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JAMES PORTEOUS

The Death of the Left: “The Terrorism of Moral Indignation”

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For decades it was assumed that ‘the liberal left’ would mount the assault against what we used to call ‘the establishment.’ But ‘the left’ is morally bankrupt, too busy standing up for Trump’s Generals and fighting the Dump Trump at any cost fake revolution. now the ‘alt-right’ is the unknown. They seem intent on fighting to the death. JP

“To be sure, the whole of Western culture is complicit, but what astounds is the complicity of what defines itself as left. Notably, the complicity of those among the left’s comfortable and intellectual “tendencies,” usually called “liberals.”

But in general, a whole language has vanished from the Western left’s vocabulary: class struggle, international solidarity, peace among peoples, social justice, exploitation, poverty. They are so illiterate in left theory and experience that the call the ruling class’s booth on their faces, “the deep state.”

This today in the West is an amalgam (rather than a conscious political program) of a loose and dangerous left. It dreams, if it dreams at all, of a revolution without struggle. The answer to that pietism is force. Whole nations wiped off the face of the earth.

We now, on this loose left, trade in our critical faculties at the theatre of propaganda. In return, the propaganda pounds, batters, and sequesters our emotions so that we end up identifying with the narrative of power.

The narrative insists that the West has the Holy Grail. It insists that it has a messianic mission to improve the world by sharing the Grail's liberal values. The old conceit of liberal humanism, thus, returns to occupy our psyche, and it's the same liberal humanism that in the 19th century enslaved the "lesser breeds" of the planet. Once again, we pick up the "white man's burden" and his "civilizing mission" to lift up darkling "junior Brothers" from "savagery" and "barbarism" into our magnificent, magnanimous, culturally superior self-image. Massacres, famines, epidemics, and genocides follow.

Who galvanizes the left today against imperialism as Fidel Castro did with his uncompromising demand at the United Nations General Assembly in 1966 that "the exploitation of poor countries by rich countries must stop"? "We hear a lot of talk about human rights," he said in the 1970s, as Jimmy Carter's White House launched the rhetoric of human rights, "but we have to talk about the rights of humanity."

"The rights of humanity," who remembers them? Chief among them the right to sovereignty, perhaps? The right to foreign non-interference? To living free of threats, sanctions, partition, dismemberment, balkanization, invasion, and occupation? To solving one's own problems in one's own country? To choosing one's economic system? To refusing to become a protectorate of the Big Bully on the Potomac?

What happens when the "rights of humanity" are trampled? Since 1999, with Bill Clinton's unauthorized war for secession of Kosovo from Yugoslavia (reduced to Serbia and Montenegro by then), unopposed and even cheered by progressive segments of the loose left,

"Like a cyclone, imperialism spins across the globe; militarism crushes people and sucks the blood like a vampire."

These are not the words of a contemporary leftist. These are the words of German socialist Karl Liebknecht, co-founder with Rosa Luxemburg of the Spartacus League and the Communist Party of Germany, both murdered by the German social democrat state in 1919. He was referring to WW I, which, alone among the social democrats in the parliament of 1914, he stood up to oppose.

We now, on the loose left, rally to the call of "human rights," which are invariably being abused outside our national borders. You'd think we lived in the Promised Land, so convinced are we of the responsibility to protect "less fortunate" human beings abroad, who together with the injury of our sanctions and bombs have to endure the insult of our condescension.

We now, on the loose left, cannot see beyond the imbecility of our arrogance that we lack most of the rights said to be "human" by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights right here at home. A report from Human Rights Watch (HRW) summarizes the inability of our society to protect its most vulnerable members, which measure alone judges the vibrancy of a democracy:

“Many US laws and practices, particularly in the areas of criminal and juvenile justice, immigration, and national security, violate internationally recognized human rights. Often, those least able to defend their rights in court or through the political process—members of racial and ethnic minorities, immigrants, children, the poor, and prisoners—are the people most likely to suffer abuses.”

Our masters, who incarcerate at home 2.37 million people, the largest prison population in the world, “caused in part by mandatory minimum sentencing and excessively long sentences” (HRW) and detain twelve million people per year in county jails, raise our moral indignation against cherry-picked crusades for human rights abroad. They use this manufactured indignation as a license to attack and terrorize whole nations.

In Afghanistan, in 2001, we bombed to liberate women; we are still there, but we hear no more of the sorrow and the pity of women’s plight. In Iraq, in 2003, we invaded to liberate Iraqis from the “dictator” Saddam Hussein, and one to two million Iraqis were liberated from their lives, millions more from their home and their country. Fallujah alone accuses—left more chemically poisoned than Hiroshima.

In Syria, we claim to fight “to democratize” the country and at the same time the Isis cutthroats, but it took the legitimate Russian intervention to prevent a caliphate of cutthroats from ruling in Damascus.

In Yemen,

“In March [2015], a Saudi-led coalition of Arab states began a military campaign against the Houthis in Yemen. The US provided intelligence, logistical support, and personnel to the Saudi Arabian center planning airstrikes and coordinating activities, making US forces potentially jointly responsible for laws-of-war violations by coalition forces.” (HRW)

Most on the loose left ignored Obama’s crimes, among which the war in Yemen may rank as the most cynical, heartless, and inhuman. It even classifies as biological warfare, because bombing water treatment plants then leaving people to die of cholera epidemics cannot be called anything else. Meningitis cases are breaking out. Two UN aid flights to Sanaa are authorized to leave from Saudi Arabia every day for famine relief. Saudi Arabia is refusing fuel. No reason given, reports *The Independent* on 5 August. Saudi Arabia blockades the Yemen’s airspace. Yemen’s agony continues. No stirrings on the left.

