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by ROB URIE

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## Democrats, Racism, and the Future



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Whatever the political back-and-forth over whether or not the current pandemic was predictable, what was predictable was the bipartisan response to it. The first instinct of the Trump administration, just like the Obama administration before it, was to secure the wealth of the rich through bailouts and special privileges and leave the rest of us to figure things out on our own. Some governors in hard hit states stepped up— mostly late and without adequate resources. It seems that political proximity to the little people was the determinant factor.

This similarity of responses coming from two allegedly opposing political parties illustrates the hold that class interests have on the American political system. With three

plus years of near daily chants of ‘not normal’ and the xenophobic right-wing nationalism of Russiagate, when put to the test, a saddening, sickening continuity showed itself to be all too normal. Rather than demonstrating political difference through their actions, establishment Democrats ran with bailouts for the rich, using empty posturing to simulate opposition.

The political views that emerged after the 2016 election did fall into opposing categories, with Nancy Pelosi articulating the Democrat’s view that turnover between the parties is natural and in no way indicative of political failures by the Democrats. This left external factors like Russian interference and racial backlash as the available explanations for the election of Donald Trump. Joe Biden was elevated by the Democratic establishment to ‘prove’ this very point. If he could win the primary, and more importantly, the presidential election, then the Democratic orthodoxy would be proven right, went the logic.

This last point needs to be amplified. The Democrats lost by running Hillary Clinton in 2016, so their strategy in 2020 is to run an even less attractive and less articulate candidate with a legislative record to the right of Ronald Reagan to prove there is a natural ebb and flow that will eventually put Democrats back in power? Why not run Bernie Sanders if that is the case? In fact, the point of running Joe Biden is that when he isn’t being Austerity Joe or Warmonger Joe or Cracker Joe or Rapey Joe, he is an empty suit who will do the bidding of his corporate masters.

So the ‘ebb and flow’ theory was to buy time so that the establishment Democrats could roll their bourgeois constituents with Russiagate and ‘Trump is a racist, sexist, etc.’ chatter. Of course, there is plenty to not like about Donald Trump. But most of what there is to not like about Mr. Trump is applicable with only the slightest of twists of the analytical frame to Democrats. To this point, the radical left spent three years spouting DNC talking points, apparently oblivious to the party’s actual history on matters of race, war, and political violence.

The national Democrat’s capitulation to Donald Trump’s political program throughout the Russiagate farce demonstrated that their disagreement was over distribution of the spoils, not ideology or issues of governance. This point was brought to the fore in the pandemic bailouts when they leapt over one another not to be bested when shoring up the fortunes of the rich. This, while their constituents were dying by the thousands without

virus tests, protective gear, or affordable health care. Even after the initial stages of the fiasco, they still can barely be bothered to fake concern for the dead and dying.

Current back and forth over charges that Joe Biden forcibly assaulted Tara Reade serve as cover for the fact that raping an employee is among the least destructive acts of Joe Biden's political career. On matters of race, Mr. Biden's affinity for Dixiecrats combined a Yankee's sense of political marketing with a plantation manager's notion of governance. And the 'Senator from MBNA' was selling out his constituents to loan sharks while he was endorsing George W. Bush's catastrophic war against Iraq. Multitasking they call it.

The Clarence Thomas hearings, in which Joe Biden cleared the path for Supreme Court Justice-for-life Clarence Thomas by prematurely silencing the erudite and stoic Anita Hill, took place around the time that Mr. Biden is claimed to have assaulted Ms. Reade. The chatter then was remarkably like the back-and-forth now over the truthfulness of Ms. Reade's claims. In fact, one need not believe either woman (Hill or Reade) to draw the conclusion that Joe Biden relished the power to decide not only who was to be allowed a voice (Hill was silenced), but what counts as truth.

Mr. Biden has been framed by his supporters as 'a friend of segregationists,' rather than as the ardent segregationist he has been. He opposed school busing and spent much of his time in the Senate racializing the use of state power through punitive immigration and drug laws and hawkish foreign policy. It was none other than Joe Biden who borrowed a line from the KKK to convince white liberals that racial integration was a threat to 'black culture.' In terms of concrete harms caused to American blacks, Joe Biden has been among the more dangerous legislators of the modern era.

The tendency of Democrats to downplay the racial subtexts of key New Democrat programs like 'ending welfare as we know it,' the focus of the 1994 Crime Bill on policing and prosecuting drug crimes for which people of color are disproportionately targeted, and the militarization of the police in targeting 'high crime' areas that overlap with poor neighborhoods, begs the question of how they have been able to sell opposition to racism as their 'brand?' The answer is that they successfully used the racist chimera of 'crime' to cleave race from class.

