

Black Jesus

“I CAME TO SEE FAITH AS MORE THAN JUST A COMFORT TO THE WEARY... but rather as an active, palpable agent in the world and in my own life. I was finally able to walk down the aisle of Trinity one day and affirm my Christian faith. Kneeling beneath that cross on the South Side, I felt I heard God’s spirit beckoning me. I submitted myself to His will, and dedicated myself to discovering His truth and carrying out His works.”

That’s how candidate Obama came out as a born-again Christian. For some “birthers” who questioned the candidate’s eligibility as a natural-born US citizen, this phrase, “I submitted myself to His will,” was a tell-tale admission to being a Muslim—raising doubts about the second prerequisite to the presidency: being born-again. I took it as subliminal

inclusiveness, probably conceived without the speaker aware that he virtually defined the word *Islam* in his confession of Christ.

I liked Obama just fine. For the record, I'd had my political coming of age as a southern-state middle schooler when Carter ran for office in 1976. (We had a mock election—I campaigned for Jimmy.) Later, in the Reagan years, I worked in the Middle East as a stalwart supporter of the Gipper and his friends and allies. The man who first took me to visit Arab bedouin was an Arabic speaking Jewish Israeli army intelligence officer who was closely associated with ultranationalist ex-IDF chief Raful Eitan.

Later, when I was asked to help investigate claims that Saddam Hussein had just used chemical weapons against the Kurds, I hastened to the arena to interview the victims and understood immediately that the Reagan administration had a hand in it—I was vociferously appalled. When George H.W. Bush then cited those same atrocities some years later to stir up support against Saddam Hussein, I was one of those who knew first-hand that Republican administrations had befriended the dictator, helped him commit those atrocities, and then denied that they happened until it suited their purposes. It was time for a change of tack, so back in America, I supported the Green Party in the 2000 American presidential elections and wrote a foreign policy piece on the Middle East for Ralph Nader's campaign newspaper. (My support was for a radical change in the status quo and for Nader himself, whom I found to be a refreshingly unencumbered candidate.)

I also voted for Obama and supported his campaign. My vote was pragmatic and conditional. Knowing that government at this level is an enormous, powerful ship whose inertia and orientation leads the leaders more often than the other way around, my expectations were low. I voted more against a continuation of the party in power than for the new one.

My skepticism was rare among Obama's supporters, where a messianic halo was forming. I prayed it would not blind Mr. Obama, who assured us that he loved Reinhold Niebuhr as one of his favorite philosophers. He would presumably hold the theologian's call to humility close to his heart, especially Niebuhr's dictum that "Democracy is a method of finding proximate solutions for insoluble problems." Obama echoed Niebuhr, saying that when it comes to solving the world's evil and pain, "we should be humble and modest in our belief we can eliminate those things." In the end, I am afraid that there was little humility to be found.

I don't doubt Obama's sincerity; I believe he really meant it, but humility seemed to either go against his nature or his head was turned by adulation. His solutions at home and on the international scene became as maximalist as Reagan's but concealed behind the velvet curtain of intellect. Maybe it was that three-tone poster's fault, with his tilted head looking beatifically toward the sublime space to which he would take us, the place of *HOPE*.

The Guardian noticed early in the campaign that the image "acquired the kind of instant recognition of Jim Fitzpatrick's Che Guevara." Actually, Che and Lenin both adopted this quasi-religious pose, modeled on Christian iconography, because it was the hope of messianic Paradise that Communism offered to fulfill. This shouldn't be understood as an accusation of cynical manipulation on Obama's part. My point is that the iconography eclipsed the man. And neither is the artist a conspirator. Artists have always portrayed their favored political subjects in divine poses and celestial light; it is a symptom, not the cause of the millenarian virus—the Paradise quest seeks out and creates would-be saviors.

We see that here. Unbidden by the campaign, Shepard Fairey did what artists do: he expressed the zeitgeist, taking campaign planners by surprise and forcing them to scramble in pursuit of *HOPE*'s extraordinary and un-Niebuhrly conceit. Having become an instant object of devotion, the challenge was to hammer out policies that could live up to it. *HOPE* was the new candidate.

