

Liberal Policy Switches

From Latin American governance to environmental protection, the reversals are dizzying

BRENDA WALKER

Is consistency a desirable trait in deeply felt values that form policy positions? You would think so, but the leftward political contingent appears to be unburdened by such moral steadiness, preferring instead the pursuit of power by any means necessary. A major example of inconstancy has been the immigration issue, where lefties once supported nation states around the world, but now side with the hated globalist corporations in pursuing a borderless planet. Go figure.

Confession: I'm beginning to miss Fidel Castro. He may have been a mass-murdering commie dictator, but he at least chose to fight for his own country rather than immigrating for the easy freebies in America. He had a reputation of being a decent baseball player with a wicked curveball, so he had a shot at an illustrious career among the evil capitalists. *Harper's* magazine reported in 1989 that he had turned down an offer to play for the Giants. That claim has doubters in some quarters, but the Internet certainly has plenty of photos showing Fidel playing ball.

In contrast, the choice to stay and fight for one's homeland is rarely made today. The earlier Latin American tradition of revolution against tyranny is just plain gone, with the modern ease of transportation and iPhones to make travel easier for illegal aliens. Are you a Latin American wishing for "a better life" immediately? Just hop a north-bound train or join a well-funded caravan to invade the United States to steal jobs, education, and welfare. Illegal immigration is the acceptable ticket to personal betterment in the modern twenty-first century — according to the left-bent mind at least.

It's obvious that liberals are fine with that change. The idea of Hispanic national self-determination through political and revolutionary struggle has dis-

appeared from public consciousness. And while liberals love to fling the "racism" charge against Americans who reject open borders, it is genuinely racist to believe brown people must be rescued from their own nations via immigration to the United States. The rescue fantasy is usually a flashing neon light of liberal virtue signaling. (Plus, the fact that most amnestied Hispanic illegals eventually vote Democrat may be a reason the D-party panders to them.)

It is not cruel to limit immigration to America. In fact, ending it entirely would have a positive effect on the Third World. If there were no comfy welfare state to which to immigrate, local people across the planet would get serious about building reform at home.

Looking at the recent past, it's curious how strongly felt beliefs of left-wingers are so apt to change over time, sometimes doing a 180 to fit the political winds (or the preferences of funders).

A few decades back, leftist revolutionaries were the totally cool icons among Democrat elites in America, to whom Fidel Castro and other Latin insurgents were great heroes. The late Tom Wolfe described "Radical Chic" where wealthy New York liberals celebrated revolutionaries like the Black Panthers and Castro.

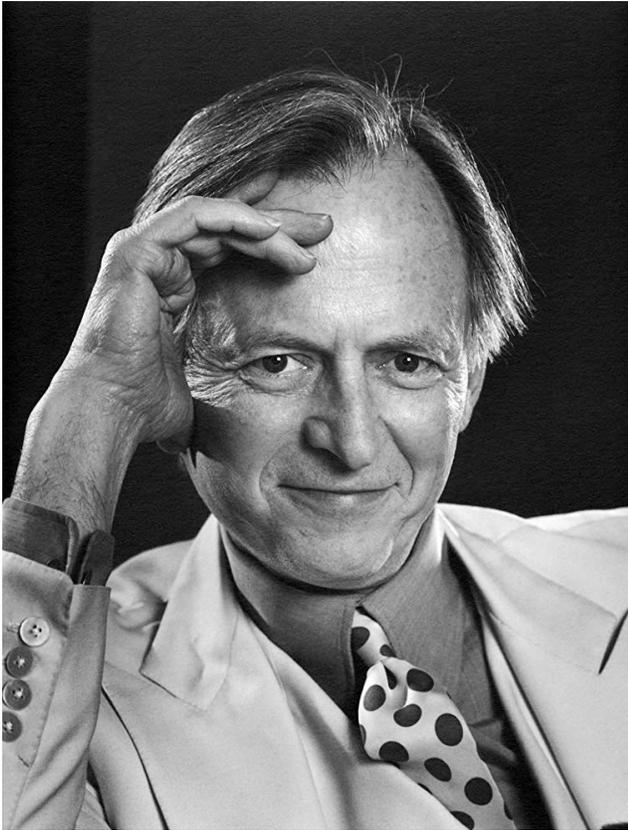
Radical chic has more recently expanded into "terrorist chic" among the open-borders left, because murderous jihadists might want to immigrate here and vote Democrat. Muslims with vague unscreenable backgrounds were certainly no problem for the Obama administration. In 2016, his administration announced it would admit 30 percent more refugees in the next year, with the target total being 110,000. The Obama White House brought in 10,000 Syrians in 2016 despite the obvious danger of admitting persons with no background files.

