

June 25, 2015

In the Federalist, Mollie Hemmingway says; "Congratulations, you oppose the confederate flag. Now What?"

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*I used to think the war was a bit more complicated than I do now, having had my mind changed thanks to some relatively recent guided readings of President Abraham Lincoln. But long story short, the Confederacy was wrong. For whatever it's worth, I have no nostalgia for the Confederacy and zero positive feelings for flags that reference the Confederacy, save the one painted on the General Lee or, perhaps, the one painted on RuPaul.*

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*... Basically it's just such a hysterical atmosphere at this point, that no one can conceive of a person who is against something but also willing to tolerate the expression of that thing. Can we be against Jeff Davis — and also against destroying art and monuments and history just because they involve Jeff Davis?*

*Symbols are tremendously important, and state sponsorship of symbols is very much worth fighting about. But there are ways to express disapproval of art, monuments and aspects of history without taking the approach of, say, blowing up the Buddhas, to take one recent example.*

*And how we manage these processes of disapproval truly is important for civil society. To quote Heinrich Heine, a man who definitely knew of what he spoke, "Where they have burned books, they will end in burning men." Mobs aren't actually the best judges of such processes, no matter how righteous they feel or certain of their cause.*

*Listen, it's great that we're aiming to be an anti-racist society. That's very, very good! But it's bad that we are slowly forgetting how to dislike something without seeking its utter destruction. Somehow we've abandoned the aesthetic of Abraham Lincoln for that of Mao Tse-Tung. ...*

By all means, says Victor Davis Hanson, lets get rid of the flag that divides us. While we're at it, he suggests, let's get rid of La Raza and the Congressional Black Caucus.

*... There are plenty of other overt racist symbols that separate Americans. One is the prominent use of La Raza, "The Race" — seen most prominently in the National Council of La Raza, an ethnic lobbying organization that has been and is currently a recipient of federal funds.*

*The National Council of La Raza should be free to use any title it wishes, but it should not expect the federal government to subsidize its separatist nomenclature.*

*The pedigree of the term La Raza is just as incendiary as that of the Confederate battle flag. The Spanish noun raza (cf. Latin radix: “root” or “race”) is akin to the now-discarded German use of Volk, which in the early 20th century came to denote a common German racial identity that transcended linguistic and cultural affinities: To be a real member of the Volk one had to “appear” German, in addition to speaking German and possessing German citizenship.*

*La Raza is just such a racist term. It goes beyond a common language and country of origin, and thus transcends the more neutral puebla (“people”: Latin populus) or gente (“people”: Latin gens). Raza was deliberately reintroduced in the 1960s to promote a racially superior identity of indigenous peoples and mestizos born in the Spanish-speaking countries of the New World. ...*

*... One wonders why in 2015 there is still nomenclature such as “the Congressional Black Caucus,” over half a century after the civil-rights movement sought to promote integration and the idea that Americans should be judged by the content of their character, not the color of their skin.. The Caucus ostensibly seeks to ensure the end of exclusion by race from full participation in American society by creating a lobbying group focused entirely on one particular race. The postmodern rationale is either that groups that have suffered past disfranchisement and discrimination should not be subject to current anti-discriminatory protocols, or that they should at least enjoy a compensatory period of exclusion from color-blind values to offset centuries of oppression.*

*Thus the group’s membership is entirely race-based. The Caucus is not open to those members of the House of Representatives who are not African-American, but who might share the Caucus’s racial or political agenda — as the Jewish-American Representative Steven Cohen learned when he was elected to Congress in 2006. The Lebanese-American Ralph Nader was once attacked at a Caucus meeting in clearly racial terms on the understanding that the group was exempt from charges of racism. How far is the racial concept transferable — “the Asian Caucus?” “the Latino Caucus?” “the White Caucus?” “the European-American Caucus?” The premise seems to be that African-American House members seek to promote a common “black” agenda that transcends their local, county, or state interests. If an Asian, white, or Latino voter’s congressional representative is a member of the “Black Caucus,” does that mean that the voter will receive less attention than a black voter — as de facto white caucuses in the Old South most certainly did ignore the interests of their non-white constituents? Is that why conservative African-American legislators who see all their constituents in terms that transcend race tend to avoid joining the Caucus? Could not the “Black Caucus” rebrand itself as the “Civil Rights Caucus” or the “Progressive Caucus”? ...*

