

# “Defense of Freedom is a Defense of White Privilege”

by Lorna Salzman (December 2015)



Welcome to today's hearing sponsored by the House Subcommittee on Safe Spaces and Offensive Speech. My name is Joseefa McCarthy, chair of this subcommittee of the House UnAmerican Committee on Identity Politics and Hurt Feelings. In order to prevent any misunderstanding or misreporting that could reflect badly on witnesses, we have excluded the media from this hearing, with the certainty that the public will be spared some unpleasant truths and facts that could impair the credibility or status of the witnesses or the plausibility of the issues raised herein. All electronic devices that have been sequestered during the pat-down will be returned at the termination of the hearing.

The subcommittee members may have some comments after each witness presentation. Our first witness is a representative of the group SomeLivesMatter, whose mission in this pre-election year is to, as far as possible, secure the oathed loyalty of all Democratic candidates for the presidential nomination to the demands of SLM. SLM has set itself a difficult task: to alter permanently the flawed, inherited and acquired thoughts and beliefs of American whites. Yo, my man....sorry, welcome to Mr. Alden Shabab.

Shabab: Thank you, chair McCarthy, for the opportunity to get more national publicity for our new and growing group. We started as a small upstart cadre in Brooklyn but are on our way to becoming an inclusive model for diversity and multiculturalism in which not just people of color but feminists, gays, lesbians, transsexuals, bisexuals, eunuchs, celibates, undecided and gender-fluid individuals will also feel at home and assured of the sympathy and protection of the powers that be who formerly promoted white privilege at our

expense. Now that equation has been reversed, thanks to the support of people like you.

Let me be blunt. Decades, even centuries, of American history have been seriously misrepresented in the media and in history books. We have too long been silent about the purported freedoms and egalitarianism of the USA, inherited from the Euro-centric Enlightenment of the 18th century which, to its discredit, celebrated the dignity and worth of individuals at the expense of racial, ethnic and religious ideologies and movements. Additionally, the unqualified support for freedom of speech, inquiry and dissent has displaced the far more precious values of personal opinions, emotions and sensibilities.

Thus, it has been our mission to reverse this in order to stress that the chief basis for social justice and policy-making can no longer be the demos, the polity, that is, representative democracy and the rule of law. Our model resembles, not incidentally, that of the former Soviet Union, though we do acknowledge some of its errors of judgment. Stalin astutely recognized that there are forces and objectives that, often regrettably, must overpower traditional beliefs and rights. We agree with this, though we take issue with his over-use of force that caused widespread suffering. We hope to avoid these mistakes.

We must recognize that instead of a proletariat, it is the phenotypic identity of marginalized minorities that must take precedence. This is, in our considered judgment, the only fair way to remedy the injustices perpetrated by those who preceded us two centuries ago. Some go further and say that these injustices were common two millennia ago, and that the practice of indentured slavery and inferior status of women dates back to Roman or even Greek times. We cannot contest this, even though, if true, all citizens regardless of color would be carrying the genes for inflicting oppression on minorities and therefore today's minorities would be equally

responsible for black slavery and the enslavement of women.

But let's focus on the present and the more palpable grievances. Of most concern, aside from individual acts of violence and brutality committed by law enforcers, is the abuse of free speech, shored up by the First Amendment of our Constitution. We firmly reject the validity of this amendment, at least for its co-optation by privileged whites. Our Constitution was written by slaveholders imbued with the false consciousness of the Enlightenment, and, in the same spirit of rebellion exhibited by all struggles of resistance to unjust rule, we unconditionally reject it. A defense of freedom is a defense of white privilege.

Reparations to blacks – er, African-Americans – have long been discussed, and it is clear that the abjurement of the First Amendment, with its stipulations reserved for use solely by historically oppressed minorities, must be implemented. These minorities and those more recently emerged need, no, demand proper restitution backed by the rule of a new kind of law which recognizes physical and social identities and their differences rather than promoting oppressive egalitarianism of all individuals within society and before the law. There can never be such a thing as a “post-racial society” because race matters, in all things and perhaps ABOVE all things.

One of the most difficult hurdles that we face is the liberty and protection afforded to the media in reporting on public conflicts, disagreements and protests. The media are still allowed free access to public spaces and events, even as they remain in the service of illegitimate institutions and belief systems, including our Constitution. Thus they directly contribute to the discrediting of groups like ours when they show harassment, threats and near-violent acts of protesters, as recently happened at the University of Missouri, where photographers were physically jostled and attempts made to prevent them from doing their job. Some object to restrictions on what is called “hate speech” and how it is defined. We

propose that among the reparations to which we believe we are entitled is the right to define the criteria for hate speech; it cannot be left to those who themselves tolerate or even employ it.

Reparations are owed us by the media as well. They cannot be allowed to defend their rights while the rest of us are denied them. Are we suggesting that minorities have been denied all rights at all times? I must defer to others for an answer to this. But there is no doubt that the new movement now afoot to deny white privilege is not only on the right track but must be enhanced by major changes in policy and statutes. The feelings, opinions and sensibilities of individuals have too long been ignored. The only fair remedy is to reverse the preferential treatment accorded whites historically and replace it with moral remuneration that puts minority and oppressed group rights before individual rights of others.

In the new globalized world, the individual is a tool of powerful forces. We cannot remedy the wrongs of other countries, but we can remedy them here in the US by elevating the minority or oppressed groups' feelings and preferences to the leading position of power and policy-making. A prime focus should be on our university campuses, where the untrammelled academic search for knowledge and truth has painfully intruded onto personal space, creating discomfort for traditionally oppressed minorities. This discomfort is a disincentive to learning and social stability. Counteracting the offending of one person's sensibility is far more important than the inculcation of false values of the Enlightenment or our Constitution. Any truly liberal person understands this, as witness the mass support from traditional liberals for our mission to unthrone democracy and civil liberties. In fact, this growing support is a healthy sign for our campaign because it demonstrates the legitimate discomfort many liberals have with the egalitarian principles embedded in our Constitution.

My apologies to the subcommittee; I know there are many witnesses waiting to speak about the flood of rude, insulting or offensive speech we find in the media constantly. We believe that steps should be taken to find nonviolent ways of controlling and eventually prohibiting language, writing or even artistic performances that provoke discomfort and violate our safe space. We offer our assistance in this venture, with the hope that the beliefs that led to our Constitution and Bill of Rights will be exposed for what they really are: tools for an illegitimate power structure to continue its oppressive rule.

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**Lorna Salzman's** career as an environmental activist and writer began when the late David Brower hired her to be the regional representative of Friends of the Earth in NYC. Later she worked as an editor on *National Audubon's American Birds* magazine and as director of Food & Water, an early opponent of food irradiation, and then spent three years as a natural resource specialist in the NYC Dept. of Environmental Protection. She co-founded the New York Green Party in 1984 and in 2004 she sought the U.S. Green Party's presidential nomination. She is the author of "[here](#)."

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