The Puritans and Political Correctness

By MacDonald King Aston
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If evil was born of the 1960s, it came not from the rock music born of the South, but in the form of political correctness and its child, multiculturalism. To oppose political correctness and multiculturalism is, by definition, to take the side of the right, if by right one means tradition. There is no way out of this fact. Whatever political correctness and multiculturalism may be, they are projects of the left, specifically from the first-wave of the sixties, the political redeemers (usually Northern), and the right usually misses this point. The modern leftist politically correct and multicultural project has its roots, however, in historical antecedents which long predated the sixties.

The importance of the sixties for the project is that the people forcing political correctness and multiculturalism upon us are the religious descendants of the New Left of that decade. The same righteous fervor they exhibited in the sixties in a politico-religious form is now the Hitlerian, goosestepping religiosity disguised in a cultural form.

The Sixties and the Puritans: Political Correctness

We are right back to the heart of Puritanism. The Puritans resolutely believed that they knew the truth of God's Word. Having failed in their religious errand in England, they migrated to New England where they could establish a strict theocracy. They were not tolerant of religious freedom, to say the least, and they punished dissent ruthlessly, even by death. The left wants to change you politically, to force you, by violence if necessary, to accept its political views whether you like it or not. The word "force" is an unavoidable term in the discussion of political correctness, for political correctness is synonymous with forced behavioral change. The words "political correctness" are therefore apt. The agenda is defined by the word "politically" and executed through the cultural term "correctness." It is an attempt to make you behave "correctly" by forcing you to believe a given set of political propositions. It is raw politics pretending to act as a cultural debate. But it is not a debate. It is radical politics. That it is political is seen in the definition: "political correctness: conformity to a belief that language and practices which could offend political sensibilities should be eliminated."

Cartoon by Glen McCoy

But what are "political sensibilities"? Many people today use the words "political correctness" with only a vague understanding of what it means. Usually they know they have said something wrong, something socially unacceptable. Saying the wrong thing in today's politically correct atmosphere can cost you your job or have you expelled from college, or worse.

If you don't believe that the left controls most of today's American culture, try this exercise (if you feel adventurous and have prepared the bail you will need to get out of jail.) Walk into any grocery store in America, step up to the customer-service counter, and ask the clerk if the store has any food "especially made for niggers, kikes, and chinks." If you have any sense at all, you will get your bail money ready and hold out your hands for the handcuffs which will soon arrive. Of course, I am not arguing that it is right to call people names. But there is something else at work here, another dynamic altogether. It is not, according to the Leftist Canon, permitted to denigrate "ethnic minorities." Free speech? Oh, that doesn't apply, because of the new and improved "hate crime" laws which the clerk could easily cite against your "intimidation." Now go into another grocery store if you dare and walk up to the Customer Service clerk again. This time ask if the store has any food made "especially for rednecks, trailer trash, and white trash." I can guarantee you that no police will pull up outside the store, tires screeching. I can guarantee no offended customers. I can guarantee no offended clerk. Why? Because the left's agenda concerns the destruction of the dominant culture, not the destruction of the various subcultures beneath it. To the left, it is perfectly acceptable to demean anyone who descends from the white Europeans who settled America, fought for its freedom from Great Britain, and wrote its Constitution (and who fought, once more, for freedom in 1861-1865).To understand why this phenomenon is what it is, you must first understand political correctness and its concomitant effects.

What is political correctness? Political correctness is, at heart, a linguistic phenomenon. Political correctness is also a political movement, subscribed to by a political faction—the left—intent upon forcing it upon our entire culture and society. It is an ideological enemy of Western culture, bitterly opposed to both Christianity and the Western culture it produced. Political correctness is a behavioural programme, an implementation of a socio-politico regime aimed at changing behaviour (through force and threats of force). Political correctness is a revolutionary political agenda backed up by force of law and just plain force. Millions of people forcing other millions of people to silence with politically correct speech and behaviour. "Hate crimes" laws now include "intimidation," including simply speaking words which might "offend" others. Say the wrong thing and go to jail or lose your job. Millions of Americans are now forced to attend "diversity and tolerance" meetings by their employers—or else. And the goal of these "diversity and tolerance" meetings is directed at changing the behaviour of the employees—whether

they like it or not. The Puritans of the 17th century and their Yankee descendants would have been delighted.

The words "change management initiative" are often used to describe a corporation's efforts to change its employees' political beliefs to conform with the corporate cultural beliefs, synonymous with leftist beliefs. Here is an example:

> Equality training in the workplace is usually undertaken in an attempt to develop knowledge, skills, behaviours or attitudes through learning experiences, which are carried out in a planned and systematic way in order to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of activities, or to change a behaviour or range of behaviours and thus to change or reinforce the culture of an organisation.

