curtin](#)

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Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#)

“Everybody knows the boat is leaking/Everybody knows the captain lied” – Leonard Cohen, “Everybody Knows”

When the polls closed on Tuesday, November 5th, I was sound asleep, like a baby rocking gently in his cradle, lost to the frenzied rants or joyful shouting of the different political clagues. Even though I missed the results of what the mass media had been telling us was the most important election in our lifetimes, I was happily oblivious to their cant. I remember hearing that nonsense many times before.

I gave up on my country’s electoral system more than 50 years ago. Every presidential election is a contest between two sides of the ruling monied elite, chosen to represent their interests. It is corrupt beyond repair and was so even then. Do most people have a clue that their country is owned and run by a small group of the super-rich and ten or so financial institutions, such as [BlackRock, Vanguard, State Street, Morgan Stanley, JP Morgan Chase, etc.](#), **the big banks and financial interests that in 1947 formed the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to spearhead the U.S. warfare state around the world in support of its economy that is reliant on endless war?**

The electorate continually puts its hope in the performers that the spectacle’s producers put up to front for their interests, failing to grasp that the rulers’ interests are not theirs. Arguing and anguishing over certain policy differences between Democratic and Republican presidential candidates, they fail to see that both exist to serve global capital, not regular people, that exchanging presidents is a counterfeiter’s con-game with the voters the scammers’ marks.

Trump’s current victory is an example of that, as was Biden’s in 2020. If Harris had won, it would have proven the same. They are two sides of one coin. That the system is rigged by the oligarchs should be obvious but isn’t. Or maybe it is obvious but people secretly harbor a perverse liking for it. Stranger things are true, as on personal levels people embrace the symptoms of their neuroses because the symptoms are their disguised solutions, their ways of staying stuck because change is hard and frightening and requires admitting repressed realities.

The cliché that all politics is local has a certain appeal and a trace of veracity, but 99 + % of the truth lies elsewhere. Approximately 145 + million Americans just lined up to vote like puppies looking for a bone to be thrown their way by the people who own the country. They do get a bone here and there, which keeps them looking for the meat, but that is reserved for the fat cats, as always.

I understand why people prefer upbeat words, but very often the upbeat is really the downbeat of hopelessness in disguise. A coverup. And seemingly hopeless words, such as that our presidents are the public personae of the rapacious oligarchy, are actually far more hopeful, even though they reveal long-held assumptions to be delusional.

Imagine what might happen if a great portion of people refused to vote for the charlatans chosen to run for president.

The fear that there was even a slight chance that this might happen lies behind all the pep talks and moralizing about doing your civic duty, which is such “a privilege.” Vote, even if it’s for the “lesser of two evils.”

But please, let us not mention the great evil that lies behind these lessers. Vote and we’ll give you a sticker. A sticker that signifies your gullibility.

There is a “system,” as young radicals referred to the U.S.’s political-economic structure back in the 1960s. I was one of them, a conscientious objector from the Marine Corps and a graduate student studying sociology, deeply influenced by the work and moral voice of C. Wright Mills and his powerful books, [The Power Elite](#), [The Causes of World War III](#), and [Listen, Yankee](#), and William Domhoff’s [Who Rules America](#), a work that has gone through seven updated editions.

There were (and are) many other books that told the story truly, but even reading them won’t help unless you are willing to dispense with the obvious illusions and face the bleakness of a corrupt system. Willing to take it personally. Willing to recognize the systemic evil that under-girds the System. Willing to accept the void that the Trappist monk Thomas Merton termed the Unspeakable:

It is the void that contradicts everything that is spoken even before the words are said; the void that gets into the language of public and official declarations at the very moment when they are pronounced, and makes them ring dead with the hollowness of the abyss.