Times have definitely changed. Liberals once espoused the idea of homegrown reform where brown people took their destinies into their own hands through armed revolution and political activity.

And the struggle was real. In 1987, *Foreign Affairs* began an article titled "Revolution in Central America?"

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by noting: “On President Reagan’s first inauguration day [1980], revolution appeared to be spreading across Central America. The Sandinistas were consolidating their hold over Nicaragua and guerrillas in El Salvador and Guatemala were on the move.”



Radical Chic author Tom Wolfe (1930-2018)

The *Christian Science Monitor* reported similarly: “Central America Revolution past, present, and future,” July 11, 1980:

Never before has the United States paid so much attention to events in Central America; but never before has the area been in such upheaval. Revolutionary ferment is everywhere; it already has appeared in Nicaragua, where a new left-leaning government has been in power for almost a year, struggling to pick up the pieces from an 18-month civil war. In neighboring El Salvador, similar ferment is nudging that country toward social and economic reforms that would parallel the intentions of the new leaders in Nicaragua. And in Guatemala, where the ferment is less evident, but nonetheless strong, the likelihood of change is very real.

But now, not so much. Improved communications have informed Central Americans of plentiful jobs and free stuff from Uncle Sucker, so they have decided that illegal immigration is easier than fixing their own

countries using the challenging strategies of political activism or armed struggle.

These days, when transportation north from Latin America is much improved, the admiration among leftist elites for freedom fighters in the Third World has disappeared. Instead, the Open Borders ideology continues to expand, to the point where elected Democrats, including Senators Kirsten Gillibrand and Elizabeth Warren, have espoused abolishing ICE.

Imagine an elected representative of a major political party recommending that the Highway Patrol be shut down because it discriminates against persons who drive fast. But the Abolish ICE movement is not considered fringe by the leftist mainstream media.

Lefty types seem incapable of maintaining long-held convictions, except the desire for power, which isn’t really a belief.

Once upon a time, for example, liberals presented themselves as the great protectors of the environment. But when \$100 million was given secretly to the Sierra Club with the specification of a mysterious donor that it never speak ill of immigration, the organization went on a search-and-destroy mission against its own members who objected to the harmful effects of excessive population growth in America. Other green institutions followed the Sierra Club, hoping to avoid questions about race and environmental elitism. Now the overpopulation issue has disappeared because accusations of ethnic bias are considered more important than protecting our planetary home.

“Racism!” has become the near universal insult of liberals toward anyone who disagrees on ever-increasing legal and illegal immigration. But that attitude is very short-sighted and lacking insight on the larger problem — namely world population growth. For example, the disastrous growth of Africa likely reaching four billion by the year 2100 will be an unimaginable disaster.

Liberals are shockingly prejudiced to believe brown people can’t improve their own societies. If there were no easy illegal immigration, they would stay put and work for reform at home. It’s just easier for them to leave and pursue jobs and free stuff in Europe and America. Open borders retard progress in the Third World. And on a planet with more than 7.6 billion residents, dissatisfied people can’t all relocate to the First World.

Curiously, liberals used to care about rapid world population growth because of its obvious threat to the environment, peace, and society. Back in President Reagan’s time, when Planet Earth supported 4.5 billion humans in 1980, population was acceptable to discuss — and it helped that Reagan was seen as a retrograde tree-hater by the left.

But as the problem becomes more extreme and difficult to solve, debate has shrunk. Instead, environmentalists talk as if the symptoms were the problem:

they chatter on about global warming, which (if you believe in it) is a manifestation of overpopulation, of too many people using polluting substances.