**Kevin Williamson** thinks we're in an era of peak leftism and that it will soon be in decline.

*... The Confederate flag, and other rebel iconography, is a marker of Southern distinctiveness, which, like American distinctiveness, is inextricably bound up with the enslavement and oppression of black people. But only the South is irredeemable in the Left’s view, and it has been so only since about 1994, when it went Republican. Which is to say, the Confederate flag is an emblem of regional distinctiveness disapproved of by 21st-century Democrats. Their reinvigorated concern is awfully nice: When the South actually was a segregationist backwater*

*that African-Americans were fleeing by the million — when Democrats were running the show — they were ho-hum. Today the South is an economic powerhouse, dominated by Republicans, and attracting new African-American residents by the thousands. And so the Left and its creature, the Democratic party, insist that Southern identity as such must be anathematized. The horrific crime that shocked the nation notwithstanding, black life in Charleston remains very different, in attractive ways, from black life in such Left-dominated horror shows as Cleveland and Detroit, and the state's governor is, in the parlance of identity politics, a woman of color — but she is a Republican, too, and therefore there must be shrieking, rending of garments, and gnashing of teeth.*

*This is a fraud, and some scales are starting to fall from some eyes. Americans believe broadly in sexual equality, but only a vanishing minority of us describe ourselves as “feminists.” “Social-justice warrior” is a term of derision. The Bernie Sanders movement, like the draft-Warren movement of which it is an offshoot, is rooted in disgust at the opportunistic politics of the Clinton clique. Young people who have heard all their lives that the Republican party and the conservative movement are for old white men — young people who may be not be quite old enough to remember Democrats' boasting of their “double-Bubba” ticket in 1992, pairing the protégé of one Southern segregationist with the son of another — see before them Nikki Haley, Bobby Jindal, Susana Martinez, Carly Fiorina, Tim Scott, Mia Love, Marco Rubio, Ben Carson, Elise Stefanik. None of those men and women is bawling about “microaggressions” or dreaming up new sexless pronouns. None belongs to the party that hoisted Dixie over the capitol in South Carolina either. Governor Haley may be sensitive to the history of her state, but she is a member of the party of Lincoln with family roots in Punjab — it isn't her flag.*

*What's going to happen between now and November 8 of next year will be a political campaign on one side of the aisle only. On the other side, it's going to be something between a temper tantrum and a panic attack. That's excellent news if you're Ted Cruz, Scott Walker, Marco Rubio, or Carly Fiorina. It's less good news if you live in Baltimore or Philadelphia*

**Peter Wehner**, a former speechwriter for W, says good riddance to the flag.

*As everyone knows by now, in the wake of the massacre at the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina last week, allegedly perpetrated by a racist, Dylann Roof, there have been renewed calls to remove the Confederate flag from state grounds.*

*Among Republicans, those calls have come from prominent lawmakers from South Carolina, most especially Governor Nikki Haley, who is playing a significant role in transforming this debate. Among those running (or are likely soon to run) for president, Jeb Bush and Rick Perry signaled early on they wanted the flag taken down. Scott Walker, after days of hesitation, then followed. So, now, has Rand Paul. (Here's a good score card of who stands where.)*

*Yet several others — including Ted Cruz, Rick Santorum, Mike Huckabee, Bobby Jindal, Ben Carson and Marco Rubio — have said it's a decision best left to South Carolinians. They have so far remained basically neutral when it comes to rendering a judgment on the Confederate flag.*

*They shouldn't. In politics there are a lot of hard calls; this isn't one of them. ...*

*... it's worth recapitulating the reasons the debate has changed in such a decisive way. The first one has to do with the history of the Confederate flag. For all the talk from defenders of the flag*

*who insist otherwise, it was a symbol of slavery, white supremacy, and the dissolution of the Union. The flag was fundamentally about hate, not heritage; about subjugation, not Southern ancestry. There is a reason white supremacist groups embrace the Confederate flag as their symbol, and it doesn't have to do with its aesthetic appeal.*

