

The Culture War Warps

by Julian Sereno

The Evangelical Right and the Progressive Left have been waging culture war at least since the dawn of the Reagan Administration. After more than 35 years of skirmishes, the battle lines remain drawn, the animosity as fierce as ever. The funny thing is they seem to have switched sides in some significant ways.

The Evangelicals demanded a strict code of conduct concerning personal morality. Then as now, they oppose abortion, which has been legal nationally since the Supreme Court decision in 1973. Then as now, they demand abstinence-based sex education, and denounce any kind of sexual activity other than between married heterosexuals. Then as now, they oppose birth control, same sex relationships and all things LGBTQ. Then as now, they support unrestricted access to firearms, including letting older teens buy assault rifles, limiting background checks, making conceal carry permits easier to get, and allowing firearms

everywhere (except where Republican politicians gather, where they are banned).

The Progressive Left has opposed the Evangelical Right on all fronts. They support abortion rights and a woman's right to decisions about her body and her health. They support sex education that is scientifically based and does not suppress fact-based information. They support LGBTQ rights.

Lots has happened in 35 years. In 1998, President Clinton was impeached for lying to a Grand Jury concerning a love affair he had with a 20-year-old intern. In 2003 the Supreme Court legalized the right of same-sex couples to have sex; in 2015 the Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage.

The Progressive Left remains true to its causes. But it no longer tolerates dissent, or any arguments that might contradict it. Under the umbrella of "Hate Speech," it aims to silence anyone who disagrees with its orthodoxy, including Hillary Clinton's "basket of

deplorables" and their racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, and Islamophobic views—all in the eyes of the beholder. The Progressive Left now opposes free speech, or any speech which might hurt the feelings of any group that thinks it has been victimized, except for white males. The Progressive Left supports the right to due process of law, except for men who have been accused of sexual harassment.

The Evangelical Right remains committed to its causes. It opposes LGBTQ rights and continues to support discrimination against them even though it is against the law. Ditto with continuing to try to restrict abortions and support abstinence-based sex education. Firearms are more abundant than ever, not to mention more lethal.

But all of sudden personal morality, their *raison d'être*, doesn't matter. Evangelicals have embraced Donald Trump. They accept him even though he has never been a faithful Christian let alone a faithful husband. They

don't mind that he is a serial adulterer who boasted about his sexual conquests. They denounce pornography but are fine that he had an affair with a porn star while his wife and newborn son stayed home. They forgive him for sexually abusing or raping women even though they have no right to forgive anything—that's up to the 21 women who have accused him. They have no problem with his bullying and cheating in his business dealings. They tolerate his bald-face lies by the thousand, and his intolerance for truths he find unflattering. They are at peace with the sleaze.

So there you have the current state of the culture wars. The Progressive Left wants to outlaw all things that smack of paternalism, so straight males best beware. The Evangelical Right has enthusiastically embraced a minion of Satan.

A pox on both your houses.

Julian Sereno is editor and publisher of Chatham County Line.

Discrimination and Disparities, Part 2

by Don Lein

Last month we looked at the ideas that equal outcomes were the natural norm and that many of our most egregious mistakes as a society result when we do not empirically evaluate the results of our policy choices. Let's test Sowell's line of thought on a couple of areas that are always in the news—taxes and wages.

Whenever tax cuts are discussed one side always trots out the idea of "tax cuts for the rich" with working stiff's bearing the burden of payment. Is that traditionally what happens or is it political rhetoric— you decide. In the 1920s the maximum income tax rates went from 73 percent to 24 percent, which resulted in huge increases in tax revenue— why?? As Sowell states "24 percent of something is greater than 73 percent of nothing". Why?? The higher rate (73 percent) motivates those in the upper brackets to hire specialists (CPAs/attorneys) to calculate how to minimize payments— at the lower rate (24 percent) the return on that investment is minimized and less often undertaken. Therefore, the rich actually wind up paying a higher percentage of the tax burden and the working stiff's paying a lower one. When discussing the issue in the early 1960s JFK opined that it was "Economics 101" that if you wanted to increase tax revenue— you lowered rates (on everybody).

Another contentious issue is the minimum wage. The fallacious rhetoric claims that if you want to improve the lives of the poor, you simply mandate that they should be paid a higher wage (minimum). Unfortunately, history shows that the idea simply does not work. Why not?? In the first place we are generally talking about inexperienced workers with quite limited skill sets who may be economically feasible to their employers at a lower rate, but at the higher rate, price themselves out of the market. Recently when Seattle mandated a minimum wage hike, those workers who were unaffordable at that rate were

released and those with marginal skills worked fewer hours according to a study done by the National Bureau of Economic Research. When the cost of labor gets too high, either the product is discontinued or a company goes out of business.

Sowell is optimistic about the future IF we have learned from the past and the mistakes we have made. He points out that history provides with many examples of countries who lagged behind other and overtook them later in history, such as the early Brits and Scots who lagged seriously behind the Greeks and Latins and surpassed them several centuries ago. At various points in time, China and the Islamic world were more advanced than Europe. Japan rose to prominence in a little over a century. Jews who were not prominent in technology in the earlier centuries won a disproportionate share of Nobel Prizes on the 20th century. He analyzes a variety of "solutions" tried by individuals/government/housing/education/wealth and income distribution. He has a problem with government solutions because government "is essentially a categorical institution in an incremental world."

