



Looking to 2021: Populism Remains a Powerful Force

The mixed results of the November 2020 U.S. elections clearly reflected deep divisions within our nation. These political fissures were already evident in the 2016 election when Donald Trump, an outsider, beat Democratic insider Hillary Clinton. Political divisions, however, are endemic to democracy and are only part of the story. America is also divided economically and culturally, as global elites have waged an economic and cultural war, in effect, on average Americans—their livelihoods, lifestyles, and religious and cultural values. In the last several decades left-wingers have become ever more entrenched in universities, schools, the media, popular culture, the federal bureaucracy, large corporations and religious institutions.

What can stop the left's takeover of our institutions and culture? What can be done in the way of a counterattack? The answer is: populist pushback on the political and cultural fronts. We have seen the first signs of a populist response already. Trump's success in attracting nearly half the voters in the U.S. in two presidential elections shows that there is ample support for an intensified counterattack.

The Political Front

On November 3 Republicans gained at least 10 seats in the House of Representatives; kept all their Republican-majority state legislative chambers; and, depending on the outcome of the Georgia run-off election for two U.S. Senate seats, may have managed to keep control of the Senate. Nevertheless, control of the White House matters. Presidents have powers to issue executive orders and implement policies through regulatory agencies.

A Democrat in the White House means rescinding executive orders by President Trump on the environment, automobile fuel standards, trade, immigration, education, housing, abortion and employment policies. Progressive policies can be implemented through a vast array of federal departments and agencies. Federal funding to states and local governments can be directed to affect policing, housing, health care, labor standards and employment prac-

tices. The progressive agenda may be furthered by federal appointments in the courts and in law enforcement.

Exit polls from the November elections suggest that a political realignment is underway, with signs of a populist uprising against the political and economic establishment. This incipient populist movement cuts across racial and ethnic lines.¹ Trump won white women again in 2020, increasing his margin over his Democratic rival to 14 points, 3 points higher than in 2016. He even increased his support among Hispanic and black women, although Democrats still have a huge majority within these voter blocs. These gains were remarkable given that Trump was portrayed in the media as a racist misogynist.

Trump won nearly a third of the total Hispanic vote, while doubling his support among black voters from 4 percent to 8 percent. Trump made significant gains from those whose families came from Central America, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Mexico and Cuba. Cuban-American voters, in fact, ended up favoring Trump over Biden. Moreover, Trump made gains among Asian Americans, especially among Filipino, Korean and Vietnamese voters. Asian Indian voters—distinguished by their high educational and income levels—showed signs of attrition from their historically strong Democratic Party voting.

This erosion of minority voters within the Democratic Party began in the 2010 midterm elections and continued into the 2012 presidential election and the 2014 midterm elections. Trump took advantage of this erosion in 2016 and made further gains in 2020. This should be worrisome to Democrats, who have constructed their party around racial identity.

Despite the relentless Democratic portrayal of Trump and the Republican Party as racists and “white supremacists,” white voters shifted 10 points in favor of Biden, away from Trump. This defection of whites began in the 2018 elections and continued into the 2020 election. *This shift toward Democrats largely came from white men, not white women.*²

What is occurring is a realignment of parties across socioeconomic lines. The educational gap is solidifying, as *a more racially diverse coalition of non-college-educated and lower-income voters is shifting Republican*.³ Republicans have a long way to go before this racially diverse coalition is fully in place to win elections, but it is taking shape. Trump gave a powerful voice to this movement, yet the electoral shift is not contingent on the man himself. The movement he began will continue with him in or out of the White House.

Democrats Overspend, Underperform

Democrats poured some \$6.9 billion into the 2020 presidential and Congressional races, compared to only \$3.8 billion spent by Republicans.⁴ What did Democrats get for their largesse? Perhaps a lesson that identity politics and a tepid attitude toward law and order did not play well with much of the American electorate.

Even the gay vote suggested troubles with identity politics. The LGBTQ vote (as it is called), representing 7 percent of the electorate, went 28 percent for Trump.⁵ Some of this LGBTQ vote reflected, as Charles Moran, co-chair of the Trump Pride coalition and a Log Cabin Republican, observed, Trump's "long relationship with the LGBTQ community before he got into politics."⁶ Trump supported a transgender military ban, argued against LGBT inclusion in civil rights legislation, and defended religious freedom against gay activists. Nonetheless, Trump won more gay support than any other Republican presidential candidate since George W. Bush in 2000, who won 33 percent of the gay vote.

There are other warning signs for the Democrats. Although the final analysis of the vote is not completed, in spite of heavy Democratic spending Biden underperformed Hillary Clinton in every major metro area in the country, with the exceptions of Milwaukee, Detroit, Atlanta and Philadelphia⁷—cities in battleground states whose vote counts were contested as having been pumped up by questionable votes.