*The second reason has to do with the history of the Republican Party. It was founded in the 1850s by anti-slavery activists and in opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Its slogan in 1856 was "free labor, free land, free men." The first Republican president, Abraham Lincoln, was America's "great emancipator" who freed the slaves. So the Confederate flag was never a symbol associated with the Republican Party – including in South Carolina, where the flag was first flown over the statehouse in 1962, at the request of Democrats in the state like Governor Fritz Hollings and Representative John A. May. Yet the Republican Party has somehow found a way to get itself attached to this toxic symbol of division and repression. ...*

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## **The Federalist**

### **[Congratulations! You Oppose The Confederate Flag. Now What?](#)**

***We are slowly forgetting how to oppose something without seeking its utter destruction.***

by Mollie Hemmingway

The U.S. Civil War was a war that never should have been fought. Some 620,000 men died because slavery, an inhumane and evil practice, was permitted in many portions of this country. The South gets most of the blame for that, but the north benefited from the regime as well, even though it didn't directly practice enslavement at the time of the war.

I used to think the war was a bit more complicated than I do now, having had my mind changed thanks to some relatively recent guided readings of President Abraham Lincoln. But long story short, the Confederacy was wrong. For whatever it's worth, I have no nostalgia for the Confederacy and zero positive feelings for flags that reference the Confederacy, save the one painted on [the General Lee](#) or, perhaps, the one [painted on RuPaul](#).

For some reason, 100% of media types (give or take) dealt with their feelings of anger and powerlessness in the aftermath of the racist murders of 9 black members of Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina, by calling in unison for a removal of a Confederate flag from South Carolina's capitol grounds. The flag was only put up during the centenary of the Civil War and a modified version was moved to a less conspicuous place about 15 years ago. Republican Gov. Nikki Haley called for its removal on Monday, as have many other politicians. [Russell Moore](#) of the Southern Baptist Convention called for its removal earlier. Sure, sounds good. Go for it. Even acknowledging that the relationship of the flag to the people of South Carolina is a bit more complicated than outsiders can understand, I think it's fair to argue the negative outweighs any positive there.

A lot of the surrounding media-led outrage over the flag seems somewhat cold, given the horror of what last week brought. We had nine black people brutally murdered because they were black and sitting in a church with a history of fighting white supremacy. With all due deference to hatred for a Confederate flag on a pole at the statehouse, this seems like an almost childlike attempt to miss the seriousness of the situation. It's as if they expect us to say,

“Congratulations! You oppose the flag of an army that was defeated 150 years ago. We’re all very proud of you, journalists!” This generation seems to excel at inventing controversies, weighing in on those invented controversies, and then patting itself on the back for being so courageous and open-minded.

The far more frightening reality that such invented controversies avoid is that mankind is full of sin, and that some of us show that sinfulness in racism and murder. Or as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn wrote in [The Gulag Archipelago](#):

“If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?”

The murderer of the Emanuel nine has done something particularly bad, but he isn’t the only person capable of evil out there. And getting rid of a flag is hardly the remedy for the racism and violence that infects our culture. How juvenile to think otherwise.

Still, it’s routine now for the media to respond to tragic events with a call for more government control. It’s not just shown by responding to mass shootings with calls for gun control. Remember how, until all the facts got in the way, the media blamed a fatal Amtrak derailment on [a lack of federal funding](#), of all things?

CNN actually went “heretic hunting” to call on businesses to ban any goods sold that in any way reference a Confederate symbol (which, of course, includes many state flags). Check out this piece headlined “[First on CNN: Walmart to stop selling Confederate flag merchandise](#).” See, it’s first on CNN because CNN decided to trade journalism-ing for activism-ing:

Walmart's statement came in response to a CNN inquiry Monday. In addition to Walmart, CNN asked Amazon and eBay whether they would remove Confederate flag merchandise from their sites. Neither company responded to repeated requests for comment.

