

## The Long Shadows

John Stepling

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The protests against Trump feel oddly class mediated. Because, lets remember, that for the last eight years a liberal {sic} democrat has been in the white house. And for those eight years there have been something like triple the number of black men dying (and women, and even children) by police deadly force. Statistics are stunningly difficult to get, actually (which even FBI director James Comey admitted). And for the last four decades inequality has steadily grown overall. But the real story of domestic policing is that of income inequality. That inequality, between whites and blacks in the U.S., is greater than in apartheid South Africa. The poor neighborhoods of the U.S., both black and Latino and Native American, have been punished by loss of welfare, deterioration of infrastructure, and a history of racism. And it is useful to look at that in terms of an American culture of violence and oppression.

Loic Wacquant (despite a recent bit of victim blaming in a letter to the regrettable Molly Crabapple) wrote of the four phases of black oppression in the history of the U.S.

“1. Slavery (1619–1865). Slavery is a highly malleable and versatile institution that can be harnessed to a variety of purposes, but in the Americas property-in-person was geared primarily to the provision and control of labour. Its introduction in the Chesapeake, Middle Atlantic and Low Country regions of the United States in the 17th century served to recruit and regulate the unfree workforce forcibly imported from Africa and the West Indies to cater to their tobacco, rice and mixed-farming economy. { } 2. Jim Crow (South, 1865–1965). Racial division was a consequence, not a precondition, of US slavery, but once it was instituted it became detached from its initial function and acquired a social potency of its own. Emancipation thus created a double dilemma for Southern white society: how to secure anew the labour of former slaves, without whom the region’s economy would collapse, and how to sustain the cardinal status distinction between whites and ‘persons of colour,’ i.e, the social and symbolic distance needed to prevent the odium of ‘amalgamation’ with a group considered inferior, rootless and vile. { } 3. Ghetto (North, 1915–68). The sheer brutality of caste oppression in the South, the decline of cotton agriculture due to floods and the boll weevil, and the pressing shortage of labour in Northern factories caused by the outbreak of World War 1 created the impetus for African-Americans to emigrate en masse to the booming industrial centers of the Midwest and Northeast (over 1.5 million left in 1910–30, followed by another 3 million in 1940–60). But as migrants from Mississippi to the Carolinas flocked to the Northern metropolis, what they discovered there was not the ‘promised land’ of equality and full citizenship but another system of racial enclosure, the ghetto, which, though it was less rigid and fearsome than the one they had fled, was no less encompassing and constricting.”

The fourth is what Wacquant calls the ‘hyper ghetto/carceral system’ of today. Mass incarceration was oddly invisible as a topic during the recent presidential campaigns. And it is important to remember that Bill Clinton signed that crime bill that helped spike mass incarceration, as well as once (1998) bragged in his radio address of cracking down on inmate fraud in receiving social security checks. Clinton family race baiting is breathtaking when one looks back on it, but then today’s white liberal rarely looks back at anything. The systematic creation of zones of exclusion, or hyper marginalization, has followed on the neo liberal policies of Democrats and Republicans alike. The withdrawal of services to these zones of marginalization began with Reagan and has not stopped.

Wacquant defined ghetto as ... “it is a relation of ethnoracial control and closure built out of four elements: (i) stigma; (ii) constraint; (iii) territorial confinement; and (iv) institutional encasement. “

In other words it is a sort of racist de facto prison. And the ‘projects’, the low income housing in big cities have increasingly come to resemble carceral camps or detention sites.

“...In this society, to a degree virtually unmatched in any other, those bearing the brunt of order enforcement belong in vastly disproportionate numbers to historically marginalized racial groups. Crime and punishment in America has a color.”

Glenn Loury

So what is it exactly that everyone fears so much about Trump? Well, the obvious answer is the empowerment of his base. How that plays out remains an open question but I’m not personally worried that it can actually get much worse than it already is. The economic violence against the working class in the U.S. is being in a sense obscured by the Trump hysteria, as if he invented discrimination and exclusion. Trump only reflects a system that has lurched ever further to the right since the early 1970s. And that is not to suggest that it was ever some workers paradise. The post industrial worker, though, has been subjected to a steady process of a downsized social safety net while prison and police funding has steadily grown. And since Bush, through Obama, the power of police has only increased. In effect for the poor, especially the black poor, the police are judge, jury, and executioner.

