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In the last several weeks, the Trump Administration has pushed for both a tax cut on the wealthy as well as an increasingly unpopular health care plan. Now, after a series of blunders, calls for impeachment in both corporate parties are growing. Wanting to know more about what this means for the rest of us, we caught up with Peter Gelderloos to try and make sense of it all.

IGD: *Several days ago, Trump fired the FBI director, James Comey. What led to his firing and the Trump administration's decision to do so? What are the broader implications of his dismissal?*

> "Trump's ship is sinking a little faster, and that he's going to have a much harder time recruiting skilled administrators."

Peter Gelderloos: The Trump administration's official reason for firing FBI director James Comey was already scandalous: they were unhappy with him for not supporting the prosecution of Hillary Clinton, and for announcing in a press conference that

Clinton's conduct was legal, rather than leaving that to the Attorney General's office. Punishing what, according to democratic logic, is supposed to be a neutral law enforcement agency for not conducting a partisan prosecution of an election opponent is not a good way to maintain the peace among institutions that are vital for the functioning of democratic government. Among "big tent" elitists, as opposed to your out-of-fashion dictatorial kind, that's a huge faux pas. As per the bad form of Comey's press conference, it's a plausible but hypocritical motive, given that Trump, his advisers, and spokespeople have thrown all communicational etiquette out the window. As a rule they don't do what governmental tradition considers to be appropriate.

However, it has since come out that the official reasons are the latest in an extremely long list of Trump lies. Insider reports, plus an off-the-cuff remark by Trump on live television, revealed that the real reason for Comey's firing was the obvious one: he was actually trying to investigate links between Russia and the Trump administration, and this pissed Trump off because it shows a lack of loyalty, and insofar as he's hiding anything there, it also frightened him.

What are the implications? Mainly, that Trump's ship is sinking a little faster, and that he's going to have a much harder time recruiting skilled administrators. Elites work in the public sector, which pays much less than the private sector, because it gives them access to power, and it gives them name recognition, legitimacy, and contacts that they can exploit when they go back to work in the private sector. Who wants to sign up to work on a sinking ship with a huge legitimacy crisis, where the job is likely to end in embarrassment and disgrace? Occasionally you get dedicated public servants, hatchet men like Scooter Libby who are willing to make sacrifices for the team, but those types worked for effective political machines like those of Reagan and Bush Jr.

What this means is that the net intelligence of the Trump administration is going to drop even further. You're going to have

to the activity and initiative that already exists. And it flows from personal relationships that in the beginning are always informal, though at a certain point may be formalized depending on our specific needs.

There are no simple answers to this question, but a few historical lessons. Subversive spaces with little coordination, with no mechanisms for spreading and encouraging proposals across a large network, tend to be slow in responding to changing conditions. They get carried along by events rather than influencing them. On the other hand, spaces with a unitary form of organization, whether that be a central assembly or a federation in the Western rather than non-Western sense (pyramidal, permanent formal organization at the center) will be conservative, easy to co-opt, and in the crucial moment, counterrevolutionary in the sense that they will put the brakes on the revolt and aid in the reestablishment of order and social peace.

This latter consideration seems really far off at the moment, but we can prefigure it, with the ways we think about organization now, and avoid some major headaches or embarrassing blunders down the road.

acknowledging it as a defeat that is very present in our lives, a defeat that one day we hope to overturn. Fetishizing cooperatives or alternative currencies is just a way to make a shrine out of the defeat. Which is not to say that we reject those tools for being impure, because everything is impure. But we need to always keep a revolutionary horizon visible and present: what projects represent compromises that enable us to survive, and what projects are the bold ones that allow us to reach for that which makes survival worthwhile? And we always, always, always need to preserve the living connection between our constructive and destructive actions. Breaking the asphalt and planting trees go hand in hand. Doing one without the other doesn't make sense.

> "Once we have an anarchist space with a high capacity for self-defense, for sabotage, for social critique, and also for the self-organization of those very needs that everybody has and capitalism sucks at providing – that's when we start to be a real threat."

Once we have an anarchist space with a high capacity for self-defense, for sabotage, for social critique, and also for the self-organization of those very needs that everybody has and capitalism sucks at providing (health, housing, food, learning, play, communication…), that's when we start to be a real threat, that's when we develop a model that other people can adopt and make their own, and we won't always have to be faced with these constant blackmails: work or starve, gentrify or decay, vote for Trump or Clinton.