I mean, OK? Even this type of “Look! Squirrel!” avoidance of the actual tragedy of the Charleston terrorism was better than the naked political point scoring that was hard to distinguish from this fundraising email sent out by the Democratic Congressional Committee:

GET THAT MONEY, [@dccc pic.twitter.com/1qm1IG6kfq](#)

Andrew Stiles (@AndrewStilesUSA) [June 22, 2015](#)

Coverage has been oddly partisan — and in ways that counter reality — as the media rush to make this Confederate flag issue a problem for ... Republicans. Funny how it always, always, always works out that way, isn’t it?

Dear [@politico](#): Republicans were for taking down that flag a lot earlier than Democrats—150 years earlier. <https://t.co/XNWivgLVF3>

Robert Tracinski (@Tracinski) [June 23, 2015](#)

The bulk of [this NPR story](#) on the history of the South Carolina flag literally doesn't mention Democratic contenders for president after cataloguing various responses of Republicans in the field. This even though Hillary Rodham Clinton was First Lady of Arkansas at the precise moment in time that Bill Clinton signed into law a flag that explicitly honored the Confederacy. As reported by [the Daily Caller](#):

Act 116 of the 1987 Regular Session

Act 116

SB377

"AN ACT TO ADOPT THE DESIGN OF THE STATE FLAG AS DESCRIBED IN SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 11 OF 1913, AS AMENDED BY HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 4 OF 1923, AND HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 11 OF THE SECOND EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF 1924."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. (a) The official state flag shall be a rectangle of red on which is placed a large white diamond bordered by a wide band of blue on which are twenty-five (25) white stars. Across the diamond shall be the word "ARKANSAS" and four (4) blue stars, one (1) above and three (3) below the word "ARKANSAS". The star above the word "ARKANSAS" shall be below the upper corner of the diamond. The three (3) stars below the word "ARKANSAS" shall be placed so that one (1) star shall be above the lower corner of the diamond, and two (2) stars shall be placed symmetrically, parallel above and to the right and left of the star in the lower corner of the diamond.

(b) The three (3) stars so placed are designed to represent the three (3) nations, France, Spain and the United States, which have successively exercised dominion over Arkansas. They also indicate that it was the third state carved out of the Louisiana Purchase. Of these three (3) stars, the twin stars parallel with each other typify that Arkansas and Michigan are twin states, having been admitted to the Union together on June 15, 1836. The twenty-five (25) white stars on the band of blue show that Arkansas was the twenty-fifth state admitted to the Union. The blue star above the word "ARKANSAS" is to commemorate the Confederate States of America. The diamond signifies that this state is the only diamond bearing state in the Union.

APPROVED: March 4, 1987



Philip Bump of the Washington Post wrote a story defending Bill Clinton following the discovery of Confederacy-themed Clinton campaign buttons. He rightly noted that anyone could make such a button. But check out how he discusses — or [fails to discuss](#) — Bill Clinton signing into law the acceptance of the flag that Clinton specifically says commemorates the Confederacy:

Clinton, a Southern governor of a state whose flag still alludes to its history in the Confederacy, needed to solidify support from nearby states to have a chance at unseating George H.W. Bush.

Yes, Philip. It "still" alludes to its history because Bill Clinton signed a law ensuring it did.

## Rename All The Things, Smash All The Statues

And now the media are hopping all over the place. Within a few hours they had moved on from their noble campaign of (largely meaningless but whatever) flag justice/posturing/attention in South Carolina to every state but Arkansas that is so tainted.

Georgia's current state flag is not their most Confederate ever, but it's the first Confederate flag + a state seal [pic.twitter.com/3mw3mkEE1D](http://pic.twitter.com/3mw3mkEE1D)

Kelsey D. Atherton (@AthertonKD) [June 22, 2015](https://twitter.com/AthertonKD/status/611111111111111111)

Key Mississippi Republican says the state's official flag must go? <http://t.co/MedSgkJcVR>  
[pic.twitter.com/luZq8PmEgF](http://pic.twitter.com/luZq8PmEgF)

CBS News (@CBSNews) [June 23, 2015](https://twitter.com/CBSNews/status/611111111111111111)

And then within a few minutes, they had moved on to renaming literally everything.

In a completely serious piece for [Commentary](#), historian Max Boot writes:

Not only should the Confederate flag come down, but I believe it's also time for Southern states to change place names in honor of traitors such as Jefferson Davis.

