
Principalities & Powers

by Samuel Francis

Revolution in the Air

Is it idle, or at least premature, to talk about “revolution from the right”? Whether it is or is not, that is exactly what leaders of the right have been talking about for some years, from Pat Buchanan’s “Middle American Revolution” and his imagery of the “Buchanan Brigades” and peasants with pitchforks rebelling against “King George,” to Newt Gingrich and his now-forgotten jabber about the “Republican Revolution.” Of course, when Buchanan and Gingrich invoked the imagery of revolution, neither gentleman meant by it what most of the more infamous revolutionaries of history meant—the violent overthrow of the government—but the mere invocation of the concept of revolution by leaders of the right today ought to tell us something significant.

The right, of course, is supposed to be anything but revolutionary. The right, after all, consists of those born to wealth and privilege who benefit from the status quo, and conservative thought has always flourished most in defiant response to calls for revolution from the left. Edmund Burke, considered to be a bit of a radical throughout most of his political career, actually founded classical conservatism with his denunciations of the French Revolution, and the renaissance of conservative thought in the United States from the 1930’s through the 1960’s was largely a reaction against the revolutions preached and practiced by the Progressives, liberals, communists, and New Leftists of the same era.

What is significant about the invocation of revolution by leaders of the contemporary right, then, is that it assumes that the right no longer necessarily consists of those who gain from the way things are; that the right, whoever it is and whatever it means, consists of those who believe they would benefit from a drastic and sudden, if not violent, alteration of the status quo. Moreover, it’s not just the leaders of the right like Buchanan and Gingrich who use the imagery of revolution; they use it because that imagery attracts a following, and it attracts a following because rank-and-file adherents of the right (note I do not say

“conservatives”) share its assumption. To a large extent, the right in America today, at least its more radical and populist wing, is defined by its attraction to the concept of revolution, violent or not, and the left, for the first time in history, is defined by its opposition to the concept.

Of course, not everyone on what is usually called the “right” harbors sympathy for revolutionary change. Soon after Buchanan started talking about peasants storming the castles with their pitchforks, Bill Kristol was dragged forth by the *Washington Post* to enlighten us with his own cogitations. “Someone needs to stand up and defend the Establishment,” he whined. “In the last couple of weeks, there’s been too much pseudo-populism, almost too much concern and attention for, quote, the people—that is, the people’s will, their prejudices and their foolish opinions. And in a certain sense, we’re all paying the price for that now. . . . After all, we conservatives are on the side of the lords and barons.”

Mr. Kristol is correct. “Conservatives”—those who want to conserve—are on the side of the lords and barons, and the fact that the delusions and pathologies of the left have long since acquired political and cultural hegemony in the United States means that real conservatives like Mr. Kristol wind up defending the achievements and interests of the left. When he, his colleagues among the neoconservatives, and the mainstream of the Republican Party denounce Buchanan for his attacks on the “Establishment,” they betray the reality that all their right-wing affectations are masks for the defense of the incumbent system of power.

Nevertheless, the rhetoric of revolution on the populist right persists and even seems to be blossoming. In the last year or so, some on the right appear to have taken it a bit more seriously than was perhaps warranted, and the FBI has actually busted more than a few bands of “extremists” who supposedly were plotting bombings or stashing weapons against *Der Tag*. There is, of course, no “right-wing terrorist underground” such as the Anti-Defamation League or the Southern Poverty Law Center insists exists, a coordinated clandestine movement dedicated to burning Negro

churches, blowing up federal buildings, murdering abortionists, and committing hate crimes, but there are random crackpots who have been captured by the crumbling legitimacy of the system that Mr. Kristol and his friends are so zealous to bolster.