That's also the point when questions of coordination and organization become really important. Before that it's a moot point. Those who fetishize mass organizations have their federation with ten people, those who fetishize informality have their affinity groups with ten people. Cutting through the illusions, organization doesn't create activity, rather it is a verb we apply

even more mouth-breathers who think they're hot stuff like Flynn, Conway, and Bannon, and Trump himself, which means more and larger bloopers. The only thing they're missing now is Bob Sagat to introduce each new episode.

I want to make one thing clear, though, to avoid unnecessary Trump-exceptionalism. What the anatomy of this latest blooper reveals is not that Trump is more of a liar than other politicians, only that he is much, much stupider. This should have been obvious already during the primaries from his inability to form a sentence, a verbal atrophy even worse than Bush Jr.'s. It also turns out he insisted on getting his daily intelligence briefing reduced to a list of bullets on a single sheet, because reading more than a page was too much for him. In fact, Trump's stupidity and its consequences are really useful for anarchists studying the relationship between institutions and the humans who staff them: to what extent are institutions immune to human influence, to what extent do they mechanize or instrumentalize their public faces, to what extent does human error (or stupidity) limit institutions? Thanks to the unconventionality of the Trump administration, we're learning new things every day.

> "What the anatomy of this latest blooper reveals is not that Trump is more of a liar than other politicians, only that he is much, much stupider."

But let's get back to how they handled the Comey firing. The typical political administration, when they want to do something controversial, brainstorm about timing. When they decide Comey is their enemy, they talk about when would be the best time to fire him: wait a few weeks, wait for a busy time during the news cycle. They don't do it immediately after the event that pissed them off in the first place. Then, they draft their press release, detailing the invented reasons why they are firing him. And this is assuming they have decided that the preferable option is unviable, which would

be pressuring the unwanted official to resign voluntarily, so she or he saves face and the administration avoids controversy. And then, they stick to their talking points.

The Trump administration did only one of these things: draft a press release full of moderately credible lies. And then a couple days later Trump went on live TV and contradicted it. He lies worse than a four-year-old.

His total idiocy, however, doesn't mean that other politicians are any less full of shit. They just have more experience. As politicians, not as reality TV stars. This is an important point anarchists need to communicate: government without politicians does all the same bullshit, but less effectively. The problems that the populists ascribe to politicians are actually all problems of government, and reasons why government needs to be abolished. Politicians aren't bad per se, they're simply inhuman. They are the manipulative, Machiavellian simulacra of human beings that all governments need to function.

> "This is an important point anarchists need to communicate: government without politicians does all the same bullshit, but less effectively."

And this brings us back to why some of us have been saying from the beginning that the Trump administration does not represent a real threat of dictatorship (and of fascism even less so). Here's an example of Trump's dictatorial leadership style: require constant proofs of loyalty from your subordinates, and pit them in constant conflict against one another. As Hannah Arendt and others have pointed out, in a dictatorship, institutions are actually less defined, less firmly rooted, and in constant competition for the favors of the dictator. That turns out to be Trump's ideal.

But what happens when you take an executive administration with a dictatorial leadership ideal, and you put it at the head of a thoroughly democratic State? You get an ineffective administration

and reiterate that you can learn as much with a few bucks in late fees at the public library as you would spending a hundred grand at a prestigious university.

A lot of anarchists today consider themselves internationalists and they only know one or two languages. What kind of cave are they living in? Back in the day, anarchists routinely taught themselves four, five, six languages. But let's not romanticize. Their gender relations and their conflict resolution methods were shit; it's not like we've been totally lazy. Rather, I mean for the example to serve as an illustration of what's possible, of how we can teach ourselves things that open completely new possibilities for the struggle, and all it takes is motivation.

> "If we don't have any useful skills, we're really just wasting our breath when we talk about self-organization, direct action, and mutual aid."

If we don't have any useful skills, we're really just wasting our breath when we talk about self-organization, direct action, and mutual aid. Once we start developing useful skills, the next step is to communalize them, to put them at the service of the communities that do not yet exist, and to put them at the service of the struggle against authority. At this stage, the biggest dangers are either that we burn out, because we're dedicating so much of our energy to a project without getting much back, trying to jump-start the gift economy, or we get redirected into a capitalist economy, forced to turn what we create into products, to sell it in order to make our efforts sustainable, and then to end up with just an alternative business, which is the frequent fate of cooperatives, publishing projects, and permaculture farms, to name a few.