I know, I know: it's a slippery slope that could eventually result in taking slaveholders such as George Washington off our currency or even renaming our national capital.

He thought that people would forgive Washington for having done good things, too. He has more confidence than I do in the progressive left.

A bunch of New York Times reporters jumped on the bandwagon:

[.@hunterw](#) teaches me that there's a street named after Robert E. Lee in walking distance of my childhood home <http://t.co/fg4OwyqmEe>

Ross Barkan (@RossBarkan) [June 23, 2015](https://twitter.com/RossBarkan/status/611111111111111111)

One wonders whether they understand the difference between men such as Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee or if the only thing that matters about them is their affiliation with the Confederacy.

And Stars and Stripes is polling people on whether to [rename military bases](#) named after Confederates.

Even Texas is experiencing some of the frenzy. The Texas Tribune reports, "[Momentum Builds to Remove UT Confederate Statue.](#)"

I can't help but notice that no one is calling to rename the Woodrow Wilson bridge right by my house, even though Wilson's racism was personal, political, focused on eugenics and far more recent than any Civil War-era leader.

## How we treat symbols we disagree with

Basically it's just such a hysterical atmosphere at this point, that no one can conceive of a person who is against something but also willing to tolerate the expression of that thing. Can we be against Jeff Davis — and also against destroying art and monuments and history just because they involve Jeff Davis?

Symbols are tremendously important, and state sponsorship of symbols is very much worth fighting about. But there are ways to express disapproval of art, monuments and aspects of history without taking the approach of, say, [blowing up the Buddhas](#), to take one recent example.

And how we manage these processes of disapproval truly is important for civil society. To quote Heinrich Heine, a man who definitely knew of what he spoke, "Where they have burned books, they will end in burning men." Mobs aren't actually the best judges of such processes, no matter how righteous they feel or certain of their cause.

Listen, it's great that we're aiming to be an anti-racist society. That's very, very good! But it's bad that we are slowly forgetting how to dislike something without seeking its utter destruction. Somehow we've abandoned the aesthetic of Abraham Lincoln for that of Mao Tse-Tung.

When I first moved to the D.C. area from Colorado, I had a bit of culture shock relative to the Confederate symbols on display here. I live not a mile from a cannon that marks where Confederate troops gathered to go off and fight. But rather than call for its removal, I've used it to learn history and teach my children about their commonwealth's history. And I've used other monuments, cemeteries and buildings to teach my children about their history, including both the good and bad points.

I wouldn't put Confederate kitsch up in my house, but mainstream media figure Claire Shipman and former Obama press secretary Jay Carney put up [Communist kitsch](#) in their house. There is something intriguing about how the elite left tolerates art celebrating those who killed 100 million people in the last century, but seeks the erasure of anything associated with the Confederacy.

As always, Popehat has the perfect compromise solution:

Totally cool with banning the Confederate flag as long as we can put t-shirted Che douchesters into concentration camps.

Popehat (@Popehat) [June 20, 2015](#)

Anthony Esolen writes about how we must be careful to teach children debates and not just propaganda, lest we harm them. In [Ten Ways To Destroy The Imagination Of Your Child](#), he writes:

Southern partisans still rankle over Lincoln's centralization of power and his assertion that the states are strictly subordinate to the federal government and have no real sovereignty of their own. Their position is one worthy of consideration; but do not consider it. We do not want students to support or oppose Lincoln's policies based on some well-thought philosophy of government. We want them to snicker.

So, for instance, we assume that Lincoln was right to go to war against the South, because the

southerners who prosecuted the war were all nasty slave owners. It isn't true, but it absolves us of the need to take the southern position seriously. Then we say that Lincoln himself thought that blacks were an inferior race. We neglect to mention that just about everybody thought so, too, including the abolitionists; it was the foolish "scientific" consensus of the day. Then we say that Lincoln mismanaged the war, and that his generals were bloodthirsty brutes....If possible, we toss in a modern rumor that Lincoln was a homosexual. There's no evidence for it, but the tactic works in a couple of ways at once. It diverts attention from the man's heroism, and it reduces him to a counter in a modern political game. It also—though it is politically incorrect for the teacher or textbook writer to admit it—makes him appear a bit contemptuous.