How could that happen among such a sophisticated body of supporters? Most considered themselves evolved past the stage of primitive religion—like their candidate, they were more intelligent, wiser and therefore better equipped to lead not just America, but the world into the twenty-first century. Were many aware of how religious that aspiration is? Not those I knew. But Obama's supporters were in denial. They were spiritually hungry and their paradise-starved hearts betrayed them as they became as unbalanced as the Religious Right of the late 1970's.

Am I overstating it? Consider again what the *HOPE* campaign promised. As the face of *HOPE* and *CHANGE*, Barack Obama could not just be about jobs, taxes or foreign policy. It couldn't mean ordinary change, the way gritty Joe Biden had said he'd change things—this had to be eschatological change, like St. Paul's definition of resurrection, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye...we shall be changed."

Before *HOPE* there were already signs that candidate Obama might be comfortable with messianic acclaim. Echoing Ronald Reagan, Obama told his audience of 2,400 churchgoers in Greenville, South Carolina that he aspired to be “an instrument of God.” Then he promised with Christ-like assurance, “I am confident that we can create a Kingdom right here on Earth.”

That’s a mighty big promise. Even Jesus did not make that claim. But Obama’s followers put their faith in him without reservation. *The Economist* observed that Obama alone among modern public figures effected ecstatic, nearly medieval reactions. “Mr Obama has inspired more passionate devotion than any modern American politician. People scream and faint at his rallies. Some wear T-shirts proclaiming him ‘The One’.” Written early in his presidency, the piece correctly notes that it was not just campaign hyperbole. He had promised to “change the world” and “transform this country,” and now as president, “he keeps adding details to this ambitious wish-list. He vows to create millions of jobs, to cure cancer and to seek a world without nuclear weapons.”

As a journalist known for his coverage of the Vatican, Sandro Magister looked at this phenomenon and recalled a historical precedent. The Italian marveled at Obama’s “messianic vision” and the president’s startling resemblance to Joachim of Fiore, a twelfth-century millenarian monk who declared the dawn of a new age in which there were to be no divisions among humanity, and specifically no religious divisions. Magister found the “messianic rhetoric that pervades Obama’s speeches,” including his repeated proclamations of a “new era,” of a “new beginning,” and an “age of peace,” to be vintage Fiore. (Rumors had already circulated that Obama based his philosophy on Fiore; Magister refuted this, but wanted to point out the uncanny similarities between the two nonetheless, and to warn of the dangers attested through long experience of such things at the Vatican.)

Historians will have to assess Obama’s presidency in terms of success or failure as he defined it. And he defined it big. Esteemed historian Morton Keller has already chosen to begin his early Obama retrospective with the only stick by which this presidency can be measured. “The media and the educated classes in particular had a strong belief in his unique talents and the prospect of an epochal presidency. (So, apparently, did Obama. Early on he asked a group of historians what it took to be a trans-

formative president.) His staff had even higher expectations. With minimal irony, they referred to him as Black Jesus.”

Jesus he was not. There is no doubt that he brought some change, but it was not capitalized, messianic Change. Transformative? On some levels yes, of course. Most presidents are, for better or worse, transformative of something, and Obama can point to some historic groundbreaking. In the greater scheme, however, nothing much changed at all. His path to the White House was well trodden and clearly illuminated by the right education, the correct friends and the obligatory money connections. Obama’s “Kingdom right here on earth” was Reagan’s bequest. He may have taken a different approach to it, but it was still the Gipper’s New World Order that Obama championed—he was at best a novel dynastic successor. Obama’s ambition was to hone and perfect the New World Order at home through his social agenda and to extend it to those last resistant corners of the globe. The idea that Obama would be truly, fundamentally different from Reagan, Bush or Clinton was in reality only a religious delusion.

