**Cancel Culture**

**There is no man who does not sin.**

***(1 Kings 8:46)***

**Jesus said: “If any of you is without sin,**

**let him be the first to throw a stone at her.”**

***(St. John 8:7)***

**The anti-woke right’s hypocrisy: The anti-woke right never cared about free speech, said David French. The coalition of podcasters, influencers, and tech moguls rocketed to mainstream prominence in 2020 with a simple message: “Cancel culture was real,” and Americans need not “mindlessly obey” government dictates like Covid restrictions. But as the anti-woke-right allied itself with Republican politicians, the movement was divided “between a love for liberty and hatred for the Left.” Hatred won. In its “quest for control,” the movement backed Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis as he launched a censorious culture war in his state, sharply limiting any discussion of sexuality and racism in schools, and punishing Disney when it dared criticize his policies. In 2024, most of the freethinkers of the “anti-woke right” backed Donald Trump – “the most speech-restrictive authoritarian president “ in more than a century. Trump has used federal power to punish law firms and universities for their views, ban words like “diversity,” and censor “divisive” ideas about America’s racial history. The supposed champions of liberty have been largely silent or even cheered Trump on, Clearly, they believe “free speech is important only so long as they get to say what they think.” *(The Week magazine, May 9, 2025)***

**Bad week for: Cancel culture, after the Michigan Republican Party sought to replace Republican election board official Aaron Van Langevelde, who cast the deciding vote to certify Joe Biden’s victory in the state. “My conscience is clear,” said Van Langevelde. *(The Week magazine, January 29, 2021)***

**So much for saving “free speech”: Do you remember when Republicans and right wing pundits were outraged over “censorship,” “cancel culture,” and infringements on “free speech? Asked Rex Huppke. They’ve suddenly grown quiet as the Trump administration scrubs a long list of specific words such as “equality,” “racism,” “multicultural,” and “diversity” from government websites and bans Associated Press reporters from the While House press pool because the news agency continues to use “Gulf of Mexico” instead of “Gulf of America.” As a global news agency organization, the AP still calls the body of water between Mexico and the U.S. by the name the world has used for hundreds of years, rather than adopting “a faux-patriotic president’s lame-brained attempt at branding.” But the White House insists the AP has no First Amendment right to write “Gulf of Mexico,” saying that term is a “lie.” The word “transgender” is also being erased from all government websites, including one for the Stonewall National Monument in New York City, which pays tribute to LGBTQ pioneers. The free-speech warriors on the Right “are now 100 percent chill with the government banning words,” and with punishing news organizations that anger Trump. What “sanctimonious charlatans.” *(The Week magazine, February 28, 2025)***

**The Department of Agriculture’s research science division has issued a memo banning the use of keywords and phrases including “climate,” “vulnerable,” “greenhouse gas emissions,” and “safe drinking water.” Also prohibited are “sustainable construction,” “diesel,” “solar energy,” “runoff,” and “micro-plastics.” *(The New Republic, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 18, 2025)***

**on race: "Was Abraham Lincoln a racist?" asked John Blake. In some progressive circles, the Great Emancipator's reputation has suffered mightily with increased scrutiny of his early views about black Americans. The pre-presidential Lincoln told jokes about "darkies," stated that blacks were inferior to whites, and proposed shipping willing black people back to Africa. But scholars of the era say nearly all white people at that time -- including most abolitionists -- did not believe in true black equality. Even when he was young, Lincoln was repulsed by slavery, expressing disgust at seeing blacks sold like animals at auction, insisting that they, too, had "natural tights." Lincoln took on black clients in his law practice and always treated black people with openness and kindness. When he became president, he developed a bond with Frederick Douglass, the leading black intellectual, and met with him at the White House three times. When Lincoln said in an 1865 speech that the freed slaves should have the right to vote, John Wilkes Booth --- who was in the audience -- vowed to assassinate him. A man with a strong moral core, Lincoln clearly evolved on race; he gave his life to the cause of equality. It would be foolish indeed to "cancel" him based on the standards of another era. *(The Week magazine, March 26, 2021)***

**Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves. *(Carl G. Jung, in Memories, Dreams, Reflections)***

**ber that not one of us is perfect, and that others see our defects as obviously as we see theirs. We forget too often to look at ourselves through the eyes of our friends. *(Abraham Lincoln)***

**Bad week for: Mike Lindell, the CEO of My Pillow, who is auctioning off forklifts, conveyor belts, and other equipment after his adamant promotion of 2020 stolen-election conspiracy theories resulted in $100 million in lost revenue. Lindell blames “cancel culture.” *(The Week magazine, July 21, 2023)***

