

ELECTION REFLECTION: The Intelligentsia is as Dumb as a Door Jam

by Julian Sereno

Among the many shocks that have accompanied Donald J. Trump's upset electoral victory is how some really really smart people turned out to be slow in the head, or, in politically correctese, "cognitively challenged".

The pollsters, pundits and prognosticators were completely wrong. Why? Some pollsters claim that respondents lied. Surprise, surprise. Or perhaps sampling has not kept up with modern communications. For example, I, like many, dropped land lines in favor of cell phones, and the numbers are not listed. As a result I received neither a single robocall nor a single public opinion query for this entire election campaign, thank heavens. No matter how sophisticated their data analysis might be, if the data is unrepresentative, results will be wrong. And of course they are insular and all reinforced one another. They were unlikely to notice the enthusiasm of his crowds and the proliferation of his signs throughout rural America.

The political establishment, both Democrat and Republican,

took voters for granted. Hillary Clinton had been ordained by the Democratic Party as their candidate well before the first primary. When Bernie Sanders popularity began to soar, party insiders did their best to thwart him, and succeeded. Trump was denounced by the Republican establishment and many of its candidates, including Little Marco Rubio, Lying Ted Cruz and Low Energy Jeb Bush. But the base loathed the establishment, and the more Trump defied it, the more popular he became. All the candidates that are still in office have fallen in line behind Trump like the yes men (and women) that Republican elected officials are. Trump alone among them was not a yes man.

Academia, the source of the jargon that undergirds political correctness as well as one of its foremost practitioners, found its product resoundingly rejected by voters. Political correctness restricts freedom of speech for the sake of not hurting people's feelings. In its more extreme forms, on some campuses and places of employment, any such speech is banned. People can have feelings and beliefs that were mainstream fairly recently but which would get them fired if they expressed them today.

Feelings and beliefs that are both milder and more mainstream than those voiced by Trump, who explicitly expressed racist and sexist sentiments.

How did all these bunches of smart people get so out of touch? Because we live in a world where we are less and less likely to interact with anyone different. Most of the people we know well are similar to us in terms of education, income and place of residence. Most of the supporters of each candidate probably are not acquainted with anyone who supports the other.

The big divide is urban and rural. Urban areas, magnets for money, are booming and its citizens prospering. Rural areas are broke, the manufacturing industries which sustained them gone. Property values fall along with employment prospects.

About all of which the establishments of both political parties as well as the intelligentsia were utterly ignorant.

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What Happened? Why?

by Don Lein

The obvious answers are that 1) Trump beat Clinton handily in electoral votes, which are the rules everyone was playing by, 2) the intelligentsia/academics lost a lot of credibility and influence, 3) leadership of both parties seriously misread the electorate, since many Republicans had tepid support for Trump and the Democrats were all-in for Hillary.

The intelligentsia is absolutely necessary for politicians who embrace state control of citizen's lives to weave rationales for this absolute control to ensure common good, general welfare, protection of citizens from outside sources, social justice, etc. They are the engineers of popular consent for statist rulers such as Obama, Hillary. However, as Wellesley sociologist Thomas Cushman stated "this election outcome...represents a failure of academic social science, the media, pollsters and just about everyone in the "cognitive elite"...Trump has broken a lot of things and will likely break many more, but he has also broken the intellectual expert class and this may be a day of reckoning for that class."

Have the elites learned a thing? On the morning after the

election, CNN noted the disappointment of some women that the "glass ceiling" was not shattered, as expected. Of course all the reputable, factual studies done in the last 40 years show that when you compare women who work as many hours a year for as many continuous years in the same occupations as men, women make equivalent to or more than men. This is another instance where facts that refute the elite's preconceptions are ignored.

The anti-law enforcement fetish is another example of insulated elites setting the stage for a political backlash, while sacrificing the safety of the general public. Actually the riots of in Ferguson, Baltimore and other cities were preceded by English riots in 2011 in Manchester and London and were quite similar in tone. However, the elites ignore the fact that the rioters in England were white and those in Baltimore were black, thus belying the facile conclusion that the underlying cause was racial oppression. This also holds true of unchecked immigration of people from countries with values antithetical to ours, the effects of which the elites are insulated from, while the hoi polloi are suffering all the consequences.

