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FOCUS: WTF?!!:

Strange things leak into my feed, usually as people I trust tell me I must take so-and-so seriouslyâ€”not their ideas, but their token-sequences as thermometers for guaging social temperatures.

And yet, usually, I have a hard time reacting soberly. Thus I look at the European intellectual far-leftist nostalgia for really-existing socialismâ€”or maybe it is the European intellectual far-rightist nostalgia for fascism, it is really hard to tellâ€”and go â€œWTF?!?!â€œ This, for example: Anton J  ger warning us how â€œEuropean industry and security policy [is now] subordinate to American geopolitical imperativesâ€œ.

The â€œAmerican geopolitical imperativesâ€œ to which â€œEuropean industry and security policy [is now] subordinateâ€œ is that *a cruel and authoritarian Muscovite r  gime not conquer and once again dominate Eastern Europe*.

This is an American goal, yes.

But one would think it is a European goal as well. Indeed, one would think that it would be a much higher priority goal for non-Ukrainian Europeans whose close cousins are right now being stalked by killer robots.

And those who do not share in this â€œAmerican geopolitical imperativeâ€œ? I gotta say: to me they look either (1) deranged, or (2) puppets of todayâ€™s kleptocratic Kremlin.

Anton J  ger: [The American experiment has just begun](#): *As Baudrillard warned, US politics is coming for Europe:* â€”The result of Putinâ€™s war has been a full-blown â€œreturn of the kingâ€œ, with European industry and security policy subordinate to American geopolitical imperatives. It feels as if the EU is effectively run from Langley. Energy costs are destabilising the German export model. Dollar supremacy is stronger than ever. The biggest army in human history is now trying to reshore its industry. Liquid gas supplies find their way to Stuttgart. Late imperial Rome with a stock exchange and nuclear weapons, and the same spectacle of public acclamations that accompanied the crepuscules of the pagan worldâ€”a vertiginously unbalanced form of hegemony.

The politics of other developed nations are also Americanising, with regular BLM rallies and trans controversies a recurrent feature. The hollow universality of American culture induces both despair and comfort. From Silicon Valley to evangelicalism to Trump to polyamory to the military-industrial complex. Anti-Americanism might be a moral imperative for Europeans. It certainly is satisfying. But a disinterest in the US is hard to justify politically, let alone strategically expedient.

Again: WTF?!?!:

Constructing an enemy: â€œAmericaâ€œ. (What has America ever done for us? One can see how Belgian Nazis and Stalinists might have a beef; but with others it is not so clear.) Claiming that while anti-Americanism is a moral imperative one must be â€œstrategicâ€œ and â€œnot disinterestedâ€œ in it. And then racing immediately into the embrace of a kleptocratic authoritarian in the Kremlin.

What kind of politics is this? And is it better classified as leftist, rightist, or simply stupid?

Let me quote some paragraphs from my *Slouching Towards Utopia* here:

Have I committed an error by not lumping fascists in with really-existing socialists? After all, how much light really shines between the fascist and the really-existing socialist?

A distressing number of people, starting with Mussolini him- self, seem to have transited from one to the other directly. That suggests not a left-right political spectrum but rather a horseshoe, or even a color wheel. Red and blue are as far apart in terms of visual wavelengths as colors can be. Yet if you take magenta paint and add a little bit of cyan you get blue; if you take magenta and add a little bit of yellow you get red. George Orwell famously asked, â€œBut arenâ€™t we all socialists?â€œ He was in Barcelona, it was 1937, and the Stalinist-backed socialists were exterminating the Spanish Marxist faction that he had joined when he arrived in the city (the Workersâ€™ Party of Marxist Unification). All the while, Francoâ€™s fascists waited outside the city.

There were important policy differences.

As Hermann Rauschning claimed Hitler had said to him, â€œWhy need we trouble to socialize banks and factories? We socialize human beings!â€œ That is to say, really-existing socialism focuses first on control over institutions and commodity flows and only secondarily on control over what people think, say, and doâ€”but we focus first on what people think, say, and do.

How profound a difference was this really? And while status inequality was important to really-existing socialists, material inequality and ruling-class luxury was . . . embarrassing. By contrast, for fascists, if material inequality and ruling-class luxury bothered you, it only demonstrated that you were not really with the program.

But do these constitute a difference in species, or just variation within a species properly called â€œtotalitarianâ€œ?

