

FOOD FOR THOUGHT
Number 9, Part 7
(NEW SERIES—2007)

MORE TO BE SAID—
BEFORE *TIME RUNS OUT*
PART SEVEN

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AMERICA, LAND OF LIES

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POISON SPREADS

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POWER, AUTHORITY
SUSPECT

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TRUST DESTROYED

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RUIN GENERAL ALSO IN ARTS,
LETTERS, PUBLISHING

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NOTE TO THE READER:

After I posted <http://www.ericlarsen.net/foodforthought9.5.1.2007.html> “Does the CIA Own Amy Goodman” on April 28, 2007, Richard Collier sent his own readers notice of a certain misgiving he had that I then made the introductory part of the next “Food for Thought” segment. That segment went up on May 6 and was titled <http://www.ericlarsen.net/foodforthought9.6.1.2007.html> “Traitors in Our House.” While Collier’s words opened the piece, the balance of it then consisted of an essay by <mailto:rotillotson@sbcglobal.net> Randall M. Tillotson directed to Richard Collier and taking up on the subject of anomalies in Amy Goodman’s coverage of news events on her program, <http://www.democracynow.org/> *Democracy Now!*

If you read <http://www.ericlarsen.net/foodforthought9.6.1.2007.html> “Traitors in Our House,” you’ll know how the piece ended. But in actuality, it *didn’t* end that way, since Richard Collier took another turn and wrote a response to Randall Tillotson’s response.

Complicated. But that's the way some of the most interesting things happen. In this case, I think that Richard Collier's ideas the second time around are more clear, cogent, pointed, and relevant to the recent "Food for Thought" series even than they were the first time around. I take them up (as you may know already) in <http://www.ericlarsen.net/foodforthought9.6.1.html> "More to Say on the Traitors in Our House," and that's where you'll find the discussion. If you'd like to Collier's words in toto, however, the way Collier wrote them—a worthwhile thing—here they are.

RICHARD COLLIER TO RANDALL TILLOTSON

From: [Richard Collier](mailto:Richard.Collier@sbcbglobal.net)
 To: <mailto:rotillotson@sbcbglobal.net> Randall M. Tillotson and revolutionarypolitics@yahoo.com ;
 Sent: Saturday, May 05, 2007 7:31 PM
 Subject: Food for Thought 9.5.1

Thanks for the valuable, in-depth, and stimulating response to my headnote to EL's 9.5.1 FFT, RT. Great stuff; glad you took the time to respond at length.

I can't really take the time to reply to all that you've mentioned, although I would dearly love to arm-wrestle on several issues. But let me suggest five differences of opinion or perspective that we may have, and which I appear to have with EL and perhaps others in the US:

1.

The degree of fear, anger, and trepidation that you project in your writing concerning the current political situation in the US may, in fact, be one of the major differences between the US and Canada. I don't think we share quite the sense of horror that intelligent people in the US experience. Perhaps we should, I don't know. And I don't know if this more optimistic or more easy-going approach is a cultural attribute of Canadians or if we simply have not yet had direct experience with the depth of perfidy occurring in the US; or we may simply be more myopic and not seeing what is taking place.

However, most thoughtful Canadians are appalled at the export of our resources to fuel the US military machine; at the ever-increasing possibility of 'deep integration' with the US, politically and economically; at the Conservatives' butt-kissing the Bush administration; at the shift in our military and foreign affairs from peace keeping to armed battle; and so on and on.

But I don't think we're yet as concerned as you about implanted chips, cameras on street corners, and a massive shift to fascist thought-control. As I said, perhaps we should be: but at this point what you and EL write about—and the quality of abject rage

and fear that pervades your writing—seems to us somewhat alien and therefore off-putting and even, well, un-Canadian.

2

Canada has had a much longer, richer, and bolder tradition of leftwing politics than the US; or at least it has been more visible and prominent—US socialist and communist movements have always been underground movements and deeply hidden from public perception, not to mention roundly vilified. After all, even our Tories would make many of your Democrats cringe in fear. I can only imagine (with some pleasure) how your Republicans view our Liberals, NDP, and Greens. And at least two Communist Parties in Canada have run candidates in ridings throughout the country for years, so there is some public familiarity with the entire spectrum of the left.

So we are not surprised at all when EL excoriates “the left gatekeepers”—they are, after all, only vaguely to the left of the Democrats [in the US], not really on the left very much at all; but we are surprised at the virulence of the attacks on these wannabe leftists. In a nation with a broad and consistent history of leftwing movements, these so-called gatekeepers would not be keeping any gates at all: they would not have been elevated into that position from among a variety of left-liberal commentators. And we would not have had overweening expectations of them: in other words, why does EL feel he needs to whack Amy Goodman unless she has somehow failed to live up to his expectations and there is no one else to fill the gap she apparently has left?

3.

As a result, his attacks on specific Gatekeepers and their work simply because they do not (yet) agree with him on the source of the 9/11 tragedy appear to us excessive, unnecessary, even, well, irrelevant. The Gatekeepers would not have to be found wanting if in fact there was a sufficient tradition of public leftwing analysis available. In effect, it is not Amy Goodman that EL should attack but the whole tradition in the US of a narrow—very narrow—range of permissible political writing and thinking. That kind of attack, using Goodman and others as examples, would to me make a good deal more sense. But without that context, these intense, querulous attacks on Goodman (and others) sound nasty, bullying, lacking in empathy, and ultimately pointless. Worse, they betray what Americans have always been guilty of: bad manners. Here in Canada it is perhaps more important to be polite than to establish turf and prove that one is right. And that’s not, I think, a poor measure of one’s civilization.

4.

Ultimately, if one is not committed to building alliances and common fronts with others with whom you agree mostly, but perhaps not completely, then to what role does that lead one? My experience has been that anything but a commitment to solidarity is counterrevolutionary and plays right into the hands of the ruling class. Sure, we have to overlook the bad-hair days and the sometimes stupid comments or mental blocks in the people we work with; but at least they're working with us and not against us. The only other option is to become a Puritan, someone who knows he/she is one of the Select and that most others are not. It behooves the Select to ensure that his/her group is never ever

contaminated by one of the Fallen or Corrupt—and that means most other people: few are worthy, few are chosen. So the Select find that much of what they do is to administer tests to others (who may or may not be applicants to join the Selects' group) to determine their worthiness: tests of fire and water; tests of what is said and written; tests of behaviour and action. So much time is spent testing others in order to determine worthiness that the original goal of revolution or a New Jerusalem or whatever recedes beyond the horizon.

And the problem with such rites of purification is that they drive away potential adherents and eventually isolate the individual or what is left of the original group. This of course is the history of Protestant religion after the Reformation, right? And I've seen this repeated in leftwing politics: the US Communist Party has fragmented and shivered into warring splinters over and over, each splinter thinking it possesses "the word," but having gotten so refined and diminished that no one takes it seriously at all. And what's the point of being right, if no one listens to you?

5.

And where does this lead? A solitary cell of paranoid suspicion, perhaps. No one can pass all the tests; no one can be righteous enough; no one can be trusted. I think I would rather make mistakes in my trust and correct them when my errors have been made clear to me than worry constantly that my friends, neighbours, associates, and colleagues may all be unreliable, may in fact be stooges or, even worse, counter-intelligence agents recruited by the fascists. My comments on EL's FFT essays are intended as an antidote to that frightening drift into solipsism.

rick

May 5, 2007

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