

# Russell Brand v Jeremy Paxman

Lazy Trout 27 Jan 2014

Based on The Brand Paxman interview is on Youtube

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3YR4CseY9pk> and

*Russell Brand, populism and a collapsing centre* in OUR KINGDOM by Oliver Huitson

<http://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom/oliver-huitson/russell-brand-populism-and-collapsing-centre>

Paul Mason <http://www.channel4.com/news/russell-brand-jeremy-paxman-anti-capitalist-revolution-bbc>

We'll watch the Brand Paxman interview to start. It has been watched over 9 million times on Youtube – 10 minutes

What are our first impressions of this interview?

What do we think about the demeanour of the two people?

According to Huitson "Russell Brand said nothing unusual in his interview with Jeremy Paxman and yet it's been watched over 9m times and the debate is still raging. Why?"

"if Facebook is any guide it seemed initially ignored by writers and journalists while being reposted endlessly by relatively 'apolitical' 20 somethings. For this demographic (and judged purely on my own news feed) the last political event to gain such widespread discussion was the death of Margaret Thatcher in April.

"Why vote? We know its not going to make any difference" (Russell Brand) Another comedian, Robert Webb, wrote a response to Brand in the New Statesman, arguing that it was absurd to dissuade young people from voting. (Nick)Clegg echoed that view, saying that to remove yourself entirely from voting and politics was "a total abdication of responsibility".

According to Paul Mason of Channel 4 "Russell stands up in front of thousands of young people who've paid a serious dollop of their wages to hear him make them laugh. Though he looks like a survivor from Altamont, his audience do not: they are young, professional people; nurses, bank clerks, call centre operatives. And what Russell has picked up is that they hate, if not the concept of capitalism, then what it's doing to them. They hate the corruption manifest in politics and the media; the rampant criminality of a global elite whose wealth nestles beyond taxation and accountability; the gross and growing inequality; and what it's doing to their own lives."

Mason again ..."I think, on balance, Russell is right about the prospect of a revolution. It won't be a socialist revolution, nor even an anti-capitalist one in design. It will be something cultural - like the mass uprising of Turkish youth I saw in Taksim Square this year. A complete rejection of the corrupt and venal values of those who run society. In fact, as I've written before, it's already going on."

Mason again ..."What's driving it is the failure of the current model of capitalism to answer some basic questions: like where will the jobs come from if automation takes over our lives? Where will high wages come from if workers' bargaining power is just repeatedly stamped down by the process of globalisation? How will this generation

be secure in old age, if the pension system is shattered and we face half a century of boom-bust?"

Mason finally .....So Russell versus Jeremy was a big cultural event, akin maybe to one of those David Frost interviews in the Profumo era, only in this case it's the interviewee, not the interviewer, who speaks for the upcoming generation. Because while on my timeline everybody over 40 is saying, effectively, "tee hee, isn't Brand outrageous", a lot of people in their twenties are saying simply: Russell is right, bring it on.