

The Utopian

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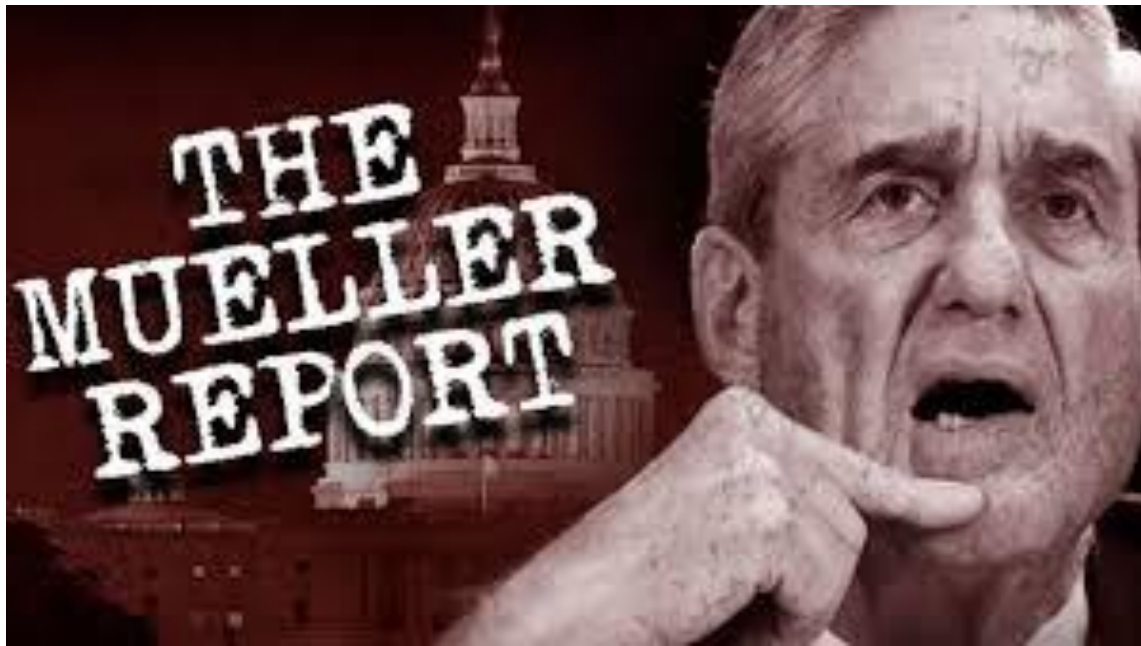
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Remarks on the Mueller Report

Ron Tabor, March 27, 2019



As we have been informed, Special Prosecutor Robert Mueller has delivered his official report on possible Russian interference in the United States' 2016 election to Attorney General William Barr. After two years and who knows how many hours of testimony and how many taxpayer dollars spent, the much-awaited report has resounded with the éclat of a soggy firecracker. If Barr's four-page summary of the report is accurate (and I believe it is), Mueller has concluded that while the Russians did interfere in the 2016 elections, there is no evidence that the Trump campaign conspired with them. Moreover, while not fully exonerating President Donald Trump, Mueller considered that there is not enough evidence to warrant a criminal charge that he actually obstructed the investigation.

It seems obvious to me that Mueller's report was as much (or even more) a political decision as a legal one. The political considerations motivating his recommendation were made crystal clear in an op-ed

piece in the New York Times written by former FBI director James Comey. Despite Comey's political and personal hostility to Trump, and despite the fact that he personally witnessed (indeed, was the target of) one of Trump's most blatant efforts to obstruct the investigation, Comey basically argued that despite Trump's malfeasance, nothing should be done to hold him accountable, since the resulting judicial process would be too divisive politically. Specifically, since legal experts seem to agree that a sitting president cannot be legally indicted, the only way forward would have been an impeachment process that would have further polarized an already-polarized electorate and intensified the alienation of that part of the electorate that voted for and still supports Trump, while inevitably failing to gain the necessary votes in the Republican-controlled Senate. Better to let the political process, including and in particular the 2020 elections, handle the problem. Beyond Mueller and Comey, crucial members of the Democratic Party leadership, particularly Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer, seem to have come to the same conclusion.



