

# From ‘Clingers’ to ‘Garbage’—Why the 16 years of Vilification?

By Victor Davis Hanson

Who actually are the “garbage” people?



Are they one and the same with Joe Biden’s “semi-fascists,” “chumps,” and “dregs of society?”

Or Barack Obama’s “clingers?”

Do they include Hillary Clinton’s “deplorables” and “irredeemables?”

Are they FBI grandee Peter Strzok’s Walmart shoppers who “smell?”

Over the last decade-and-a-half, Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, Joe Biden, Harris-Walz, and a host of other self-described elites have variously invented a wide range of smears and slurs—but about whom exactly?

Who are these people that leftwing politicians have so vehemently derided—and why?

They include Trump supporters, of course, or what Biden also dubbed “ultra-MAGAs” and Tim Walz called “fascists,” now

without the prior qualifying prefix “semi.”

In general, these adjectives of disdain denote about half the country according to the results of what will soon be the last three presidential elections.

This half is more rural than urban, characterized by larger than smaller families, more high-schooled diplomaed than college degreed, and more conventional and traditional than vanguard and trend-setting.

Statisticians tell us that the new non-clinging Democratic Party finds its greatest support from those who earn less than \$50,000 and those who make considerably more than \$100,000. These are the rich/poor bookends that surround the reformed Republican party in between.

So, in terms of generalized income and earnings, the left is now the party of the well-to-do professional and credential class and the rich, along with the subsidized poor. The Republicans, by contrast, are increasingly represented by the middle classes.

The Democratic top dogs are most likely to embrace agendas that never garner 51 percent of public support—vast reductions in gas and oil to lessen “climate change,” open borders to welcome in the world’s needy, the government promotion of a third, transgendered sex, abortion on demand without restrictions, the reifications of various critical (race/legal/penal/modern monetary) “theories,” and radical changes in the current system (ending the Senate filibuster, the Electoral College, the nine-justice Supreme Court, the 50-state union, etc.).

Two truisms stand out about the elite boutique agenda: one, when these theories are implemented—often by the courts, and the permanent and unelected administrative and bureaucratic state—the architects of such experimentation do not really feel the inevitable deleterious consequences.

Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, the Silicon Valley masters of the universe, the professors of law, the corporate CEOs, and the Bill Gates of the world really don't care much whether gas is at \$3 a gallon or \$6, or Romex wire is \$39 a spool or \$150.

Illegal aliens do not go to their children's schools or crowd the offices of their concierge cardiologists and oncologists, much less dump trash on their streets and curbs.

They are strong supporters of teachers' unions, despising the very idea of charter schools and homeschooling. And yet they send their children more often to private schools where students are not the lab rats of the public school system.

Their ideology is the fruit of their privilege and so is often more utopian and abstract. Given that if it results in economic, social, and cultural damage to millions, they will certainly avoid the ensuing flotsam and jetsam.

The fallout from defunding the police falls upon the inner city, not the privately patrolled Presidio Heights or the secluded sorts in Martha's Vineyard.

Given their income and status, the new Democratic credentialed and moneyed classes do not care about the struggle of others to live one more day, clinging to the middle-class vestiges of their parents' era. Instead, for the anointed who have transcended the fear of not filling up their tank or coming up short on monthly rent and power bills, it is not hard to mandate job-killing EVs or to chuckle over biological boys in girls' locker rooms and pride flags flying from the abandoned American embassy in Kabul.

By the same token, the poor count on the left's largesse to cushion themselves from the damage of their own party's dreams turned into nightmares. Various food, housing, medical, legal, and educational subsidies to the poor are testaments that the left's own agendas stagnant upward mobility and confine the poor to permanent poverty.

In a cynical sense, left-wing elites square the circle of the guilt over their privilege through government subsidies for those whom they'd rather not necessarily live next to or have their children attend school with. In other words, they find them useful rather than empathetic. They welcome in millions of illegal aliens—as long as they don't camp out at Yale, the Hamptons, or Malibu Beach.

Not so the struggling middle classes. Modern theories can result in hyperinflation that can ruin them or easily send them into the ranks of the government-subsidized poor. They are conservative in wanting a secure border, legal-only immigration, affordable food and energy, safe streets, and equality of opportunity rather than of result, because they have no margin of error, lacking the wherewithal of secure home zip codes, or the perks of gargantuan grocery bills at Whole Foods, or a new foreign car every two years.