In an earlier chapter, he writes:

If you feed children enough of what is politically motivated, regardless of the direction of the motive, you will insinuate into their minds that all the humanistic subjects they study, and some of the scientific ones too, are power games and nothing more.

One might be forgiven for thinking that is the goal of modern outrage politics — to turn everything into [power games](#) and nothing more.

I agree with New York Times reporter Lydia Polgreen:

A risk in all the flag unanimity: everyone will think this whole race problem in America has been solved and we can move on.

Lydia Polgreen (@lpolgreen) [June 23, 2015](#)

This is in fact what outrage culture does. [We're addicted to judgment porn](#), and this is just the latest example. And just like traditional porn, outrage porn serves only for momentary release. Confederate flag burning doesn't actually do anything to stop racism. It's a complete sideshow. And once we've blown up every confederate statue and smashed every tombstone with Confederate marks and erased all evidence of the Confederacy from our roads, we'll still have the scourge of racism and every other sin with us.

## National Review

### [America: One Nation, Indivisible](#)

***The Confederate battle flag is far from the only worrisome symbol in America today.***

by Victor Davis Hanson

Everyone is weighing in on the horrific murders in Charleston and blaming the mindset of the mass murderer on wider social pathologies. After the airing of the racist crackpot ideas of the unhinged Dylann Roof, calls have gone out to ban the public flying of the battle flag of the Old Confederacy, which has also been incorporated in various forms in four state flags. Perhaps we should step back and eschew symbolism that separates us by race rather than unites us as fellow citizens.

Aside from the specious argument that the flag, along with media like Fox News and talk radio, fuels homicidal maniacs like Roof, there is quite another question: whether implicit state endorsement of Confederate symbolism offers sanction for the old idea of an apartheid nation,

and thus sends entirely the wrong message of American separatism rather than unity. While many Southerners object that the flag simply proclaims the battlefield honor of those who were defending their homeland, the Confederacy was so entwined with the idea of preserving slavery that the flag, even today, can evoke racial polarization. For all the Southern patriots who understandably see in the Confederate battle flag the historical resonance of Pickett's Charge or the resistance to Sherman's March to the Sea, there are probably just as many who equally understandably consider it a nostalgic icon of white supremacy. In a racially diverse society, it makes sense to phase out state sanction for the battle flag — as South Carolina governor Nikki Haley advocated yesterday, in calling on the state legislature to vote for the removal of the battle flag that has been flying over the grounds of the state capitol.



But perhaps we should not stop there, given increasing ethnic tensions and widening racial fault lines. There are plenty of other overt racist symbols that separate Americans. One is the prominent use of *La Raza*, “The Race” — seen most prominently in the National Council of La Raza, an ethnic lobbying organization that has been and is currently a recipient of federal funds. The National Council of La Raza should be free to use any title it wishes, but it should not expect the federal government to subsidize its separatist nomenclature.

The pedigree of the term *La Raza* is just as incendiary as that of the Confederate battle flag. The Spanish noun *raza* (cf. Latin *radix*: “root” or “race”) is akin to the now-discarded German use of *Volk*, which in the early 20th century came to denote a common German racial identity that transcended linguistic and cultural affinities: To be a real member of the *Volk* one had to “appear” German, in addition to speaking German and possessing German citizenship.

*La Raza* is just such a racist term. It goes beyond a common language and country of origin, and thus transcends the more neutral *pueblo* (“people”: Latin *populus*) or *gente* (“people”: Latin *gens*). *Raza* was deliberately reintroduced in the 1960s to promote a racially superior identity of

indigenous peoples and mestizos born in the Spanish-speaking countries of the New World. That is why the National Council of La Raza once had a close affinity with MEChA (*Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán*), the infamous racist U.S. student group (its ironic motto is “Unity creates strength”), some of whose various past slogans (cf. the Castroite derivative “*Por La Raza todo, Fuera de La Raza nada*”) finally became sources of national embarrassment.