And if there is any certain indication that talking about “revolution from the right” is not premature, it lies in that very crumbling. Opinion polls in the last few years have shown that increasing numbers of citizens simply do not trust the government, and virtually any unusual event, crime, or disaster is now immediately enveloped in labyrinthine webs of conspiracy theories. The death of Vince Foster, the death of Ron Brown, the crash of TWA Flight 800, the Waco massacre, the Oklahoma City bombing and the trials of its suspects, the O.J. Simpson case, and even the killing of Bill Cosby’s son have all been absorbed into these webs.

There is also now an institutionalized network by which these theories and the delegitimization of the system that they breed are communicated. Talk radio, short-wave radio, the Internet, militia meetings and gun shows, and several nationally circulated popular magazines, newspapers, and newsletters devoted exclusively to the weaving of the webs ensure that the distrust of the system is not going to abate. And the same sort of communications network exists for publicizing views of the world that are profoundly at odds with the worldview on which the system rests. They offer radically different views of religion, history, race, government, economy, and even the universe from what is taught in most schools and universities, discussed in most mainstream media, and gabbled about by public political figures. In addition, there is the underground educational system, consisting of homeschooling, private schools, and parochial schools that often instill these alternative worldviews into students at an early age.

The emergence in just the last few years of this populist underground and the continuing and ever-escalating popularity of what it has to offer are perhaps the best reasons to believe that the system so beloved by Mr. Kristol and his allies cannot long endure. What is oc-

curing is what scholars of the revolutionary process call a “crisis of legitimacy”: more and more subjects of the regime are ceasing to believe that what the regime (the government, the dominant culture, and the economic elite) do and say and tell them to do and say possesses any legitimacy, and gradually they are withdrawing their allegiance, their everyday activities, and their minds from the regime. In place of the institutions of the regime—its media of communication, its schools, its churches, its political formulas and belief-systems—they are elaborating their own system, under their control and directed toward doing what they want it to do.

The collapse or erosion of the legitimacy of a regime is one of the critical developments in the emergence of what scholars of revolution have come to identify as a “revolutionary situation,” a condition of society in which not only the power but also the authority of the incumbent regime is vulnerable. There is a good deal of back-and-forth among scholars as to what the other features of a revolutionary situation are, but most agree on at least two others in addition to the crisis of legitimacy.

One is a “critical event” that exposes the incapacity of the regime to govern and to carry out the other functions it is supposed to carry out. If the crisis of legitimacy is the collapse of the authority of the regime to do what it is supposed to do, the critical event is the collapse of the power of the regime. The critical event is what Lenin was thinking of when he wrote that no government ever falls unless it is first dropped. In the French Revolution, the critical event was the financial crisis and insolvency of the government, which required Louis XVI to call the Estates General for the first time in 175 years. Once the Estates took their seats, they proceeded to rid the country of the king, the queen, the church, the aristocracy, and the other vestiges of the old regime, and there was little or nothing Louis and his allies could do to stop them (or at least nothing they were willing to do). In the Russian Revolution, the critical event was the collapse of the Russian army in World War I. In the English Revolution of the 1640’s, it was a war with Scotland, coupled with rebellion in Ireland, that required Charles I to call Parliament in order to get money with which to fight the war.

Today there is no obvious “critical event” in the United States such as these

historic ones, but such is the situation in this country that such an event could occur at any time. The perennial budget crises, the increasing arrogance of the courts, the incompetence of the government to control crime and immigration, and the decline of legitimacy itself all suggest that a revolutionary critical event could occur in the United States in the not too distant future. What if Congress should just refuse to approve a budget and the government has to shut down more or less permanently? What if the Crips or the Bloods or some other gang decides to take over a city or even a state? What if some states or parts of the country secede or refuse to pay taxes, enforce federal laws, or obey federal court orders? What if the Armed Forces refuse to carry out the orders of the Commander in Chief to enforce federal laws and court orders? I do not predict that these situations will occur, but they are no longer unimaginable, and if any of them do occur, it could constitute the very “critical event” that precipitates revolution.