Leaving aside strictly legal and political judgments, it seems patently obvious to me that Mueller's conclusions on the facts of the matter are absurd. How dull does one have to be not to recognize that Donald Trump, his family, business associates, and campaign staff are political stooges of Vladimir Putin and the oligarchs/mobsters that surround him! The Russians own Donald Trump! As I've indicted elsewhere, I suspect the Russians have compromising material on him (probably a video/audio tape of Trump with some Russian prostitutes) that goes back to his first visit to Moscow in the 1980s. I also believe that Trump

is completely in hock to Putin and his associates. While Trump claims to be worth \$10 billion (others believe his net worth is closer to \$1.3 billion), I think it most likely that Trump has negative assets, that is, owes far more than he owns, and that the holders of this debt are the Russian oligarchs and the institutions in Russia and elsewhere, such as the Deutsche Bank, that they control. Trump went bankrupt six times. He also stiffed so many people – lenders, contractors, sub-contractors, and workers – so many times that no legitimate entity would lend him any money. In this situation, it was the Russians who bailed him out and to whom he is beholden.



Beyond all this, look at the people Trump has surrounded himself with and whose questionable activities were revealed in Mueller's own investigation! It seems obvious to me that they, and members of his own family, met and actively coordinated Trump's election campaign with political operatives (aka agents) working, directly or indirectly, for Putin and his pals. Consider all the people who have been convicted of or pleaded guilty to lying to Congress! Why lie if you have nothing to hide? Remember, too, Trump's hysterical efforts to impeach the character of Mueller's investigation (and even Mueller himself), the leaders of the intelligence agencies, and the mass media, his claims that it was all a "witch-hunt" and "fake news." Why such frenzied efforts to undercut, discredit, and obstruct the investigation if there was, in fact, nothing going on? Very clearly, there was something going on, but Mueller, Barr, and most of the rest of them are prepared to look the other way in the interests of political expediency.

So, while Trump crows about his "victory", his putzes, schlemazls, and schmigeggis, that is, Michael Cohen, Paul Manafort, Michael Flynn, George Papadopoulos, Rick Gates, Roger Stone, et. al., face trials, prison time, destroyed careers, and ruined lives... unless, of course, Trump pardons those he can and whose loyalty he still trusts. I hope they found their work for the "great man" to be worth it.



At least two things are clear:

First, Trump's legal worries are far from over. There are still more than a few on-going investigations on both the federal and state level into Trump and his family's businesses, "charities", and other affairs, with more than a few people who know something about Trump-world, including his long-time accountant, cooperating with investigators in exchange for leniency in sentencing for the crimes they've admitted to.

Second, while Robert Mueller may be held up for his non-partisanship, independence, and probity, he has actually revealed himself to be nothing but a loyal and rather cynical servant of the political Establishment and of the ruling elite whose interests it defends. For such people, the stability the system comes first, truth and justice last. Of course, he and his allies might see his decision as broad-minded, non-partisan, and principled.

California Teacher Movement— A Report and Assessment

Jack Gerson, May 31 2019



Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, the teacher movement in California is not building on, or even replicating, the most important positives of the red state teacher strikes.

Specifically: the red state strikes cut across geographic and demographic boundaries: they rapidly spread statewide, and they embraced teachers and non-teachers. And, importantly, they were not deterred by legalisms -- teacher strikes were illegal in these states, but they struck successfully anyway, embracing militant action and confrontation rather than a narrow legalistic and "collaborative" approach.

In contrast, in California teacher locals are striking one at a time -- Los Angeles in January; Oakland in February; Union City in May (they're on

strike now). And the main statewide teacher union, CTA, heavily pushes a very legalistic and very cautious approach, one that relies on appealing to Democratic party politicians on a very passive, "seat at the table", don't confront -- collaborate approach. This bears out what we observed a year ago: the red state strikes were successful where the state and national teacher unions were weakest precisely because those unions were too weak to strangle incipient militancy. In California, CTA has vast resources which it uses to restrain militancy.



Thus: in Los Angeles and in Oakland, the strikes were settled with less than could have been won -- in Los Angeles, the settlement was mediocre; in Oakland, it was worse. In both cases, the union leaders invited prominent Democrats in to help settle the strikes. And despite ongoing rhetoric about the need to move towards statewide strikes, not only did LA and Oakland strike at different times when they could have struck at the same time, but their new contracts don't expire at the same time -- the LA contract expires in June 2021, the Oakland contract in June 2022. In other words, they've moved away from coordinating for a statewide strike.

