

Donald Trump Is Not Andrew Jackson – He Is Fernando Wood

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*Most people don't even know [Abraham Lincoln] was a Republican. Does anyone know?
Lot of people don't know that! – Donald Trump*

Right... approximately the same number of people who do not know that the Pope is Catholic. But, while this imbecility set the stage for a discussion of Trump's knowledge – or lack thereof – of American history, it was comparing himself to Andrew Jackson that really got people thinking about who in American history Trump most resembles. It is certainly not Andrew Jackson; but who?

People don't realize, you know, the Civil War – if you think about it, why? People don't ask that question, but why was there a Civil War? Why could that one not have been worked out? – Donald Trump

Actually, there are people who ask this question; they are called historians. And the result of their studies has been distilled into textbooks, which, apparently, Chelsea Clinton has read, "One-word answer: Slavery." The [BBC interviewed three Civil War historians](#) and got roughly the same answer:

Judith Geisberg: People have been asking that question from the moment the war began. Historians have come to a consensus that slavery is the reason.

Jim Grossman: When people say it was about states' rights, in 1861 states had nothing else to defend but slavery.

The plantation owners of the Antebellum South were what we would today refer to as oligarchs. Almost all the South's wealth was in the hands of a few dozen ultra-wealthy families, far below them were poor Whites and a sprinkling of free Blacks, and at the bottom of the social ladder were the Black slaves. But, in the 19th century, it was generally assumed that a concentration of wealth was one and the same thing as a slave economy. So, they did not need the term oligarch; "slave owner" was sufficiently descriptive.

The only other example that 19th century Americans had of such concentrated wealth was European royalty. The monarchies had never relied on slavery but rather on the peasants' belief in Divine Rights and on their inability to make sword steel and fight effectively against a mounted knight. But the invention of the crossbow brought down knights¹, and the discovery of gold in the New World caused inflation that impoverished noblemen who had perpetual contracts for rent to be paid in corn. America had defeated King George in 1783 and, by 1861, it was clear that monarchies were on their way out. But the position of the plantation owners in the U.S. South was solid; nothing short of war was going to dislodge them.

¹ The invention of the helicopter reversed this; small professional armies are again stronger than peasant armies.

Thus, Donald Trump's boast that he could have cut a deal to avert the Civil War is wrong for two reasons: First, any such deal would have left the Black man enslaved, which is immoral, and there were lots of people in the North – mostly represented by the Abolitionist societies – who were quite vocal about the immorality of the institution. Second, a peaceful settlement had already been attempted. Taxes can eventually wear down oligarchs if they pay them, which is why the Federal government had been imposing a tariff on the South's exports of cotton and tobacco. South Carolina referred to the Tariff of 1828 as the "Tariff of Abominations" and, when it was raised slightly in 1832, they enacted an Ordinance of Nullification threatening secession if Andrew Jackson used force to collect the money. Never one to back down from a fight, Jackson said that "disunion by armed force is treason" and Congress passed the Force Bill, which – as the name implies – authorized force. But South Carolina was unable to rally the other Southern states, who were unprepared for war, and Jackson quietly reduced the Tariff – the "deal" that Trump may be referring to. Thirty years later, the Southern states apparently felt more prepared for war.

However, Chelsea Clinton's boast of having a one-word answer to Trump's question is simplistic for two reasons: First, it seems to imply that the Abolitionist societies spoke for everyone in the North, which is not true. The Irish were opposed to Abolition because they understood that free Black men would compete with them for factory jobs in the North. After their potato famine, they were barely hanging on and had no room in their hearts for any other downtrodden race. Second, most of the people in the North were skilled enough that they did not have to worry about a free Black taking their job, but were cold enough not to really care about him either. However, they did care about bringing down an oligarchy. It had been only 80 years since they had fought King George and they had not forgotten the danger of having such vast wealth in the hands of one man, or in the hands of a small group of like-minded men.

The biggest problem with Chelsea Clinton's one-word answer is that it seems to imply that oligarchies ceased to exist the moment Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This is not true. There is an oligarchy in Russia today, yet they are not a slave economy. To a lesser extent, there is an oligarchy in America today, yet we are not a slave economy. The lower classes can be convinced that working at subsistence wages while actively promoting their masters' agenda makes sense; there is no need to put them in chains. In 1861, abolitionists wondered why the poor Southern White was so willing to throw his life away fighting with a shotgun against artillery; he did not own slaves and even a cursory examination of his finances showed that he never would. Today, Democrats wonder why the working poor with preexisting health conditions vote for Donald Trump. One-word answer: They are morons. Long answer: It is in the interest of both the fascists and the socialists to conflate fascism with capitalism so, getting the same message from both sides of the aisle, the working poor also see the world as a dichotomy between fascism and socialism. In the 1920s there was fighting in the streets of Berlin; exactly those same antagonists are now fighting in the streets of Berkeley. They have learned nothing from history. The socialists insist that capitalism is a euphemism for fascism and the fascists insist that they be called capitalists. Real capitalism – big and small businesses equal under the law – has exactly zero defenders.