The other feature of a revolutionary situation that is probably necessary is the existence of a revolutionary apparatus. Lenin obviously had one at his disposal in the form of the Bolshevik party. The English revolutionaries also had one, in the form of Puritan cells, churches, and eventually a political party that dominated the Parliament Charles I was forced to call. In the American Revolution the apparatus consisted of the “committees of correspondence” that coordinated communications and activism among the patriots. In the French Revolution there were several apparatuses, including salons, where Enlightenment doctrines were crafted, discussed, and disseminated, and Freemasonry, which served similar purposes. To historian Crane Brinton, such apparatuses “begin to go beyond lobbying and propaganda, begin to plan and organize direct action, or at least a supplanting of the government in some dramatic way. They are the beginnings of . . . the ‘illegal government,’” and eventually, if their work is successful, they essentially become the real government and replace the old government that can no longer perform its functions.

In the United States today there is no such apparatus, but there may be the beginnings of one, or several. The populist underground described above may be its embryo, and if today all it seems to do is weave sometimes preposterous conspiracy fables, it may soon in the future turn

to planning and organizing direct action of some kind or other. Some portions of it are already involved in such action, at least politically, and the victory of such populist initiatives in recent years as propositions 187 and 209 in California, Amendment 2 in Colorado, and the grassroots defense of the Confederate Flag in several Southern states are indications of such incipient activism. Their political activities are not yet revolutionary, but given the absolute refusal of the incumbent regime to accept their fairly moderate reforms (cutting off welfare to illegal aliens, ending affirmative action, denying affirmative action to homosexuals, etc.), it would hardly be surprising if they started pushing more radical causes.

But the apparatus, insofar as it now exists, is far too rudimentary to act as an effective revolutionary agent. Its doctrine is vague and sometimes incoherent, centering merely on the criminality of the present system and its leaders and lacking a clear vision of what it wants in place of the system and how that can be achieved. Some parts of it are religious to the point of fanaticism, others are only nominally religious or outright pagan. Some demand the restoration of the Constitution, but many betray no more command of the meaning of the Constitution than the courts themselves. Until the populist network articulates a coherent and credible doctrine, develops a means of spreading and enforcing its doctrine on its adherents, and is able to represent itself as the emergent *de facto* government, it will not function as an effective agent of revolution.

The transformation of the American right from a conservative force intent on preserving the present system into one that at least sympathizes with the imagery of revolution shows that the right has at last begun to grasp the truth that it no longer exercises control of the country. That is an anomalous situation for many who conceive themselves to be on the right, and much of the lack of preparation they exhibit derives from the anomaly and the discomfort those of the right experience when the techniques and tactics of revolution are seriously discussed. It may be premature to talk about “revolution from the right” today, but it is not idle to do so, and the sooner the right understands that it no longer has any business being “conservative,” the sooner its revolutionary impulses will quicken in the womb.

Letter From Australia

by Roger D. McGrath

America Down Under



Vietnamese gangs shake down proprietors of small businesses for protection money. Blacks have enormously high rates of drug addiction, alcoholism, crime, and out-of-wedlock births. Pakistanis, Lebanese, and Nigerians drive cabs. Japanese buy up downtown high-rise and choice beachfront properties. Chinese and Koreans take control of sections of the intercity. East Indians and Arabs run small shops and gas stations. Immigrants quickly learn how to defraud the welfare system, working for cash while collecting government benefits for food, shelter, transportation, and health care. Whites flee to the suburbs, publicly professing their love for people of all colors but privately admitting that the demographic shift and accompanying problems are ominous.

Sounds like California, Los Angeles in particular. Except I am describing Sydney and, to a lesser degree, Melbourne. Australia has followed in American footsteps, even copying our dramatic 1965 reversal of immigration policy.

Through the end of World War II, Australia's population consisted almost entirely of whites of English, Irish, and Scottish extraction. There were also a small number of aborigines and a dash of Dutch, German, and Scandinavian settlers. Beginning in the late 1940's and continuing through the 1950's, Greek and Italian immigrants arrived from their war-torn native lands. Although most of them spoke little English, they were white, Christian, and European. Moreover, they came in numbers that made acculturation and assimilation practical. Some of them were instrumental in helping to develop Australia's booming wine industry.