Neochange

BUT WASN’T PRESIDENT OBAMA A NEOLIBERAL AND REAGAN A *neococonservative*? Space does not allow for a full discussion, but these terms are red herrings. They are two sides of the same ideological coin, sharing an overarching dream of a global society, characterized by a free-market economy, free trade, democracy and human rights. What is the difference then? It is only in the details of social balance and the means by which recalcitrant international players can be compelled to comply with the new order. Obama sounded like Reagan—the same grand narrative that promised God’s kingdom on earth—because he was indeed exactly like Reagan. Both promised the same end of days liberation and, in a word, were all about *Hope*. (Reagan’s appeal was the absolutely believable optimism he projected; “It’s morning again in America,” brought tears to people’s eyes.)

Many of Obama’s supporters soon began to realize this too, understanding finally that there would be no *Change*. His iconographer noted the similarity to Reagan-Bush with a disenchanted shrug. “Do you think Obama has lived up to your ‘Hope’ poster?” *Esquire* asked Fairey in 2015.

“Not even close.” How come? “There have been a lot of things that he’s compromised on that I never would have expected. I mean, drones and domestic spying are the last things I would have thought [he’d support].”

Sad to say, these are no compromises; they are the standard policing tools of the New World Order, a type of the same weapons and invasive hand that appeared originally with the Old World Order—the Cosmic Order of Sumeria. Sovereignty has always been coercive and Obama’s reign was too. Wars to end history were always brutal, and Obama’s was no exception. And yes, he fought a vicious war in the Middle East against fundamentalist resisters and conducted an aggressive culture war at home against those whom he considered to be regressive. We are not accustomed to thinking of liberal democracy as waging an eschatological holy war, especially not Obama’s kind of progressivism, but it surely does.

Here is where we see the link between Reagan and Obama most clearly. As early as 1989, Francis Fukuyama identified democratic liberalism as history’s exit point. Fukuyama’s best-selling, *The End of History and the Last Man*, evangelized the end of conflict between ideologies and the dawn of an age of universal humanity. All would embrace the triumph of freedom, democracy, equality and human rights—the lion had lain with the lamb. This is Barack Obama to a T in all his Fiore-like messianism.

But the Good News came from an influential neoconservative Reagan planner as a declaration of victory for the Republican president’s ideals. Fukuyama was more than qualified to write it. He was one of the first young disciples of the administration, brought in by neoconservative intellect Paul A. Wolfowitz in 1981 soon after Reagan was sworn in. Fukuyama and team were tasked with devising the president’s strategy for global domination. The result was the Reagan Doctrine, the hardline principles for taking down the USSR and establishing worldwide liberal democracy.

It wasn’t just for Republicans, however. The Clintons were true believers in Reagan’s New World Order. Bill’s job was to rebalance the economy after half a century of Cold War and if possible to talk government-skeptical Americans into accepting social services that were becoming the norm in the rest of the NWO. All that was left for the Clintons was to tidy up and cash in. There was no grand vision here: their entire agenda was to reinforce Reagan-Bush gains and utilize them to begin to marginally spread the booty around.

Bill Clinton's international energies were spent sweeping up after the Soviets and trying to figure out how far to go in employing American military power to further the NWO. He also brokered the peace deal between Israel and the PLO, an organization that had lost its international sponsor with the collapse of the Soviets.

When force was needed, Clinton used it, most prominently in Yugoslavia, Somalia and Haiti. He also acted militarily against al-Qaeda's network wherever and whenever he chose. At last it had become clear that Islamic revivalists were going to be among the last resisters to Western hegemony. And, lest we forget, it was Bill Clinton who signed the Iraq Liberation Act in 1998, officially sanctioning the neoconservative theory of unilateral regime change. Operation Desert Fox was launched six weeks later to show he meant business. (This was a seventy-hour air campaign involving 300 sorties, 600 air dropped munitions and 250 or so cruise missiles. Targets included six of Saddam Hussein's palaces.)

After Clinton, George W. Bush took the helm. Paul Wolfowitz returned as Deputy Secretary of Defense. The world was fairly quiet except for a few segments that resisted the order: jihadists and the dictatorial poles of the North Korea/Iraq "axis of evil." Now finding his ideological seat still warm after the Clinton years, it was a chance for Wolfowitz to test the limits of state power.