So, too, they ignored Obama’s drone attacks on Yemen, Pakistan, and Somalia. So, too, they ignored this:

“The US restored full military assistance to Egypt in April [2015], despite a worsening human rights environment, lifting restrictions in place since the military takeover by President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi in 2013. Egypt resumed its position as the second-largest recipient of US military assistance, worth \$1.3 billion annually, after Israel. In June, the US lifted its hold on military assistance to the Bahraini military despite an absence of meaningful reform, which was the original requirement for resuming the aid.” (HRW)

And this:

“In September [2015], Obama waived provisions of the Child Soldiers Prevention Act to allow four countries—the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Somalia, and South Sudan—to continue to receive US military assistance, despite their continued use of child soldiers.” (HRW)

And this:

“Hundreds of thousands of children work on US farms. US law exempts child farmworkers from the minimum age and maximum hour requirements that protect other working children. Child farmworkers often work long hours and risk pesticide exposure, heat illness, and injuries. In 2015, the Environmental Protection Agency banned children under 18 from handling pesticides. Children who work on tobacco farms frequently suffer vomiting, headaches, and other symptoms consistent with acute nicotine poisoning.” (HRW)

The loose left now calls that grotesque excrescence in the White House a fascist, as if Trump had replaced an administration of enlightened humanitarians. They are calling for virtual presidentialicide so that the rule of that enlightened international “vampire,” the Democratic Party, can be restored.

But let me tell you: he’s only the last of the “fascists” in a long line since 1945. The loose left just hasn’t noticed because the loose left has no concept of class struggle. It has, therefore, no critical equipment to include imperialism—the war of the class of international imperialist on the class of colonial or semi-colonial peoples—in the catalogue of the crimes of fascism.

Our planners are not stupid. They know how to maintain their minority’s primacy by waging class war. They not only exercise it on the “proletariat” at home but also across the map of the world. In 1948, George Kennan, the architect of the policy of containment, which launched the Cold War, recommended inequality in international relations—that’s war by the imperialist class at the center against whole national peoples at the peripheries. Imperialism, therefore, is just another form of class war.

“We have about 50% of the world’s wealth but only 6.3% of its population. This disparity is particularly great as between ourselves and the peoples of Asia. In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity without positive detriment to our national security. To do so, we will have to dispense with all sentimentality and daydreaming; and our attention will have to be concentrated everywhere on our immediate national objectives. We need not deceive ourselves that we can afford today the luxury of altruism and world benefaction.” (Memo by George Kennan, Head of the US State Department Policy Planning Staff. Written February 28, 1948, Declassified June 17, 1974)

By “we,” Kennan does not mean the 99% of Americans. He means the 1%. The foreign policy he recommends is class-vested and is kept secret, for practical

reasons, from the rest of us for two decades. That's because the resources to support this policy protecting the elite has to be extracted from the rest of us, and counted in losses to social welfare and progress. Class is a relation of power, in which one class determines the direction of the whole of society. This is one example.

Fascism has many faces, but the most constant is that of the supremacist delusion that the West is the carrier of "universal values" and that, as exclusive interpreter and custodian of these values, the West is obligated to act as watchdog of democracy and human rights throughout the globe. In his inaugural address of January 1997, Bill Clinton assumed for the United States the planetary leadership of this humanitarian imperative:

"America stands alone as the world's indispensable nation. . . . May God strengthen our hands for the good work ahead, and always, always bless our America."

This is not universalism; this is ethnocentric hubris. This is the terrifying message of one nation "uber alles." This is totalitarian dogma. This is a profession of democratic faith without the slightest credibility because it does not aim at democratizing international *relations* but at subjecting them to the discipline and image of the "indispensable nation." This, in one word, is imperialism–fascism in action. Karl Liebknecht saw it clearly, one-hundred years ago:

"In capitalist history, invasion and class struggle are not opposites, as the official legend would have us believe, but one is the means and the expression of the other."

Why can the loose left today not see it that way? Why does it abstract the concept of imperialism from the conduct of the Western political order, thus mutilating the totality of reality, especially the reality reserved to the peoples of colonial origins now being reinvaded, partitioned, looted, left to chaos?

Why do they see a defense of "human rights" where others, especially the victims, see subjugation, neocolonialism, and imperialism? What blinds the moral vision of the left to the point of reserving the fascist brand to the crude jester, Trump, but denying it to the slick charmer Obama of the Drone-Kill-List, destroyer of Lybia and Syria, architect of regime change in Ukraine, advocate of war with Russia, harasser of China, enabler of Israel in its assault on Gaza, global spymaster, deporter-in-chief, most successful weapons salesman since 1945, including to that obscene abuser of human rights, autocratic Saudi Arabia?

This uneven distribution of the fascist brand insures that the next president will be another "fascist," but more polished, "educated," grinning confidently with sharp teeth from a shark's mouth. Trump's mouth pouts; the image does not inspire confidence.

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