Despite these new arrivals from southern Europe following World War II, in the 1960's Australia still looked very much like the British Isles. Ninety-five percent of Australians traced their ancestry to England, Ireland, or Scotland.

Most of the blokes were some version of Paul Hogan, who was working on the Sydney Harbour Bridge at the time, and the sheilas a variety of Olivia Newton John.

Strict control of immigration was relaxed in 1973 and nonwhites began pouring into Australia. At first their presence was hardly felt. By the 1990's, however, the effect was changing entire sections of Sydney and Melbourne, creating sharp racial antagonisms and straining the social welfare system. Afraid to be labeled racist, few dared to speak out. Recently, Pauline Hanson, a member of the Australian parliament, has addressed the immigration problem with forthrightness and candor. She has been viciously attacked. Not her arguments, mind you, but she herself. *Argumentum ad hominem*—the last refuge of the politician!

While visiting "down under" in March, I saw attacks on Hanson nearly every day on television news. I saw the astounding spectacle of Australia's two major political parties, Labor and Liberal, opening negotiations to run a candidate jointly against her. A popular figure in her native Queensland, she will be difficult to unseat. Whether she can withstand the assault by the combined might of both parties remains to be seen. Her home base of Ipswich makes her a sentimental favorite. Wasn't it from Ipswich (in New England) that John Wise challenged the Puritan oligarchy? Pauline Hanson is challenging the secular religion of political correctness.

Many politicians and Australian businessmen are terrified that Hanson's pronouncements will damage relations with Asian trading partners. Featured on a nightly newscast was a group of Australian politicians apologizing to and groveling, nearly genuflecting, before a delegation from Singapore. A government official told me privately that he agreed with everything she said but noted that Australia received more than eight billion dollars from trade with Singapore, Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, Korea, and Japan. With a population only half that of California, these dollars are not insignificant to Australia. The attitude seems to be prosperity now and to hell with tomorrow. Some later generation will have to face a changed Australia.

The same government official told me that Australia could not afford to give the appearance of being racist by prohibiting nonwhite immigration. "After all," he said, "we are a part of the Orient and we must be full and equal trading partners." "What," I responded, "does that have to do with immigration? Could you move to Japan and become a Japanese citizen? There are thousands of Koreans who have been there for five generations now who are not allowed citizenship! Would Singapore allow boatloads of Aussies to take up residence and go on the dole? Could you buy and develop property in all those countries? Why is it that only white nations are not allowed to restrict immigration? Why is it that only white nations are not allowed to restrict noncitizen property rights?" The official looked down, shook his head, and said: "You're right."

A changed Australia is already a reality in some areas of Sydney and Melbourne where a popular pastime is a game called "Spot the Aussie." As I learned, sometimes it takes a while to spot one amid the East Indians, Malays, Chinese, Vietnamese, and other immigrants parading by. The change is also evident along parts of the Gold Coast and in Queensland. A real estate agent from Innisfail (just south of Cairns on a choice stretch of coastline inside the Great Barrier reef) told me that the Japanese were buying properties by the dozens and pushing prices well beyond the average Aussie's reach.

He also mentioned that the Japanese had bought his local golf course. He was still allowed to play on it but was forced to move aside when any Japanese arrived. They had absolute priority at all times. He was ordered about on a course that he had played on for 30 years by, as he described them, "arrogant little bastards." After we downed more Guinness stout, he got more expansive: "We fought a war to keep them from invading Australia. The bloody Japs. We fought them in the Coral Sea. We fought them in New Guinea. The bloody bastards."

Chinese from Singapore, Taiwan, and especially Hong Kong have also purchased Australian properties. Some beachfront casinos cater specifically to the Chinese, who have a well-deserved reputation for gambling. Along with the gambling has come prostitution.