

J'accuse! The Demand for Injustice

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J'accuse! The phrase of Emil Zola, that shook a nation because it demanded justice for a falsely accused man, the phrase that will ever be remembered, as will the man who wrote it, is a phrase now used to condemn people, without trial, without fair hearing, without right of reply, without justice. The phrase "I accuse" is now not a demand for justice but is considered proof of any accusation that follows it; it has become a demand for injustice.

"I accuse X of this." "A accuses B of that."

The Media (suitably horrified) calls out, "Horror! Horror! The social fabric is coming apart. Hang him. Hang her. Hang them all!"

The consumers of this information, the mass of the people who have been robbed of their reason and can react only as unthinking automatons, dutifully react,

"Did you hear that? She accuses him of this! Terrible. Terrible. He should be shot and quartered."

"Did you hear that the Russians did that? My God, they should be taught who's who."

Did you hear that John Doe did this to? He has to be punished. Ruin him. Throw him in jail!" as shouts of derision resound.

The lynch mob is back, this time tapping out their calls for punishment on the keys of their computers and the social media. The rumour mills are working overtime. The vigilantes are out everywhere, the watch committees, the informers, the armchair lawyers and judges, the salivating scavengers of other peoples' lives who lust for revenge, for someone, somewhere, to be punished, for something.

It can be an accusation of a sexual nature from decades before. It can be a political accusation from the present. It can be a campaign of rumours spread through the media, never confirmed, but spread with great indignation accompanied by looks of disgust for anyone who asks, "But is it true? But is there proof? What really happened? How do you know this? If true, what was the context? What is to be learned?" Such people are themselves accused of defending the crime the accused is accused of. And so it goes. Prejudice breeds hatred. Hatred calls for blood. And we call ourselves humane, civilised, reasoned, and good.

The first to join the mob, to call for the immediate revenge are those that consider themselves the most righteous, the most liberal, the most dedicated to justice and "human

rights.” But it’s all just the fashion of the time. They pretend to believe in right and good because they have no real conception of what right is, what the good is. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth is their cry and to hell with fairness, with trials. If the accused denies the charge, hang him quicker and higher. If anyone defends their right to be heard, hang them too.

Bertolt Brecht was right. Mac the Knife is back in town and ready to stab and cut and crucify at a whim.

This seems to be a heightened phenomenon in the USA. The past few weeks we have seen allegations of a sexual nature thrown at a series of Hollywood figures. This is nothing new in Hollywood. The scandal sheets have been full of this since the silent film era. But the hunt today seems even more vicious than in the past and reflects the toxic political atmosphere in the entire western world but which is at its most toxic in the United States.

For the past year we have seen absurd accusations made against political figures in the US about connections to Russia. We have seen world leaders standing in the way of US interests accused of war crimes. Assad used barrel bombs, and gas on civilians. Proof to the contrary be damned. Maduro is starving his people. No evidence needed. Kim Il Sung is going to kill us all. War is prepared. One accusation after another made so rapidly our heads are kept spinning trying to keep track of it all.

Entire pages of newspapers and hours of television news time are devoted to things that never happened. Investigative committees pretend to investigate. News anchors pretend to be alarmed. Accusations have been made. If an accusation is made, it must be true. That is the way it is now, the fascist way, to spread suspicion everywhere.

The acceptance without question of the accusations against Kevin Spacey, as one famous example, and the denial of his right to be heard, the acceptance of the destruction of his life and career without trial, without any recourse open to him makes it all the easier to convince the population that the accusations against Russia deserve action, against Syria, against Venezuela, Korea, Iran, against Milosevic, Ghaddafi, Ndindiliyimana, Gbagbo, and the rest of the political victims of these witch hunts. It sets the tone for the whole society. Facts are not important. The story is what is important. Agitate the people and keep them agitated against someone. Pick a target, a scapegoat. Get the people angry with them, just so they forget to ask the bigger questions. Who is making their lives miserable? Who is destroying the economy, the ecological systems the climate? Who is murdering civilians en masse in Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan? Who has robbed us of what little democracy we had?

And of course someone like Spacey is an easy target, famous, rich and popular. The people love nothing better than to see the mighty fall. Give them one or two or three. Throw them some bones so long as it keeps them distracted. Besides Spacey deserves it. He was just too good at showing us what criminals the US presidents have become in his role in House of Cards.

Even Martin Luther King has once again been smeared on the BBC and CNN, which have repeated, as news, through the JFK Assassination files, the slanders made against him by the US secret services when he was alive.

As Zola wrote:

“The nation is struck into a stupor, whispering of terrible facts, monstrous treasons which make History indignant; naturally the nation is so inclined. There is no punishment too severe, it will applaud public degradation, it will want the culprit to remain on his rock of infamy, devoured by remorse.”

So every time you hear of an accusation and think about taking part in it by repeating it on Facebook or elsewhere in some misguided sense of righteousness and self-vindication of your humanity think about the injustice you are serving. Every time you call for some one’s head based on some one’s mere say so and feel all cozy in your smugness, consider what Emil Zola would think of you.

For it is a crime of the corrupted press to destroy people without the means to defend themselves. It is a crime that injustice is celebrated by the high and the low, that injustice triumphs while fairness, law and simple probity are spat upon. It is a crime to distort the public opinion, to pervert it to the point of delirium. It is a crime to poison the small and the humble, to exasperate passions of reaction and intolerance, while taking shelter behind the odious mask of injustice masquerading as justice by which they are destroying all sense of decency, of reason, in order to exploit the peoples fear, anger and hatred of the system in which they are forced to live, for the interests of the those that oppress us.

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