

Trump: after his Inauguration, what next?

Discussion at The Park

Wednesday 1 February 2017 7:30pm at The Park Tavern, Macclesfield

An Introduction:

These notes are based on main stream media and video / audio / print on social media, where there is already a veritable library of report and comment available.

Questions:

1. "Is there a better, more apt description of the incoming Trump administration than '**kakocracy**', which translates from the Greek literally as '**government by the worst people**'? The new US President, as Barack Obama remarked on the campaign trail, is 'uniquely unqualified' to be commander-in-chief. There is no historical analogy for a President Trump. He combines in a single person some of the worst qualities of some of the worst US presidents: the Donald makes Nixon look honest, Clinton look chaste, Bush look smart." (**Source:** Mehdi Hassan, British Indian journalist, moved to Washington DC 2015. *The New Statesman* 20-26 Jan 2017.) **Going round**, comment briefly (no more than a sentence or so) on this – especially the "no historical analogy" point.

2. "It's a bit like Brexit. The victory was made possible by wealthier, older people ... but it's seen as a working class revolt." (**Source:** Garry Younge, a feature writer for *The Guardian* and monthly columnist for the USA journal, *The Nation*. He was based in Muncie, Indiana for the election campaign.)

3. Do participants have any particularly informative or enlightening quotes (again brief one-liners or short sentences) from major commentators; eg Trump himself, Bernie Sanders, Paul Mason, etc, etc? What about this: "If anything, he is the first independent, nationalist President since the C19th. He does not fit easily into any political category." (**Source:** Sunday Telegraph, editorial, 22 January 2017.)

4. The response to Trump's election & first few days in office has been unusually vigorous across the USA and globally – including men, women, children and many dogs! Will this have enduring impact, changing politics and policies? Will it actually remove him?!

5. Standing back, reviewing the above in the context of history and what historians, philosophers or cultural commentators have written about pivotal periods of change, consider a recent opinion piece by Jeff Sparrow <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/jan/02/trump-brexite-left-progressives-aghast-they-should-be-emboldened> The Australian writer says, "The technical means (of facilitating participative democracy) are difficult enough but the biggest difficulty is in accepting, deep in our minds, the values on which they depend: that the ordinary people should govern..."

Further reading or viewing:

- a) The new White House website, for the Trump Administration, is here: <https://www.whitehouse.gov>. The text of his Inaugural Address is here: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/inaugural-address> . On the homepage, see "The Issues" of the President and his actions so far under the "Briefing Room".
- b) The old White House website of President Obama has been archived at: <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov> with links to Obama now.

These notes are modelled closely on those produced recently by the discussion circle at *The Blue Mugge*, Leek. Thanks to *The Muggers*! January 2017