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CNN is Trash

Why has the hash tag #CNNisTrash been popular since this week's presidential primary debate? There was nothing new about the corporate, militarist, anti-progressive slant of the debate "moderation." What was new was the level of blatant bias so extreme that even viewers who knew nothing about the issues couldn't miss it, plus the amount of time CNN focused on expressing its hostility toward a single candidate, Bernie Sanders.

First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they attack you, then you win . . . or so the saying goes. The Bernie Sanders campaign is well into stage 3 out of 4.

Here's a petition where people are asking CNN to apologize for its performance.

Remarkably, CNN began Tuesday's debate with a focus on endless U.S. wars in the Middle East, and with questions aimed at criticizing those who had supported the launching of some of those wars many years ago — support that various politicians and even media outlets like the New York Times (but not CNN) have long since been compelled to apologize for.

Yet the CNN moderator began by noting how close the United States had just come to war with Iran and then asking Bernie Sanders why he would be the best commander in chief, not why he would be the best president for making peace. Next, CNN falsely claimed that Sanders had only recently admitted that his vote for war on Afghanistan was wrong, and equated that vote with Joe Biden's vote for and promotion of war on Iraq, as well as Biden's blatant lying about his record.

A bit later, this was part of a question to Sanders: "Iran's Ayatollah Khamenei has again called for all U.S. troops to be pulled out of the Middle East, something you've called for,

as well. Yet when American troops last left Iraq, ISIS emerged and spread terror across the Middle East and, indeed, around the world.” This clumsy propaganda equates opposition to war with a demonized enemy, and blames blowback on a withdrawal rather than on the invasion that created it.

With each new topic, the bias grew in Tuesday’s debate. What can be read in the debate transcript was compounded by the titles CNN displayed on the lower part of the television screen during each segment. For example: “Sanders’ proposals would double federal spending over a decade; how will he avoid bankrupting the country?”

CNN, which added right-wing journalists to its panels of questioners at all four of its Republican primary debates in 2016, has adamantly refused to add progressive journalists to its panels at Democratic debates.

CNN presented candidates supporting a NAFTA-like trade deal as reasonable Tuesday night, and accused Sanders of unwillingness to compromise. When Sanders’ cited environmentalist opposition to that trade deal, he was reprimanded for straying off topic.

Then CNN turned to a story that it had reported on just prior to the debate, alleging that Sanders had told Senator Elizabeth Warren that he did not believe a woman could be elected U.S. president. The CNN moderator ignored Sanders’ assertions that he had a public record going back decades of stating that a woman could be elected president, that he had stayed out of the race in 2015 until Warren decided not to run, and that in fact he had told Warren no such thing. Then came this exchange:

CNN: So Senator Sanders — Senator Sanders, I do want to be clear here, you’re saying that you never told Senator Warren that a woman could not win the election?

SANDERS: That is correct.

CNN: Senator Warren, what did you think when Senator Sanders told you a woman could not win the election?

You don’t have to know that you’d be better off with free college and Medicare for All than with yet another war to recognize the bias here.

Many viewers recognized the slant. Many even began to notice the strange double standard in never mentioning the cost of any of the wars, but pounding away on the misleading assertions that healthcare and other human needs cost too much. Here’s a question asked by CNN on Tuesday:

“Vice President Biden, does Senator Sanders owe voters a price tag on his health care plan?”

There was even time for this old stand-by bit of name-calling: “Senator Sanders, you call yourself a Democratic Socialist. But more than two-thirds of voters say they are not enthusiastic about voting for a socialist. Doesn’t that put your chances of beating Donald Trump at risk?”

So say the people who did so much to elect Donald Trump.

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