More: A week ago, on May 22nd, there was a statewide mobilization of teachers to converge on Sacramento. It was initially billed as a convergence to support Sacramento city teachers, who were going to strike on that day. But then, CTA reversed field and leaned on the Sacramento teachers to call off their planned strike. The reason is obvious: CTA made May 22nd into a toothless day for lobbying

legislators -- and only top CTA leadership and some local presidents got to do that lobbying. The rest of us were fed lunch on the Capitol Mall lawn, and then marched around downtown for an hour or two (and then there were some of those lame union chants, that are at best reminiscent of high school cheerleading and at worst of kindergarten).

Worse: at the same time as that toothless CTA Sacramento event, Union City teachers were (and still are) striking. But CTA is doing the opposite of trying to spread that strike to other locals, or to even hold partial work stoppages. And in the absence of that, what happens? Well, what's going on in Oakland is a good example of that.

The day after the Oakland strike ended, the school district laid off about 150 classified school workers (mainly SEIU members), eliminated several student programs, and closed several school libraries (laying off librarians in the process).



About two weeks after the Oakland strike ended, state superintendent of public instruction Tony Thurmond (an insurgent Democrat who has been heavily supported by CTA, OEA and DSA) appointed a panel to study and report back with recommendations on charter school regulation reform -- an eleven-member panel, seven of whom have strong ties to the charter school industry.

About a month after the Oakland strike ended, the Alameda County Office of Education took over full control of the Oakland school district's

finances -- the district's deputy superintendent for business was fired (he was somewhat honest) and the district's Chief Financial Officer now reports to the County superintendent of schools. This was done under legislation -- AB1840 -- that also assigns the Fiscal Control and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) to monitor OUSD finances and, together with the county office of education, to enforce budget cuts. (Indeed, the layoffs and cuts that were made just after the OEA strike ended were done at the insistence of FCMAT.) During the state takeover of OUSD, 2003 - 2009, FCMAT, please note, were the state-imposed auditors and, as such, gave a green light to severe downsizing (layoffs, school closures, program cuts, library closures) and a steep increase in outsourcing to private consultants. Then, from 2013 - 2017, FCMAT campaigned to have City College of San Francisco's academic accreditation revoked (eventually defeated because of a huge pushback by the SF community, but not before enrollment dropped significantly and several programs were cut).

What is CTA doing about this? Nothing -- they supported AB1840 when it was adopted by the legislature last year. What is the OEA leadership doing? They're hoping to elect some better school board members in November 2020 (besides that being 18 months away, there's not much chance of success there; first of all, pro-corporate candidates are heavily funded by the real estate and financial interests that run the city; and second, even when a well-intentioned "reformer" gets elected, they change their tune almost immediately to become executors of cutbacks and feeding private contractors.)

To end on a more positive note -- it's clear that teachers' energy and expectations have been lifted by the success of the red state strikes. There are a number of rank and file teachers who are not happy with the OEA contract and who think that the union should not have folded the strike when and how they did. Most of them are not yet ready to completely give up on the leadership, which after all has been in office for less than a year, and which did mobilize well for the strike (but ran the strike top down; relied on the Democrats to deliver; pursued an opaque, cautious approach rather than confronting corporate power by shutting down the port and the city center).

But the red state strikes have revived the strike as a weapon. For years, the CTA leadership and allies in local leadership pushed back against any talk of striking -- those who advocated building for strikes were

called "strike-happy". This year, amid the surge of expectations generated by the red state strikes, CTA has had to change its tune. Rather than opposing strikes in Los Angeles and Oakland, it sought to control them, to keep them short (six school days in Los Angeles, seven in Oakland) and non-confrontational, and to lobby for modest settlements brokered by Democratic Party politicians.

However, strikes – even relatively short ones – are schools whose participants learn a great deal about what it will take to win. New leaders and increased rank and file awareness often emerge from these struggles. For sure, some of the younger teachers are learning, and maybe their patience with the current leaders will soon wear thin. For some it already has: there are signs of incipient organized opposition. That is a start -- just a start, but a start nonetheless.