The use of the phrase *La Raza* reflects its illiberal modern origins. It came into popular currency during the 1930s in Spain, when the Fascist dictatorship of Francisco Franco wished to promote a new Iberian identity that went well beyond the commonality of Spanish citizenship and fluency in the Spanish language. Franco expropriated *La Raza* to promote the racist idea that the Spanish were a superior people by birth. He penned a crackpot novel, *Raza*, embodying Fascist and racist themes of Spanish genetic and cultural superiority. *La Raza* appeared on the big screen in the form of a hokey 1942 Spanish-language movie, full of racist themes, anti-Americanism, and fashionable Fascist politics.

But Franco was only channeling another, more famous contemporary Fascist, Benito Mussolini, who had his own Italian version of the term, *la Razza*. In 1938 Mussolini published his *Manifesto della Razza* (“The Racial Manifesto”), which defined Italians as a superior Aryan race and excluded Italian Jews, Africans, and other supposedly less pure groups from various positions in the Italian government.

In sum, the word “Raza” has a disturbing recent history, and that is why Spaniards and Italians today have dropped its common usage. Yet that well-known association with racial chauvinism was precisely why the founders of the National Council of La Raza, by their own admission, reawakened the word in the 1960s to focus on what they saw as a particular racial category of Spanish speakers. But *La Raza* is now a calcified separatist slogan, one full of implications that are unworthy of taxpayer support.



One wonders why in 2015 there is still nomenclature such as “the Congressional Black Caucus,” over half a century after the civil-rights movement sought to promote integration and the idea that Americans should be judged by the content of their character, not the color of their skin.. The Caucus ostensibly seeks to ensure the end of exclusion by race from full participation in American society by creating a lobbying group focused entirely on one particular race. The postmodern rationale is either that groups that have suffered past disfranchisement and discrimination should not be subject to current anti-discriminatory protocols, or that they should at least enjoy a compensatory period of exclusion from color-blind values to offset centuries of oppression.

Thus the group’s membership is entirely race-based. The Caucus is *not* open to those members of the House of Representatives who are not African-American, but who might share the Caucus’s racial or political agenda — as the Jewish-American Representative Steven Cohen learned when he was elected to Congress in 2006. The Lebanese-American Ralph Nader was once attacked at a Caucus meeting in clearly racial terms on the understanding that the group was exempt from charges of racism. How far is the racial concept transferable — “the Asian Caucus”? “the Latino Caucus?” “the White Caucus?” “the European-American Caucus”? The premise seems to be that African-American House members seek to promote a common “black” agenda that transcends their local, county, or state interests. If an Asian, white, or Latino voter’s congressional representative is a member of the “Black Caucus,” does that mean that the voter will receive less attention than a black voter — as de facto white caucuses in the Old South most certainly did ignore the interests of their non-white constituents? Is that why conservative African-American legislators who see all their constituents in terms that transcend race tend to avoid joining the Caucus? Could not the “Black Caucus” rebrand itself as the “Civil Rights Caucus” or the “Progressive Caucus”?

Reexamination of the battle flag offers us a teachable moment. Critics made a good point that *any* state sanction of the secessionist flag inevitably sends the wrong message to millions of Americans, who in their private lives are free to display any symbol they wish. But the current racist reaction to past racism has become equally indefensible in an increasingly fragile multiracial state. The state should not support any racially separatist symbols, titles, or groups.

We should pause to appreciate that the American democratic experiment in ethnic and racial diversity is nearly unique. Indeed, the very idea of racial diversity and nationhood does not have much of a record of success in history. Few countries have been able to transcend their ethnic origins and sustain a racially pluralistic society. Rome was an exception and pulled it off for nearly 500 years, as the Roman Empire grew to encompass non-Italian peoples from the Euphrates to Scotland before unwinding into tribal chaos. The Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires worked for long periods, though they relied on the use of autocratic force and imperial coercion to suppress minorities, in ways antithetical to modern notions of governance.

In more recent times, religious and racial diversity — in Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, Iraq, or contemporary Nigeria — has resulted in chaos and, occasionally, genocide. True, some nations have been able to incorporate different tribes, as in the United Kingdom’s unification of the various peoples of the British Isles, but usually after hundreds of years of fighting and only when there were underlying racial and cultural affinities that could trump tribal differences.

