

America Afflicted

The Seattle Carnival of Ugly Shadows

Tassos Symeonides
(RIEAS Academic Advisor)

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I arrived in Seattle in the closing days of 2010 to settle permanently and instantly fell in love with the Emerald City. I discovered a brilliant, vibrant, almost “homey” place completely different from other American cities I know. Even the Seattle climate—much derided as gloomy, rainy, and depressing—agreed with me; it reminded me (with adjustments) of the temperate climate of my birthplace Greece during the good climate years of the 60s and 70s that are now gone forever. Yet, as soon as I had my initial fill of the positives, I turned my eye to city politics and government and my heart dropped.

I had been warned of Seattle’s peculiar “progressivist looney leftist liberalism,” but I could not imagine the degree of the woozy “policies” of Seattle politicians toward urgent crises like growing homelessness, rampant drug addiction, opportunistic street crime, property break-ins, and illegal homeless encampments.

My brief involvement with neighborhood civic initiatives revealed deep fissures in opinions on how to “stabilize” all these growing serious complications including a perceived trend to confront police “brutality”—a concept of varied interpretations according to one’s politico-ideological perceptions but, more significantly, skin color. It also cemented my suspicion that the city leadership tended to entertain unworkable but wooshy “soft solutions” guaranteed to exacerbate, rather than control, the growing crises at hand.

Fast forward to Corona-19 and the George Floyd Troubles.

The swift strike of the pandemic upended Washington state resources and hit particularly hard the Seattle area. Then, the Troubles crushed in the middle of all of this to further debilitate the already fragile stability of the city. Maintaining control collapsed; and every “justified vandal,”

“peaceful looter,” “equality warrior,” and half-baked, weed-smoking “liberal progressive democrat” crawled from under their rocks to ignite the streets with “peaceful” destructive protests against “state violence” (read: the law and the police) “inequality and non-inclusion” (read: basically no offers of decently-paying jobs for the unqualified, the illiterate, and the perennial whiners claiming ‘racialist prejudice’) and “choking freedom” (read: must not intervene with force to interrupt, suppress, and prosecute crime).

But George Brown-related violence and anarchy arrived in a city where crime statistics were already telling an ominous story behind the glittering facade of brilliant new multistory buildings waiting for high-income renters, a gargantuan Amazon HQ, and a posh downtown center brimming with luxury shops and suave “eateries” waiting to tend to those high income earners of whom Seattle was already famous.

Yet, the picture behind this dreamworld facade told a different story.

According to 2017’s FBI crime statistics, quoted [here](#), for example, “*New York City today has a property-crime rate of 1,448 per 100,000 citizens while Seattle’s is 5,258 per 100,000 people — that’s 363 percent higher. The only major city with a worse record is, of course, San Francisco (6,168 property crimes per 100,000 residents) That makes Chicago look like Hooterville.*” At the heart of this Seattle crime crisis is rampant drug abuse which goes unprosecuted while “progressive activists,” and their allied weak-kneed politicians, the very same who push for possession non-punishment, who now toy with opening highly controversial [“safe injection stations” within city limits](#). Their efforts have been met with serious pushback and the issue lingers in anticipation of legal action to deliver definitive rulings.

And then there is the **Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone**, or CHAZ, which has now been rechristened the **Capitol Occupied Protest** or CHOP, a trade mark looney progressivist [Seattle kind of protest](#) aiming at “changing the narrative” and freeing the oppressed:

QUOTE: They call it Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone, or CHAZ — a six-block area in downtown Seattle that has been taken over by the radical leftists of antifa, Black Lives Matter, and the John Brown Gun Club. A cardboard sign on the edge of CHAZ reads, “You are now leaving the USA.” Rapper Raz Simone, who appears to have become the self-appointed “police chief,” patrols the area with an AK-47 slung around his shoulders. There have been several reports of Simone assaulting individuals who failed to obey his orders. Former mayoral candidate and hard-left activist Nikkita Oliver has taken leadership of CHAZ, declaring, “[We will] align ourselves with the global struggle that acknowledges [that] the United States plays a role in racialized capitalism. Racialized capitalism is built upon patriarchy, white supremacy, and classism.” END QUOTE

From Day One, CHAZ/CHOP became *the* hot button issue of the Troubles in Seattle. Far from being approached as just another hollow-brained street “revolutionary initiative,” CHAZ/CHOP is moving to define the Seattle politico-ideological fault lines quickly forming in the wake of the Troubles. The possibility of this “Seattle spirit” spilling over state lines should not be underestimated. Simultaneously, however, there are already many across a boiling, confused, angry, and unpredictable United States who see the Seattle “autonomists” as criminal thugs associated with the worst of the worst—primarily the extreme left wing Antifa movement, which President Trump wants [to declare](#) a domestic terrorist organization, a move that has immediately ruffled the feathers of the [usual East Coast dedicated liberal crusaders](#), who rushed to exonerate Antifa as a non-existent organization and remind the world the United States has no domestic antiterrorist laws.