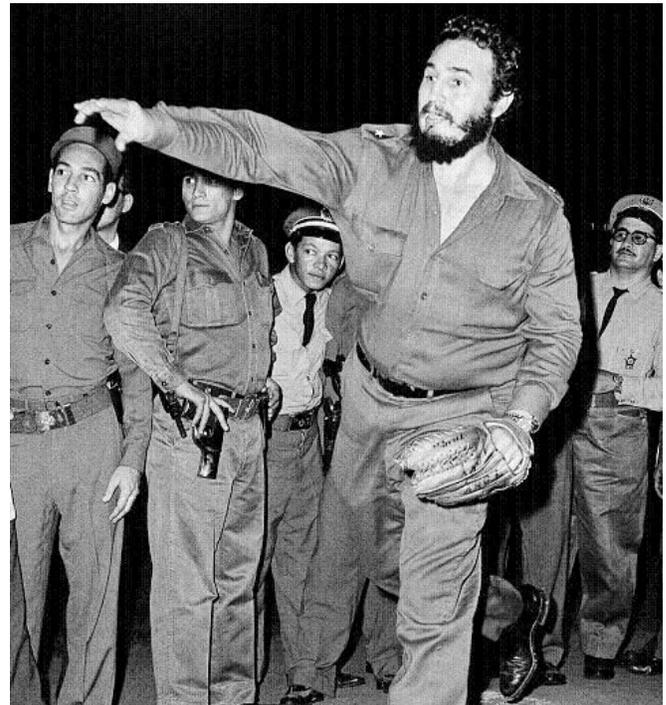
Meanwhile, the exterior pressures continue to mount as poor neighbors notice America's sieve-like border. Despite the increasing claims of foreigners that they are eligible for asylum because of their alleged suffering, nearly all aliens want to relocate to America because of economic issues: they want to make money and scrounge welfare, period.

However, there are successful strategies for improving lives in poor countries. One is microlending, where very small loans are made mostly to women so that they can start their own businesses. It was started by a Bangladeshi economics professor, Muhammad Yunus, who believed that the poor needed credit, not charity. Starting in 1976, Yunus created the Grameen Bank and secured donations to fund its initial lending programs. Today the bank is self-supporting from the interest paid on its loans to the poor.

Another strategy is to elect a dynamic leader, dedicated to constructive reform, like Lee Kuan Yew, who transformed Singapore from a Third World basket case into an economic powerhouse in a single generation. America was a dusty agglomeration of colonies until the people built it into the great nation it is today through work, struggle, and dedication. The blueprint exists, but it requires a lot of work to execute.

Sadly, the population of the Third World is growing, while the First World remains fairly stable, so the clamor for open borders will only increase as the unhappiness in less developed nations worsens. But it's a foolish policy to pretend to be doing good by saving a tiny fraction of the needy by welcoming refugees, asylees, and the poor. That strategy is designed to make the rescuers feel virtuous, not to solve the problem.

The voices on the left crying for a big government rescue program should have more respect for human ingenuity and ability to effect change, because that strategy is the one best equipped to work. ■



Lee Kuan Yew (left) is known as the “architect of modern Singapore” for guiding the post-war city-state from a third-world economy to a modern, first-world society during his 31 years of rule as prime minister. He was a realistic, results-oriented character, even noting the limits of diversity ideology by observing, “I think we were progressing very nicely until the surge of Islam came...I would say today, we can integrate all religions and races except Islam.” More generally, Lee criticized U.S. immigration philosophy and policies, warning that “multiculturalism will destroy America.”

Lee ruled a diverse nation of Chinese, Malaysians, and Indians but promoted a Singaporean identity with an emphasis on education and meritocracy. English is now taught as a common language, which is also a cultural unifier because it doesn't benefit any particular tribe. Many Americans would see Lee's regulation of citizen lifestyles to be unduly authoritarian — the ban on chewing gum has been a common example. But he saw the discipline of social order as essential to progress.

Fidel Castro was similar to Lee Kuan Yew in one respect: having a long run in office — 49 years starting in 1959 — until he handed down the job to his younger brother Raul in 2008. But Fidel's record for the people was transformative in a negative way. Regarding economic progress, Cubans suffered under communism and at times experienced food shortages and rationing. Perhaps Cubans would have been better off if the nation's resources had not been spent on internationalist projects in Grenada, Chile, Nicaragua, and Angola. But Castro enjoyed his image as a modern communist icon. Two leaders; two different outcomes of governing.