Let us bring in as a reference British socialist historian Eric Hobsbawmâ€”a card-carrying communist from before World War II until 1956, thereafter becoming more moderateâ€”who had a couple of asides in his histories that strike me as revealing:

The first comes in his 1994 book *The Age of Extremes*, a history of what he called the short twentieth century, or the period from the start of World War I in 1914 to the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. Hobsbawm, writing in his old age, still believed that joining a â€œMoscow-aligned Communist partyâ€œ was, for those who de- sired global revolution, â€œthe only game in townâ€œ: â€œLeninâ€™s â€œparty of a new typeâ€œ . . . gave even small organizations disproportionate effectiveness, because the party could command extraordinary devotion and self-sacrifice from its members, more than military discipline and cohesiveness, and a total concentration on carrying out party decisions at all costs,â€œ he wrote. â€œThis impressed even hostile observers profoundly.â€œ

Is there a hairâ€™s breadth of difference between the fascistsâ€™ worship of a heroic leader and Hobsbawmâ€™s belief that unthinking obedience to the dictator in Moscowâ€”whoever he might beâ€” who had murdered nearly all of his peersâ€”was praiseworthy, and profoundly impressive? To accept that being a follower meant de- votion and self-sacrifice at all costs would absolutely have earned Mussoliniâ€™s and Hitlerâ€™s approval. â€œThis is a fascist coupâ€œ were perhaps the last words of Stalinâ€™s peer Bolshevik Gregory Zino- viev, as Stalinâ€™s henchmen shot him...

And Hobsbawm could be aggressively and neoliberally rightist:

One touchstone, again, is British left-wing historian Eric Hobsbawm. Hobsbawm saw the late 1970s and the subsequent discontent with the social democratic order as justified, writ- ing, â€œThere were good grounds for some of the disillusion with state-managed industries and public administration.â€œ He de- nounced the â€œrigidities, inefficiencies and economic wastages so often sheltering under Golden Age government policies.â€œ And he declared that â€œthere was considerable scope for applying the neo-liberal cleansing-agent to the encrusted hull of many a good ship â€œMixed Economyâ€œ with beneficial results.â€œ He went on with the clincher, saying that neoliberal Thatcherism had been necessary, and that there was a near-consensus about this after the fact: â€œEven the British Left was eventually to admit that some of the ruthless shocks imposed on the British economy by Mrs. Thatcher had probably been necessary.â€œ

Hobsbawm was a lifelong communist. To the end of his days, he would continue to stubbornly maintain, while drinking tea with his respectful interviewers, that the murderous careers of Lenin and Stalin (but perhaps not Mao?) had been worth undertaking, because they indeed might, had things turned out differently, have unlocked the gates and opened the road to a true utopia. Yet he also eagerly attended the Church of the Thatcher, its

turned out differently, have unlocked the gate and opened the road to a true utopia. Yet he also eagerly attended the Church of the Thatcher-ite Dispensation, where he heard and then himself preached the Lesson: the market giveth, the market taketh away; blessed be the name of the marketâ€

Show me who I talk to say that I greatly understate the role that bribes and videos play in the construction of the pro-Muscovite opposition to North Atlantic civilization. Perhaps. Perhaps I am not barking up the wrong tree as a worry the question of how conceptual frameworks are much less important than performatively assuming an oppositional stance.

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MUST-READS: ãŽe Best Things About Twitter I Have Seen Today:

I need to stop talking about this. I have already blocked â€œElon Muskâ€œ, â€œMuskâ€œ, and â€œElonâ€œ from my feeds. Yet he keeps leaking through. And I do not need to have him living rent-free in my brain.

But here are two that properly orient you:

Linette Lopez: [At Tesla and SpaceX, Elon Musk was a jerk with a grand vision. At Twitter, he's just a jerk](#): â€”The Musk playbook: Enter a field with very little competition. Claim that your new company will solve a massive, global problemâ€€. Raise money from a fervent group of true believersâ€€. flashy, half-baked product ideasâ€€. Repeat. Twitter is the antithesis of an "Elon Musk company.â€œ... At previous stops in his career, Musk's employee-punishing, product-pushing plays worked. Customers seemed satisfied with what he gave them, and he was able to keep around enough workers to eventually build the cars or mount the solar panels or launch his rocketsâ€€! [because] they are made to feel as if they are saving the worldâ€€. Selling the dream is what turned Tesla's stock into a superstar since it went public. People bought Tesla to be part of Musk's mission. It didn't matter that the company only became profitable last year, or that it had an unreliable lineup of vehicles, or that more-established automakers were poised to catch upâ€€. There is no pivot in which Musk suddenly becomes serious and starts actingâ€€! normalâ€€. Theâ€€! boss from hell you see on Twitter is the one people actually get in Musk world. It's always been that way...

Mike Masnick: [No, The FBI Is NOT â€”Paying Twitter To Censorâ€™](#): â€”Musk is either deliberately lying about stuff or too ignorant to understand what heâ€™s talking about, and I donâ€™t know which is worse, though neither is a good look. Today, his argument is that â€œthe FBI has been paying Twitter to censor,â€œ and he suggests this is a big scandal. This would be a big scandal if true. But, itâ€™s not. Itâ€™s just flat out wrong. As with pretty much every one of these misleading statements regarding the very Twitter that he runs, where people (I guess maybe just former people) could explain to him why heâ€™s wrong, it takes way more time and details to explain why heâ€™s wrong than for him to push out these misleading lines that will now be taken as fact. But, since at least some of us still believe in facts and truth, letâ€™s walk through thisâ€€!

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