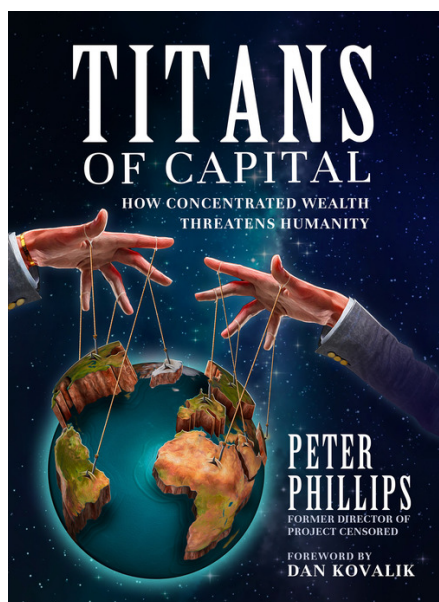
This void is the fact that the U.S. political economy is controlled by a small group of the wealthiest nihilists and is maintained through lies, a military-industrial economy, and perpetual wars around the world to maintain and increase their wealth. It is a death cult that people worship by their participation.

Although in subsequent years it became fashionable to decry the use of the term “the system,” there was a system then and there is one now, run by the upper class elite whose wealth has increased exponentially over the years throughout Democratic and Republican administrations. This system is tightly entwined throughout the social structure of the country, part of the everyday fabric of American life. It is fueled by the corporate mass media of all political persuasions. Understanding it helps to explain most of what is going on today, including the farcical election just concluded. A battle between two candidates who represent the forces that oppress the common people, support the genocide of the Palestinians, and are figureheads for the warfare state.

The system has evolved its methods of control since the 1950s but is essentially unchanged. It is now monopoly global capitalism joined with the steroidal injection of digital technology and the Internet to create a seamless marriage of economic exploitation and

non-stop propaganda that has coopted and controlled the working classes and leftist intellectuals alike. Those middle to upper middle classes who like to consider themselves liberal or progressive accept the status quo because it rewards them at the expense of struggling peoples at home and abroad. They can afford to play along and look away, being typical Babbitts. And the right-wing was always in the pocket of the power elites.

Elections are said to be about pocket-book issues, which is largely true, but the oligarchic control of the nation's pocketbook is not the focus. Small stuff is.



Listen to Peter Phillips, a sociologist in Mills's tradition, who tells the truth that most can't bear to hear and will never accept. His latest book is, [Titans of Capital](#). Here he is being interviewed by Robert Scheer, [These Ten Companies Run Our "Democracy."](#)

It's nothing new, but to accept it would require an American revolution, which isn't coming. No, it's not coming when so many people "do their civic duty" and vote for presidential candidates fronting for the upper class's interests.

As I am finishing writing these words, a headline appears at *The New York Times* Corporation to make me laugh and give me that all-over happy tingle. It reads: "Popularist Revolt Against Elite's Vision of the U.S." Subheaded with these introductory words: "In the end, Donald Trump is not the historical aberration some thought he was, but a force reshaping the modern U.S., writes Peter Baker in an analysis."

Not an historical aberration! Then he must not be a deviation from the normal type of American president. Trump is a good old normal American president, claims the *Times*. Is this a Freudian slip?

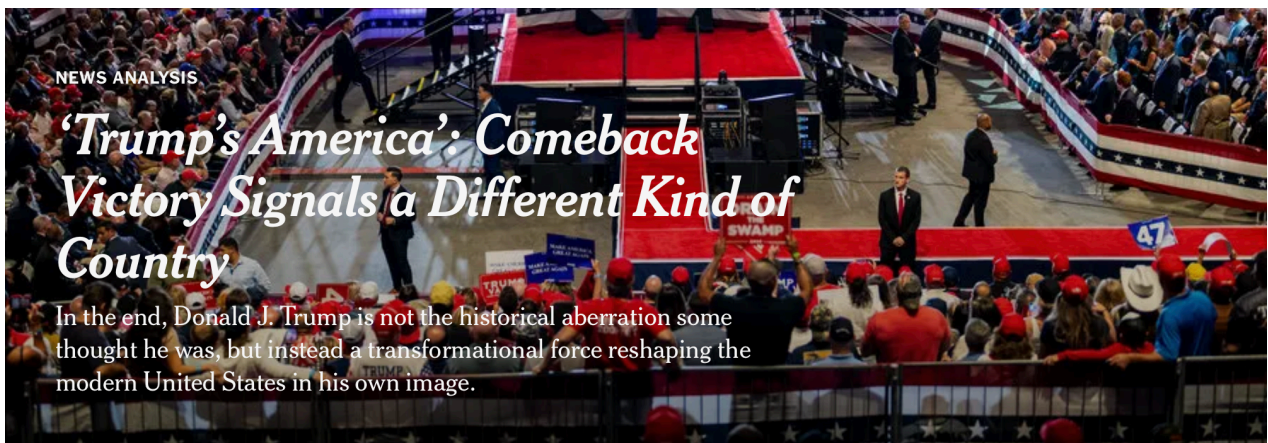
The "elite's vision?" So the *Times* is also admitting that there is an elite and they have a vision for the common people? I wondered what kind of confession was to follow? So I followed.