The Trump base, to be clear, is suburban bourgeois whites, and rural whites, and a fair number of affluent white men who traditionally vote Republican. And more than a few are educated. Though it is worth examining what anyone means by educated today. The Republican financial elite, for the most part, abandoned Trump to sign-on with Hillary.

I have had friends, liberals, white, become infuriated at any stigmatizing of Hillary Clinton. I was told it was reproducing the sexism of Trump. Now I find this interesting and I think what interests me the most is that it reflects the not so deeply buried colonialist mind set of liberals. I also got a very polite and intelligent letter from a woman regarding my last article. But she, too, complained that I was minimizing the sexual violence against women in the U.S. But see, it is important to examine how that violence operates exactly. For much of what is behind the systemic violence against women is a deeply entrenched idea of privilege. Remember, too, that

the Clintons (both) have inflicted massive state violence on the poor in Iraq, the former Yugoslavia, Libya, Somalia, Honduras and Haiti. These are facts. One cannot separate the fact that police deadly force on the streets of poor America is reproducing the military violence on the streets of Iraq and Libya etc. and the legacy of the violence of chattel slavery. The U.S. is the worlds leading manufacturer of weapons that kill. We are the death merchants for the world. But the white bourgeoisie that is so up in arms about Trump were never up in arms when the U.S. bombed the civilians in Yemen or Iraq or Afghanistan. Nor were they up in arms about mass incarceration. And not a single word, not one, not ONE word during the presidential non debates about the massive prison strike going on across the U.S. prison system. The white bourgeoisie doesn't care. What they do care about, apparently, is the casual sexism they have endured and the workplace insults and misogyny of their employers. And, rape. And no larger culture of rape exists than the U.S. military. I trust that the contradictions are becoming clearer. One cannot turn a blind eye to the violence inflicted on the poor globally, on the women and families in Iraq, Libya, and elsewhere, and remain, also, silent on the subject of military rape, and complain about Trump's sexism. YES he is sexist. But the new wave of shaming turned on Melania Trump has been truly appalling. The body shaming of Trump, the ridicule has been pretty extensive. But behind all this is the fact that the global periphery (from the point of view of western capital) is mostly black and brown, and Muslim and most everything except white. This is the colonial aspect. So deeply engrained is colonialist thinking that violence against muslims is normalized and accepted. The white liberal will decry Islam's treatment of women, though often with little grasp of the history and culture of Islam. Most have never been to an Islamic country. Hollywood does nothing except vilify Islam and glorify the U.S. military. Also, it is not insignificant to recall that under Bill Clinton, the U.S. supported the Raul Cedras junta in Haiti that instituted a systematic policy of rape and sexual violence against the women of Haiti (the Lavalas movement, led by Aristide, was mostly driven by women). There were an estimated fifty thousand rapes directed at the political opposition (see *Junta, Rape, and Religion in Haiti*, 1993-1994 Terry Rey, *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* Vol. 15, No. 2 Fall 1999). This is who Bill and Hillary supported. And then there is the question of Hillary's close ties to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (as well as her top aide Huma Abadin). They behead queers in Saudi Arabia. Woman are not allowed to drive in Saudi Arabia. And Saudi Arabia was the single largest contributor to the Clinton Foundation.

The intolerance of the Trump base is, of course, huge. And this touches on not just this U.S. election, but the Brexit vote, and the rise of white wing anti immigration parties in Europe. The rejection of globalization is now nearly complete. Except for the privileged white voter in the U.S. who remains \*confused\* by this wave of populist xenophobia and racism.

Patrick Higgins wrote recently:

“As the United States and Europe violated the sovereignty of postcolonial Middle Eastern states at will, they raised their own borders more vigilantly than ever, eager to keep out the “barbarian hordes.” Right-wing culturalist tropes began to be raised about the ostensible threat the dispossessed masses of the Middle East posed to the “traditional values” of “Western civilization.””

Higgins adds...

