

Will the Midterm Elections End the Progressive Agenda?



by Lee Smith

Forecasts of a Red Wave with next week's election suggest not just a referendum on Joe Biden's first two years as president, but also a judgment of the progressive ideas driving Democratic Party policy. We were in a similar situation with the 2016 vote, even if most Americans didn't know it at the time.

Had Hillary Clinton won as expected, a faction that constitutes a small but vocal minority would have had nearly two decades to consolidate its control over the political process. Traditional conservatives like to credit themselves as partisans who "stand athwart the world yelling stop," but it took an unorthodox Republican candidate willing to do more than talk to make it happen.

"Obama and Hillary were planning 16 years of leading from

behind,” says author A.J. Rice. “Sixteen years of crushing the middle class; 16 years of rewriting American history.” Donald Trump, says Rice, gave Americans a fighting chance to win their country back.

I spoke with Rice for the [latest episode](#) of “Over the Target Live.” He’s recently published his first book, “The Woking Dead: How Society’s Vogue Virus Destroys Our Culture,” a nearly encyclopedic account of the Woke initiatives and ideas that have assaulted the republic’s constitutional order.

Rice is a well-known figure in conservative media circles. He runs his own public relations firm, Publius PR, promoting some of the top names in the right-leaning press, including Laura Ingraham, Monica Crowley, Dan Bongino, Victor Davis Hanson, and Judge Jeanine Pirro.

With all the books he helped land on bestseller lists, he saw an opening for his own distinct, and irreverent, voice and started working on a manuscript in 2018. He says he was confident “the themes of the last five or six years, even going back to the second Obama administration, those themes would be evergreen and they would hold up because I saw the Woke crowd was getting crazier.”

The Woke domination of America’s major cultural and intellectual institutions, he says, is a result of the first efforts to inject communism into the American political system.

“Marxism shows up here in the early 20th century,” says Rice, “and they see that we have a vibrant middle class, that we have blue-collar workers, they’re earning a living. ... They’re working their rear ends off. ... And the Marxists look around and it dawns on them: Wow, we’re not going to get a workers’ revolt here. We’re not going to get a bunch of plumbers and longshoremen and lumberjacks to overthrow the government. We need different foot soldiers.”

Instead, the subversives captured American elites. They targeted “the silent picture industry,” says Rice. “They go into Broadway, they go into entertainment, early radio, they go into the newspaper business. They get into the government schools from kindergarten all the way up to law schools. ... And then they find a home in the Democratic Party of Margaret Sanger and Woodrow Wilson. So if you fast forward 100 years, these are the same people we’re fighting today.”

Except today they’ve added a large weapon to their arsenal—Big Tech, responsible for what Rice calls “the digital brown shirts”: “These are the people that pick and choose winners and losers. These are the people that want to de-platform, demonetize, shadow ban, and they can move at the speed of light.” Big Tech, Rice says, “is like [the progressives’] aircraft carrier that helps them project power.”

Big Tech augments the power and influence of the Woke movement, but it also disguises its actual strength. It’s a minority position, says Rice. “Regular people,” he says, “cannot take this anymore.” Eighty to 90 percent of the country feels this way, says Rice, including not just Republican and independent voters but also Democrats who don’t want to be told that “the country was founded by the Klan. And I’m going to let Steve and Gary into the women’s locker room. ... They don’t want any of this.”

According to Rice, we’ve seen clear evidence of this in elite regions like Northern Virginia. Wealthy counties around Washington, DC went for Biden in 2020 because they were promised a return to normalcy. But what they got wasn’t normal. Instead, they found out their children were being indoctrinated with racial and gender ideology. “This is how [Glenn] Youngkin was able to swing 11 percentage points in Virginia,” says Rice, and become governor.

If there’s a Red Wave, Woke activists are less likely to rethink their policies than they are to double down on the

ideas and initiatives that Americans are starting to reject in large numbers. And that, says Rice, may lead to more conflict.

“Some of these people, they get physical,” says Rice. GOP officials such as Rand Paul, Steve Scalise, and Lee Zeldin have been victims of political violence in the last several years, but so have entertainers who’ve pushed back against Woke articles of faith. “Somebody jumped on stage and tried to stab Dave Chappelle ... because he’s telling LGBTQ jokes,” says Rice. “It’s no different than the Taliban firing RPGs at those Buddhist statues.”

If Republicans take back the House and Senate, says Rice, “the Squad is going to be leading battalions through the halls of Congress. ... It’s not just going to be Medea Benjamin and Code Pink, it’s going to be Antifa, BLM, and whatever other fascist shock troops.”

But today’s Republicans won’t be bullied, says Rice. Before Trump, he explains, there was an image of Republicans as “a bunch of bow-tie-wearing Alex P. Keaton types.” And along comes Trump, “who grew up in Queens [New York] with a hard hat on.”

The America First movement is more than just Trump himself, says Rice. He compares the Trump phenomenon to the legacy of a president whom Trump admired. As with “Andrew Jackson,” says Rice, “you don’t just get Trump, you get Trumpism. And that’s what really scares the ... left and the media. When they see [Ron] DeSantis scalping people ... that scares them.”

Rice lists a number of other GOP candidates who’ve modeled themselves after Trump, like Arizona gubernatorial candidate Kari Lake. These Republicans combine “policy components that deal with trade and immigration and foreign policy,” says Rice, and there’s also the influence of Trump’s style.

“And you’re going to get more people like this as they rise,” says Rice. “We had a whole generation of people that wanted to

be Ronald Reagan.” Now the model is Trump. The fact that he isn’t on the 2022 ticket but has nonetheless projected his influence through scores of GOP candidates is more evidence he may be one of the most significant political figures in U.S. history.

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