

Jonestown: A Preview for the West?

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This fall marks the fortieth anniversary of the Jonestown horror, the mass suicide and mass murder of more than 900 Americans in the South American country of Guyana. How this situation came about is a fascinating study in human psychology and the arts of demagoguery. It also serves as a metaphor for the Western world today

The sad saga began in the mid-1950s when a man named Jim Jones founded The Peoples Temple, a religious community in Indianapolis. Jones was an atheist, but he decided that religion could be useful as a means to advance the agenda of his true faith: Marxist socialism.

Jones was a pioneer in promoting what today we call multiculturalism. He insisted on making his congregation as diverse and rainbow-friendly as possible. He moved the Temple to California in 1965 and eventually ended up in San Francisco. Along the way Jones drew great acclaim in liberal circles as a humanitarian and social reformer.

As Wikipedia noted, “Jones enjoyed public support and contact with some of the highest level politicians in the United States. Jones personally met with vice presidential candidate Walter Mondale and First Lady Rosalynn Carter. Guests at a large 1976 testimonial dinner for Jones included Governor Jerry Brown, Lieutenant Governor Mervyn Dymally, and Assemblyman Willie Brown, among others.”

The media generally acclaimed Jones as a moral and spiritual leader, but one reporter began raising questions about the nature of his operation and his motives. Shortly thereafter, Jones decided to leave the United States and take his congregation with him. He claimed his departure was due to American racism.

In 1974 he negotiated a lease of a large tract of land in northwestern Guyana from the socialist Guyanese government. Three years later he moved there with his congregation to found a settlement which he modestly named Jonestown. He stated that he and his followers

were “the purest communists there are.” His wife, Marceline, said Jonestown was “dedicated to live for socialism, total economic and racial and social equality.”

But as is usually the case in equalitarian utopias, some people are more equal than others. Jones took measures to make it difficult for his congregants to leave, and subjected them to rigorous indoctrination and mind-control tactics. Jones’s power, now unrestrained from outside oversight, seemed to enhance his megalomania. He began to imagine that the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency was plotting against him. His thoughts turned toward suicide, and unfortunately—as events unfolded—he decided that his congregation should also embrace his death wish.

He ordered trusted followers to set up vats filled with cyanide-laced kool-aid, and commanded his congregants to drink. Some apparently did so willingly, and even forced their children to swallow the deadly blend. Others finally saw Jones for what he really was—a lunatic. Some of them had to be restrained and forced to drink, while a few others managed to escape to the surrounding jungle.

As we reflect on this dreary tale, it bears some striking parallels to the state of Western societies today. The elites of those societies in government and other key sectors share to a large degree Jim Jones’ commitment to multiculturalism and social equality. And like Jones, for most of his career, they have enjoyed high acclaim as humanitarians and highly moral people.

At this point their defenders will protest vigorously that this is as far as any comparisons should go. These leaders, they will proclaim, are indeed good and virtuous, and nothing like the power-hungry manipulator and madman we know as Jim Jones. Nevertheless, there are further parallels for anyone willing to see them.

To illustrate, it would be useful to focus on Europe, the heartland and source of Western Civilization. The leaders of the European Union and leading national governments are totally committed to mass immigration, much of it from Muslim countries, which will sweep away the historic demographic and cultural character of Europe and replace it with a crazy quilt of multicultural diversity. The elites and their media sycophants hail this experiment as enlightened social policy, the pathway to a utopia of harmony and peace.

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This project—to put it bluntly—is pure insanity, and one needs nothing more than simple common sense to know why. What these elites are unleashing is chaos, bringing the eclipse of almost 3,000 years of European Civilization. What could animate such lunacy if not some profound spiritual disorder, which one might properly describe as a death wish?

And this is a wish—shades of Jim Jones—that they want their fellow Europeans to share. With the help of the media and other opinion-shapers, they apparently have persuaded majorities of the people in major European countries that drinking the demographic kool-aid is their moral duty. Thus Germany keeps its Angela Merkel, and France votes for the multiculturalist Emmanuel Macron over French patriot Marine Le Pen. These and other countries persist in their loyalty to the European Union, which wants to open the gates to Third World invasion even wider.



As at Jonestown, not every citizen of these nations is a kool-aid enthusiast, and many of them have protested their displacement. Their ruling elites are not at all happy about that. The media demonize the dissidents as “extremists,” and politicians criminalize their dissent. In the once great nation of Britain, Muslim rape gangs have gone unpunished for fear that cracking down on them will elicit charges of “racism.” Meanwhile, people trying to expose the gangs have suffered prosecution. The message to the dissidents is clear: Shut up, smile, and drink your kool-aid.

Fortunately, some European nations are resisting. One is Hungary, led by her brave patriot leader Victor Orban. He, like the members of Jonestown who fled to

the jungle, has no illusions about the multicultural kool-aid dispensers and what they portend. He has the integrity and courage to speak and act on his knowledge. As things are going now, Hungary and other Eastern European countries may be the only nations in Europe that will remain European.

What’s the source of the West’s death wish? In the past century, two prominent commentators, both leftists who abandoned that creed, offered insights. One was James Burnham, who affirmed that liberalism is “the ideology of Western suicide.” The other, Malcom Muggeridge, speculated on what he called, “the great liberal death wish.”

Recent decades have revealed how insightful these men were, particularly with respect to the current migration crisis. Historically, Western liberalism has had many good aspects, but with its ongoing descent into Cultural Marxism and “social justice,” liberalism sharply has taken leave from reality. Its believers revel in their god-like self-importance as they propose to remake nature and human nature. The cost of this soaring flight of ego is leaving behind any sane connections to tradition, family, nation, and faith. As these believers profess to love all men equally, they end up loving no one in particular.

The consequence is spiritual and emotional emptiness, and into this void despair is likely to enter, specifically one leading to a death wish. Western liberals have the option of returning to their own tradition, but their pride is an enormous obstacle. If they did so, they could no longer feel superior to “deplorables,” to use Hillary Clinton’s term.

Commonly they deal with this problem by trying to live vicariously off the energy, or presumed energy, of the incoming migrants. This may explain why liberals rhapsodize so often about immigrants’ “vibrancy.” Lacking real life within themselves, they seek passion and life’s blood wherever they can find it. Vibrancy vampires might be a name for them. Also, the sheer chaos of multiculturalism may provide liberals an exciting diversion from their inner deadness. These remedies may work for a time, but the emptiness and its attendant death wish will still remain.

Why are Western elites so eager to push their death wish on their countrymen and countries? Perhaps, in part, it is misery wanting company. Certainly the miserable Jim Jones wanted his followers to follow him to his bitter end. They could have stopped him if most of them had realized, before it was too late, that he was not the good and ethical man he claimed to be.

Similarly, the survival of the West, or at least most of it, will depend on whether the people of Western nations can realize that their ruling elites are essentially clones of Jim Jones. Admittedly, they are not as certifiably deranged as Jones, but the difference is one of degree, not kind. ■