

The Diversionary Anti-Racism Campaign

by Lorna Salzman

“This is the real potential disaster of 2016: That legitimate economic discontent is going to be dismissed as bigotry and xenophobia for years to come.”

– Thomas Frank, August 2016 (author of “Listen, Liberal!”)
The Guardian UK, August 13, 2016.

I dislike truthdig and especially Chris Hedges, but Robert Scheer’s views are correct as are many of those on the left, at least on the election. The late political historian Walter Karp wrote years ago about how the political parties put the retention of internal party cohesion and power ahead of winning elections.

In light of this simple fact, it was naive in the extreme to imagine they would ever nominate Bernie Sanders. In like manner the U.S. Green Party threw Ralph Nader under the bus because, being the lackeys of the Democratic Party, they astutely realized that to nominate Nader was to invite into the big green tent all manner of upstarts who might eventually replace the party’s leadership and role in shoring up the Democrats.

In this election the Democrats threw under the bus whole constituencies: environmentalists, anti-fracking groups, those clamoring to punish Wall St. and the big banks, anti-globalization activists, blue collar workers, anti-war contingents, free speech advocates, critics of Islamism tired of being tarred as “Islamophobes,” those hoping for single payer health care, activists seeking a muscular energy policy instead of one based on de minimus principles. All of these were written off for varying reasons, in favor of a campaign

that deliberately sidestepped all of these issues and catered to those who would be sympathetic to either their Soros-tainted globalism or neoliberalism or those who accepted the lie that racism and xenophobia were the roots of American unrest. Thomas Frank smashed that lie to bits.

In retrospect it is only a trace of paranoia to suggest that the ongoing national penance for being a supposed "racist society" was a deliberate attempt to divert attention from the real agenda and character of the Democratic Party. Distractions of this sort are time-tested in nearly every country of the world where there is social and economic unrest and inequality that government either creates or allows. In this case, the tag "racist society" has been quite successful in liberal circles and the complicit neoliberal media in marginalizing to near-invisibility the intimate connection of Clinton and the Democrats to Wall St. predators and corporate globalists working 24/7 to prevent democratic oversight over commerce and trade, as personified in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

Briefly, the national obsession with racism has been a lethal diversion from the urgent issues facing the country and the world. Mind you, this is not a campaign about racial discrimination but one about human attitudes. The U.S. long ago put itself on the side of equality and social justice, something few other countries can claim. The fact that among the citizenry there are misfits and troublemakers and bigots is nothing more than a description of human nature and human frailty. Anti-racists may harbor notions of social engineering to deal with these misfits but if they do they show themselves close to the authoritarian (and quite Marxist) mind-set in which a small elite coterie of True Believers makes and enforces their own laws for controlling human (mis)behavior.

This is of course exactly what the Democrats have done in running our country for years, promoting a neo-liberal vision

and regime that benefitted the wealthy and powerful corporate and Wall St. elite resembling the European Commission, whose own attempts to depict nation-states as right-wing extremists intent on demolishing democratic institutions exactly mirrors the U.S. rants about "embedded racism". Right now the European media are using the election of Trump to pander and instill fear of European populism and nationalism, just as the Democrats rant about our "racist society." This is deceptive and divisive politics at its most dangerous.

We need to be wary of the coming administration but we also need to take extra care that the American left does not intimidate more Americans into doing full-time penance for the sins of our ancestors. It is not "white privilege" that threatens our country but economic privilege, paid pundits and egomaniacs like George Soros that promote untenable and unjust global rules and institutions to undermine democracy. Goddess save us from the liberals next time.