

Burke warned us. We'd do well to listen

Ours is now a world where the rule of the gang crushes all dissent

Washington Times, By Everett Piper, Sept. 7, 2020

Wanton destruction coast to coast. Rioters burning down entire car dealerships in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Protesters chanting "F___ Your Jesus" in the streets of Charlotte, North Carolina. Hate, violence, death and destruction.

This is the rule of the mob. This is what democratic socialism looks like. This is your future if you don't stop it now. And I am not the only one saying so. Edmund Burke said it 230 years ago as he watched the same fires burning in the parks of Paris that we now see smoldering in Portland's streets.



In 1790 Burke wrote his seminal work, "Reflections on the Revolution in France." In it, he warned that the radicalism underlying the events of 1789 was only a foretaste of things to come.

More specifically, Burke challenged the theory-laden relativism of the Jacobins. He called out their arrogance, chronological snobbery and juvenile confidence in everything that was new while chastising their childish disregard for anything that was old. He prophesied that this unmoored youthful verve would end with French blood flowing in the streets.

How did he know all this? Why was he so right?

Put simply, Burke understood and respected the recorded facts of human experience. Or stated differently, he believed in the reality of history as an antidote to the progressive infatuation with the abstract, untried, unproven and untrue.

Burke famously said the most obvious lesson of human experience is that the problem is human nature. It isn't race. It isn't socioeconomics. It isn't poverty, wealth, education or intersectionality. The problem is you. The problem is me. The problem is sin.

"In history, a great volume is unrolled for our instruction, drawing... wisdom from the past errors and the infirmities of mankind", said Burke. "History consists for the great part of the miseries brought upon the world by pride, ambition, avarice, revenge, lust, sedition, hypocrisy ... and all the train of disorderly appetites."

In saying this, Burke was responding to the secular subjectivism of the Enlightenment thinkers such as Rousseau. His warning was that if any society arrogantly discards all the traditions, morals and standards that have served as sin's restraint that that culture is doomed.

He understood that boundaries and definitions are needed for there to be freedom. He was the precursor to Chesterton in arguing for the paradox of liberty and law. He knew that if you kill the culture and kill the church, the next inevitable step will be to kill the people because nothing is left to restrain you from doing so.

Burke argued that it was the rejection of time-tested truths, customs, and traditions that led the Republic of Virtue's proponents to act with a viciousness that shocked the world. More directly, he contended that the source of the Jacobins' evil was their rejection of Christianity and their belief that if they could just destroy the church, they could construct their own socialist utopia from its ashes. Thus, all the world's problems would be solved, and they would be the new secular gods and crush all who dared not worship them.

Burke called this the "spirit of profanation," where all was profaned. Time and dates, sex and sanctity, male and female, structure and morality, even life and death — Nothing was left sacred — Not property, not tradition, not customs, manners or laws.

Diderot and Robespierre were quite clear. They sought "to dismantle" everything that stood in their way. Defund the police. Desecrate statues. Defame the church. Everything must go. They would not be satisfied until "the last king was strangled by the entrails of the last priest."

Burke labeled this the "black and savage atrocity of mind" that superseded "the common feelings of nature and all sentiments of morality and religion."

Today, the same "spirit of profanation" is rife. How can anyone, but the most calloused soul, watch the riots and looting now commonplace in the nightly news and not think of the "extreme democracy" Burke warned of or the dystopias foretold by Huxley and Orwell?

Ours is now a world where the rule of the gang crushes all dissent. This is a world where all who refuse to storm the Bastille are told they have no rights or even the right to exist. This is a world where the common folk, the traditionalists, i.e., the Christians, are deemed deplorable rubes to be laughed at, maligned, scorned and "canceled." This is a world where small towns are destroyed, power is centralized, families are broken, churches are shuttered, and anything that stands in the way of the new cultural high priests and their bloodlust for power must be destroyed.

Welcome to 1984. Welcome to your "brave new world." Welcome to the hell of our own making. Welcome to the guillotine.

By the way, Burke ends his classic work by quoting Cicero, "Tell me, how did you lose a republic as great as yours so quickly?" This is a question our own children will be asking of us if we don't act now to stop the insanity.

Everett Piper (dreverettpiper.com, @dreverettpiper), a columnist for The Washington Times, is a former university president and radio host. He is the author of "Not a Daycare: The Devastating Consequences of Abandoning Truth" (Regnery)

https://washingtontimes-dc.newsmemory.com/?token=af41eeecf675d61cd65578fc78b142fd_5f5633ac_6dbe28b&selDate=20200907