The Bush team developed the Reagan Doctrine into a determination that the United States has an obligation to depose unsympathetic regimes and install NWO-style democracies. This is the Bush Doctrine. It is quintessentially millenarian because of its unreserved faith that America can successfully bring holy judgment upon the rulers of darkness and miraculously transform their nations into exemplary members of history's final society.

The test case was an obvious one. As soon as the Bush team settled into the White House, plans to invade Iraq were front and center—not in response to 9/11, which had yet to take place, but to prove America's ability to deconstruct a dictatorship and build a liberal democracy. This was important—the End of History was depending on it.

Al-Qaeda's attack helped make the plan palatable, but of course there was never any connection between the two, except that both groups did not submit to the post-Soviet order. I have no doubt that without 9/11, the war would still have been pursued solely on the grounds that Colin Powell

presented to the United Nations: Iraq's support of global terror and the development of WMD's. The same pack of lies would still have been effective without al-Qaeda's help.

Bush's war was therefore an evolution from Reagan, GHW Bush and Clinton; when Congress authorized the invasion in 2002, it cited nothing less than Bill Clinton's own Iraq Liberation Act as its precedent. Senator Hillary Clinton cited it too when she voted for the authorization. Her proviso was that her vote did not mean adopting a doctrine of unilateralism or preemption. What did she think of regime change per se? A-OK. Before casting a 'yes' vote, Senator Clinton noted this in her floor speech. "In 1998, the United States also changed its underlying policy toward Iraq from containment to regime change and began to examine options to effect such a change." That is to say, her husband's Iraq Liberation Act did that.

The big difference between Bill and Hillary's precedent-setting regime change doctrine and Bush's was the Clintons insistence that such actions be done in a coalition and only after being provoked. In practice, there has been very little to distinguish the two, just nuances over what constitutes a provocation, and how much of the army to field. If you listen closely, you will hear the real argument: "how much will this cost?"

The Bush people imagined it would be a relatively easy task and that it would recoup the costs by way of free Iraq's booming economy. They were confident that the military phase would be quick and painless. The nation building should go well too, because everyone in the world wanted our Western liberal system and values. The only thing holding those poor people back were leftover dictatorships from a by-gone age—pathetic vestiges of the time before history ended, caricatured perfectly in Saddam Hussein, Muammar al-Qaddafi and Kim Jong-il.

Obviously, the experiment did not go well. As the failure in Iraq became clear, Fukuyama stopped preaching the End Time Gospel. He wrote a critique of the invasion for *The New York Times Magazine*, now arguing that history cannot be pushed along to its final point. Not only was history not over, there was nothing to be done to hasten its end. Such activism was founded upon Bolshevik Leninism, Fukuyama said. (Hopefully, he had not been reading Goebbels.)

It is a spot-on insight, but as we know, this belief that history can be compelled did not begin with the Bolsheviks—we have seen it in every

attempt to secure Paradise: Jewish rebels, Muslim jihadists, Crusader armies, global Christian imperialists, New World Puritans, Nazis and yes, Bolsheviks.

As a lowly state senator, Barack Obama vehemently opposed the invasion, calling it a “dumb war.” Not hard to say as a local official whose position rendered the opinion without consequence. As he was not specific, I’m not sure what part of the invasion he thought was “dumb.” It couldn’t have been the military part of the experiment, which was actually a rip-roaring success: getting rid of Saddam was not hard to do. Setting up a democracy was easy too—free and fair elections took place within eighteen months. Here is the dumb part: Bush defeated Saddam and installed democracy without accounting for the possibility that Western democracy and morals might be rejected by a majority of the people there. The ideal of world-saving liberal democracy was the weak point, not the invasion.

Newly democratic Iraq elected a majoritarian tyranny of Shiites who were increasingly beholden to Iran. Very large parts of the population, in and out of power, did not want the New World Order. Democracy (of a less than liberal kind), allowed them to make that clear. Now all that was left was to begin killing one another to impose their own flavors of absolutist oppression. Were there NWO-style liberal democrats there? Sure. They just couldn’t win an election.