Sowell recognizes that civilization is a "thin crust over a volcano". He nominates for the "most appalling of all human institutions", slavery, because of its longevity and universality. It has existed on every inhabited continent for thousands of years as far back as the history of the human species goes. In most cases it involved people enslaving people of their own race. Europeans enslaved other Europeans for centuries before they brought the first African slaves— purchased from other Africans who had enslaved them— to the Western hemisphere. Sowell points out that the European slaves brought to the coast of North Africa by pirates were more numerous than African slaves brought to the United States and to the American colonies from which it was formed. This fact, among others, is

glossed over/forgotten in our history books. Unfortunately, as Sowell points out "the politicization of history has shrunk the public perception of slavery to whatever is most expedient for promoting politically correct agendas today."

Sowell laments the many ways that the agendas of today distort our understanding of the past. As Edmund Burke stated several centuries ago "In history a great volume is unrolled for our instruction, drawing the materials of future wisdom from past errors and infirmities of mankind." The past must be understood in its own context and judged only within the inherent constraints of their particular times and places. To try to understand history using contemporary standards is a fool's errand. Specifically, he is concerned about the idea of social irredentism, growing out of historic wrongs done to other people, in light of the wrongs perpetrated under territorial irredentism which has led nations to slaughter each other's people over land of little/no intrinsic value, simply to pay for purported past sins.

A special note to say good bye to Alfie Evans, who passed away in a British hospital in April. While battling a disease the doctors at the hospital decided to remove his life support system, against his parents wishes. The high court decided to side with the doctors and refused to let the parents, using their own funding, take him to another country for treatment. So much for socialized medicine and basic human rights that, apparently in England these days, are bestowed/retracted based upon the whim of the government. This is not what our forefathers said/believed. This incident should be a warning shot across our bows.

Don Lein is a regular contributor to Chatham County Line. A Chatham resident, he is involved in a variety of civic organizations.

Railing About the Past, Ignoring Today

by Jeff Davidson

"The Disuniting of America" is a short, 1998 book by historian and Kennedy Administration advisor Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. Schlesinger elaborates on how contemporary "historians" employ a variety of tactics to thwart and subvert the truth in favor of "Politically Correct" history over actual history.

Informed of the tactics that Schlesinger exposes in his book, one is better prepared to fend off unsubstantiated views. Claims about the Founding Fathers represent a case in point. Some 220 years ago, some of the Founding Fathers owned slaves, as did other citizens. This year, millions of women, children, and men are enslaved around the world.

THE NUMBER IS GROWING

Authors Becky Allen and Gayle Tzemach Lemmon writing in a recent issue of *Fortune* observe, "From the gulags of North Korea to the battlefields of Iraq and Syria and the brothels of Eastern Europe, millions of people are enslaved worldwide."

"Modern slavery," the authors state, "spans every continent and plagues major industries, including cotton, coffee, and mining. Despite feeding off of poor and vulnerable populations, the practice generates a staggering \$150 billion for traffickers per year— an average of \$3,722 per victim."

As producers of the Global Slavery Index lament, "Almost every country in the world has laws against modern slavery. But very few governments have sought to hold business to account."

NEVER MIND ABOUT TODAY

In 2018, otherwise educated people in "progressive" college towns such as Berkeley, California and Chapel Hill, North Carolina go silent when any mention is made of

contemporary slavery. They're more focused on pulling down statues that provide vivid clues— good and bad— to American history. Concurrently, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency estimates that up to 1,000,000 or more people are sold across international borders each year, and widely held estimates put the number of people in contemporary slavery at between 40 and 45 million.

As we speak, girls as young as 5 are trafficked into domestic work in West Africa. Families are forced to work as bonded slaves in South Asia. Women are used as chattel in Europe's sex industry. Indeed, slavery is shockingly common in the world today: in homes, factories, farms, and brothels.

The most common form is bonded servitude, or holding people to pay off debt amounts that are saddled with stratospheric interest rates. The trade is illegal, and officially condemned throughout the world. Yet it flourishes, earning perhaps \$8 to \$10 billion a year for its perpetrators.

WE HEAR NOTHING

Collectively, England and the U.S. did more to end the worldwide slave trade than all other countries, combined, for all time. Yet town councils and school boards across America, driven by their PC agendas, will hear none of that.

The truth always wins out, even if it takes decades. When our time on earth is up, what side do you want to be on? That of reality or that of political agendas that will be exposed for their distortions?

Jeff Davidson of Raleigh is a regular contributor to Chatham County Line. He is "The Work-Life Balance Expert®", the premier thought leader on work-life balance issues. Jeff is the author of 65 books, among them Breathing Space, Dial it Down, Live it Up, Simpler Living, 60 Second Innovator, and 60 Second Organizer. Visit www.BreathingSpace.com

STEP UP

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on June 4th at Town Hall and/or the Town Board meeting on June 11th.

The meetings commence at 7 p.m. at Town Hall which is located at 635 East Street.

In addition, citizens and stakeholders can email their thoughts and concerns to Mayor Cindy Perry at cperry@pittsboronc.gov or the Town Planner Jeff Jones at jjones@pittsboronc.gov.

The Town website is also helpful and can be accessed at: pittsboronc.gov.

Personally, I am advising the Town leaders to consider whether it wants to place further restrictions on the following uses in the proposed district and if so, to please provide a strong rationale to justify the potential restriction:

- Certain amusements such as bowling alleys
- Play grounds
- Athletic fields
- Private clubs, non-profit
- Game rooms
- Theater indoor
- Theater outdoor
- Electronic gaming operation
- Nightclubs, bars, taverns
- Bakeries
- Shopping centers
- Tobacco shops

I advise other to peruse the list of potentially restricted uses as well and let the Town leaders and staff know which uses should remain and which uses should be stricken from the list.

As the saying goes: "teamwork makes the dream work."

Randy Voller is the former mayor of Pittsboro.