Control of state legislatures will be especially important when it comes to redistricting in the next two years. Democrats knew what was at stake in trying to win back state legislatures in 2020. Outside state money from corporate donors operating through PACs flowed into the state races like Mississippi flood waters. Republican state legislative candidates found themselves outspent by their Democratic opponents at multiples of ten, twenty or more. With help from President Obama's very partisan Attorney General Eric Holder, Democratic state legislative candidates had enough money for well-organized campaign staff, workers paid to knock on doors and make calls, and television and radio spots. Republican candidates relied on meager funds

but enthusiastic grassroots supporters who spent weekends doing what well-paid Democratic operatives were doing—rallying voters. In the end, no state legislative chambers were turned Democratic.

The 2020 election should be seen as a down-ballot disaster for the Democratic Party.⁸ While House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Biden assert that they have a national mandate to proceed with a transformative agenda, party strategists are worried about the trends indicated in this election. David Shor, a veteran of the 2012 Obama campaign and the Civis Analytics firm that advised liberal super-PACs on advertising, warns that the 2020 results suggest a lost decade for progressives at the federal level.

The results of this election show a widening gap between the college-educated white vote and the non-college-educated white vote, the growing swing of Hispanic voters to the Republican ticket, and, Shor said, "there's really no indication that the gap is going to narrow over the course of this decade." He added that "It's educational polarization. As a whole, the Midwest continues to trend against us, and I think this election in a lot of ways was a natural continuation of the trends that happened in 2016."⁹

Republicans made impressive gains in the U.S. House of Representatives, with a net gain of at least 10 seats as of this writing (including in California and New York) and a couple more expected. At least 16 female Republicans won their House races. They will join 11 female incumbents in the House. The female candidates won their seats as conservatives of various degrees standing against socialism and for gun rights and smaller government. These women stopped the "blue wave" projected by Pelosi and nearly every pollster in the country.¹⁰

Democratic Infighting

Democrats are already fighting among themselves over the radical agenda put forth by the activist wing of the party. Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Rep. Cedric Richmond, a black congressman from Louisiana, both told the press that they believe the call to "defund the police" hurt Democrats.¹¹ They were not alone. Moderate Democrats are calling for a scaling back of radical rhetoric. Speaker Pelosi is being accused by moderates and leftists of having lost House seats.

Moderates contend that the radical rhetoric hurt the party, while the left argues that the left-wing messaging during the campaigns was not sharp enough, especially on the issue of a proposed Medicare for All.¹² The leftists point out that losses came for Democratic moderate candidates, while candidates running on Medicare for All won election, such as Katie Porter, Mike Levin, Peter DeFazio, Matt Cartwright and Jared Golden.

Republicans also performed well at the state level. Six GOP governors up for reelection won their races, and in Montana, Republicans gained another governorship. Republicans kept control of state legislatures they held and managed to gain control of the New Hampshire legislature. Even though Democrats poured huge amounts into state elections, they did not flip a single state chamber. The importance of this cannot be underestimated because *it will help the GOP draw favorable congressional and state legislative maps*. Democrats are faced with remaining a minority party in key state legislatures for the next decade.¹³ Redistricting could result in a Republican-controlled House of Representatives in two years.

A Biden Presidency

Assuming the Republicans hold the Senate, it will prevent the Biden proposed tax hike, BidenCare or Green New Deal legislation from passing. Republicans might agree to a stimulus bill and perhaps some infrastructure legislation. It is doubtful that Republicans and Democrats will be able to reach agreement on much-needed immigration reform.

Biden has other options to push a left-wing agenda through executive action and through the administrative state.¹⁴ He has already announced America's reentry into the Paris Climate Accords. Trump's executive order banning travelers from specific countries associated with terrorism will be overturned. Biden proposes to stop the Trump administration's Migrant Protection Protocols which restrict asylum seekers. Biden's administration will increase "supervision" over U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement as well as Customs and Border Protection, specifically making personnel accused of "inhumane treatment" accountable. Funds for "community policing" will be released through the Justice Department.

Biden's team is prepared through executive action to reverse more than 100 public health and environmental rules that Trump implemented. Furthermore, hundreds of Biden transition team members have been reviewing every federal department and agency to see ways in which the Biden program can be imposed without legislative action. Transition team members are calling themselves "landing teams" and "beachhead teams"—recalling the Normandy landings in World War II.

Biden's transition team has its share of left-wing activists, some coming with close ties to George Soros's organizations, but the team is mostly made up of experienced Washington insiders, former Obama officials and Democratic operatives who understand the levers of power.¹⁵ The Biden administration will put on a public face of showing moderation in its cabinet appointments. Yet staff will likely be charged to carry out a left-wing, transformative agenda.

