

# Is Contemporary Liberalism Creating a Soulless Monoculture?

The Final Call, the NOI's newspaper. I rolled down the window and asked for a copy.

That's when he hit me with it: "F\*ck off, cracker."

*The Demon in Democracy: Totalitarian Temptations in Free Societies* by Polish scholar Ryszard Legutko. The book is an intense read that argues that liberal democracies are succumbing to a utopian ideal where individuality and eccentricity might eventually be banned. As liberals push us towards a monoculture where there is no dissent, no gender, and no conflict, the unique and the great will eventually cease to exist. No more offbeat weirdoes, eccentric crazies, or cults. No more Nation of Islam there to call me a cracker. No more of the self-made and inspired figures of the past: Duke Ellington, Hunter Thompson, Annie Leibowitz.

Legutko's thesis is that liberal democracies have something in common with communism: the sense that time is inexorably moving towards a kind of human utopia, and that progressive bureaucrats must make sure it succeeds. Legutko first observed this after the fall of communism. Thinking that communist bureaucrats would have difficulty adjusting to Western democracy, he was surprised when the former Marxists smoothly adapted—indeed, thrived—in a system of liberal democracy. It was the hard-core anti-communists who couldn't quite fit into the new system. They were unable to untether themselves from their faith, culture, and traditions.

Both communism and liberal democracy call for people to become New Men by jettisoning their old faith, customs, arts, literature, and traditions. Thus a Polish anti-communist goes

from being told by communists that he has to abandon his old concepts of faith and family to become a member of the larger State, only to come to America after the fall of the Berlin Wall and be told he has to forego those same beliefs for the sake of the sexual revolution and the bureaucratic welfare state. Both systems believe that societies are moving towards a certain ideal state, and to stand against that is to violate not just the law but human happiness itself. Legutko compares the two:

*“Societies—as the supporters of the two regimes are never tired of repeating—are not only changing and developing according to a linear pattern but also improving, and the most convincing evidence of the improvement, they add, is the rise of communism and liberal democracy. And even if a society does not become better at each stage and in each place, it should continue improving given the inherent human desire to which both regimes claim those found the most satisfactory response.”*

Legutko argues that, of course, there are huge differences between communism and liberal democracy—liberal democracy is obviously a system that allows for greater freedom. He appreciates that in a free society people are able to enjoy the arts, books, and pop culture that they want. Our medical system is superior. We don't suffer from famines. Yet Legutko argues that with so much freedom has come a kind of flattening of taste and the hard work of creating original art.