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Opinion

How Should We Handle Right-Wing Disrupters?

Recently, I saw two separate stories about right-wing disrupters. In one case, a well-known bookstore in the Washington, D.C. area, “Politics & Prose,” was visited by right-wing disrupters during a book event focused on “whiteness.” In another case, a discussion of race and politics in the Dominican Republic was disrupted by alleged Dominican fascists who are allies of the grandson of the notorious Dominican dictator, Rafael Trujillo.

Liberal and progressive individuals and institutions should expect disruptions to not only continue but to increase in scale. Given the signals that the Trump administration has conveyed to the political right — as in suggesting that it is appropriate to beat up opponents—the rabid right feels empowered.

So, what does one do? Here are a few suggestions.

First, we should take personal and institutional security seriously. Disruption can be carried out through right-wingers simply chanting or it can take the extreme form of violent attacks, e.g., the bombings of mosques and synagogues; the assassination of progressives. This



Bill Fletcher Jr.

The Global African

means ensuring that our institutions are protected and that there are security teams prepared to intervene when there is a threat of physical violence.

Second, be careful about provocations. The history of the COINTELPRO operation that disrupted progres-

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sive and radical groups in the 1960s and 1970s, demonstrates that agents and other disrupters can either carry out a provocation to encourage progressives to break the law, and/or they can infiltrate our organizations and institutions and covertly encourage us to carry out illegal ac-

tivities. Many great activists found themselves incarcerated or killed as a result.

Third, establish clear rules for behavior at all events and meetings, and ensure that such rules are posted and/or circulated. It is not uncommon to have a provocateur(s) stand in a forum and speak beyond their time limit or to engage in forms of personal harassment. Under those circumstances it always needs to be made clear to the audience who is in the right and who is in the wrong before any actions are taken.

More than 20 years ago I

united Ireland, and rights for the Catholic (nationalist) community in Northern Ireland, McAliskey was the subject of assassination attempts and various forms of harassment.

An opponent, who was obviously a supporter of Britain and the Protestant (Loyalist) community, surfaced in the audience during the question and answer. He started asking very provocative questions and clearly aimed to disrupt the event. Rather than evict the provocateur, McAliskey asked the provocateur questions and let him talk. Within a few minutes the provocateur demonstrated that he was an idiot and vanished.

We are not entering a new era. These sorts of disruptions have a long and ignominious history in the USA. Many people have forgotten this and act as if so-called civility is the normal state of affairs. The right wing has little interest in civility but a great deal of interest in suppressing progressive thought.

So, get organized!

Bill Fletcher, Jr. is the former president of TransAfrica Forum. Follow him on Twitter, Facebook and at www.billfletcherjr.com. He is the author of the murder mystery The Man Who Fell From the Sky.

Our Democracy is on the Line, Congress Must Act Now

While the debate whether President Trump obstructed justice should be over with the release of Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s report, unfortunately, it is not. In fact, it has just begun as Congress prepares to conduct exhaustive examinations into these breathtaking revelations.

Given the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, Attorney General Barr’s attempt to exonerate Trump is simply stunning. It is crystal clear that Trump interfered with the Mueller investigation. Even the redacted report contains a multitude of actions in which Trump obstructed justice in one of the most consequential investigations ever conducted regarding the state of our democracy.

We warned the nation about Attorney General Barr when we opposed his confirmation to the position. We told the Senate that William Barr “can never overcome the public perception that he endorsed Trump’s efforts to hold himself above the law. William Barr simply cannot serve as the independent leader our country needs at this critical time.” We were correct.

Barr’s lack of independence and Trump’s obstruction raises critical questions about



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the rule of law. But this is also about the integrity and security of our democracy. Just as

“Trump has caused infinite damage to the office of the presidency by impeding justice and subverting the rule of law.

important in the Mueller report was the astounding disclosure that our country was subjected to a full-scale attack on our democratic process.

Astonishingly, the Mueller report concluded that Russia “interfered in the 2016 presidential election in sweeping and systemic fashion.” Russia intended to benefit and did in fact benefit Trump. We also know that the Trump cam-

paign knew about Russia’s assistance and welcomed it with open arms. Russia helped Trump win the presidency by manipulating voters, fomenting racial division, and targeting the African-American community to suppress voter turnout.

Back in December 2018, we led a boycott of Facebook. We called upon Congress to conduct further investigations into Facebook after a report released for the Senate Intelligence Committee revealed that the Russian influence campaign “made an extraordinary effort to target African-Americans” using an array of tactics to suppress turnout among Democratic voters.

Now, with the results of Robert Mueller’s report, the outrage should be palpable. Congress must fully investigate, take all appropriate action, and ensure the integrity and security of our democracy. This must be done with the urgency it requires. The 2020 election has already begun. Candidates are making pitches. Voting machines are being purchased. Yet our democracy is not safe from the external forces that want to cause us harm.

Congress begins their examination and investigation without a full record, and

completion of that record must be a top priority.

The redacted report released by Attorney General William Barr falls woefully short of what is owed to Congress and to the American people. It shows that the Trump administration is intent on hiding facts and covering its tracks. Mr. Barr should immediately release the complete Mueller report in unredacted, unedited, and unvarnished form. The American public deserves the truth.

We are also troubled by Special Counsel Mueller’s decision not to press for a subpoena or interview of Trump. Trump has caused infinite damage to the office of the presidency by impeding justice and subverting the rule of law. He should be called to answer and held accountable for his actions to harm our democracy.

Our democracy is in a holding pattern. We need answers and we need them fast. The Trump administration has already harmed our civil rights in devastating ways, and it will take us years to recover. But we cannot, and must not, allow the foundations of our democracy to be undermined, knowing full well of the threat. This is our democracy, and we must act to protect it.