Some Initial Considerations on Ihlan Omar, the Palestinians, and Anti-Semitism

Ron Tabor, March 27, 2019



To me, the saddest part about the recent brouhaha over Congresswoman Ihlan Omar's tweets and comments on the matter of the Palestinians, Israel, and the Zionist lobby is that none of the issues involved got seriously discussed, let alone clarified. Although some young activists seem to feel that the number of people rallying to Omar's side reflects progress in the struggle to raise and defend the justice of the struggle of the Palestinians to liberate their land, I am not convinced this is the case. On the contrary. As I see it, Omar's comments and the controversy that ensued served to muddy the waters still further and to allow those who wish to tar all defenders of the Palestinian cause with the brush of anti-Semitism to continue to do so.

I am prepared to accept that Ihlan Omar is not personally anti-Semitic. However, there is little doubt in my mind that her tweets and other comments promoted anti-Semitic motifs which I, personally – as both a

militant supporter of the Palestinians and a strongly identified Jew – found offensive.



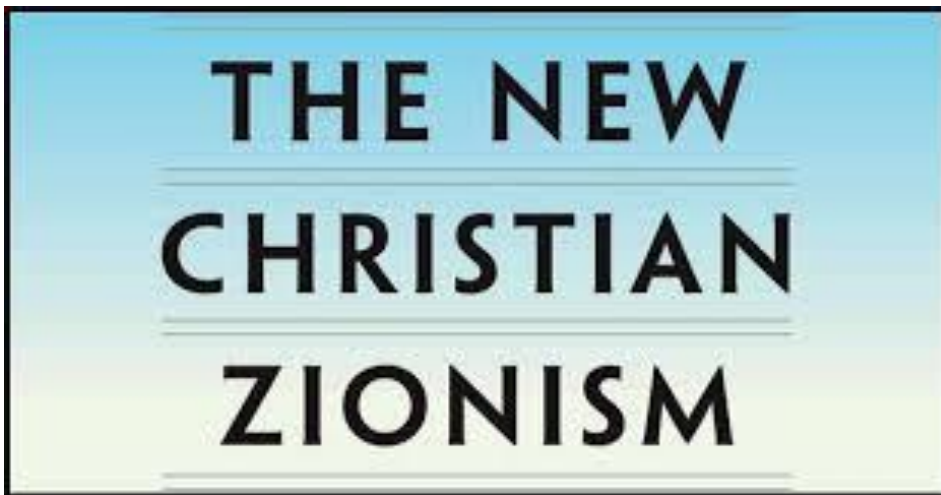
Some of these motifs are:

- A. Representative Omar's comments implied that "the Jews" act in concert, that we are not distinct and separate individuals who, despite a common religion and/or cultural background, have our own diverse views on a variety of subjects (among them, Israel, Zionism, and the Palestinians) that deserve to be addressed as those of individuals and not those of a unified and disciplined political bloc. This dovetails with the long history of the notion, most vividly promoted by the Protocols of the Elders of Zion (now recognized as a forgery perpetrated by the Okhrana, the Tsarist secret police), that "the Jews" are all participants in an international conspiracy to subvert "Christian civilization" and take over the world. It is worth noting in this regard that some of the most active and dedicated supporters of the cause of the Palestinians and opponents of Zionism and the Zionist project have been, and continue to be, Jews. This includes many scholars from around the world, some of whom have run considerable risk to their careers and even their lives to discover and disseminate the truth about the history of Zionism, Israel, and the tragedy of the Palestinians. I include here the Frenchman, Maxime Rodinson; the Israelis, Ian Pappé and Avi Raz; and the Americans, David Hirst and Norman G. Finkelstein. I am sure there are many others.

- B. Omar's comments also cast doubt on the patriotism of American Jews by raising the subject of "divided loyalties", thus implying that most Jews are or are likely to be more loyal to Israel than to the United States. This, too, has a deep past in the history of anti-Semitism, the so-called "wandering Jew" of the Middle Ages, the alien poisoners of the Aryan peoples of the Nazis, and the "rootless cosmopolitans" of the Soviet Union under Stalin and after. Although I, personally, do not consider myself to be a patriot, it is my firm belief that the overwhelming majority of Jews in the United States are deeply committed to the United States, to the U.S. Constitution, and to the other institutions of the country. They are particularly grateful for the fact that the United States has offered observant and non-observant Jews alike a homeland in which they have been at least somewhat safe from the discrimination, contempt, and periodic mass assaults ("pogroms") to which they and their ancestors were subject in Russia, other countries of Eastern and Western Europe, and elsewhere in the world. In fact, many Jews, including Soviet Jews who were allowed to leave the Soviet Union for Israel, much preferred to immigrate to the United States rather than go to or remain in Israel. Not least, why does Omar appear to single out Jews, among the myriad of immigrant groups (including Somalis) living in the United States, as being likely to harbor divided loyalties?
- C. Omar seems to imply that the main reason Jewish politicians and other prominent figures support Israel is because of the money disseminated by the "Zionist lobby" (or, as some still call it, the "Jewish lobby") and other wealthy Jews. ("It's all about the Benjamins", meaning the \$100 bills that feature the picture of Benjamin Franklin one side, Omar tweeted.) This, obviously, refers to the anti-Semitic motif that Jews are obsessed with (and especially gifted at making and hoarding) money, in other words, that we are all rich money-grubbers. There definitely exists a "Zionist lobby" in the United States, a group of very powerful organizations (among them the American-Israel Political Action Committee, the Congress of Presidents of Major Jewish