"To change a behaviour or range of behaviours." That statement encapsulates the entire politically correct ideology. Like Winston Smith in George Orwell's 1984, we are all potentially guilty of "thoughtcrime." And Big Brother is watching. In legislation, in police cars, and with surveillance cameras. Political correctness is the alteration of language to redress real or alleged injustices and discrimination or to avoid offense. The term most often appears in the form politically correct or PC, and is generally used mockingly or disparagingly. "One stated aim of politically correct language is to prevent the exclusion or the offending of people because of their differences or handicaps." Note the primacy of language in this definition.

In real life, political correctness extends to nonverbal behaviour as well. For example, depending upon where you live in America, if a man holds a door open for a woman out of courtesy, the woman can complain that the man is not being "politically correct," that he is not recognising her "gender equality," that he is subtly "oppressing" her as a woman. (In other parts of the land, a woman can attack a man who does not hold a door open for her, claiming he is "impolite.") Nonetheless, most of what we mean by political correctness concerns language in one way or another, and language always in relation to forced behavioural change. For that reason, the old bugaboo of linguistics, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, comes back to haunt its detractors. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is a linguistic theory; it states that language, in some way, influences thought. In its "strong" form, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis would account for political correctness by theorising, to take one example, that racist language creates racist thought. This line of reasoning should sit well with the left, since it basically proposes what the left wants: to force people to avoid offending other people.

A website distributing free "prewritten term papers," presumably so a student does not have to write an original one, offered up this definition which shows the relation of political correctness to multiculturalism:

> Political Correctness refers to matters of inclusive speech, advocacy of nonracist, nonageist, nonsexist terminology, and insistence on affirmative action policies, avoidance of Eurocentrism as reflected in a "traditional" canon of literature, acceptance of multiculturalism as a valued feature of American society, and dismantling hierarchy as controlled by a white male power structure.

This last definition more accurately agrees with the position of many conservatives, who regard political correctness as an attack upon the European roots of those who settled America in the 17th and 18th centuries. Such an attack, they reason, is also an attack upon the traditional American culture and values derived from those settlers. They are correct. But political correctness affects our schools in many different ways. Teachers are silenced. Texts are rewritten to satisfy politically correct bias and sensitivity guidelines. Even as I write, a project is underway in Missouri to rewrite the history of the border war of the 1850s and 1860s, to tame it and turn it to the Yankee's need to buttress his mythology. I have little doubt that the Missouri project will succeed, given the necessity for propaganda to evince a foundation which supports its ends.

History

In its historical context, political correctness traces its lineage to those followers of Marx in the West (as opposed to the Soviet Union), who, faced with the obvious shortcomings of Marx's predictions about the future, melded his economic and historical ideas with those of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and a mish-mash of philosophers from Aristotle to Hegel, to produce a set of radical social theories. The most important of these "neo-Marxists" were those in the Frankfurt School (Institut für Sozialforschung), an institute in Germany founded by Carl Grünberg in 1923 and allied with the University of Frankfurt. The Frankfurt School included Max Horkheimer, who became its director in 1930, and who brought on board Marxist theorists such as T. W. Adorno, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, and Walter Benjamin. These men combined various disciplines such as sociology, philosophy, psychology, and economics, to critique popular culture, music, capitalist culture (and especially the role of the individual within it), fascism, and authoritarianism. This synthetic approach was called "Critical Theory." Critical Theory selectively used some of Marx's ideas for analyses of social relations under capitalism, while ignoring other parts of Marx's writings.

Members of the Frankfurt school were not in other words orthodox Marxists, but rather neo-Marxist anti-capitalists with a profound distaste for the societies which embodied capitalism, including Europe and the United States. The type of Marxism espoused by the members of the Frankfurt School is often called Cultural Marxism, a synonym for political correctness. Cultural Marxism is a term used to capture the close ties between the ideology of political correctness, egalitarianism, and the ideology from which it came, Marxism. Patrick Buchanan, an enemy of the left, uses the term Cultural Marxism in The Death of the West: "Political correctness is cultural Marxism, a regime to punish dissent and to stigmatize social heresy as the Inquisition punished religious heresy. Its trademark is intolerance." Bill Lind, equally detested by the left, also identifies Cultural Marxism with political correctness: "Political Correctness is Cultural Marxism. It is Marxism translated from economic into cultural terms." Lind traces political correctness back beyond the sixties: "It is an effort that goes back not to the 1960s and the hippies and the peace movement, but back to World War I. If we compare the basic tenets of Political Correctness with classical Marxism the parallels are very obvious." I prefer the term neo-Marxism because it more accurately describes the intellectual and political background of the concept, but Cultural Marxism is a valid description of the phenomenon.