What can keep us from burning out or selling out? Sharing and solidarity. None of us can take on this machine alone, and none of our projects are pure, beyond the reach of capitalist dynamics. To survive nowadays, everyone's got to make some money. The solution to this isn't living entirely out of the dumpster, but rather

that people should be thinking about organizing? Or at least, what principles could help guide us?

PG: Mutual aid and direct action are beautiful ideas, but many anarchists rarely move them beyond the level of slogans or the simplest kind of projects. What we need is to practice the self-organization of everyday life and of all our vital needs. We need healthcare, healthy food, access to housing, a clean environment? Of course. But what are we actually doing to achieve these things? There's an alarming lack of projectuality. What I'm referring to is a constant process of identifying our collective needs and the needs of our struggles, and ensuring that our projects, our vital activity, constitute an effective projection of the satisfaction of those needs into the future.

> "We need healthcare, healthy food, access to housing, a clean environment? Of course. But what are we actually doing to achieve these things? There's an alarming lack of projectuality."

What do we need that today we don't have or we rely on the State or capitalist businesses to provide for us? What are we doing to make sure that in five or ten years, we have the capacity to fulfill those needs in an anarchist way, which means self-organized, anti-capitalist, and also inclusive, subversive, constituting a tool that other people can also adopt?

How many anarchists studied anthropology or literature instead of mechanics, applied chemistry, first aid, medicine, or permaculture? With very few exceptions, people need to stop going to college. Autodidactism used to be an important principle in the anarchist movement, but nowadays anyone who can get the loans goes to university, mortgages their future, wastes their time, and learns elitist modes of political action that have more to do with policing identities or preserving comfort zones than any kind of conflict against authority. Education is about paperwork; however, learning is a function of motivation. So I'm going to drop Will Hunting

that is unable to push its programs through, even within its own party, and you get a backlash from the other branches of government, doubling down on democratic values.

The primary danger, once again, is democratic government, and the alarmist warnings of dictatorship or fascism are really only a tool of the democratic renaissance. That said, both democracy and dictatorship are tools of the State, and anarchists should never think that our government is incapable of deciding to round us all up in concentration camps or to shoot us. On a smaller scale, governments round people up and shoot people every day. The important thing is to simply understand how those decision-making processes operate, and under what conditions a dramatic change might occur.

The necessary conditions do not currently exist.

IGD: *With Comey's firing, again people are stating that a push is going to come from the Deep State to remove Trump. Is there any validity to these predictions?*

> "In the US, there's no way to understand why people here would speak standard American English or eat foods infused with corn syrup or have holidays on certain days, if you omit the role of the State."

PG: I want to start by changing the terrain of the question. I don't like the term "Deep State." I honestly don't know its origin, but it smacks of conspiracy theorists who tend towards the Right.

I'll talk about the government, which is elected, and the State, which includes the government as well as the whole pyramid of unelected bureaucracies and technocracies, as well as other power structures that are private but intricately regulated and connected to the architecture of society. The State is deeply rooted, to the point of being inseparable from a particular society. It even affects the language we speak and the food we eat. It becomes clear in James C. Scott's, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, for example, nowadays or a thousand years ago, that states sculpt the societies they

dominate. In the US, there's no way to understand why people here would speak standard American English or eat foods infused with corn syrup or have holidays on certain days, if you omit the role of the State. It's not a hidden cabal of military planners so much as an extremely aggressive parasite existing at a continental scale (though non-transparent bodies of military planners certainly have their place in the State).

So let's talk about the government and the State. At the moment, I think Trump actually faces a much greater threat from the government. He already has the judiciary and an oscillating quantity in the legislature in rebellion against him, and there's growing support for impeachment. With a little more information on Russia connections, they could impeach and remove him through an official process, or they could push him to resign once they have a solid case against him, as happened with Nixon.

> "So yes, there will be blood. When you fuck with healthcare, tens of thousands of people tend to die silently as a consequence."

At the moment, the Republicans are the gatekeepers of such a process, and since they're political realists, they won't do anything, no matter how much McCain and some others hate Trump for idealist reasons, until they calculate that a continuing Trump presidency will be significantly worse for the future of their party than the controversy and humiliation of impeaching him or forcing a resignation, and replacing him with Pence. In their eyes, Pence is solid, but if they get rid of Trump in the first two years of his presidency, in such an abortive way, that reflects especially poorly on the Party that carried him to office. The most comfortable solution for them would be if Trump stops fucking up so bad, the investigation drags on slowly, and Trump is pressured not to run for reelection in four years.

