

How Trump Changed the GOP and the Nation

by Conrad Black



While a very large number of people throughout the world are celebrating what they believe is the end of the Trump phenomenon, the fact is this president, who has been so widely reviled as freakish, corrupt, accidental, illegitimate, and a virtually total failure, has received nearly 72 million votes to remain as president, even though he fell short of [Joe Biden's total](#). Whatever happens, [Trump has reoriented the Republican Party](#) from country-club altruists, to which it reverted after the Reagan era, to a political organization soundly based in the lower-middle and working classes and among the principal minorities.

It is a considerable achievement that Trump has reduced poverty and generated sharp gains in the income of the lowest 20 percent of income-earners while reinforcing the capitalist credentials of the Republicans. The notion that the changes he

has wrought in his party and his policies have been rejected is rubbish; they were effectively ratified in the congressional and state elections and in the huge increase that he gained in the Republican presidential vote. If Trump has really lost, it has been to a vast and fervent coalition that included virtually the entire national media, the administrative state, the financial establishment, Big Tech acting as media censors, Hollywood in all its garish and opinionated fatuity, China's self-interested American friends, and a near unanimity of academic and ostensibly intellectual opinion, and that does not erase or even significantly diminish his achievement.

If he wishes, Trump can spend the next four years as Andrew Jackson did from 1825 to 1828, claiming with some plausibility that he has been robbed of the presidency, while smoothing some of the gratuitously abrasive aspects of his public personality. President Biden will take office at the head of a profoundly divided party trying to bridge anti-white urban guerrillas and vandals masquerading as civil-rights crusaders across the traditional liberal-Democratic heartland to the powerful and entrenched interests that united against the alarmingly populist Mr. Trump. If the Republicans win at least one of the senatorial runoffs in Georgia, Biden will do this as only the fourth president elected without his party controlling the Senate (after Taylor, Cleveland, Nixon and the senior Bush).

A nonpartisan poll, while reflecting a distinct advantage for Biden over Trump, revealed that 13 percent of Alabama voters who thought leadership was most important regarded Biden as a strong leader, compared to 86 percent, whether they liked him or not, for Trump. Biden has spent nearly half a century in legislative work, revels in personal contact with other politicians, and is personally well liked, so he may achieve a reduction in the intensity of political discussion and may even succeed in putting together a governing majority for

certain issues. But he is very unexciting, unoriginal, and apparently enervated. He is unlikely to seek reelection or to be able to pass on to the next Democratic nominee an administration laden with prestige and popularity. Donald Trump, or more likely someone carefully endorsed by him, could carry the banner of Republican populism to victory and resume the assault, though with relative civility, on the entrenched bipartisan establishment that may have succeeded in easing out the great orange ogre. What his enemies like to think of as the end of Trump is just as likely the beginning.

If America has cast the die and rejected Trump's popular capitalism and substantially embraced the Biden-Sanders unity program, this will be, as both those pleased and those displeased by such a result recognize, a historic turning of profound importance to the whole world. All those on both sides of the election who proclaimed it to be the most important at least since FDR was elected to a third term in 1940 promising massive rearmament, peace through strength, and all aid short of war to Britain and Canada, if not since the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860, are correct. The Biden-Sanders unity program, which the Democrats officially support, endorses the United States relapsing into tolerating undocumented immigration, a radical ecological policy that amounts to war on the petroleum industry, sharply redistributive income taxes, comprehensive microregulation of business, the implicit toleration of military nuclearization by Iran, North Korea, and anyone else, vast reparations to Native and African Americans, unlimited and facilitated abortion, including early infanticide, a partial confiscation of firearms, some profound constitutional changes, a partial or general revocation of the traditional status of authentic churches and faiths, and the official approval of the fundamental moral turpitude of traditional American patriotism.

A substantial proportion, though presumably a minority, of the

75 million or so Biden votes will have been cast in support of most or all of the above radical policies and beliefs. Their substantial enactment would implicitly cede the principal national influence in the world to the People's Republic of China. Great Britain, thanks to Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt, managed the comparatively painless and seamless transition from the most influential nation in the world to the principal ally of its successor in that role, a country with which Britain shared a language and a democratic political tradition, all within the broad Judeo-Christian framework and the separation of secular and religious organizations. If the United States, after barely a century as the world's most influential and powerful nation, is about to surrender that position, it will presage a radical change in the prevailing political ethos of the whole world.

When Winston Churchill was defeated by Clement Attlee in the British general election of 1945, Stalin remarked to Andrei Gromyko and Vyacheslav Molotov: "Democracy must be a wretched system to replace a great man like Churchill with a nonentity like Attlee." He somewhat underestimated Attlee, and of course Trump is no Churchill (though he at least brought his likeness back to the Oval Office from the purgatory to which Obama had banished it). And the United States has not just navigated the greatest crisis in its history, as Britain had in 1945. But there is [much talk these days of Oswald Spengler](#), the gloomy German who wrote the recondite and provocative *Decline of the West* in the 1920s. He foresaw that democracy would fail because of the lack of qualifications of the masses to govern themselves and the inevitable irresponsibility and corruption of a free press. His book gained great popularity in Germany as a justification for that country's woes after World War I and was frequently cited by habitual pessimists throughout the West for many years. In fact Spengler's prophecies were mistaken: His prediction of two centuries of "Caesarism" when the West would be governed by the likes of Mussolini was bunk. (Mussolini ended up trying to flee Italy dressed in a German

army uniform and was executed by communist partisans, and his corpse was hung upside down and mutilated at a Milan gas station.)

And Spengler's basic premise of public stupidity has not generally been validated in sophisticated countries, though his opinion of the media (including their polls) has been substantially illustrated in the U.S. in the Trump years. If America really has begun the comprehensive adoption of the Biden-Sanders program, it is finished as a great power. Abraham Lincoln famously said that the United States could never be conquered, that no invader "will drink from the Ohio River or leave a track in the Blue Ridge; America will flourish as a democracy or perish by suicide." That fate is now on offer: The repudiation of the American experiment, supposedly to perfect it, is national suicide, and if the United States goes down, it will take all of Western civilization with it 500 years after the Renaissance, and China will accede to world leadership. No thoughtful American or intelligent foreign observer should be unaware of what is at stake.

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