Marxism itself is at its heart a theory, or theories, about radical egalitarianism, the belief in equal political, economic, social, and civil rights for all people. Radical egalitarianism is a belief in a theory about human nature, namely that all human beings are fundamentally equal. All well and good. But what does equal mean in this context?

There are two main definitions of equality as defined politically: equality of opportunity and equality of condition. Both definitions use the metaphor of hierarchy. Equality of opportunity refers to a hierarchically ordered society where the hierarchy, or class, is determined by merit rather than by some innate equality. In other words, the cream rises to the top. Society is better served by recognising that some people are simply better at some things than others. Equality of condition is the opposite, the notion that society—usually a centralised government—provides the conditions which promote equality among its citisens. Equality of condition assumes for its goal equal results and for this reason is sometimes called "equality of results."

The American philosopher and educator, Mortimer J. Adler, used the analogy of a race to describe the difference between equality of opportunity and equality of condition. In a foot race, assuming that all racers start with equal circumstances to allow them to win, racers come to the race with equality of condition, meaning that all racers start with the same conditions: the length of the track, the heat of the day, and so forth. All the racers face the same conditions under which the race is run. Some racers are faster than others, though. Some have more determination than others. At the biological level, not all the racers are equal at all. If they were, there would never be a winner—just ties. In the end, the winner of the race takes advantage of the inherent inequality among the racers. Indeed, a race assumes that one of the racers is unequal—he is faster than the other racers. When awards are handed out at the finish, the medals—first place, second place, third place—represent the inequality of conditions presupposed by the inequality of the racers' abilities. Equality of opportunity, therefore, refers to the notion that human beings are not innately equal in their results, but are equal, at least potentially, in their "starting gun" conditions. The conditions being equal, equality of opportunity asserts that the first-place racer wins because of some

opportunity he has exploited, perhaps the fact that he is simply faster than the rest of the racers. Equality of condition, in reverse, assumes that all racers start out and end up with the same conditions. Awarding medals based on unequal results—first place, second place, third place—is an admission that all the racers do not end up with the same conditions—that some racers are unequal to others in some respect.

The problem with both definitions lies in overlooking the underlying meaning of equality itself. Equality, whether physical, intellectual, moral, or economic, among human beings simply does not exist. But it does exist as another one of the building blocks of the Yankee Myth: the idea of innate equality or radical egalitarianism, which is tied to compulsory conformance to societal conventions, as seen in the Puritans and developed in full by the Yankee. It doesn't take much imagination to see the effects of an egalitarian ideology at work today. The entire "diversity and tolerance" movement is built upon it and political correctness is a direct fruit of it. But no ideology is more famous for is insistence upon radical egalitarianism than Marxism; it was Marx who thought that capitalism denies to most what it gives to a few. Capitalism, according to Marx, does not provide for equality of condition. All racers do not start out with the same conditions. Capitalists agree, but point out the virtue of having the competition in the first place: a winner will be determined. Neo-Marxism as a leftist "improvement" upon historical Marxism, is an attempt to bring about the dissolution of a culture—specifically European-based cultures like ours—by redefining the culture from within rather than warring upon it from without. It is a "bottom-up" revolutionary tactic which evolved from traditional, economic Marxism. But whereas Marx wanted to effect his revolution of the proletariat through economic means, cultural Marxists, like the German,Herbert Marcuse, believed in a cultural revolution directed against the very core of a given society (namely, the capitalist, Western societies, like the American Empire).

Marcuse was not only a member of the Frankfurt School, but a Marxist professor at Brandeis University (in the belly of the Yankee Beast, Massachusetts), not to mention an intelligence officer for the US Government. Marcuse is important to this discussion because he represents a connection between the conscious efforts to impose neo-Marxism on American culture and the popular culture of the 1960s, especially the "New Left" radical student movement. In other words, Marcuse envisioned an attack on the core values of American society which would lead to its disintegration, and he rode on the coattails of the sixties radicals to help effect that disintegration. In An Essay on Liberation, Marcuse makes the linguistic connection between the radical New Left and its attack upon "the Establishment," when he writes that "in the most militant areas of protest, it amounts to a methodical reversal of meaning." In the black militancy of the sixties, Marcuse saw an even greater threat to the Establishment through the "far more subversive universe of discourse" of the black militant movement. "Here," he wrote, "is a systematic linguistic rebellion," in which blacks redefine "some of the most sublime and sublimated concepts of Western civilization," a rebellion that to him meant a cultural form of Marxist revolutionary thought and action. In a hint of the political correctness to come, Marcuse also wrote, of black ghettos, that "while it is true that the white man is guilty, it is equally true that white men are rebels and radicals."

