

## The new American patriots

Though we haven't yet experienced a nationwide channeling of Patrick Henry in these United States, we are getting closer by the day. "Give me liberty or give me death" are seven powerful words and one powerful statement, spoken at a time when death for treason was a very real possibility in the colonies. Patrick Henry (who was one of our 'founding fathers' and Virginia's first Governor) was a rousing orator and his speech to the Second Virginia Convention on March 23, 1775 tapped into the patriotic fervor of his countrymen who were mobilizing against the English King.

We forget how truly dangerous it was to speak out during those years before we declared our independence from the Crown, but patriots like Henry knew it well and somehow managed to find the courage to give voice to their beliefs despite the ever-present threats against themselves, their families and their livelihoods. While there are still some schools that teach our children about the 'rebels' of that time, there are way too many who gloss over the trials and travails of men and women then who put their lives on the line for a profound idea and a powerful principle.

It's tempting to want to compare our current state of affairs with abusive overreaching governments, censorship of our speech and indoctrination of our civilian and military population with the early days of the American Revolution just as it is tempting to liken the vaccination mandate nay-sayers and school board protesting parents with the brave men and women of the late 1700s. And while there are definitely similarities, the danger levels are very different but they are real.

'Whistle-blowing' within the halls of government is protected today just as the First Amendment is supposed to safeguard our right to speak freely and openly and to gather in groups and protest our government's actions, anywhere in our country. We can thank our forebears for these freedoms, but while those rights are guaranteed to every man and woman in our Bill of Rights and Constitution in perpetuity, they are not immune from attack by forces that would gladly erase them from our daily practice. On that subject, we can thank Ronald Reagan for the following quote from his inaugural address as Governor of California on January 5, 1967, "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free."

That quote is widely cited by American Conservatives who view - with increasing and worrisome frequency - the constant attacks on our freedoms as being extremely hazardous to our national health. It has also become a mantra of sorts for all freedom-loving people around the world. The reasoning is different for different peoples. Those enjoying that freedom (like Americans) haven't recently paid the price for it except for those brave service members who have given their lives on the battlefield, but we have all reaped the dividends. Those aspiring to attain it are willing to risk life and limb. For some in faraway lands it is still only a hope and an omnipresent dream. Regretfully, it is not yet an 'American-style' reality although we do see proof of people's struggle for freedom in Hong Kong, Burma, the Middle East, Africa and in many other cities and nations. The embarrassing fact is we Americans take our freedom for granted. Not all of us mind you, but enough of us to make the expectation of its unchanging nature and unbroken continuity something we feel we needn't worry about.

### Freedom's defenders

Contrary to what the media allows us to see, American patriotism is not dead. It's not even on life support. It is alive in thousands of small groups of Americans who are fed up with government overreach, media lies and abuse of their inalienable rights. They are fighting back in a variety of ways, many of them unseen and unreported. The more visible ways are playing out in protests over

the *Stalinist* or *Maoist* tactics employed in our schools to turn the heads of our youngsters against American values like free speech.

Have we forgotten the 'great reset' of those two vicious dictators who were responsible for untold murders of their own people and who purged their nations of free thinkers and the free exchange of ideas? Have we also forgotten that both understood the importance of controlling education to achieve their ambitions? Stalin's oft-quoted opinion on education is chilling: "Education is a weapon whose effects depend on who holds it in his hands and at whom it is aimed." Mao was a little more descriptive in his statement in 1967: "The proletarian revolution in education should be carried out by relying on the masses of the revolutionary students, teachers and workers in the schools, by relying on the activists among them, namely those proletarian revolutionaries who are determined to carry the great proletarian cultural revolution through to the end."

To be sure, no American politician running for office or those in leadership positions are going to go around quoting these men to support their ambitions of indoctrinating our school children. They are, however, subscribing to the overarching goals of USING our children to do their bidding when it comes to 'transforming' our society away from *all that cumbersome and time-wasting free speech and critical thinking*. Mao was more direct in another quote about the means necessary to realize his revolutionary vision: "There is no construction without destruction. Destruction means criticism and repudiation; it means revolution. It involves reasoning things out, which is construction. Put destruction first, and in the process you have construction."

We need look no further than American schools in Virginia and more specifically Loudon County (along with dozens of other American cities and counties) to see a Stalinist embrace or a Maoist taste of tactics embedded in school systems' choice of curricula whether it be 'Critical Race Theory', 'Gender Fluidity' or the latest 'Social-Emotional Studies.' America's school children are the prize and radical educators and social activists know it. And they, along with politicians like former Democrat Governor of Virginia Terry McAuliffe, are circling the wagons. Were it not for a slip of the tongue in a political debate in September in which McAuliffe openly stated that parents should not be controlling what their children learn ("I don't think parents should be telling schools what they should teach") the Left's dirty little secret would not be revealed and angry parents would not be pushing back in ever-growing numbers. Their movement to take back their schools will continue to grow and it will spread. Of that we can be sure for the simple reason that we love our children and realize that their future depends on our actions...in the present.

No, Virginia, patriotism is not passé. The torch of freedom still burns bright in the hearts and minds of many and Patrick Henry still walks among us. Thank Almighty God that he does.

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