The article by Baker has a strangely punctuated title with an ambiguous meaning that its text contradicts: ['Trump's America': Comeback Victory Signals a Different Kind of Country.](#) It opens with the introductory words I quoted above, as if to reinforce the point. Not an historical aberration, which for anyone who understands the English language means he is

normal. But then Baker mixes his illogical word salad with dressing.

He writes, as if there were some logical connection between his sentences:

Populist disenchantment with the nation's direction and resentment against elites proved to be deeper and more profound than many in both parties had recognized. Mr. Trump's testosterone-driven campaign capitalized on resistance to electing the first woman president.



[Screenshot from the NYT](#)

Is he not saying that there is an elite that the common people are rebelling against by voting for Trump and that Harris has been chosen by these same elites.

But if Trump is not an historical aberration and therefore has also been chosen by the elites, then the “populist revolt” is no revolt at all but a con job played out by the billionaire elites who support Trump. Baker and all the “experts” he quotes are loathe to admit openly that the ruling oligarchy is split; that both Harris and Trump are candidates of the elite who war among themselves but who in the end reap the spoils of the system. That they are allied in an overall goal.

Baker tells us about **Kamala Harris**, who was not chosen by the people but by the elite who control the Democratic party, that

“Once she took the torch from Mr. Biden, Ms. Harris initially emphasized a positive, joy-filled mission to the future, consolidating excited Democrats behind her, but it was not enough to win over uncommitted voters.”

Joy didn't work. Well what the heck!

Baker also tells us that trashing Trump and emphasizing unity didn't either because the American people want a strongman.

What? A non-aberrational strong man?

But Baker goes on to castigate Trump as a criminal, a liar, a fraud, a conspiracy theorist,

etc. while the joyful Harris just miscalculated and underestimated popular discontent. This is the usual *Times'* schtick. Turn to the *New York Post* for the obverse and have a chuckle at the absurd game the media play on the public.

Baker's headline tells us that Trump's win signals that the U.S. is now a different kind of country because so many people are fed up with how it's being run. Different from 2016 when Trump won?

If only it were a different country, but it isn't. The same elite money forces run the show. Elections don't change that. People continue to be suckers.

Baker lets it slip again with these words:

The assumption that Mr. Trump represented an anomaly who would at last be consigned to the ash heap of history was washed away on Tuesday night by a red current that swept through battleground states - and swept away the understanding of America long nurtured by its ruling elite of both parties.

Yes, the "ruling elite." One elite. Both parties. And nothing was swept away. This ruling elite is just laughing and no doubt secretly applauding the stenographers who serve their interests, such as Peter Baker, who portrays them in typically deceptive *Times'* gobbledygook fashion as "perplexed." Have a laugh!

"Everybody knows the fight was fixed
The poor stay poor, the rich stay rich
That's how it goes
Everybody knows"

Do they?

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This article was originally published on the author's blog site, [Behind the Curtain](#).

Edward Curtin is a prominent author, researcher and sociologist based in Western Massachusetts. He is a Research Associate of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG).

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