MSNBC announced that four of its contributors are joining the Biden team: historian Jon Meacham, legal analyst Barbara McQuade, political analyst Richard Stengel and Ezekiel Emanuel. Emanuel designed ObamaCare and is a true believer in health care rationed by the federal government. Writing in the *Atlantic* magazine in 2014 ("Why I Hope to Die at 75"), Emanuel argued against federally funded flu shots, colonoscopies and other care for the elderly.¹⁶ (One wonders what Emanuel thinks now about the 78-year-old Biden.)

The Department of Labor is a good example of how a left-wing agenda can be implemented without legislation.¹⁷ Labor employs 15,000 personnel and has a budget of \$50 billion. Through its various agencies, this single department can release a torrent of new workplace rules and business regulations that do not need legislative approval. Through empowered assistant secretaries of labor coming out of activist labor groups, unions and academia, an ambitious, even visionary program could be developed and imposed by this single department. The same methods will be applied to other cabinet departments. It does not take high-powered binoculars to see where this is headed.

Conservatives in a Divided Nation

We are in for turbulent times. The left has pursued a long game. Step by step, they have inched forward on all fronts, politically and culturally. Conservatives have fought a rear-guard action.

A counteroffensive is in order. Conservatives need to see themselves engaged in the "long struggle" as well. It took decades for the left to advance, while facing a reluctant citizenry that placed God, country and family above left-wing priorities. In this connection it should hearten conservatives to learn that *CNN exit polls from the November election showed that only 24 percent of voters identified as liberal, while 38 percent said they are conservative and 38 percent identified as moderate*. These figures represent a decline of 2 points in self-identified liberals and an increase of 3 points in self-identified conservatives since 2014, despite the much louder voice of the socialist left in the last several years.¹⁸

Conservative leadership will be required for a counteroffensive, but ultimate success will come from average people who will stand up at school board meetings and city council hearings to challenge inanity. Counter-institutions—what the left calls "dual power"—need to be created. This means "school choice" and establishing new colleges and universities as small colleges go bankrupt and go up for sale at bargain prices. Alternative social and mainstream media outlets are already being created (notably including Parler as a challenge to Twitter's censorship of conser-

vatives) and should be accelerated. “Woke” corporations can be and are being called out for flagrantly left-wing activism.

Churches must spread the Word. No more hiding our faith, afraid of offending people. The nation needs a political revival, a cultural revival, and most of all a religious revival.

Such revivals come when the citizenry declares “Enough.” And the 2020 elections showed that many millions of Americans have had enough.

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 - 3 Chris Arnade, “2020 Exit Polls: As the Racial Gap Closes, the Democratic-Republican Education Gap Widens,” *USA Today*, November 14, 2020.
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 - 5 Chris Johnson, “Gay Conservatives Get Small Victory: LGBTQ Vote Goes 61% Biden, 28% Trump,” *Blade*, November 9, 2020.
 - 6 Ibid.
 - 7 Matt Vespa, “Pollster: It’s Curious How Biden Underperformed Hillary Clinton in Every City... Except These Four,” *Townhall*, November 14, 2020.
 - 8 Eric Levitz, “David Shor’s Postmortem of the 2020 Election,” *Intelligencer*, November 15, 2020.
 - 9 Ibid.
 - 10 Ledyard King, “A Record Number of Republican Women Will Serve in the House after the GOP Ate into Democratic Majority,” *USA Today*, November 10, 2020.
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 - 14 Matt Viser, Seung Min Kim and Annie Linskey, “Biden Plans Immediate Flurry of Executive Orders to Reverse Trump Policies,” *Washington Post*, November 7, 2020; and Elena Moore, *National Public Radio*, “Biden’s First 100 Days: Here’s What to Expect,” November 9, 2020.
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CMF Hosts Speakers on Blessed Karl



Suzanne Pearson and Princess Galitzine

On November 8 the Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation was proud to sponsor informative talks in St. Louis, Missouri by two of the most knowledgeable people in the world about the last emperor of Austria and king of Hungary and his cause for canonization. Princess Maria-Anna Galitzine, a granddaughter of Blessed Karl, and Suzanne Pearson, a leader of the Emperor Karl League of Prayer in the United States, addressed an appreciative audience at Saint Mary of Victories Church, long an ethnic Hungarian parish in downtown St. Louis which happens to house a relic of Blessed Karl. Princess Galitzine recalled meeting Venerable Joseph Cardinal Mindszenty in 1972 in Switzerland for the 80th birthday of her grandmother Empress Zita (Karl’s widow). Venerable Cardinal Mindszenty revered Blessed Karl as a saint.

We wish all our readers a blessed Christmas and remain deeply grateful for your ongoing support of the work of our staff and our all-volunteer officers and board members.

Correction: The September 2020 *Mindszenty Report* mistakenly stated that Ignatius Cardinal Kung died in Communist China. He was imprisoned and tortured in China but died in Stamford, CT. We regret the error.

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*web site: www.mindszenty.org
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