Such conservatism is reflected in the worldview of the clingers and irredeemables. They accept not cosmopolitanism but 2,500 years of nationhood that remind them there can be no nation without borders.

There can be no modern comforts and security without access to affordable food and energy. There can be no public society without safe streets—and indeed, not even public places without sanitation and common decency.

So, the great middle class is wary about falling at the hands of others into government dependency and even more fearful of destroying what has worked over the ages. They resist experimenting with the unknown, especially when thought up and designed by those who will easily ride out the ensuing disasters when such harebrained schemes inevitably fail.

These chumps, fascists, and garbage people know that their advantages in numbers are outweighed by the Eloi's absorption of institutional and government power. So, in depression, they

often shrug and drop out. They assume wisely that the network news, the New York Times and Washington Post, Hollywood, and the corporate boardroom are mere extensions of the utopian and cultural left, who despise them for ignoring their supposed betters.

They pass on watching the Emmys, Oscars, Tonys, and Grammys. They are deaf to the top-down sermons from an Al Gore, John Kerry, the Clintons, the Obamas, or Joe Biden, which assume the grubby majority is either too ignorant or amoral or both to know what is good for them and so must be shamed, smeared, and slurred rather than won over by argumentations and persuasion. Is not the 2024 election about just that—the haughty who sermonize and those weary of being lectured?

The dregs could care less who is president of Harvard or how many letters and titles follow a professional's name—except to confirm to themselves when watching or hearing such people that our elites increasingly have neither common sense nor integrity. A high school history teacher could have answered congressional questioning on race, anti-Semitism, and bias far more effectively and adroitly than a deer-in-the-headlights, clueless Harvard president Claudine Gay.

Yes, the semi-fascists are lectured that they are racist, sexist, and xenophobic. They are damned by the credentialed as “white privileged” who “rage,” as they dutifully go off to Iraq and Afghanistan to die in combat at double their numbers in our demographics.

They are advised of their toxic illiberality and bigotry, even as their children lack the race, gender, and ethnicity advantage accorded to the so-called Other and the inside edge that money, influence, and status provide for the elite.

What has recently brought this great divide to a head and exposed the fury of the elite is resurgent anger at the newfound impudence of the deplorable class, or the notion that

they would dare call the dishonest media the “fake news” or suggest that “fit-as-fiddle,” “smart-as-a-tack,” cognitively challenged Joe Biden is the proverbial emperor with no clothes.

Who are these arrogant who pack the 20,000 seats of Madison Square Garden even after the good people have warned that they were mindlessly reenacting Leni Riefenstahl’s *Triumph of the Will*?

The left believes that either racial victimization or money should guarantee privilege and so despises those qualifying for neither. In the elite’s view, the working class so often lacks the romance of the poor and non-white, but worse still, the culture and pretensions of the progressive Übermenschen.

Finally, the unspoken irony of this divide is that the self-professed elite know that they are not the elite by any definable standard or meritocracy. Yale gives a higher percentage of A’s on spec to its students than do trade schools and junior colleges.

Today’s supposedly brilliant Columbia student would likely struggle to earn an objectively graded C on a state college’s standardized, multi-choice history exam.

Those who run the *Washington Post* or NPR are less competent, worldly, and knowledgeable than the chumpy and dregsy sexagenarian who publishes a small town’s weekly newspaper.

The average salesman and electrician can far better spot fraud and deceit than an Anthony Fauci or Peter Daszak. And the tractor driver is more likely not to lie under oath than a John Brennan, James Clapper, or Andrew McCabe. The lineman working with high voltage is far more likely to err on the side of safety with the lives of others than the executives of Pfizer or Moderna.

In a wider sense, the deplorable class believes it can still

build reliable pipelines, frack, truck our nation's goods, and clean up after a hurricane. But it has utterly lost confidence that the best and the brightest at the Pentagon can win a war, at Boeing can craft a safe jet, or at NASA can send astronauts safely into space and back in the fashion of their grandfathers more than half a century ago.

This election is about many things—left/right issues, of course, and the peculiar personalities of Trump and Harris perhaps.

But it will likely be defined by those who are not just tired of being smeared as the underbelly of America but, far more unforgivably, are beginning to enjoy and mock the disparagement from those who have never earned the right to smear anyone but themselves.

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