

Are We Entering a Post-Liberal Era?

In his December 9 article “Has the Trumpian Revolution Begun?,” long-time conservative commentator Patrick Buchanan dared to say that, with the Trump presidency, “we may be entering a post-liberal era.” Could it be true?

According to Buchanan, “Liberalism appears to be a dying faith. America’s elites may still preach their trinity of values: diversity, democracy, equality. But the majorities in America and Europe are demanding that the borders be secured and third-world immigrants kept out.”

But it is not just political liberalism whose demise Buchanan is tentatively predicting. He also suggests that moral and cultural liberalism could be on the wane as well. He writes, “As Hegel taught, in the dialectic of history the thesis calls into existence the antithesis. What we seem to be seeing is a rejection and a counter-reformation against the views and values that came out of the social and political revolutions of the 1960s.”

What? A counter-reformation against the radical cultural shifts and moral changes that came out of the counterculture revolution of the 1960s, a revolution that birthed radical feminism, gay activism and sexual anarchy?

For years we have been told that liberalism had triumphed and that conservative morality was a thing of the past.

For years we have been told thought “progressivism” owned the future and that traditionalists were a dying breed, soon to be replaced irrevocably by a younger, enlightened generation.

Could it be that America’s future is not as set in stone as we have been told? Could it be that the Trumpian triumph is part

of a much larger social and cultural shift?

On the one hand, it is clear that Trump's victory, along with that of the Republican party, was not primarily driven by moral issues as much as it was driven by other national concerns. Americans didn't like the way their country was going—politically, socially, economically—and they wanted to regain control.

They wanted a greater sense of security, a greater sense of strength—Trump's line that “we never win anymore” certainly resonated with millions—and a greater sense of Americanism, meaning they didn't want to lose the unique qualities that, in their minds, have made America what it is over the decades and centuries.

And while white evangelicals also turned out in large numbers to vote for Trump because they were concerned about their religious freedoms and about the makeup of the Supreme Court, with pro-life issues front and center for many of these voters, it would be wrong to think that the election of Donald Trump represented some kind of moral imperative—unless we look at things from a little bit different angle.

Let's focus on LGBT issues for a moment. While Trump did make overturning Roe v. Wade a consistent part of his message, he did not make overturning the Obergefell decision a consistent part of his message, actually saying recently that same-sex “marriage” was the law of the land. And the fact that he featured openly gay PayPal founder Peter Thiel at the Republican National Convention and that Thiel is playing a key role in his transition team indicates that he is hardly an opponent of LGBT goals.

At the same time, the vote for Trump was a way for millions of Americans to say “enough is enough” to extreme political and social agendas—even if they were not singled out by name—and leading the way in those extreme agendas is LGBT activism.

In a remarkable interview conducted at New York City's famous Stonewall Inn, where the gay revolution burst on the national scene in 1969, Attorney General Loretta Lynch spoke with MSNBC's Rachel Maddow about the Trump election and its potential effect on the LGBT movement.

As reported by the Advocate, Maddow "asked Lynch if Trump and his homophobic potential cabinet were a backlash to marriage equality, hate-crimes legislation and open military service."

They genuinely feared that many of the victories they had won during the last eight years under the Obama administration could be undone by the Trump administration, and they perceived the vote for Trump to be a vote against LGBT activism.

Could it be that they rightly sensed a larger cultural shift?

In their minds this is all grim and negative, but could it be that Americans have had it with a small minority—whatever that minority may be—imposing their will on the rest of the country? Could it be that many Americans are sick and tired of having their rights subsumed to the rights of a radical subsection of the populace?

The operative word for Maddow and Lynch was "backlash," and for good reason.

Speaking to Fox's Tucker Carlson, Tammy Bruce, the openly gay, staunchly conservative radio host, stated that leftists, whom she called fascists, "now want Christians to preemptively prove that they pay allegiance to conforming to secular society." She pointed to the recent liberal attack on Chip and Joanna Gaines, the popular reality TV stars, simply because they attend a gospel-preaching, Bible-believing church that does not believe in same-sex "marriage."

Bruce noted that the "great news" was that the attack on Chip and Joanna failed, also stating that, "I think the election

itself was a message about our rejecting of political correctness and the culture of intimidation.”

Precisely. And that is the heart of the matter.

It is not that tens of millions of Americans suddenly became homophobic, Islamophobic or xenophobic as much as that tens of millions of Americans rejected the left’s “political correctness and the culture of intimidation.”

In fact, these three articles on National Review, written respectively in May, November and December of this year, detail the progression well. First, by David French, “Identity Politics Are Ripping Us Apart”; next, by Kevin D. Williamson, “An End of Identity Liberalism?”; and then, by Kay Hymowitz, “Why Identity Politics Are Not All-American.”

Enough with the divisive ways of identity politics. Enough with the attack on traditional American values. Enough with the assault on our religious freedoms. Enough.

Inevitable, at some point, the radical leftist agenda has always been doomed to fail, and there is now a pushback against the left’s overplaying of its hand, which includes: forcing transgender activism into our children’s schools; declaring that phrases like “ladies and gentlemen” are transphobic and sexist; students at the University of Pennsylvania replacing “a hallway portrait of William Shakespeare with a photograph of lesbian activist Audre Lorde”—apparently Shakespeare was just too white and too male; and Oregon State University offering a course on “African-American resistance to Trump.”

These radical agendas can only go so far before the people begin to push back, and that it is partly what happened with the recent elections.

So, in that sense, yes, we are witnessing a larger moral and cultural backlash, even if some of these issues were not front

and center in the Trump campaign. And to the extent we can make the case for a biblically-based, moral conservatism, one that treats everyone fairly but that recognizes that certain boundaries are healthy and good, we can turn the hearts of the younger generation as well as recapture the hearts of the older generation.

As my close colleagues and I have said for the last 15-plus years, on with the revolution. {eoa}