[At closer look](#), however, the situation inside CHAZ/CHOP, “autonomous” anarchical zone run by “peaceful” protesters, may be more complicated. A taste of how “people’s democratic governance” runs inside CHAZ/CHOP [came on June 20](#) when a shooting killed one and seriously wounded another “...*but neither Seattle police detectives nor Seattle fire medics reached the scene after the shootings, according to city officials and videos of the aftermath.*”

CHAZ/CHOP is the perfect example of a dangerous undercurrents bubbling just below the current Troubles and seeking to disable/defund law enforcement, legitimize violence by the self-declared “marginalized,” and push for a society ***undefended*** before the whims and ideological obsessions of “activists” who know little beyond “demolishing oppression.”

What played out in Seattle streets in the last several weeks is deeply disturbing and dangerous. Following the violence, burning, and looting, the coming of CHAZ/CHOP was the cherry on the cake – *highlighting the drifting escalation caused by dead-end governance by covering politicians and a deteriorating public, administrative, and safety situation.*

The spectacle of the Seattle police chief [rejecting](#) the abandonment of the East Side Police Precinct, situated in the middle of CHAZ/CHOP, and demanding its return to the police, while [the mayor rushed to defend the “autonomists” as true children of patriotism](#), was a sad display of how not to handle, let alone de-escalate, similar situations and protect the lives and properties of *all citizens*.

Given the threatening dynamics of a still evolving situation across the whole country, playing the usual local politics of “fairness, inclusion, brotherhood, and diversity” won’t affect a simmering phenomenon that can escalate at any moment.

There are unforeseen undercurrents playing out both in Seattle and elsewhere that could suddenly escalate into any ugly confrontation—despite the glossy, romantic depiction of how the “autonomous people” of Seattle’s Capitol Hill are lingering in a lullaby atmosphere mixing

Woodstock, Vietnam era “resistance,” the Flower Children, and more recent “...lives matter” growling and threatening demands. Meanwhile, it is rather obvious, the “revolutionaries” themselves [are confused](#), not unexpectedly, on what to do next with their proudly won, but empty, “autonomy.” In the end, as [another report put it](#), CHAZ/CHOP does have an unsolvable existential problem:

QUOTE: Old Karl (Marx) would be disappointed. “This is not a party,” a local NAACP official scolded the CHOP the other day. “This is a mission and we have a mission to accomplish.” But it is becoming more difficult to draw the line between carnival and campaign, especially when the mission of the campaign is so ill-defined. CHOP seems destined to go the way of Occupy Wall Street as revolutionary energies dissipate, boredom sets in, local property owners lose patience, and protesters’ grievances are coopted by legitimate political structures. Enjoy the show while it lasts. Because the Seattle soviet, like its predecessors, is doomed to fail. END QUOTE

Throughout history, social change resembles a massive train rolling at suffocating slow speed, which exasperates our average “street revolutionary.” Claimed “principles” of freedom and, why not, “autonomy,” either deflate for lack of “revolutionary zeal” (which often means conflict, violence, and blood shedding) or simply fall by the wayside because the “revolutionaries,” or “autonomists,” begin to squabble out of frustration and fall apart because various “tendencies” collide and self-destruct.

CHAZ/CHOP seems evolving according to this historical paradigm of initial surge, crowd euphoria, and eventual deflation and disappearance, after feeding on a heavy dose of recreational vandalism, the usual kumbaya communal singing, a taste of gratuitous violence, and the home-garden variety of communist philosophizing around the fire sipping healthy organic drinks.

That does not mean though authorities should remain idle spectators and wait for some gradual chemistry of boredom, and diminution of “zeal,” to take hold of the “autonomists” leading to their dismantling New Petrograd and receding into their confused distant shadows. ***They need to act soonest possible to restore order, and the routine functioning of a law-abiding city, and, thus, remind all – the good, the bad, and the ugly—that government still works, and can do the job as it should, with measured but firm and decisive response.***

THE LATEST: “New Petrograd” CHAZ/CHOP is indeed on its inglorious way out. See [this](#) and [this](#).