

The New America

(Written after the election of 2024)

Charles Darwin revealed that the evolution of species was a natural phenomenon, something that could be tracked through the millennia. Nothing to pass judgment about or rail against - one should accept these changes as a natural reaction and adaptation to a changing environment.

So too has “America” evolved. Americans live in a new country now. Inarguably, the majority of Americans want what their President-elect stands for. He hasn't duped any of them. They prefer, or at least don't mind, the principles embraced by the next leader of their country. No need to repeat all the recriminations here.

For a person who has spent 42 years of his life dedicated to the protection and preservation of the Old America (26 years in the US Air Force, 15 with TSA) - its values, its institutions, its principles, its freedoms - I lament this country's latest evolution. But I accept it. No sense weeping about it - you can curse the blizzard but the storm must play itself out. The only thing left to do is figure out how to deal with it.

Let's start with the near term. Next week is the annual Veterans Day commemoration - an homage to the Old America. In years gone by, we celebrated the dedication and sacrifice of service men and women who put themselves in harm's way to preserve and defend the ideals set out above. By fiat, those ideals are now gone. Veterans Day can no longer be a “national” holiday in a country that no longer accepts what the holiday intends to honor. Those in the New America who have elected their future leader are morally barred from celebrating those Veterans who fought for something entirely different. I certainly won't be accepting any hypocritical invitations to recognition events. And then there's Memorial Day...

And then we must deal with the longer term. Most of the Old Americans are stuck. One must live somewhere, and places like Montana are attractive enough. Besides, friends, family, and loved ones live here. Selfishly, one hopes that the trampled freedoms, disdain for individual rights, disregard for the rule of law, and other dire consequences of the New America will not impact them too much. “Just hunker down” might be the clarion call. Perhaps a legal, non-violent, political guerrilla warfare campaign by the not-so-loyal opposition might appeal to the brave. Some of us, though, have other options.

As an Irish citizen, luckily, I have the chance to vote with my feet. With the means to move, I have to decide if I want to continue to live in this New America. It's a tough call. I can easily see myself living near golf courses and beaches along the Mediterranean, returning

frequently to the New America to visit family and friends. Certainly, the New Americans would do nothing to discourage my leaving.

The evolution of the human species has not progressed enough to abandon identification politics. For some reason, we continue to categorize everyone into buckets to be dealt with by the powers that be. Nations and nationalism, many social structures, even wars, depend on it. So what am I? What is my label?

Here's what I think I know (it's still early): I am an Irish citizen first, because I know I'm not a New American. I am also a passport-carrying citizen of the Old America - I claim that label even without official standing. I hope to see the day that my US passport represents what it used to mean: belief in democratic institutions; rejection of authoritarianism; preservation of individual freedom of all kinds; benevolence of government to protect and elevate us all, and reaffirmation that no person is above the law. At that point, this country will have evolved once again, and I will be an American reborn.

Good luck to us all.

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