

The US media declares war, once again, on comic Louis C.K.

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A significant portion of the American media castigated a villainous figure this past weekend, lamenting the fact he had essentially gone unpunished for his crimes.

Was it the late Sen. John McCain, who dropped tons of bombs on innocent Vietnamese and then earned a well-deserved name for himself over the course of nearly four decades in Congress as a ferocious militarist and jingoist?

No, no—it was comic Louis C.K.

While McCain was warmly, effusively eulogized in the pages of the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Washington Post*, etc., Louis C.K. was lectured in those same pages about his misdeeds and told he had not paid nearly a high enough price.

What provoked the outrage was the comic's reappearance, after an absence of more than nine months, at two comedy clubs last week, one on Long Island, the other in Manhattan. He was greeted enthusiastically at both venues.

Last November 9, the *New York Times* published an article containing the allegations of five women that C.K. had masturbated in their presence. The following day, he acknowledged the truth of the reports, adding that he never committed the acts "without asking first." The talented comic went on to express remorse. He then disappeared from the public eye. An intriguing film he directed and starred in, *I Love You, Daddy*, disappeared with him.

Coming on the heels of accusations against producer Harvey Weinstein and actor Kevin Spacey, the C.K. case was one of those that helped the #MeToo movement get off the ground. Allegations against Jeffrey Tambor, Charlie Rose, Matt Lauer, Garrison Keillor, Al Franken, Mario Batali, James Levine, Geoffrey Rush and others soon followed, leading in most cases to resignations or dismissals, in certain cases, after decades of artistic effort.

Louis C.K.'s actions were eccentric, inappropriate and unpleasant. Apologies to those he had offended were clearly in order. It appeared that he had taken advantage of his celebrity and the admiration he inspired to act out compulsively.

However, we pointed out at the time, "Louis C.K. is not a fiend deserving to be liquidated. He appears to suffer from emotional disorders that find expression in his compulsive exhibitionism. There must certainly have been a way to deal with his form of behavioral disorder without ending his career as an actor and comic. Perhaps one of his producers, directors or agents might have done more, or anything, to help Louis C.K. if he or she had not been so fixated on making as much money off the comic's

work as possible."

The media attacks on the comic were largely dishonest and self-serving. #MeToo is a movement of the self-absorbed, ambitious upper middle class. While its pseudo-left apologists pay lip service to concerns about the conditions of working class women, the moving forces behind this campaign, including billionaire Oprah Winfrey and top Obama administration officials like Tina Tchen, are solely concerned with advancing the interests of an already well-to-do grouping of aspiring female professionals.

The plight of immigrant women targeted by the US government, much less the endless suffering of women, men and children in Yemen and elsewhere as a result of predatory American imperialist policy, is of absolutely no interest to the #MeToo crowd, who solidly backed the corporate warmonger Hillary Clinton.

Instinctively, the population senses the selfishness of this movement. As the resolution adopted by the Socialist Equality Party's recent congress argues, "While the relentless preoccupation with sex has played well with the Democratic Party's affluent upper-middle class constituency, it has fallen flat with the great mass of working people, whose main concerns relate to problems arising from their class position in capitalist society, rather than their gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation."

This "falling flat" is not going over well with the #MeToo spokespeople in the American media. The outlandish and absurdly out-of-proportion response to Louis C.K.'s brief shows at two comedy clubs is a measure of their unhappiness. (That he was welcomed with "open arms" and standing ovations did not go over well. The American public itself may need to be replaced!)

Dozens of resentful and sanctimonious pieces sprang up like mushrooms after the rain. ("Just A Reminder: Let's Not Give Alleged Sexual Harassers A Comeback Narrative," "Starting with Louis C.K., the creeps are creeping back into the spotlight," "Too Much, Too Soon," "Louis C.K. Seems to Think That After 9 Months, He's Listened Enough," "Louis C.K. forces audience to watch him without their consent," "Here They Come Again," "No, Louis C.K. didn't 'serve his time' for admitting to sexually harassing women," and so forth)

"Louis C.K. hasn't been punished enough," "He's back too soon," "We'll decide when he can re-emerge," etc., etc. These themes appeared over and over again in the depressingly similar and subjective pieces.

Punished for what? And by whom? Who are these self-appointed

Grand Inquisitors?

