

How revolutions go bad

The Black Lives Matter upheaval follows a well-worn path and is going downhill precipitously

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Revolutions have a depressing tendency to go bad. The first American Revolution in 1775 is an exception, but the rule has been for well-intentioned revolutions to turn very ugly very quickly. The present Black Lives Matter (BLM) upheaval is one that is going downhill rather precipitously. The Internet and social media have probably hastened the process, but the BLM movement is following a well-worn path.

Most revolutions begin with a spark that sets off a set of long-held grievances. They are usually hijacked by organized forces with their own agendas far different than those that began the unrest by attempting to redress legitimate injustices. Those new revolutionary elites soon begin to keep power by suppressing those who disagree with them. Eventually, they rewrite history to support their own narrative and attempt to destroy those societal institutions that might oppose them. Finally, they tend to collapse under the weight of their own illogic.

The Russian Revolution is perhaps the model for the cycle, although it took seven decades for it to finally implode through the illogic of its underlying premise. The original 1917 revolution was led by progressives and socialists who meant to redress legitimate grievances against the government of the czars. It was quickly hijacked by the radical Bolsheviks (Communists) and their agenda was largely imposed by force.

The Communists originally paid lip service to democracy, but dissenting opinions were quickly shouted down as the Bolsheviks tightened control. Then, dissent became a crime against the state. Mild dissidents were “reeducated,” and those who persisted in their criticism were liquidated.

Once the Communist Reds had won the civil war against the Whites — a loose confederation of monarchists, moderate Socialists and democrats — the real terror began, and the Communists began to rewrite history in their own image. Cities and streets were renamed, churches were banned, and statues — even those of legitimate nationalist heroes — torn down.



The Communists industrialized terror and intimidation more efficiently than most radical revolutions, and the edifice did not collapse until 1991. By that time, the well-meaning progressives and liberals who had started the original revolution were long gone. Those who survived the Red terror were forced to quietly watch a czarist government was replaced by something far worse.

Most revolutions that go bad don't last as long as the one that created the Soviet Union. The French Revolution that was hijacked by the radicals was itself negated by Napoleon within a decade, and China's Great Cultural Revolution didn't last as long as that. However, before they implode, some revolutions can do a great deal of damage.

Millions of Russians and Chinese died in the terror generated by the Bolshevik and Great Cultural revolutions, respectively, and the purges by the Cambodian Khmer Rouge decimated that nation's population. Massive blocks of the cultures of those nations were wiped out as the revolutionaries tried to erase history and rewrite to suit their narrative.

Fortunately, the current excesses caused by the unholy alliance of reverse-racist and Antifa radicals who have co-opted the Black Lives Matter movement seems to be running through the revolutionary cycle at warp speed. This is likely caused by the Internet and social media as well as the rapid psychological burn-out resulting from the 24-hour news cycle.

It did not take long for the revolutionaries to begin mandatory re-education classes via Zoom with the resulting repercussions for those not showing proper revolutionary attitudes.

Take, for example, the case of Marymount College Associate Professor Patricia Simon, who had the temerity to fall asleep during a BLM Zoom re-education meeting. According to The New York Post, activist students quickly gathered 1,800 signatures demanding her firing; fortunately for her, it was not a firing squad. By all reports, Ms. Simon is a harmless progressive nitwit, but radical revolutions need example as a warning to the insufficiently zealous.

One of the reasons that the Russian Revolution lasted seven decades, and the Black Lives Matter upheaval will not likely last past the first frost is that the Communists had a coherent agenda based on the philosophy — however misguided — of Karl Marx. By allowing the radicals to become the face of the movement, BLM activists have alienated many middle-road people who could help them attain their goals if they could ever articulate them coherently.

Aside from renaming a few streets and sports teams, destroying neighborhood businesses and getting some insincere corporate executives to put more Black actors in their commercials, this is a revolution that is burning its candles at both ends.

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