In 1861 and today, the single biggest obstacle to bringing down oligarchies is craven politicians with no morals who do not care one way or another about big issues like slavery but simply have an ingrained habit of inserting their noses up the butts of rich, powerful men in the hopes that a few coins will be

dropped down to them. Corruption and graft are their defining characteristics. Since they have no morals, they can be found all over the political spectrum advocating for a wide variety of leftist and rightist causes and, over time, flipping and flopping from one cause to another. This has produced confusion: Vladimir Putin financially supports both far-right and far-left politicians in Europe, England and the United States. People who believe in the fascist/socialist dichotomy are confused. What to make of this man Putin?



Observe: Michael Flynn and Jill Stein, representing the far right and the far left of American politics, respectively, competing to see who can get their noses the farthest up an oligarch's butt hole.

Donald Trump is not the least bit like Andrew Jackson; Jackson was a fighter and Trump is a suck-up. Compare the official portrait of Jackson with what has become the unofficial portrait of Trump.



The figure from American history that Trump most resembles is Fernando Wood, whom historian Edward Spann described as “a man of bold ambitions and limited conscience.” Trump and Wood are/were both New York real estate tycoons whose only interest in politics is/was using their position to line their own pockets. Before entering politics, they were both notorious con men; Wood was convicted of defrauding investors during the 1849 Gold Rush and Trump inexplicably evaded conviction for defrauding real estate investors with his “University.” Biographer Jerome Mushkat wrote that Wood “took duplicity to an extreme and made it an integral part of his operation.” There is no more accurate description of Trump.

Tammany Hall got most of its popular support from poor Irish immigrants who were afraid that freed Blacks would take their jobs; Trump's anti-Mexican rhetoric feeds the same fear – held by all peasants –

of losing their unskilled labor job to someone equally unskilled, but willing to work for lower wages.² But, most of all, Wood's suck-up approach to Southern plantation owners is comparable to Trump's suck-up approach to Vladimir Putin, Recep Erdoğan, Rodrigo Duterte and now Kim Jong-un, whom Trump calls a "smart cookie" that he will be "honored" to meet. As Horace Greeley wrote, "Fernando Wood evidently wants to be a traitor; it is lack of courage only that makes him content with being a blackguard." Similarly, while Trump dances on the Emoluments Clause, cowardice has (so far) precluded any hangable offenses.

Little men like Wood and Trump have a suck-up/kick-down worldview that has them simultaneously groveling at the feet of those more powerful than themselves while stealing from and cheating those who are less powerful. This is evident in their promotion of the corrupt elements of the police, such as Wood keeping the New York City Municipal Police intact after the governor had dissolved them on corruption charges and replaced them with the Metropolitan Police. Similarly, Trump promotes a worshipful attitude towards police "heroes" while simultaneously appealing to their most base instincts by giving them the authority to confiscate property from immigrants that have spent a lifetime building a business in America.

What lessons can be learned from the history of the New York Copperheads? Ellis writes, "The infamous [1863] Draft Riots... were so well led that they constituted an organized insurrection, rather than a spontaneous mob uprising. Definite strategy may be seen in the efforts to cut off approaches to the city, to sever communications, to capture forts, to seize armories and munitions works..." This is what we are seeing today in Eastern Ukraine. Vladimir Putin must think us fools to persist in claiming that highly trained SAM gunners in unmarked green uniforms suddenly appeared on the roofs of skyscrapers as part of a "popular" uprising of plain folk revolting against "oppression." And the identifiable regular army soldiers (e.g. Sergeant Selfie) were on leave. Seriously? The Red Army allows soldiers on leave to take their tank? Was Flight MH17 shot down by Red Army soldiers who took their Buk to go on a picnic?

All dictators (pricktators, as Colbert calls them) employ muscle that, with slight variations in their branding, are identical. Fernando Wood had the Dead Rabbits, Adolph Hitler had the Brownshirts, Vladimir Putin has the Night Wolves and Donald Trump has Bikers for Trump. I predict that the alt-right will denounce the inevitable impeachment of Trump as fake news, leading rioters to loot sanctuary cities in what will be described as popular uprisings, but will inexplicably take place under airspace devoid of helicopters because of SAM gunners on the roofs of skyscrapers. Like in 1863, the civilians lynching Blacks will be inflamed with emotion, but their movements will be directed by the cool hand of infantry officers such as Michael Flynn. Like in the Ukraine, key points will be seized by soldiers in unmarked uniforms. To counter this, I recommend that California raise its own army and that they purchase [a weapon for burning the roofs of skyscrapers](#) to protect their helicopters. I can help them modify the LAV-150 to do this. One tiger can prevent a hundred deer from crossing a river; and one SA-7 can ground a hundred helicopters. Cities such as Los Angeles and Berkeley cannot assume that they will always have control of their airspace.

² At the high school where I work, all the teachers – especially the history teacher – despise Trump; the only pro-Trump employee is the Mexican-born janitor. Since schools do background checks, she must be legal, though she has been in the U.S. no longer than Fernando Beristain and speaks no better English. I do not know enough about ICE to explain why she got the nod and Beristain did not, but her defending Trump against the history teacher's arguments makes it clear that the Democrat's tone-deaf identity politics is what cost them the Hispanic vote.