

Yankee Steve's Column
for the Week of July 8, 2010

Lost Liberties and a Lousy Independence Day

"Men of wisdom will not always be at the helm of government." James Madison

"That government governs best that governs least." Henry David Thoreau

We have just celebrated another Fourth. Some did it with a fifth, which is the way they celebrate just about everything - even the birth of Christ Jesus. I caution against practices of that kind because this is a time in history when we must remain sober. We have a **Progressive** sitting in the oval office who by all accounts is drunk with power. Like Lenin, President Barack Obama will hear your opinion, only so that it may be suggested of him that he always acts on the best advice. What should be understood is that he is the one who acts, not the Congress, or the Senate, or the people, but Obama. Should Congress not go along with what he wants he will offer its more resistant members a bribe.

When President George W. Bush was in office, Senator Robert Byrd [D-WV] felt constrained to write a book in which he said that the "present administration" is characterized by "arrogance." At that time Obama was not even a blip on the radar screen. Just the other day Senator Byrd slipped quietly into eternity. If more time had been allotted to him, and had he the courage, he could have written a sequel in which he would have been forced to admit that Obama (when it comes to arrogance) has by a wide margin outdone his witless predecessor.

Watch how Obama walks. His body language is revealing. It is the stride gate and saunter of an all too confident man. It is in many ways similar to that of W who signed into law, the so-called Patriot Act, that even after it was modified, places an asterisk beside the Bill of Rights. We have rights but whenever the word "terrorism" is invoked these same rights no longer apply as they once did. Ironically, the Obama administration is more concerned about granting rights forged on the anvil of sacrifice to the sworn enemies of America.

Progressives

I have called Obama a Progressive. You may be wondering how I define "Progressive." A Progressive is to politics what the naturalist Charles Darwin is to evolution. The Darwinist thinks that physical man has undergone changes that presumably will never be reversed, and that along with the apes we descended from a common ancestor. The apes did not for some inexplicable reason continue changing, but we did. Consequently we are not what we used to be. We are asked to believe that if we go back far enough we will discover once upon a time our forbearers walked on all fours. Somehow the quadruped became a biped. All that was needed was that he shed two of his feet by converting them into hands. Oh yes, he also had to develop a

long, strong mobile thumb so that he could make tools. Most important of all he had to develop a larynx and vocal cords capable to complex speech sounds so that he could pass on to succeeding generations what he learned. Many etceteras, at least 24, could be added here which place evolution in a dubious light but I must go on to other issues.

Progressives believe that **human nature** changed along with the biological changes which they claim are recorded in the fossil records. In other words all those cautionary remarks that the Founders of America made about the way in which power can corrupt a politician, and for that matter anyone, has to be taken with a grain of salt. We are different now. We have made progress. The founders were merely reacting to the heavy-handed tactics of King George III. Progress has been made since that day when a shot was heard round the world. We can trust the government with power now because human nature is never static. Human nature is fundamentally good, and as such it will with each passing age improve. Deny that and we will declare you a misanthrope! Worse yet, we will say that you do not believe in Darwin.

But is human nature changing? And do we know more about human nature than the ancients who saw to it that the Athenian Constitution had within it a number of checks and balances that were meant to prevent the abuse of power?

Congress is proof that power corrupts, and that human nature is as corrupt as it was when the British Parliament turned a blind eye and a deaf ear to the pleadings of Benjamin Franklin who asked only that the Colonies be given the same freedoms as British citizens.

In World War II black Americans fought partially in order to secure for African-Americans some freedoms which they did not enjoy. Their patience, while waiting for equal rights to be granted them, is inspiring. Maybe they thought about Crispus Attucks, a freed slave, who was the first patriot to die in the Revolutionary War in what has been called the Boston Massacre. Now there are Americans of every color fighting overseas to preserve freedoms that are slowly being taken away from all of us regardless of color. I am not afraid of Al Qaida; I am afraid of Congress.

Why are we cheering at passing parades and shooting off fireworks when so many of our freedoms are being systematically dismantled? Under the cover of economic necessity our freedoms are slowly disappearing. Old Tom Paine is right again – “These are the times that try men’s souls.”

Just look at what has happened over the past few years.

- Gone is your right, on religious or other grounds, to take care of health matters. Now you must buy insurance even if you don’t need or want it. Friedrich **Hayek said, “Liberty is the absence of coercion.”** You are less free than you were a year ago because you can now be coerced into buying health insurance. What is next?

- Gone is the right to tan in a salon without paying a ten percent tax. Is this possible?

- Gone is your right to resist the local government when it lays claim to your property through eminent domain so that it can increase revenues.

- New York state now wants to control what happens to your body after you die. This is the greatest act of presumption ever assumed by any modern day government. Unless you sign a paper saying that you do not want to be an organ donor, the state could rob your grave. That heart or liver that served you so well could now belong to the government. We must not forget that New York was the first state to authorize elective abortion. What begins in New York has a way of traveling throughout the country. Be ye warned America!

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION, FREEDOM OF INFORMATION, FREEDOM OF SPEECH, FREEDOM FROM UNREASONABLE SEARCHES, LEGAL REPRESENTATION and A SPEEDY AND PUBLIC TRIAL are rights mentioned in the Bill of Rights as belonging to each and every citizen of this country, but these have been modified.

Calvin Coolidge [1872-1933]

President Calvin Coolidge, sorely neglected by historians, was a real Conservative.

In his 1915 Fourth of July speech Coolidge took on the Progressives. He was fully aware of the fact that human nature is now what it has always been. The entire speech should be read; it is a masterpiece. Coolidge pointed out that power-grabbing is older than what the Founders of America envisioned and that to suggest that we go beyond the Declaration of Independence is to return to what America rid itself of in the War for Independence.

About the Declaration there is a *finality* that is exceedingly restful. It is often asserted that the world has made a great deal of progress since 1776, that we have had new thoughts and new experiences which have given us a great advance over the people of that day, and that we may therefore very well discard their conclusions for something more modern. But that reasoning cannot be applied to this great charter. If all men are created equal, that is final. If they are endowed with inalienable rights, that is final. If governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, that is final. No advance, no progress can be made beyond these propositions. If anyone wishes to deny their truth or their soundness, the only direction in which he can proceed historically is not forward, but backward toward the time when there was no equality, no rights of the individual, no rule of the people. Those wishing to proceed in that direction cannot lay claim to progress. They are reactionary. *Their ideas are not more modern, but more ancient, than those of the Revolutionary fathers.* [emphasis added]

I will send Coolidge's speech by electronic mail to anyone who requests it; I received as a courtesy of the Ashcroft Foundation.

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