

## Twitter Gulag?

June 22, 2020

An old Soviet-phrase — “*ne chital, no osuzhdayu*” (“didn’t read, but disapprove”) — seems as apt now as ever. Why? Because Americans today have revived the “Soviet mentality,” according to Izabella Tabarovsky, writing at *Tablet*.

Ms. Tabarovsky, a researcher with the Kennan Institute at the Wilson Center, explains that “[c]ollective demonizations of prominent cultural figures were an integral part of the Soviet culture of denunciation that pervaded every workplace and apartment building.”

Jobs lost, careers ruined, people socially disgraced — for “social media gaffes or old



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teenage behavior” — this is not just a Soviet mania, for Twitter mobs are on the rampage against those they deem “to be deplorable and unforgivable.”

The difference between current mobbing

and Soviet experience, though, is stark: the government does not *seem* to be in charge, and there are no real gulags to be sent to — as of yet.

Today’s mobbing behavior, on and off Twitter, appears spontaneous and “systemic,” not organizational — more *Crucible*-like than 1984-ish.

Nevertheless, this is dangerous stuff. “The practice of collective condemnation feels like an assertion of a culture that ultimately tramples on the individual and creates an oppressive society,” Tabarovsky concludes, insisting that “the failure of institutions and individuals to stand up to mob rule is no longer an option we can afford.”

She’s right. Twitter-mobbing may be ugly, but it is more than that: it is obviously backed by force — witness the current riots; look at the policy agendas of the “politically correct” — and, unless stopped culturally it will have to be stopped in the realm of (ugh) politics and government.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.