Did you know that the Democratic party in the U.S. relies more heavily upon large donations from millionaires for its finances than the Republicans? The Republican party takes in a much larger proportion of its funds from small and modest donations, because its backbone is formed by the small businessmen and "sole proprietors" (barbers, shopkeepers, plumbers, etc.) of the American heartland. The Democratic party gets its strength from the millionaires in the communications industry, Hollywood, and other new technological elites.

These underreported facts do not serve the mythology of the American Left. The Left imagines that it is the populist party. But most journalists, professors, and other commentators on public affairs are considerably to the left of the American people. And wealthier, and highly educated — in short, privileged. The "voice" of the Democratic party seems much more like the glitzy people "uptown" and in Hollywood than like the workers and middle class of Midland, Texas.

That is why, under the leadership of George W. Bush, the Republicans have gained control of not only the White House, but also the Senate, the House of Representatives, 29 of the 50 governorships (having won three out of four elections last month), and (for the first time in ages) a majority of the legislators in the 59 states.

So it is no wonder that a big story in the United States these days is "Bush-hating." The Democrats seem to be spinning crazily in pure fury at the president. Time magazine describes the president as a "polarizing figure." A small majority of Americans love him, Time says, but those on the leftmost side of the Democratic party positively hate him.

Why do they hate him? Some say he irritates them because he is a Yale elitist and a Connecticut plutocrat, others say because he is an unsophisticated lower-class Texas boob. Some say he is a clever schemer and liar, and others that he is a moron. Some say all these inconsistent things at once. The point is, they hate him and who cares exactly why?

Yet, I can see two reasons why leftists might really hate him.

Bush has stolen two things which the Democrats believe they own by right: the presidency, and the future.

Having finished on top in the Florida election by a small margin, the Bush team prevented the Democrats from stealing the election in the recount. But winning elections in a recount is a maneuver at which Democrats have been incomparably accomplished for generations. In most urban centers, the Democratic party controls the local workers who do the bulk of the counting and vote storage.

Therefore, Democrats felt the bitter loss in Florida with exquisite pain. The Republicans beat them on the streets, in the counting houses, and in the courts. That election belonged to them, Democrats think, and they have continued to cry out against a cosmic injustice.

After the election, each of the independent recounts of all the Florida votes showed that Bush had in fact won, with virtually the same margin as the election-night returns. But Democrats still feel they should have won, by a kind of cosmic right.

The second thing the Democrats think they own, by a kind of Hegelian dialectic, is the future. The Left has long believed that the Left defines the future, and points out the path of progress. In the past, moderate Republicans tended to respect this leftist claim, protesting only timidly, "Not so fast, not so much, not just yet." The Democrats got used to facing an essentially compliant, "me-too" opposition. They thought President Bush would be the same. He isn't.
That's why some Democrats call Bush "the most radical president in history," "the worst president [from their point of view] in a hundred years," a "disaster," and other such names.

It would take another column to show how Bush has cut off the future that the Democrats thought they owned, and how he dared to put the world (not just the U.S.) on an entirely new progressive path, both in domestic and in foreign policy. If he succeeds, the Democrats will be caught thinking in outmoded terms. In tax policy, in welfare policy, in medical care, and in support for democratic reforms rather than mere "stability" overseas, the very meaning of "progressive" will have been defined afresh. Failed Democratic programs will be revised, new directions will be set.

Of course, they hate him! He is the greatest threat to them in 100 years.

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