Cartoon courtesy of Cubanology.com

In One-Dimensional Man, Marcuse attacks the culture at its root: the family. "Massive socialization begins at home and arrests the development of consciousness and conscience." Because Western—and American—culture is the agent of this "massive socialization," Marcuse sees the way to change the repressive culture through a "redefinition of needs." If, for example, people could be weaned from television and other forms of "false fathers," they would be freed of their repressive needs and what historical Marxism could not achieve would be finally realised: "the disintegration of the system." By "the system," Marcuse meant civilisation itself, and by civilisation he meant culture, as he spelled out in Eros and Civilization. Marcuse's words perfectly describe the outward form of political correctness, which despite its insistence on "celebrating diversity," prohibits the underlying ideas of the ideology itself from open expression (so much for "diversity"). As a neo-Marxist, Marcuse grasped the main Marxist thesis (historical materialism), but he went beyond it, recognizing that much of Marx's revelation had not come true. The proletariat, for example, a Marxist word for "the oppressed masses," had not risen against their "masters"; the Oppressive State had not faded away into the sunset of political ideas. Marcuse, along with others, especially his colleagues in the Frankfurt School, sought to extend Marxist ideas to produce an explanation for the holes in Marx's theories (since there is no one Marxist theory). In the Soviet Union, for example, the great Marxist dream had crumbled to a totalitarian dust during Marcuse's own lifetime. What to do? Marcuse's solution was to take the redemptive Messianic message of Marx's "proletariat" and place it in the hands of alienated minorities, radical students, hippies, Viet Cong guerrillas, and Black Power militants. Such groups, he declared, could form liberating elites and destroy the managerial society. So reappeared the old Marxist–Hebraic (and Puritan) pattern of redemption through struggle by a chosen people. In other words, radical minority groups could seek to destroy Western civilisation from within by subverting the institutions which made up that civilisation. The new proletariat in Marcuse's eyes was made of feminists, radical students, homosexuals, revolutionaries, the asocial and disenfranchised. The weapons of neo-Marxist's like Marcuse were not the old ones, such as armed uprisings, printed pamphlets, and so forth. The new weapons were hedonistic and more subtle than the old: sex, drugs, and rock-and-roll. Juvenal's *panis et circenses* in short.

Marcuse and the other members of the Frankfurt School—not to mention the New Left on the campuses in the sixties—already had a base upon which to build. Another voice had already put forth a more cogently dangerous form of the cultural Marxist idea: Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), an Italian politician and intellectual. Gramsci, having joined the Socialist Party in 1914, left that organisation and founded the Italian Communist Party in 1921. He spent two years in the Soviet Union before returning to head the Italian Communist Party in 1924. In 1926, Mussolini banned the party and threw Gramsci in prison for 11 years. Gramsci died at 46 upon release. Gramsci's version of Marx's theories of history and sociology was quite different than Marx's. Like other disillusioned Communists who had not seen the materialisation of the Great Proletarian Revolution—indeed, the proletariat was busy becoming the Enemy; the mercantilist Puritan of New England had thwarted Marx—Gramsci sought another answer to battle the Great Satan of Western Society. Gramsci came to believe one could destroy a society from within, slowly over time, by attacking quietly but persistently its deepest values. He knew that he was up against the 2000-year culture of Christianity and that to attack that culture he would have to use a revolutionary psychology (propaganda) to break down the beliefs, traditions, values, and cultural habits of Western society. State socialism for Gramsci existed potentially in the social life of the working class, and the Marxist state must be built from the culture of the people.

And how did Gramsci intend to proceed? What did he want? In short, he envisioned "a new proletarian culture (a civilisation) totally different from the bourgeois one," where "class distinctions will be shattered." Gramsci was out to destroy Western civilisation and he was not shy in admitting it. "What remains to be done?" he asked. "Nothing other than to destroy the present form of civilization." On the way to building his Marxist paradise, Gramsci saw the need for "a preparatory period involving organizing and propaganda."

It is this "preparatory period" which calls to mind the New Left of the sixties, for they could accurately be described not only as

Marxists, but as Gramscians. Like Gramsci, they too were intent upon destroying Western civilisation, replacing it with Tom Hayden's "participatory democracy," which is, once more, simply propagandese for "neo-Marxist state." Thanks to the New Left of the 1960s, we in America are now in that "preparatory period."

The politically correct are simply the thought police who patrol the perimeters of that period. To this day, whatever "political correctness" means, there is no doubt that to study it is to study "the New Left in middle age." It is also to study the origins of political correctness in the Puritans. A Time Magazine article called political correctness "busybodyness," tracing it back to the Puritans "who began it all." The magazine put its finger on the ultimate cause: enforced conformism, the specialty of the Puritan.

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