Organizations, the American Jewish Congress, and the Anti-Defamation League) who militantly defend Israel and quickly rush to attack and impugn the reputation of any public figure (including, quite recently, former president Jimmy Carter) who dares to challenge the Zionist/pro-Israel/anti-Palestinian consensus that currently dominates political and intellectual discourse in the United States. But there are (at least) two things that need to be said here:

1. A major and very powerful wing of this lobby does not consist of Jews at all but of evangelical Christians who, for their own (and anti-Semitic) reasons, are fanatical defenders of the state of Israel. In their conception, Israel is to be the site of the Second Coming of Jesus, who will in-gather all the Jews from around the world into Israel, turn all non-Christians, (including the Jews) into devout Christians (thus doing away with Jews and Judaism altogether), and bring about God's Kingdom on Earth.



2. The main reasons those Jews (and others) who do support the state of Israel hold to this position have nothing to do with money. Rightly or wrongly, ignorantly or in full knowledge of the situation there, they support the state of Israel because they believe it is politically and morally the right thing to do. Among the reasons for this are: that the existence of the state of Israel makes Jews around the world safer than they would

otherwise be; that Israel, for all its faults, is the only democratic state in the Middle East at a time when democracy is on the retreat there and elsewhere; that Israel helps to defend the secular West against the rising tide of Islamic fundamentalism that threatens to engulf the world; that the Palestinians, for whatever reason, have come under the political hegemony of fanatical anti-Semitic leaders and organizations whose aim is not only to destroy the state of Israel but also to drive all the Jews into the sea, that is, to carry out another Holocaust; that for these and other reasons, the rights of the Palestinians deserve little or no consideration.



Without going into details here, my own view is that none of this justifies the horrible injustice that has been done, and is still being done, to the Palestinians: their expulsion, at gunpoint and through other forms of coercion, from the land in which they and the ancestors worked, farmed, maintained their businesses and their political and cultural life for generations; the destruction of their farms and businesses; the daily brutalization – insults, beatings, arrests, imprisonment, torture, and assassinations, to which they are subjected; their marginalization and oppression within Israel itself; their demonization and dehumanization, painted as the descendants of Nazis and other radical anti-Semites, made to pay the entire price of the Holocaust themselves, even though

that catastrophe occurred in Europe and not in the Middle East and was carried out by Europeans not by Palestinians; essentially forced to atone, all by themselves, for the horrors that were perpetrated on the Jews in Europe and around the world throughout all of history.

Perhaps Representative Omar deserves praise for having had the courage to raise the cause of the Palestinians in the pro-Israel cauldron that is Washington, D.C. If it turns out that she is not personally anti-Semitic and is truly interested in defending the rights of the Palestinians and in fighting anti-Semitism, it might be good if she were encouraged to run her tweets and other comments on the issues of the Palestinians, Israel, and the Jews by her friends, comrades, and colleagues who have had more experience on American politics and who might know better how to avoid playing into the hands of the enemies of the cause of the Palestinians and of justice around the world, before she releases them to the public.

‘MeToo’ Movement— Comments and Discussion

Roni,

The International Socialist Organization (ISO) situation was instructional, in my view, as to how 'red scares, 'witches,' 'invasions from Mars,' and (in this ISO case) 'sexual assault,' can whip up hysteria that moves beyond reason to assumption of guilt. I don't claim to know what is true or not true in the ISO situation (though my skepticism about the original claims is strong). I think the DSA situation is potentially fascinating. However, I urge that we apply the same skepticism to what we hear on this matter that we apply to everything we hear and read in the 'bourgeois press.'

