

MSNBC: Cherry Picking News & Issues to Make Toxic Democrats Look Good



By BAR managing editor Bruce A. Dixon

For the last couple weeks and several more to come, Chris Christie will get more air time on MSNBC than drone murders, gentrification, NSA spying, and network neutrality put together. Why not? He's a Republican, and Democrats are only fighting it out between the 40 yard lines.

Why are some stories "news" and not others? Why will New Jersey governor Chris Christie's antics make the top of MSNBC news broadcasts for weeks to come, while the poisoning of 300,000 people by corporate greed and government abandonment on a scale not seen since Katrina dips below the radar as soon as corrupt officials declare there's nothing to see here, nothing at all? Why do Chris Christie's follies get more air time than drone murders, the revocation of network neutrality,

The answer is that some news stories make it easy to poke fun at racist, homophobic Republicans... the venal Chris Christies, the militantly ignorant Sarah Palins, and Michelle Bachmans, the craven Eric Cantors of the world,

while others point inconveniently *at the systemic evils of capitalism for which gender and ethnically diverse liberal Democrats are just as eager to front as Republicans.*

The death toll for government abandonment of people in West Virginia isn't nearly as high as that in Katrina, partly because pollutants and carcinogens kill and cripple slowly, but the principle is the same. Like New Orleans residents left to get out of town the best way they could, West Virginians were left to their own devices to do what their government was supposed to do for them – to figure out where, when, whether and how badly corporations were poisoning them. Nobody in government on any level lifted a finger to protect those people till hundreds of households simultaneously complained to local officials that their tap water stank of hydrocarbons. When government officials finally swung into action, they still held back full accounts of which chemicals they detected, in an apparent effort to safeguard the rights of “customers” as EPA likes to call the corporations it supposedly regulates.

The problem is that Democrats run West Virginia from top to bottom. Like Katrina, the evil forces on display in West Virginia implicate the core system of capitalism itself, not just the table manners of one out of the two capitalist parties. That makes the mass poisoning of West Virginia barely newsworthy, whether the carrier is Fox News, or CNN or MSNBC. All the news and cable networks, just like both the capitalist parties have to drink from that trough.

Whether it's urban black Democrat regimes in our big cities or the white Democrat establishment in West Virginia the mechanism is the same. Black big city urban Democrat mayors won't come out against gentrification or privatization or resist the federal initiatives that are privatizing public education because they are just as much the eager servants of capital as their Republican opponents. White West Virginia Democrat honchos won't rein in the rapacious

corporations that have made Appalachia a toxic wasteland either, [for the same reason](#) [2].

In the realms of actual policy, of reining in corporate privilege, the creeping prison and military state, Democrats will do very little to distinguish themselves from Republicans.

Nobody said it better than Democrat-in-chief Barack Obama to the [Wall Street Journal](#) [3] ['s CEO Council](#) [3] late last year

“People call me a socialist sometimes. But, no, you’ve got to meet real socialists. You’ll have a sense of what a socialist is,” Mr. Obama said. “I’m talking about lowering the corporate tax rate. My health-care reform is based on the private marketplace. The stock market is looking pretty good last time I checked... Here in America, the difference between Democrats and Republicans – we’re fighting inside the 40-yard lines,” “When fighting inside those 40 yard lines, Democrats need to foster strategic delusions, to deploy tactical distractions and effective branding that preserve the illusions needed to hold Democratic voters in the herd. That’s why the Christ Christie follies will get more air time this month than the revocation of network neutrality, drone murders, NSA spying, and administration lies about Syria and Afghanistan put together. All these are things the Obama administration could turn around tomorrow, and none of them are things he or we can blame on Republicans. So they aren’t news. Clamping down on toxic polluters is way outside those 40 yard lines.

It’s time to stop letting major media and Democratic party operatives tell us what the issues are. MSNBC, just like Moral Monday, is about keeping the political game between those 50 yard lines where the two capitalist parties want it, We need a political game played out in the red zone. We need to come up with urban development strategies apart from gentrification. We need to raise social security, roll back

the prison state, anchor the minimum wage to the cost of living and re-legalize real unions. We need to halt the privatization of public education and put it in the hands of teachers, parents and communities. We need to bring all the troops home, stop US imperial wars in every part of the globe, and pass a single payer health care plan.

We won't find any of those things mentioned during [Moral Monday street theater](#), [4] or explained on MSNBC, because all of them implicate Democrats at least as deeply as they do Republicans. And Democrats need to keep the political fight, as President Obama put it, between the 40 yard lines.

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