**The latest cancel culture victim: The "father of the national parks" has been cancelled, said John Fund. "Who's next?" John Muir has long been an iconic hero to environmentalists, but the Sierra Club has announced it is severing any association with its founder because as a young immigrant from Scotland in the 19th century, Muir made "derogatory comments about black people and Indigenous peoples." The fact that Muir's views "evolved later in his life," the Sierra Club said, cannot salvagehis tarnished reputation -- even though he wrote admiringly of Native American tribes after he went to live among them. "If we are to expunge from their place of honor all the historical figures who changed their views later in life or who held views that were common in their time, where will we stop?" Martin Luther King Jr. once counseled a black teen who confessed his attraction to boys to seek "a good psychiatrist" to overcome this "problem." John F. Kennedy threatened to send a Democratic donor who wanted to be an ambassador to "one of those boogie republics in Central Africa." His brother, Robert F. Kennedy, wiretapped King. By cancel-culture standards, aren't those redeemable sins? "Which soon-to-be tarnished icon will be next?" *(The Week magazine, September 11 / September 18, 2020)***

**On February 16, 1971, President Richard Nixon's secret taping system made its first recording. On That morning Nixon declared, "I will not be transcribed." He could not have known that less than three years later his secret taping system would be exposed during a Senate investigation on Capitol Hill and he would forever be linked to the bugging of the Democratic National Committee's offices at Watergate. Nixon was not the first to implement secret recordings. He was the sixth president in a row to do so. But Nixon's secret taping contributed to his political downfall, ending the practice. *(The Daily Chronicles)***

**Cancel culture: Now coming from the Right: “MAGA’s doxxing war” has begun, said Edith Olmsted in The New Republic. Hundreds of Americans have been fired, suspended, or investigated over social media posts expressing negative opinions about Charlie Kirk after the prominent Trump ally’s assassination last week. Vice President, JD Vance encouraged the purge, saying, “When you see someone celebrating Charlie’s murder, call them out. And hell, call their employer.” But many of those being canceled didn’t “celebrate” Kirk’s death; instead, they called out his “history of making racist, misogynist, and homophobic remarks.” One Oklahoma teacher was investigated for writing, “Charlie Kirk died the same way he lived: bringing out the worst in people.” Washington Post columnist Karen Attiah was fired for posts lamenting the country’s gun culture and reminding her audience that Kirk said Black women like Michelle Obama and Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson don’t “have the brain processing power” to succeed without affirmative action. A website called Expose Charlie’s Murderers received over 63,000 tips about people deemed to be celebrating Kirk’s death. *(The Week magazine, September 26, 2025)***

**The history books used to teach that the early-twentieth century polar explorers Robert Perry and Robert Scott were great leaders, men of courage and vision who achieved almost superhuman feats. Now things appear to be different; recent historians have dethroned these schoolbook heroes. Scott, who died after reaching the South Pole, drove his men to the point of collapse, refused to listen to their advice, and did not learn from his mistakes. Peary was so obsessed by his quest that he took dangerous risks, ignored the advice of others, and tried to claim all the credit for himself. Although these men did accomplish some great things, they are not models of leadership for the 1990s. Today’s leaders do not attempt to succeed by running a one-man show. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**At least 160 public Confederate statues and other symbols were taken down or moved out of public spaces last year, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center. About 700 Confederate monuments remain across the U. S. *(Associated Press, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 12, 2021)***

**Replacing Abe Lincoln: The San Francisco Board of Education voted 6-1 last week to rename 44 schools honoring Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, sitting California Sen. Dianne Feinstein, and other prominent figures, accusing them of racism or sexism. Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison were marked for removal for their ownership of slaves, while Lincoln was faulted for his role in the mass execution of 38 Native Americans in the Dakota War of 1862. An elementary school named for Feinstein was included because, as mayor of San Francisco, she replaced a vandalized Confederate flag that was part of a display outside City Hall. The school board is reportedly considering renaming one of the schools after Grateful Dead front man Jerry Garcia. San Francisco schools remain closed because of the pandemic, and Mayor London Breed criticized the board’s decision to focus on school renaming “when there isn’t a plan to have our kids back in the classroom.” *(The Week magazine, February 12, 2021)***

**, right now, it is possible to meet people who have lost everything – jobs, money, friends, colleagues – after violating no laws, and sometimes no workplace rules either. Instead, they have broken (or are accused of having broken) social codes having to do with race, sex, personal behavior, or even acceptable humor, which may not have existed five years ago or maybe five months ago. Some have made egregious errors of judgment. Some have done nothing at all. It is not always easy to tell. *(Anne Applebaum, in The Atlantic, October, 2021)***

**Whatever their achievements, proponents of this era of progressive cancel culture must reckon with the fact that they helped to bring about the very thing they dreaded most: Trump’s restoration. It was delivered, in part, by voters tired of being told that their clumsy speech or unfashionable opinions made them not just wrong but bad. Even evil. Now they have been promised relief. The cultural winds that prevailed for a decade or more are shifting. Whether the new regime fosters a more relaxed speech environment or a vicious one of a different ideological stripe remains to be seen. *(Joshua Chaffin, in The Wall Street Journal)***

**Good week for: Woodrow Wilson, whose name will be kept on a major school at Princeton University, despite demands that the former U.S. President be removed because of his segregationist views. All historical figures have "flaws and deficiencies," said university president *Christopher Eisgruber. (The Week magazine, April 15, 2016)***

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