Rod

Rod and All,

I find myself in direct opposition to Rod's point of view on the 'me too' movement. In my view, this is an important grass-roots movement. Women are sick and tired of being harassed and assaulted by men, especially those holding positions of power.

I understand the feeling that at times this has gone too far and that those accused are not given a chance to defend themselves. I think to start organizations need to create procedures to deal with these issues before the problem arises. Those accused have the right to know the specific charges and to have a hearing before impartial adjudicators, where they are given the opportunity to present their side of the issue. Those bringing charges have the right to know those charges are taken seriously, that the issue will be dealt with expeditiously and that if the accused person is found to have harassed or assaulted another person that person will be suspended for a lengthy period or expelled from the organization.

These are highly volatile issues and devising fair procedures is not easy. Nevertheless, the issue needs to be addressed. Trying to hide complaints just leads to more bitterness and ultimately to splits and mass resignations. Furthermore, if an organization's claim to believe in women's rights is to be taken as more than empty rhetoric then it needs to deal sternly with those members who harass or assault others.

One final point. The ISO issue arose out of a charge of rape. The person making this accusation should have been encouraged to take this complaint to the police. Rape is a serious crime, and the ramifications of it go well beyond the capabilities of an organization such as ISO.

Eric

Eric and All,

Eric writes that he finds himself "in direct opposition to Rod's point of view on the 'me-too' movement." I think Eric and I may have disagreements, but let's try to clarify what we are disagreeing about.

1. I didn't write or express a point of view on the Me-Too movement. I made references, in the context of the ISO situation and possibly the DSA situation, to dangers of 'witch-hunt hysterias.' I will return to this point.

2. I believe (as I am reasonably certain that both Eric and Roni do), that: a) women have been harassed, discriminated against in myriad ways, molested, assaulted, and even murdered *simply for being women* since all history I know began; b) women have raised voices more aggressively that are more frequently (but not always) heard with credibility around the issue of gender assault. (Discussing the why and wherefores for this has taken place in the most recent past and present, including its connections to the positive sea change that has occurred around gender issues generally (gay/straight; male/female; trans, bi-and more) seems quite worthwhile to me.); 3) that the overwhelming thrust of this is to advance issues of social justice. 4) that, to the degree that this is what we are referring to when we speak of the 'Me-Too' movement, these positives hold.

If Eric or anyone else is 'in direct opposition' to the views I just stated, I think it would be very important to discuss these differences. However, I don't think this is where the differences between Eric and me (and perhaps others) lie. What, then, is Eric directly opposing? I think he is opposing my implied criticisms of the Me-Too movement. Assuming this is so, I will make these criticisms more direct, and less implied, in the hopes we can discuss and debate what we actually disagree about. I will also make the case for why these criticisms should be voiced.

1) As Roni alludes to, the Me-Too movement, or elements of that movement, have advanced the view that a woman voicing an allegation of sexual harassment/assault/rape should 'automatically' be believed and, conversely, an accused man should be 'presumed guilty until proven innocent.' With views such as this being made *explicit*, it hardly takes argument to suggest that an unfortunate 'witch-hunt atmosphere' can arise. I am not going to take the time here to explain why these are atrocious notions or why the consequences are devastatingly negative . I will (provocatively) say that it is akin to shooting everyone who has 'bourgeois origins or attitudes.' If someone disagrees, I am happy to have *that* discussion.

2) There are those who might say: "Yes, Rod, but the 'main line of march' is defending against women's oppression. Your criticisms weaken the 'main line of march.'" If anyone on this list believes this is the case, then *let's discuss this*. I come from a political tendency that never thought that opposing US imperialism meant withholding criticisms of Castro or Pol Pot. I come from a tendency that supported the civil rights struggle, but never thought that it should hold back on its criticisms on the limitations of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Or the hucksterism of Jesse Jackson. It's a tendency that supported Black nationalism as a legitimate alternative to an Integrationist perspective--but it never thought that it shouldn't say that Louis Farrakhan was an authoritarian, reactionary creep. I could go on. But, if this is the issue, *let's discuss this*.