The latest scandal, Trump's leaking of classified information to the Russians, strains his relations with the Republican Party even

people frustrated by Trump's heavy-handedness but point out that at least Trump lets us know the bad things he's doing, whereas a competent politician is better at hiding them, or we could argue that the spectacle of controversy is distracting us from things that actually have a much bigger impact on real people, whether it's the wars in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, the deportations and the deaths on the border, police shootings, climate change, or the loss of healthcare.

> "if Trump is replaced by Pence, we can sympathize with people frustrated by Trump's heavy-handedness but point out that at least Trump lets us know the bad things he's doing."

Currently, what's going on is nearly all hype, so our strategies will naturally be discursive, conversational, an intervention in the debates other people are having as they watch the news. Impeachment or a similar process will happen much more slowly. The Democrats will react with an arrogant triumphalism. If and when it comes to that, anarchists can react by arguing that government cannot be reformed, that government protects itself but will never protect people (Trump will presumably be in trouble for firing a political appointee and not for deporting thousands of people, for example), and so forth. But I don't think we can intervene directly in the process. It's a spectacle. At best, we can reveal it as a spectacle, show people the curtains and the stage props, and erode the legitimacy of all those who participate in the spectacle.

Beyond that, we can keep on attacking state institutions that harm people, and keep pushing the practice of self-organization to higher levels. Which brings us to the last question.

IGD: *Anarchists in the US are starting again to think about what it would mean to, on a large scale, begin to come together to meet our needs and build dual power in the current age and within the crisis of Trumpism. What are your thoughts on worthwhile programs*

specific purposes, like the salivation of Pavlov's dogs. We should keep a clear head instead of going along with it, because it won't necessarily translate into action, any actions produced will be institutional and therefore reaffirming of government, and it almost certainly will be a distraction from the things that should really be perceived as infuriating.

At the moment, the question for me is, how can we be responsive to social conversations without either producing mere cynicism, or falling into the chorus that is basically just cheerleading due process and democratic values? Indignation over the Russia leak, if we're going to be honest, is nothing but patriotism and support for the US war apparatus, the same one that progressives meekly protested during the W. Bush administration.

> "All of this is a roundabout way of saying that anarchists should think twice before getting outraged by the things that enrage the public."

This is a question that can only be answered by anarchists who are actually intervening in the social conversation. What kinds of rebuttals work with our parents, with our coworkers, with our neighbors, in the supermarket? This brings up another, much darker question: are we even having such conversations, or are all such exchanges of opinion now being mediated through Facebook?

If the latter is the case, we're being completely ingenuous by discussing communication strategies and methods of discourse. Those whose expressions pass exclusively through virtual network platforms like Facebook or Instagram have no real capacity for expression, so they have a much deeper alienation they need to address before they can think about how to intervene in debates. If the revolution won't be televised, it sure as fuck won't be tweeted or shared as a meme.

As for the rest of us, we can spread deeper critiques that will still be valid if Trump is replaced by Pence, we can sympathize with

further, but so far they haven't changed course. No Republican outside Trump's inner circle defended him after he admitted to passing on information—how could they? But neither have they thrown him under the bus or directly accused him of misconduct.

> "At the moment, I think Trump actually faces a much greater threat from the government."

The other possibility is that Democrats sweep midterm elections and get enough power in the legislature to push an impeachment. This is something they would probably only do if it were a campaign plank they won on, because it's a risky maneuver and the Democrats are typically more timid with such tactics. Besides, they might be happier to let Trump finish out his four years and fully destroy the Republican Party in the process.

What about the State, beyond the elected government? Different actors within the State have a couple possibilities, but they basically boil down to pressure and assassination. As far as I know, there's no deep State with a simple "remove" button.

It has been proven in democracies other than the US, and alleged within the US, that heads of state who were undesirable to other power holders were removed through assassination. I'm not going to jump on any JFK bandwagon, simply because I don't think that it's important enough to stake a position on. Theories based on unverifiable conspiracies are a very weak foundation for revolutionary action. What's important, on a theoretical level, is to deride the mystifications of democracy and accept that nothing is sacred in US politics and that whatever may or may not have happened here, there is no doubt that assassination by other power holders has been an important part of the democratic toolbox.

> "The most comfortable solution for them would be if Trump stops fucking up so bad, the investigation drags on slowly, and Trump is pressured not to run for reelection in 4 years."

The problem with state actors assassinating a high-profile target like a president is that the aftermath is messy, and assassinations aren't supposed to happen in a stable democracy. It erodes the legitimacy of the State as a whole.