There is a difference between even severely inappropriate behavior and criminality. C.K. has faced public humiliation and “disgrace,” he has lost millions of dollars in income, his film has been buried. This is all described as a “soft landing.” What should he face? Prison, flogging, waterboarding? His *real crime*, although he expressed personal regret, is that he has not fully kowtowed to the #MeToo witch-hunt and its dictates. He has not yet sufficiently “gotten on board.” He remains dangerously on the loose. Moreover, he is one of those few prominent personalities who *might* even speak some unpalatable truths about the whole dishonest, dirty business—and in the process reveal that the Emperor has no clothes.

The *New York Times*—of course—published two prominent commentaries on the comic over the same weekend they were honoring the deceased McCain as a “war hero” and a courageous opponent of Donald Trump: “Who Gets a Second Chance?—Louis C.K. decided it was time for his,” by Aparna Nancheria, and “Louis C.K. and Men Who Think Justice Takes as Long as They Want It To—A comedian who admitted to sexual misconduct seems to think it’s time for his comeback,” by Roxane Gay.

Nancheria, a fellow comedian, has no particular argument to make; she’s mostly irritated that Louis C.K. has returned. She tells us that the comic promised to “step back and take a long time to listen,” and asks complainingly is “‘a long time’...now less than one calendar year?” Again, C.K. was not charged with, much less convicted of, any crime. The court of public opinion is fairly reliable in such cases. It expressed clear disapproval, grimaced, and went on to other, more pressing matters.

Nancheria complains that C.K. did not refer to his misdeeds in his recent appearances: “For Louis C.K. not to address his fall from grace feels like the equivalent of someone who has been listening only to wait for the rest of us to stop talking, so he can talk again.” In other words, he did not adequately prostrate himself.

Like a number of commentators without much more than personal spite to convey and who are looking to inflate their arguments, Nancheria chooses to turn the five women involved in the original embarrassment into martyrs of sexual victimhood. She claims, without providing any evidence, that their careers were harmed, and goes on: “To think the entertainment industry is fair or just or chiefly merit-based is assuming it operates by different rules from the rest of the world. The burden placed on victims will always far outweigh those placed on predators. Yes, there is probably no measure by which he can undo the pain he has caused these women, but he can try.” The sanctimony in many of the commentaries is almost unendurable.

Gay is even more consumed with self-pity and bitterness. After a reference to C.K., Lauer, Spacey and Rose, and how easy they’ve all had it, she goes on: “Their victims, however, have been disbelieved. They have had to withstand accusations that they are seeking attention. Justice has been grandly elusive. The public discourse has been more about whether the #MeToo movement has gone too far than it has been about reckoning with the alarming prevalence of sexual predation in every circumstance imaginable.”

None of this is true. Ninety percent of the media coverage has been devoted to blackguarding the accused and proclaiming the alleged victims to be heroes and heroines. Justice had been “grandly elusive” because, by and large, there is precious little evidence of criminal behavior.

The #MeToo movement is attempting to tap into widespread and entirely legitimate hostility toward everyday corporate and institutional bullying and brutality, including sexual harassment, which are integral to the profit system, and hijack that sentiment for its own selfish, right-wing purposes. Exploitation, wage slavery, capitalism...there’s no mention of any of that. Everything is directed toward the alleged crimes and perfidy of *men*.

In any event, this is Gay’s suggestion for C.K.’s sentence: “How long should a man like Louis C.K. pay for what he did? At least as long as he worked to silence the women he assaulted and at least as long as he allowed them to doubt themselves and suffer in the wake of his predation and at least as long as the comedy world protected him even though there were very loud whispers about his behavior for decades.

“He should pay until he demonstrates some measure of understanding of what he has done wrong and the extent of the harm he has caused. He should attempt to financially compensate his victims for all the work they did not get to do because of his efforts to silence them. He should facilitate their getting the professional opportunities they should have been able to take advantage of all these years. He should finance their mental health care as long as they may need it. He should donate to nonprofit organizations that work with sexual harassment and assault victims. He should publicly admit what he did and why it was wrong without excuses and legalese and deflection. Every perpetrator of sexual harassment and violence should follow suit.”

This is demented. Gay and the *Times* enthusiastically supported the Obama regime, which organized “kill lists,” rained thousands of drone missiles down upon innocent civilians, launched or encouraged bloody interventions in Libya and Syria, facilitated the bail-out of Wall Street, cut new auto workers’ pay in half, continued the spying and surveillance of the American population, presided over unprecedented social polarization...but a comic with onanistic tendencies—now *there* is a major criminal! This is the contemporary American upper middle class and its priorities.



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