Several other phenomena appeared

The Obama turnout failed to materialize in Milwaukee, Detroit and Philadelphia costing Hillary Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania

Working class workers tiring of a stagnant economy, no raises, increased taxes and regulations chose not to vote for a white multi-millionaire, although female

Democrats pandered to tribal instincts and polarized white workers who overwhelmingly voted for Trump

Democrats erred by focusing on Trump's obvious weaknesses and not his strengths. Early on – they all wanted to run against him

Is the Trump phenomenon unique to the U. S. or is it representative of a world-wide disaffection for the smug elite and the siren songs of the intelligentsia? Was Brexit a precursor? As Americans adapt to our change of command, where in the world will these changing attitudes manifest themselves next?

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War is the World's Biggest Racket

by John Heuer

Editor's Note: John Heuer died November 16. His unexpected death has left his family and friends devastated and grief-stricken. He devoted his life to promoting peace and wrote about it passionately. He will be sorely missed at Chatham County Line. We will print and post more as we receive it from his family. This is his final column.

This year's Armistice Day has left me wondering if we ever will regain the original meaning of the day, a day that Congress proclaimed in 1924 to be a day to celebrate the outbreak of peace following WWI.

Thirty years later, Congress renamed November 11 "Veterans Day," and the concept of celebrating peace seemingly has been assigned to the trash heap of history. This year, we heard endless tributes to our military service members and veterans, but not a word about ending our wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, Libya, Yemen and Somalia, or ending our sale and shipment of weapons around the world. How far we have come from the original intent of Armistice Day! We now are the world's major weapons supplier, our government is engaged in multiple endless wars, and we are the largest operator, by far, of military bases throughout the world.

A recent story in Sports Illustrated magazine brought home to me how we manage to maintain endless wars while imagining that we are living in peace. Football star Eric Reid was asked why he was supporting Colin Kaepernick's protest during the opening of the NFL games this year. Reid replied that he supported Kaepernick's effort to draw attention to injustice in this country. Howls of protest ensued, with claims that anything less than total respect for our flag and anthem was an insult to our veterans and service members. Reid then pointed out the hypocrisy in idolizing our men and women in uniform



John Huer at a Veterans for Peace rally in Burlington, NC, April 2014.

PHOTO BY SAM ROBERTS

and then ignoring homeless vets when they return because we don't care enough about them to provide for reasonable adjustment to civilian life.

We make any criticism of the US, or of US policies or shortcomings, to be synonymous with disrespect for our troops. In this way, we blind ourselves to the fact that all our platitudes about defending our freedoms are simply excuses for engaging in endless war. We always have money for war, but never have enough money to properly care for our veterans.

And why is it that we couldn't have a peace candidate in our recent election?

In 1935, retired Marine General Smedley Butler published "War Is a Racket." He described a racket as a system that operates without most people understanding how or why that system

operates. Gen. Butler described war as fitting the definition of a racket because "the few profit while the many pay," and few understand the real reasons for any particular war.

The 2003 invasion of Iraq fits this description perfectly. George W. Bush should be tried for war crimes for this totally unnecessary war yet, 13 years later, the war goes on, others are blamed, Congress allows waging war to be a sole prerogative of the president, and successive presidents attack other countries seemingly for sport. And yet, sadly, neither major political party saw fit to make room for a peace candidate.

Veterans For Peace have been working to expose this racket, and the true costs of war, since their organization was founded in 1985. Obviously, they have a long way to go to overcome the constant drumbeat of war propaganda offered by our mass media. It should come as no surprise that our mainstream media are owned by the same corporations that manufacture the weapons of war. This is all part of the racket.

One of the great costs of war is the fact that all soldiers also are victims. This recognition is why Veterans For Peace have expanded to include new chapters not just in the US, but in England, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Vietnam and Mexico, and welcome new members from Israel, Palestine, Germany, Australia, Canada and Russia, among other nations struggling with global militarism.

Imagine a world in which soldiers and veterans realize mutually that their enmity for each other has been manufactured for the benefit of a few profiteers. Only then can we begin to understand the true spirit of Armistice Day. Perhaps, on the centennial of the original Armistice Day – November 11, 1918 – we will have managed to recruit peace candidates to lead all our political parties, and the day will again be a day dedicated to the celebration of peace rather than the glorification of war.

www.veteransforpeace.org