The supposed stupidity of the exercise, the only part that failed, was the aspect that Obama went on to embrace most fully and most foolishly. President Obama did not wait for history to meander its way to its own conclusion as penitent Fukuyama suggested he should. He pushed and coerced with every bit as much Bolshevik ambition as Bush. Both were out to save the world for global free-market democracy, human rights and freedom. Both cited God’s authority.

Obama will pursue the ideal of democracy in the Middle East as hard as his predecessors had. Whether one or the other was more inept is hard to say, but it was President Obama who oversaw the Syrian Civil War and the rise of ISIS.

Disclusiveness

WHAT DIVIDED THEM WAS NOT FUNDAMENTAL TO THE GLOBALIST FAITH,

but rather cultural and technical differences highlighted in domestic social programs (transgender bathrooms anyone?) and military tactics (the role of expensive ground forces in deposing dictators versus remote controlled bombing and proxy armies). Bush and Obama would apportion public wealth differently, slicing the negotiable public monetary pie—a beggar's portion to begin with—in favor of different biases.

Just like Bush, President Obama found much of the world unreceptive. There is more to the New World Order and liberal democracy than simply voting. Hitler won votes. Putin wins votes. The fault was the NWO's assumption that it knows what is best for everyone and that the majority always wants what Western globalists want. When given the option to choose, people often choose to reject liberal modernity and embrace their own 'religion,' which from Russia to Egypt has lately been some form of structured intolerance.

Why couldn't Bush and Obama see this? Because theirs is as much a religion as any other; to think otherwise is a deceitful conceit. Any utopian ideology that promises the End of History is a millenarian religion, and it suffers from the overreach that characterizes all such fantasies.

At home, President Obama made this miscalculation as he tried to perfect the ideal of liberal equality—a nice idea that may well be impossible to achieve peacefully by the force of law. The aspiration for a truly equitable and peaceful world is wonderful, but it requires prophetic moral suasion—the ability to convince and convert those who oppose the equality of others. As an ideology imposed by law, it will create a backlash and in all probability violence. That may well be the correct course; George Washington and Abraham Lincoln pursued it, but they were not deluded. They knew their limits, and they understood the dire consequences: they were going to tear their nations in half and kill hundreds of thousands. They did not imagine themselves to be Jesus bringing the Kingdom of God.

Thankfully, the Obama administration did not have slavery or national independence on its agenda. Its issues were largely marginal. Nonetheless, the president managed to institute a package of domestic social reforms, which at the end of the day, revolved mainly around race, gender identity and peripheral adjustments to social welfare—none of which was extraordinary in comparison with, for example, other corners of the

English-speaking neoliberal world, such as Canada, New Zealand or even the UK.

In America however, even this level of intervention was felt by many to be stridently coercive—half the country felt the experience of “inclusiveness” as active exclusion of their culture and values. To them, “we include everyone” felt like “everyone as long as you’re like us.” They felt disbarred because their social construction was different from the president’s. They will later vote for Donald Trump.

It wasn’t just Obama, however. These people had been content to roll along with liberal globalization for years as the changing economic landscape destroyed cities, tens of thousands of small towns and millions of secure well-paying jobs. They already felt disenfranchised; now Obama’s perceived assault on their private morals was felt to be the last straw. I don’t mean to discount racism or white nationalism as a factor, but we mustn’t overstate the fringe—most of those in the Trump backlash simply felt that they’d had enough, that things were going too far, too fast—that they’d been run over.

As it had in the 1970’s, this came from people who held more traditional and literal religious beliefs and paralleled an identical anti-globalization sentiment sweeping the Muslim world. A conservative Christian and a Muslim revivalist may see in each other the Antichrist, but anti-modernism is actually what they share in common, along with the desire to maintain their differences from one another. Neither wants “all roads lead to God.” We can include non-believing, national purity ideologies in this too. Liberalism’s insistence that we are all the same feels to them like persecution by a hostile religion with global imperial ambitions.

