

EDITORIAL

On Trump's New Call to Terror and Resistance Like Harriet Tubman

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The US President has trumpeted his threat to visit systemic terror Sunday 7/14/19 on the homes of families where one or another person does not have their immigration papers in order. The threat has brought distress, panic even, to many in the USA. Perhaps campaign strategy, the rhetoric and its effect hearken to Dred Scott Days (the period after the U.S. Supreme Court Decision “Dred Scott vs. Sandford,” March 6th, 1857) when persons abetting escaped slaves avoid re-capture were themselves considered law-breakers and punished. As if in flash-back, persons in our time who provide refugees water in Arizona's desert are targeted with prison. But today's refugee-hunters count driver's license photo facial recognition software (notorious for increased mis-identification with People of Color, a new spin on the “crime” of “Driving While Black”) in their civil rights dismantling tool-kit.

A few weeks back I learned of a Greater Boston incident where ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) agents awaited an undocumented pregnant couple (with no criminal record beyond “driving while Latinx”) apparently knowing they had an Obstetrics appointment, catching them in their car blocks from their home en route to the doctor and arresting him in front of her near-term presence, provoking her terrified, traumatized screams which echo loudly still in our community. The damage such trauma causes to People of Color, Allies and Accomplices is

predictable, profound and strategic. Perhaps the scenario was planned to elicit local-global terror of coming to the USA, similar strategy to separating children from their families at the U.S. border or housing said children in unhygienic cage-like structures without toothbrushes or adequate healthcare.

The damage Trump does with such enabled perversion extends far beyond People of Color and Allies. Just as the trauma of witnessing a public lynching less than a century ago activated racist hatred and low self-esteem within children with white-skin-privilege via bias “oncogenes” (cancer gate-keeper genes which, like the potential for race-based bias, inhabit all our cells and lives), all of us within the USA get dosed with hatred toxins by affirmation of bullying, systemic racism and arrogant other-bashing when an elected leader legitimizes a pogrom. As for nostalgia about our history, it's essential to remember that Hitler studied in detail the laws of our segregationist 1870-1930's redlining, post-Reconstruction USA (a society complicit with over 4000 lynchings of African Americans) when planning his ethnic-cleansing perversion murdering six million Jewish persons and their Allies. Now copycat racists worldwide, emboldened by Trump's post-Charlottesville “some very fine people on both sides” and his “illegal immigrants...pour into and infest”-language, express finding renewed legitimacy and inspiration toward terror.

Meanwhile at home, ICE and CBP (U.S. Customs and Border Protection) employees have been given a mandate (which the best among them will, as decent people do, resist) to dream up terror-provoking strategies as part of their very job description. Just as in the past there were persons whose job was to auctioneer slaves, others to oversee plantations and also those with government posts to hunt down refugees from slavery, there is a pseudo-legitimacy ascribed now

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to imagining efficient tracking-down of people who are trying to live a quiet life in our communities for and with their children. Alas, within the CBP, one response to Trump’s hate-filled language has been the creation of two “Secret” Facebook pages (“I’m 10-15” with 9,500 members and “The Real CBP Nation” with 1000 members) each filled with vile, inhuman memes and statements. If any American can officially be affirmed when posting such trash, our “red-wood forest to the Gulfstream waters” Woody Guthrie Golden Delicious nation risks nurturing a worm-like sickness at the core.

There is another, greater, American way. Resistance to legalized injustice is within the strongest healing bell-song of American tradition. Harriet Tubman, legendary Underground Railroad conductor, is an Example we must celebrate and seek to emulate. Why is it Trump abhors her image on the \$20 bill (preferring symbolic amnesia to our Native American Trail of Tears)? She would not have put up quietly with his shenanigans. Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience” legacy is another exemplary American strategy, founding a legendary roadmap to global greatness (by Gandhi, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and

many more). Let us imagine, no matter our employer or job description, instead of immoral complicity in any activity that might make America hate again, creative ways to engage with all human beings as we would want our own family treated.

“There but for fortune may go you or I” is an Och’s empathy ballad of shared endeavor. We can indeed become a better nation than what we sometimes have been. Each of us has the opportunity to show what makes America beautiful through creative actions, from civil disobedience when necessary to simply treating others—especially persons who think differently than us—with decency and respect. May our conduct today merit a different perception by our children’s children’s children than the kind of United States which once legitimized invading slavery-free states and communities to arrest People of Color calling them law-breakers for stealing themselves from white men. Let us make “with liberty and justice for all” ring true with tones encompassing all colors, all cultures and all who care and dream to be within the salsa-jazz-blues-country-rap-symphonic, the real “This Land is Our Land” USA.