“in order to reclaim the internationalist and anti-imperialist legacy bequeathed by Marxism-Leninism, it will be necessary to reiterate and explain that right-wing “anti-imperialists”—Third Positionists, American constitutionalists and libertarians, and so on—are in fact not anti-imperialist at all, only appearing to be anti-imperialist in the face of left media networks in service to the interventionists, from ’68 leftist intellectuals such as Bernard Henri-Levy to old-style Yankee crusaders for the White Man’s Burden such as John McCain. The concretization of regime change as official policy comes out of the demands of finance capital, but there is nonetheless an ongoing debate within imperialism about how it should be managed. It must be kept in mind, for example, that right-wing libertarians in the United States, while objecting to regime change doctrine, wish to save the United States, not to put an end to the settler-colonial prisonhouse of nations built on genocidal property claims.”

The reality of U.S. Imperialism is the huge forgotten piece in public discourse today. The Hillary Clinton supporter, the idiotic Gloria Steinham or the opportunistic Michael Moore, or a dozen others, are pro Imperialists. Just as the pseudo left once seen in the signers of the Euston Manifesto, were pro Imperialism. The rise here in Europe of right wing parties is firstly a rejection of globalization and all austerity measures, but this dissatisfaction is delivered in the dress of nativist jingoistic volkish populism. Blame the immigrants is the call of the European bourgeoisie. They clothe such sentiments in rational discussions of protecting their fellow citizens from various diseases, or in the irrational language of pure racist demagoguery — all the while blissfully ignorant of the fact that Western imperialism has created the current refugee pseudo crises. And its clear Europe, for the record, could take in far more refugees. The total refugee numbers still amount to less than 5% of the population of Europe.

In the U.S. the Trump base is doing much the same thing, albeit with a particular near obsession with rolling back the rights of the LGBT community. And this suggests something else, culturally. Loic Wacquant made the observation that where over four decades the ghetto came to increasingly resemble the prison, that over the last two decades the prison has come to resemble the ghetto. This is something Eddie Bunker once said to me, too. While this is, I think, only partially true, it served as justification for more and more draconian human rights violation (solitary, super max joints, etc). And the new populist political movement also reflected, increasingly, a kind of gangsterism. The gangster model of social organization has taken root across the political spectrum (save for socialists). The Clinton machine just as much, or more, than Trump, operates like a mafia or the Aryan Brotherhood. Even Obama instituted a kind of \*omerte\* code on his administration. Public discourse of any meaningful kind has all but been completely erased. And behind this, again, is the engine of Imperialism and neo liberalism. The inflicting of austerity and privatization, and the rest of financial capitalism’s strategies for extracting maximum value from people and planet link up directly with the original colonial project and the slave trade. The privatized for profit prison is quite simply the new plantation with slave labour.

“Having no economic function, incarcerated black bodies are now simply warehoused, abused, and left to die—if not a physical death, a social death.”

Cynthia Nielsen

“Yet the discourse surrounding punishment policy invariably discounts the humanity of the thieves, drug sellers, prostitutes, rapists, and, yes, those whom we put to death. It gives insufficient weight to the welfare, to the humanity, of those who are knitted together with offenders in webs of social and psychic affiliation. What is more, institutional arrangements for dealing with criminal offenders in the United States have evolved to serve expressive as well as instrumental ends. We have wanted to “send a message,” and we have done so with a vengeance. In the process, we have created facts. We have answered the question, who is to blame for the domestic maladies that beset us? We have constructed a national narrative. We have created scapegoats, indulged our need to feel virtuous, and assuaged our fears. We have met the enemy, and the enemy is them.”

