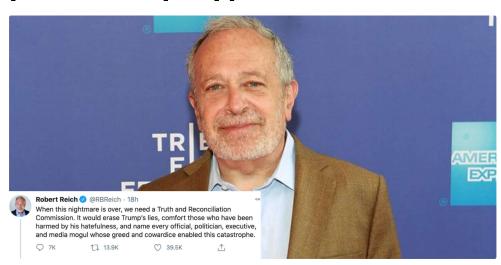
OPINION

Former labour secretary calls for Truth and Reconciliation Commission to punish Trump supporters



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"We need a Truth and Reconciliation Commission," Reich tweeted. "It would erase Trump's lies, comfort those who have been harmed by his hatefulness, and name every official, politician, executive and media mogul whose greed and cowardice enabled this catastrophe."



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Dan Bongino emerged as a voice of reason in this conversation, saying "Holy sh—, this is a real tweet. You've been warned—liberals are looking for revenge.

And they're not kidding. What they can't win democratically, they'll punish tyrannically."



In addition to this Commission, Reich is calling for a blacklist of Trump supporters. It is unclear as to what he would like to happen to the people named by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, or how it would be determined who should be on it.

Replies to the tweet included some who support this idea fully, and call for even more stringent measures to purge Trump supporters from American society. One person who got more retweets than she has users stated:

"DEPROGRAMMING CENTERS. These will have to be at every strip mall in every town!! They had them in Germany after Hitler, we need them just as badly!! Make it mandatory trump supporters go or they must leave our country!! I'm Fkg. Serious"



Whereas actor and indefatigable Bernie Sanders supporter John Cusack suggested the Truth and Reconciliation Commission be expanded to include those who were involved in the Bush administration, and those who were involved in "drone assassination programs" under the Obama administration.



For his part, Reich linked to an article from *The Conversation* that also calls for the creation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the US, albeit for racial justice.



Robert Reich 🕗 @RBReich · 2h

I love the people responding to this tweet as if it's a radical, undemocratic idea.



Do truth and reconciliation commissions heal divided nations? Wherever there is an ugly, unresolved injustice pulling at the fabric of a society, there is an opportunity to haul it out in public and deal with it ... \mathscr{S} the conversation.com

That article <u>calls</u> for a US Truth and Reconciliation Commission that would mirror Canada's attempts to make right the historical harms done to Indigenous Canadians, and says that the US needs one to redress harms done to black Americans.

"It's painfully apparent that the United States needs a national truth commission of some kind," Bonny Ibhawoh of McMaster University writes, "to address



hundreds of years of injustice suffered by Black Americans. There, centuries of enslavement, state-sponsored racism, denial of civil rights and ongoing economic and social disparity have yet to be addressed."

Reich's plan, for supporters of the most recent president, would set a horrifyingly dangerous precedent that could deleteriously impact the peaceful transition of power—if people are too afraid of the punishing consequences under the ensuing administration. And it would unquestionably silence free speech, as people could be afraid to speak up for fear of ending up on a future blacklist.

Notable Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, aside from Canada's, which while it listed crimes has not taken any action on rectifying them, include those operated by the US in Germany in the wake of the Nazi regime, in an attempt to purge those leaders from government offices. There was a truth and reconciliation commission in South Africa after apartheid, and giving Reich the benefit of the doubt, these are the kinds of things he is imagining.

But this is America, Trump is a democratically elected president, and his supporters are not guilty of war crimes. Instead, for Reich and his ilk, what Trump's supporters are guilty of are thought crimes.

Thought crimes are also punishable via truth and reconciliation commissions, and the world has seen this happen in the worst dictatorships. Cambodia's Khmer Rouge, which itself was complicit and guilty for a horrific number of deaths, punished thought crimes.

Chile's General Augusto Pinochet punished those who supported Salvador Allende, his predecessor. Mao Tse-tung used his power to institute a Cultural Revolution that reeducated, murdered those who opposed him or were even perceived of as opposing him, as well as intellectuals, teachers, and artists. Joseph Stalin did much the same in the Soviet Union.

Truth and Reconciliation Commissions have been used in the aftermath of genocide to relieve the government of those who were in charge of, or complicit in, that genocide. When this process is used in the absence of genocide and war

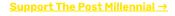
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