Isn’t it? Doesn’t global liberalism make itself the one exception that rises above the level field of other ideas? If it is anything at all, it is a universal religion. It conditionally tolerates other religions: one can be a Christian, Muslim, Satanist or whatever as long as democratic liberalism overarches it. I’m reminded of George W. Bush’s response to a question from a Muslim student. “People view America imposing its beliefs. If you believe that freedom is not universal then it could be viewed as an imposition of beliefs.” There again is where the presidents share a common faith; somehow the imposition of Western-style freedom is exempt from the charge of imperialism. Why should it be?

Abroad, the Arab Spring was President Obama and Secretary of State

Clinton's test case. How should diversity-minded, inclusive neoliberal leaders respond to a mass movement dominated by anti-globalist Islamic revivalists? The answer seemed to be: with studied incomprehension.

"Obama upended three decades of American relations with its most stalwart ally in the Arab world, putting the weight of the United States squarely on the side of the Arab street," judged the reliably Obama-friendly *New York Times*.

The upending took place in February 2011, when the president rebuked Egypt's Hosni Mubarak in a telephone call and then immediately appeared on television in a hastily-called news conference to say that Mubarak must go. It looked and felt like a superior dressing down a subordinate and that's what it was. Such a display of dominant coercion is unusual from American presidents, perhaps an expression of President Obama's messianic confidence.

Mubarak, now without a superpower ally, duly resigned and democracy had its day in Egypt. For Bush it took a military invasion to overthrow Saddam and give democracy to the Iraqis. Obama's circumstances were different. Saddam was a legacy of a by-gone age. The results were not exactly the same: millions died in Iraq. But in both cases democracy proved to be anything but liberal. The people of Egypt chose the Muslim Brotherhood to rule over them.

Did the president understand the situation better when, just eighteen months later, the streets again filled to attack US diplomatic missions in Egypt and Libya? The latter resulted in the death of Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and Hillary Clinton's Libya debacle while in Cairo the protesters burned effigies of their liberator President Obama. 'Democracy' soon erupted in Yemen, Bahrain and Syria also, and the president's responses indicate that he remained as blind to the reality as Bush had been.

Meanwhile in the Garden of Eden...

AS SYRIA BEGAN TO DISINTEGRATE IN 2011, MY ASSOCIATES AND I rushed aid to democracy's Christian victims in the north. There, the 'democratized street' meant locally imposed Islamic law and curtailment of Christian rights (and in some areas outright atrocities). How did it

come to this? It seemed almost too perfectly symbolic: The upper Euphrates, where the worst of catastrophes unfolded, was the biblical setting of the Garden of Eden and the actual location of humanity's conscious birth. How is that things were worse here now than they were 12,000 years ago?

We recalled President Obama's unprecedented speech at Cairo's Al-Azhar University in 2009, where he spelled out his vision calling for "governments that reflect the will of the people" across the Middle East. The latter part of his remarks referred to America's unique calling: "The United States has been one of the greatest sources of progress that the world has ever known...shaped by every culture, drawn from every end of the Earth, and dedicated to a simple concept: E pluribus unum: 'Out of many, one.'"

Was there some suggestion that this was a motto applicable to the world? Come under the unity of the New World Order? Or was it a subliminal appeal (or possibly affront) to Islam's cardinal doctrine of *tawhid*, the indivisible unity of God? It's unlikely anyone in the administration understood that these words could be read as a rival creed, so we would assume the line was written without guile. Nonetheless, it again failed to recognize that many people do not want to be one with Western liberalism.

It did have an effect, however. The Arab Spring erupted in the wake of his speech to unintended consequences, and the Syrian Civil War was one of them. Clearly, universal tolerance under the aegis of liberal democracy was not the will of the people who took to the streets and picked up weapons to depose Assad. Nor that of the people in Cairo's streets who happily burned Obama in effigy. As for the rest of "the people," most would have been better off with their tyrannical leaders.