Glenn Loury

The homophobia of the Republican party is worth noting. Mike Pence seems the poster boy for homophobic panic. But again, the bourgeoisie overall still retains a certain degree of class protection. That said, the Campus Sexual Assault Study, 2007, saw that 1 in 5 women experienced a completed or attempted rape while in school. (National Institute of Justice). Globally the numbers are even worse. In 2014, 23 per cent of non-heterosexual women (those who identified their sexual orientation as lesbian, bisexual or other) interviewed in the EU indicated having experienced physical and/or sexual violence by both male and female non-partner perpetrators, compared with five per cent of heterosexual women. There is also the global issue of human trafficking. But a reminder here, that almost always the worst rape and violence against women and homosexuals occur around or near military bases. And the U.S. has close to 800 military bases worldwide. Much like gun control, violence against women cannot be separated from the violence of war and occupation. There is a very needed psychoanalytical exploration of white patriarchy as it expresses itself culturally, and in how and why it reproduces such a magnitude of violence. And indeed, the prototypical Trump follower is an exemplar of patriarchal privilege. However, its important to also remember the white liberal privilege overall in the U.S. And that includes all sexual orientations. The most vulnerable and marginalized in the gay community are poor queers of color, and transfolks. This hierarchical structure of privilege mirrors the structures of privilege overall.

The Brexit vote and the Trump victory have sent shock waves of anxiety through the ruling elite in financial institutions globally, but in particular in the crumbling EU. And the ongoing Imperialist project of the U.S. and its sidemen in Europe, particularly the U.K., that control over a trillion dollars in mining rights across Africa is ignored. Not surprisingly the largest spike in military base building has taken place in Africa over the last decade. In other words, the upset white liberals wringing their hands at the Trump victory and his threats against immigrants have been perfectly alright with the U.S. and UK bombing African and middle eastern countries as a means to control resources. As Tim Anderson put it, its \*vanity anti-racism\*.

The colonial white liberals so up in arms about potential Trump effects domestically have remained stone dead silent about war crimes against women and children in Yemen by Saudi

Arabia (and now directly the U.S.) and U.S. and NATO crimes against civilians, women and children in Libya (where U.S. backed militias lynched countless black refugees) and U.S. and NATO bombing of Iraq. Silent. The only conclusion one can arrive at is that Muslim women don't really count. Unless of course its a protest against poverty or child soldiers or genital mutilation, or some other issue to which white paternalism can be applied. And then of course, one could discuss Honduras and Haiti. Or Obama's relentless erasure of civil liberties.

The legitimate fear of violence against queers, and an uptick in hate crimes in the U.S. cannot, in the end, be separated from six decades of institutional neglect of the poor across the U.S. A neglect that rises to the level of sadism. Nor from the realities of mass incarceration, and the militarizing of police. All of which took place during both Democratic and Republican presidencies. Nor can it be separated from a culture and entertainment industry that manufactures endless narratives valorizing male violence, militarism, and tropes that posit the police as the last protection from a criminal underclass (nearly always black and brown). The American public has been trained and inundated with popular entertainments that are now so saturated with excessive sadism and violence that it is weird when one doesn't see such violence in film and TV. And its not violence per se, as I have often said, it is a particular form of casual violence, usually in the hands of men in uniform, that is given legitimacy. Violence in the hands of anyone else is transgressive and unnatural.

The real question is, finally, how do such grotesque immoral people control the government. Trump is picking from the same class of neo con hawk as Hillary planned to — Bob Corker replaces Michelle Flournoy. I don't personally see much difference. Gingrich or Nuland? The same privately funded think tanks churn out these ghouls. The Enterprise Institute, CATO, the Heritage Foundation, the Council on Foreign Relations, The Brookings Institute, The Center for American Progress, The Rand Corporation, Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Hoover Institute. The list is pretty long. Whats pretty funny, but also revealing, is that think tanks labeled \*liberal\* (like Center for Strategic and International Studies) include members such as Madeleine Albright and Ehud Barak. The point is that the entirety of this gigantic bureaucratic apparatus, from Wall Street to the NGOs have been in the service, for sixty or seventy years, along with the Pentagon, CIA, FBI, and U.S. State Department, of destroying any socialist movements globally that happen to occur. And with squashing dissent domestically. And with disseminating a constant never ending stream of anti communist, and anti socialist propaganda, and with the dissemination of propaganda to label alternative views and values as crazy or fringe (the smearing of Stein/Baraka is the most recent clear example).

So forgive me if I can't find it in me to care much about Trump. If protesting Trump expands to become a protest against neo liberalism, against militarism and war, and against white supremacy — then count me in. Or lets have some teach-ins. Until then we can all try to educate ourselves and others.