After years of assertions that Donald Trump is racist, the Americanism that racism, sexism, etc. are what you believe, not what you do, appears to have been instantiated in the public mind. As his public statements have it, Donald Trump is racist. So are the New

Democrats. The residual glow of their ambiguous, wavering and often paradoxical support for the Civil Rights movement fell prey to Bill Clinton's Southern strategy. That strategy depended on dog whistles like 'law and order' that allow racist Democrats to cause harm to people of color while maintaining an unearned and undeserved sense of virtue.

The visceral conception of racism that motivates parts of the Democrat's base, that of armed lynch mobs breaking down doors and burning black churches, is historical memory, not political analysis. This isn't to suggest that racism has disappeared. What is meant is that organized racial violence was migrated to the very levers of social control that the New Democrats dedicated their careers to re-racializing. How is the political party that promoted and passed the 1994 Crime Bill that increased the carceral population by 60% not racist? The answer, that incarceration is a class issue, requires understanding how its American incarnation evolved during and after slavery.

And this gets to how the New Democrats have been more insidious than out-and-out racists. The relation of race to crime has historically been tied to maintaining a hierarchical economic order. In the realm of economics, this is clearly a class issue. However, the liberal notion of merit depends on full employment. Had Bill Clinton actually believed in merit, he wouldn't have ended welfare for the sake of merit because doing so wouldn't have been necessary. Full employment would have made doing so redundant except in select cases.

That Mr. Clinton 'ended welfare as we know it' for political reasons—to triangulate Republicans from the right, both puts a lie to the concept of merit (the disabled and poor parents raising children merit assistance) and it demonstrated a willingness to benefit politically by throwing blacks under the bus. Ronald Reagan put forward the fraudulent caricature of the black 'welfare queen' (most people on welfare were white), and this is the reference made by Mr. Clinton's political gesture, else it wouldn't have 'worked' for him politically.

Occasional Democrat Michael Bloomberg used the Clinton's logic of crime prevention to oversee New York's 'stop and frisk' program that targeted black and brown youth using the logical fallacy that 'that is where the crime is.' Not only was the program openly racist in that people were targeted based on race, it was fascist through the use of racialized police state tactics. That stop-and-frisk made social sense to white liberals suggests that liberal opposition to racism is skin deep. How long would the injustice of

stop-and-frisk have remained hidden if the Democrats' donor class had been shaken down once a week by cops filling a quota?

The program depended on logical fallacy in several dimensions. In the first, racially targeted law enforcement will produce racially disproportionate results given equivalent criminal tendencies. This is called selection bias in statistics. In the second, the New Democrat's focus on so-called street crime left poor neighborhoods over-policed relative to bastions of white collar crime like Wall Street and corporate executive suites. The result was to over-represent street crime relative to white collar crime, with the clear class bias that doing so represents. The effect of the New Democrat's policies was to maintain an unjust social order, not to make people safer.

The fear of political violence expressed since Donald Trump took office assumes away the New Democrat's hawkish foreign policy, the political violence of mass incarceration, of the militarization of the police, of cutting the social safety net, and of freeing predatory capitalism. The Republicans are just as guilty here, which is the point. There are multiple axes of political violence. To focus on those that might affect you while being indifferent to those being carried out in your name is moral and political cowardice.

Here (embedded video) is Joe Biden advocating political violence against poor black and brown children. Here is Hillary Clinton advocating political violence against poor black and brown children. Left unstated by both Biden and Clinton was that the CIA was supplying the American drug cartels with the cocaine that motivated the activities that both objected to. When the distinction is made between state and non-state violence, 1) listen to Ms. Clinton's defense of 'citizen patrols' (link above) and 2) consider that the CIA structured non-state violence through its drug distribution channels.

With serial crises of capitalism of increasing scale and scope unfolding, the economic conditions conducive to political violence are rising. It is a legitimate fear. Deference to the former Yugoslavia ignores the impact of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, residual Cold War tensions and the role of the Clinton administration in stirring ethnic tensions. Otherwise, liberals have been claiming that a fascist coup led by Donald Trump's supporters was imminent for three and a half years. The closest the U.S. came was by Democrats using Russiagate as a pretext.

Political tensions are sure to rise as economic fortunes fall. The logical solution would be to elect people who believe in the power of government to make people's lives better.

The Democrats aren't going to do this, the Republicans aren't going to do this, so no one is going to do it. The only political path left is outside of electoral politics.

Finally, the image of Joe Biden wandering the White House in adult diapers telling stories of how he and Jesus Christ built an ark would be entertaining if the stakes weren't so high.

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