I'd be really surprised to learn that informal political pressure were not the only feasible option other state actors had to get rid of Trump. And the problem with pressure is that it relies on the organs of government to execute a formal procedure, with all the limitations discussed above.

So, let's look at who within the State might pressure to have Trump removed, and what their interests are.

Intelligence technocrats and military brass would be motivated to act if they felt that the presidential administration were harming national security, which, as Chomsky revealed during the war in Vietnam, is a baldfaced euphemism for the ability of the US to project force globally, to be seen as legitimate while doing so, and to preserve its place as the architect of the current world system. Until the recent Russia leak, Trump's fuck-ups had not yet reached that level. By sharing information from a confidential source, Trump hurts US intelligence gathering. If he keeps making similar gaffes, you won't have to wait for any deep state, Congress itself will pressure him to resign. But the one slip was a relatively minor one, affecting one confidential source and the credibility of US confidentiality. If there are no more slips, that credibility can be restored. Republicans have previously revealed the identity of spies and confidential sources. They've done it for calculated political gain, and not as a fumble, but still, it's not the end of the world, whether or not the media and the Democrats have a field day with it.

> "Franco in Spain and Pinochet in Chile, before they went on to become dictators, both earned their stripes putting down popular rebellions at the behest of a democratic government."

would it mean for Trump to be removed from office for real for us? If anything?

PG: As the days go by, it becomes clear that the Comey firing is being viewed by the political and media elite as a more serious offense than the Russia leak. The latter hurt US interests, but it was perfectly legal: the President has full authority to declassify information. The former, meanwhile, constitutes obstruction of justice, which is an impeachable offense. Meanwhile, Republicans are still treating both controversies as a source of embarrassment or even a cause for anger with Trump, but they are not abandoning him or talking about punishing him in any way. Many are even risking themselves to help with damage control, suggesting that the allegations are false or exaggerated, even though they know Trump has no credibility.

This shows us a few things: outrage in the media often does not translate into political action, nor does it change the calculations of power that actually govern the decisions of politicians and bureaucrats; secondly, what seems most serious to the public (the Russia leak) will not necessarily seem the most serious to the politicians. As discussed earlier, politicians are not fully human, so they're responding to power calculations and not to ethical considerations. The Russia leak was perfectly legal so it constitutes no risk, and the Republicans currently have little to gain and much to lose from impeaching Trump. Over time, the media will sculpt our view of the controversy, and redirect our gaze to the offenses that are more relevant to the politicians. Comey, therefore, is dominating the news cycle more than Russia.

> "All told, the signs suggest that Social Peace is not selling very highly in the futures trading on Wall Street."

All of this is a roundabout way of saying that anarchists should think twice before getting outraged by the things that enrage the public. Public outrage is spectacle, it's produced by the media for

misery, use universal healthcare, welfare, and education to pacify the population, and win their loyalty or at least passivity. A social democracy like France was only able to push a part of its population into the same condition of lawlessness and rejection of civil society with more than a century of racism so unexamined and therefore unmediated it would even make a gringo blush.

All told, the signs suggest that Social Peace is not selling very highly in the futures trading on Wall Street.

> "they sense that the ship might be sinking and like the rats they are, they're bailing, which in this case means freeing up more liquid capital."

So yes, there will be blood. When you fuck with healthcare, tens of thousands of people tend to die silently as a consequence. But let's be real: healthcare was already extremely fucked up in the US, because there is no true universal coverage or social medicine, just government schemes to throw money at the for-profit businesses that get rich off our disease. Obamacare was a joke, the biggest embarrassment of a healthcare plan in the entire First World. The only thing is, and this makes a difference in people's lives, it was killing a lot fewer people than the Republican plan will kill.

If we're going to talk about healthcare, we could scoop even deeper: Western medicine was already fucked up long before questions of public or private came into the matter.

24,000 might be an accurate calculation, but in the end, it's an illusion. Even without those 24,000 deaths, there are a lot of other people dying due to deeper problems. In the end, we're all living and dying so that the rich can get richer and the rulers can stay in charge.

IGD: *Seems the day after firing Comey, Trump met with the Russian ambassador and gave them classified information. The details are still playing out, but if and when the wheels really start to turn against Trump, how do you think we should, or can, respond? What*

As for his other failings, Trump himself might be compromised by the Russians, but his administration hasn't backed off from NATO, they're playing relatively well with China, and they're trying to take some kind of role in Syria and the Middle East, which no other world leaders have a solution for anyways. So he hasn't yet become a serious national security issue.