Rod

Eric and All,

As a follow-up to my previous email, I ask the following:

Do those accused of rape, sexual assault, and sexual harassment have the right to defend themselves, and that there should exist fair legal procedures that allow them to do so, and that, as a logical consequence, all "survivors" are not automatically to be believed?

I think it would be helpful to the discussion (not just between Eric and me) to clarify whether this is a difference or not.

Rod

first, and almost as an aside: some form of male on female rape (i.e. "date" rape) is so commonplace as to be an unspoken "rite of passage." it is only now, in the light of #metoo that some of my oldest friends have confided such experiences to me. "I let him have his way with me."

Robin

Hi Robin, Eric, Rod and all,

In general, the "law" should be able deal with it. However, if I killed my rapist it would be hard as hell in our courts to get off on a self-defense plea. So, in a case of rape, we almost always have to believe the women unless there's the facts to prove otherwise.

I still maintain that if a guy is a hugger naturally (hugs guys as well) to accuse him of "he makes me uncomfortable" as a sexual harassment goes too far. #metoo takes it way too far. I don't want a society that goes from objectifying women to harassing men. Are men in general more to blame when it comes to sexual assault under capitalism, yes. However, Tyler Perry and I guess many other men were sexually assaulted, some by men some by women. Capitalism created and

continues a patriarchal society. That's the fact and it oppresses everyone men included.

Love you all,

Roni

Hi All,

I think that in the vast majority of cases women who make public accusations of rape and sexual coercion against well-known people should be trusted because they do it in the context of the justified expectation of punishment of being attacked, being publicly denigrated and a lot of sharp scrutiny from the supporters of the accused. Sadly, government agencies, the police, the courts, legislative investigators, etc. are not very respectful or compassionate toward them either, even though there has been small improvements in this area. That being said, I do firmly believe that all accused people deserve the opportunity to defend themselves against false charges.

For me, however, there is another pressing issue, that of how to develop better processes for dealing with cases of sexual harassment and rape in anti-authoritarian and anarchist communities. As it stands now, restorative justice processes are often not really effective in solving problems of this sort, even when several people have direct knowledge of the incident. Also, I definitely don't think that police intervention is helpful, especially since they are not sympathetic to anarchist or other anti-authoritarian groups, and generally wish us harm. That is probably also the case with respect to socialist and social democratic groups.

I know of two cases in which restorative justice was attempted, both people involved were listened to and attempts at reaching understanding and behavior change were made. In both cases the aggressors left the groups they had been involved with. In one case the victim also dropped out. In the other case the victim stayed.

I know that answers are difficult to develop in the context of the current

authoritarian macho male dominated society, but I think that discussing possibilities is important.

In Solidarity.

Sylvie

Who We Are

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To look for Utopia means providing a vision for the future – of a world worth living in, of a life beyond what people settle for as experience clouds their hopes. It means insisting that hope is real, counting on human potential and dreams.

Utopians do not accept “what is” as “what must be.” We see potential for freedom even in the hardest of apparent reality. Within our oppressive society are forces for hope, freedom, and human solidarity, possibilities pressing toward a self-managed, cooperative commonwealth. We don’t know if these forces will win out; we see them as hopes, as moral norms by which to judge society today, as challenges to all of us to act in such a way as to realize a fully human community.

We can describe some of these possibilities: worldwide opposition to the imperialist domination of the global economy; struggles against dictatorship in China, Syria, Egypt, and Venezuela; fights for national liberation in Ukraine, Kurdistan, and Palestine; cultural movements for the defense and recovery of indigenous languages and histories; changes in society’s acceptance of homosexuality, trans-gender freedom, and women’s equality, campaigns to defend the rights of immigrants and racial and religious minorities. The organized labor movement and the Black movement in the United States have – we hope – new utopian phases ahead.

But beyond these specifics, we are talking about something familiar to everyone, although difficult to get a handle on. In small ways, every day, people live by cooperation, not competition. Filling in for a co-worker, caring for an old woman upstairs, helping out at AA meetings, donating and working for disaster relief – people know how to live cooperatively on a small scale. What we don’t know, and no one has found a blueprint for, is how to live cooperatively on a national and international scale – even on the scale of a mass political movement. Nobody has described how the society we want will look, or how to get it, though we know what it will be – a society where people are free to be good.