In his fateful telephone conversation, Mubarak had correctly predicted chaos, warning President Obama that he didn't have a good grasp of how the Middle East works. Questioning the American president's intellectual acumen was a bad tactic, which most certainly backfired on Mubarak. Obama was used to giving lectures, not receiving them. (In the words of Congressman Dennis Cardoza, a fellow Democrat from California, "President Obama projected an arrogant 'I'm right, you're wrong' demeanor that alienated many potential allies"). Mubarak told veteran correspondent Christiane Amanpour that he didn't hold a grudge,

however, and believed Obama to be “a good man” who simply “does not understand.”

“He’s not good with personal relationships; that’s not what interests him,” said an experienced United States diplomat, adding further light to the problem. “But in the Middle East, those relationships are essential. The lack of them deprives D.C. of the ability to influence leadership decisions.”

This observation about Obama’s hectoring style was echoed again and again by a wide spectrum of leaders, from Arab diplomats to British Prime Minister David Cameron and New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg. (The latter two called Obama’s stance, “arrogant.”)

In the Cairo speech he assured his listeners that he considered it “part of my responsibility as President of the United States to fight against negative stereotypes of Islam wherever they appear.” One thing he may not have understood, but could have learned if he’d listened to Arab diplomats, was that many activist Muslims perceive this good will as dishonest. When a gun wielding Western superpower insists that Islam is a religion of peace, it is seen as a means of pacification disguised as a compliment; it is imperialist trickery to cow Muslims into “Uncle Tom” subservience, they would say.

None of this was understood. Despite growing chaos, the administration (through the embassy in Syria), encouraged democracy protesters while Clinton and other top advisers urged the president to increase U.S. support to moderate, secular Syrian rebel groups, as if the situation could be contained and transformed into a 1776-style fight for freedom. Obviously that did not happen. Arms quickly fell into the hands of jihadists with an ideology indistinguishable from al-Qaeda’s; Iran entered the fray without reserve; and ISIS came to dominate the scene for three bloody years—current death toll about 500,000. A measure of the disaster: among the factions that matter, the *most moderate* belonged to the Muslim Brotherhood. The number of fighters who really want a Western-style democracy is few, and they are so ineffective as to be insignificant.

Tunisia is the only possible success story here, but it is a mixed result. Its lurch from a modern secular, but authoritarian regime to a democratic, but Islamist constitution, threatened to curtail rights for women that had been in place for a century. The US embassy was attacked and breached here too, and on the brink of all-out civil war, the country was snatched

from the flames through the efforts of four institutional leaders, the Nobel Peace Prize winners of the Tunisian Quartet. The situation remains precariously fragile. Polls suggest widespread discontent and with over 7,000 Tunisian jihadists in Syria and Iraq, it is not difficult to imagine the scales tipping the wrong way if any number of them decide to go home.

On the opposite end of the spectrum we have the Kurds who fought valiantly against the Islamic State. At first glance, Syria's Kurdish PYD is democratic and secular. They have sexual equality—just look at the images of those women soldiers! Look more closely: this is not the liberal free market world at all. It is a Bookchinite socialist Paradise that does not allow rival ideologies and practices forced collectivization. Property is redistributed punitively based on ethnicity and political affiliation. Rivals are suppressed and arrested. My personal experience of this group is that it is totalitarian and mafia-like in the way it enforces the parameters of its Paradise. And those women-warriors? I had a fourteen-year-old student in a scholarship program whom they forcibly recruited by threatening to kill her father. She was disfigured in the fighting. This group's socialist dream is one of the most extremely prescribed versions of enforced Paradise outside of North Korea.

With more time, we could consider Vladimir Putin's mystically-tinged Russian nationalism or China, neither of which submit to the NWO. As yet, they are playing to the tune of an older version of the Cosmic Order while benefiting from the new. Both would gladly take on the mantle of world savior at the moment of liberal democracy's failure.

I can stop here. All this is to say that the answer to the terror of history is not to be found in liberal globalist ideology any more than it is found in older religious forms of millenarianism or earlier socially constructed cosmologies. None is able to force open the exit door from history, none can bring Paradise, and liberalism is just as dangerous to human life as any of them when it arrogantly makes the attempt. Just ask any Syrian.