Leadership in intelligence and the military could convince politicians to abandon one of their own or even to initiate investigations or impeachments, but they would have to be unified and very worried. And we're not talking about a particularly brave group of people. In a stable democracy, the kind of people who rise to the top of a military hierarchy tend to be boot-lickers and crowd-pleasers who don't generate surprises for the government and the investors. In a democracy on the rocks, it's the opposite. Franco in Spain and Pinochet in Chile, before they went on to become dictators, both earned their stripes putting down popular rebellions at the behest of a democratic government. In an unstable democracy, that's exactly the kind of security military leadership needs to be able to provide: a know-how for shooting protesters and liquidating unions and so forth. In a democracy that hasn't had a civil war in 150 years, military leadership needs the know-how to be chill and respect business as usual.

Speaking of business, that's another group with a lot of clout: leaders in the private sector. They're not part of government, but their collaboration is necessary for the State to function, they're the authors of most legislation, and specific leaders frequently pass through what proves to be a very porous border, with famous examples of CEOs-turned-rulers like Cheney, Tillerson, or, back in the day, "whizz kid" McNamara, obscuring the fact that nearly all elected officials, after their political careers, make a killing in the private sector. Within this tangled web, influence isn't only possible, it's a constant. So what do these barons of commerce and industry care about? The economy. And presidents don't do nearly as much to influence the economy as they pretend in their speeches.

Trump is good at creating expectations, which is good for keeping the stock market humming, and in the meantime energy prices are low and for every sector in trouble, there's another sector that's growing. Trump already has the barons of the tech and media sectors up in arms against him, and they've already been effective at turning public opinion against him and creating a climate in which an impeachment would seem justified to the public. But the economy is multicephalous. He has enemies, but he still has a lot of support there, in the energy sector, in finance. His deregulations and tax cuts have made him a lot of friends.

IGD: *In about two weeks' time, Trump has pushed for deep tax cuts on the wealthy and a new health care plan (American Health Care Plan, or AHCA) that attacks the poor, elderly, and those with pre-existing conditions. What will be the major effects of such a plan? Some projections are saying that upwards of 24,000 people could potentially die. What are you thoughts?*

> "Rich people in the US aren't nearly as afraid of the poor as they should be."

PG: Rich people in the US aren't nearly as afraid of the poor as they should be.

Drugs, racism, patriarchy, urban/suburban segregation, and poor-on-poor crime are effective shock absorbers, and a few dead cops a year cover any spillover. Neither the rich nor the upper middle class in the US feel even one percent of the rage that they cause through so many ruined lives. And many Americans don't even think to direct their rage at their exploiters. Maybe that's starting to change with growing awareness and rage about the healthcare overhaul, but on the whole, people's rage has been effectively redirected by the elite ever since the major social struggles of the '60s and '70s were defeated with extreme and brutal repression.

Another thing these policies tell us is that the rich are not interested in investing in America's public institutions. Is it simple

greed, or are they cutting and running? If they're thinking rationally, then either they have confidence in the stability of US institutions and aren't worried about weakening those institutions through funding shortages, or they sense that the ship might be sinking and like the rats they are, they're bailing, which in this case means freeing up more liquid capital.

> "people's rage has been effectively redirected by the elite ever since the major social struggles of the '60s and '70s were defeated with extreme and brutal repression."

(To fill in the blanks: when rich people allow themselves to be taxed, they're effectively investing in governmental structures and public infrastructure, because they see it as useful to them, either because they are the primary beneficiaries of such infrastructure, or because it promotes economic growth, or because it disarms popular rage in cases of social upheaval. When they reject taxation, they want to free up their money for other investments that they see as more beneficial, whether that means sending it overseas or investing in hedge funds).

Also, let's not forget Attorney General Sessions' decision to bring back the War on Drugs. There was almost a bipartisan consensus and definitely a scientific consensus that the War on Drugs and the prison-industrial complex it fosters were a failed strategy as far as social peace is concerned. They create more conflict, more illegality, and in the long run they make large populations lose their fear of entering into intense hostility with the State. That's actually a peculiar characteristic of social control in the US (and maybe a few other countries like Brazil). Large parts of the population have normalized life-and-death hostility, even shoot-outs with the law. There's a direct correlation between more social democracy and less Wild West justice. In the long term, social democracy is a more stable strategy: mediate people's