This is a good time to be publishing a journal dedicated to utopianism, revolutionary socialism, and anarchism. The left is no longer in retreat. The struggles of organized labor, the Black and Latino communities, women, lesbian/bisexual/gay/transgender people, indigenists, and environmentalists are gaining strength. Within the world of the organized left, the influence of anarchists and libertarian socialists has greatly increased.

But these are perilous times as well. The fabric of the post-World War II world system—a “democratic ideal” for Europe and the United States masking elite control and international domination—is fraying. In the U.S. and Europe, we see ideals of openness and inclusion in collision with xenophobia and race resentment. The parties of reform – the Democrats in the U.S., the Social Democrats in Europe, the Christian Democrats in Latin America, the old nationalist parties in Africa and Asia (where they still exist) – have abandoned the idea of social reform and freedom from international capital; yet, at least in the U.S., the Democratic Party has lost none of its ability to absorb, blunt, and demoralize radical efforts at change from within. While the collapse of the Soviet bloc and China’s adoption of a capitalist economic system under a Communist political dictatorship have tarnished Marxism’s idealist image, they have also discredited, for many, the very idea of changing society fundamentally. As never since the early nineteenth century, many believe that market capitalism is the only path to human progress.

A highly problematic new phenomenon in recent years has been the rise of Islamicist or Jihadist religious fanaticism, which exploits radical hopes for escape from western domination as mass support for a tyrannical, socially regressive, and exceptionally brutal war against non-Muslims and the great majority of Muslims. This development is a response partly to the collapse of secular anti-imperialism in Africa, the Arab world, and Asia since fifty years ago, and partly to continuing European domination in these areas, now made worse by the anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim backlash in Europe itself. The road forward, clearly, lies in rebuilding a democratic, radical anti-imperialism, but how this may occur we don’t know.

Moreover, with a few exceptions, revolutionary anarchist and libertarian socialist groups remain small and their influence limited. Various kinds of reformism and Marxism still attract radical-minded people. Both these ideologies and their corresponding movements accept the state, capital-labor relations, conventional technology, and political authoritarianism.

But these are reasons why it is important to continue to work for freedom and speak of utopia. This racist, sexist, and authoritarian society has not developed any new charms. It remains exploitive and unstable, threatening economic collapse and environmental destruction. It wages war around the globe, while nuclear weapons still exist and even spread. Even at its best - - most stable and peaceful - it provides a way of life that should be intolerable: a life of often meaningless work and overwork; hatred and oppression within the family, violence from the authorities; the continuing risk of sudden violent death for LGBT people, women, and Black people; the threat of deportation of undocumented immigrants. The very major reforms of the last period of social struggle, in the 1960s, while changing so much, left African Americans and other minority populations in the U.S. and around the world facing exclusion and daily police (state) violence, literally without effective rights to life. The videos we see every day (in which new technology makes visible what has always been going on) reveal, like sheet lightning, the reality of the system we live under. For this society, from its inception, to call itself "democracy" is a slap in the face of language.

This paradoxical situation - a society in obvious decay but without a mass movement to challenge it fundamentally - is, we hope, coming to an end. As new movements develop, liberal-reform and Marxist ideas will show new life, but so have utopian and libertarian ideas. We work with this in mind. We have to do what was not done during the last period of really radical social struggles in the 1960s and 1970s. Among other things, revolutionary anarchist and libertarian socialist theory very much needs further development, including its critique of Marxism, and its ideas about how to relate to mass struggles, democratic and socialist theory, and popular culture. And we need to reinvigorate the ideals of anarchism/libertarian socialism and the threads in today's world that may, if we can find them and follow them, lead to a future worth dying for and living in.

This future, we state clearly, is an ideal, not a certainty. The lure of Marxism, for many, has been its seeming promise that a new world is objectively determined and inevitable. This idea is not only wrong but elitist and brutal: if the new society is inevitable then those who are for it are free to shoot or imprison everyone who stands in the way. That is the key to Marxism's development from utopia to dictatorship, which everyone except Marxists is aware of. Nor do we believe in an inevitable collapse of the present system—capitalism can push its way from crisis to crisis at its usual cost in broken lives and destroyed hopes. We believe people have to make ethical choices about whether to accept life as it is or to struggle for

a new society, and then about whether the society they are for will be democratic or authoritarian. The only key to the future is a moral determination to get there, a dream of a world in which those who were obscure to one another will one day walk together. We do not know where this key may be found, but we know the only way to find it is to search for it.

That is who we are.

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