In other words, the United States is history’s exception, not its rule. America is a great, evolving experiment of a constitutional republic in which peoples of all different races, religions, and ethnic backgrounds are equal under the law and see themselves as Americans first and members of tribes second — appearance and religion being incidental rather than essential to the American body politic.

In an America that was originally founded by mostly Northern European immigrants, a Juan Lopez from Oaxaca is freely accepted as a U.S. citizen in a way that a white Bob Jones would never fully be embraced as a citizen of Mexico, a country whose constitution still expressly sets out racially chauvinistic guidelines that govern immigration law. Someone who appears African or European would have a hard time fully integrating as a citizen in Chinese, Korean, or Japanese society, in a way not true of Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese in America. The world assumes that in America a president, attorney general, secretary of state, or Supreme Court justice can be black; but it would be as surprised to find whites as high public officials in Zimbabwe as to find a black as prime minister or foreign minister in Sweden or Germany.

In the last half-century, Americans have increasingly tended to emphasize race and tribe in promoting “diversity,” rather than seeking to strengthen the more tenuous notion of unity with their fellow citizens. We have forgotten that human nature is fond of division and must work at setting aside superficial tribal affinities to unite on the basis of core values and ideas.

Symbols, flags, organizations, and phrases that emphasize racial difference and ethnic pride are no longer just fossilized notions from the 1960s; they are growing fissures in the American mosaic that now threaten to split the country apart — fueling the suspicion of less liberal and more homogeneous nations that the great American experiment will finally unwind as expected.

That would be a great tragedy, but a catastrophe entirely predictable if citizens seek symbolic solidarity with their tribe rather than in the common idea of just being American.

## National Review

### [We Have Officially Reached Peak Leftism](#)

*A progressive panic attack begins as the Obama era wanes.*

By Kevin D. Williamson

If it seems to you that the Left has, collectively, lost its damned mind as the curtain rises on the last act of the Obama administration, you are not imagining things. Barack Obama has been extraordinarily successful in his desire to — what was that phrase? — *fundamentally transform* the country, but the metamorphosis is nonetheless a good deal less than his congregation wanted and expected. We may have gone from being up to our knees in welfare-statism to being up to our hips in it, and from having a bushel of banana-republic corruption and incompetence to having a bushel and a peck of it, but the United States of America remains, to the Left’s dismay, plainly recognizable as herself beneath the muck.

Ergo, madness and rage.

We have seen an extraordinary outburst of genuine extremism — and genuine authoritarianism — in the past several months, and it will no doubt grow more intense as we approach the constitutional dethroning of the mock messiah to whom our progressive friends literally sang hymns of praise and swore oaths of allegiance. (“I pledge to be a servant to our president” — recall all that *sieg heil* creepiness.) There is an unmistakable stink of desperation about this, as though the Left intuits what the Right dares not hope: that the coming few months may in fact see progressivism’s cultural high-water mark for this generation.

If there is desperation, it probably is because the Left is starting to suspect that the permanent Democratic majority it keeps promising itself may yet fail to materialize. The Democrats won two

resounding White House victories but can hardly win a majority in a state legislature (seven out of ten today are Republican-controlled) or a governorship (the Democrats are down to 18) to save their lives, while Republicans are holding their strongest position in Congress since the days of Herbert Hoover. The Democrats have calculated that their best bet in 2016 is Hillary Rodham Clinton, that tragic bag of appetites who couldn't close the deal in the primary last time around. "Vote for me, I'm a lady" isn't what they thought it was: Wendy Davis, running for governor of Texas, made all the proper ceremonial incantations and appeared in heroic postures on all the right magazine covers, but finished in the 30s on Election Day. With young people trending pro-life, that old black magic ain't what it used to be.

For the Left, it feels like time is running out. So it isn't sufficient that same-sex marriages be legalized; bakers and florists must be locked in prison if they decline to participate in a gay couple's ceremony. It isn't sufficient that those wishing to undergo sex-change surgery be permitted to go their own way; the public must pay for it, and if Bruce Jenner is still "Bruce" to you, you must be driven from polite society. It isn't enough that the Left dominate the media and pop culture; any attempt to compete with it must be criminalized in the name of "getting big money out of politics." Not the *New York Times's* money, or Hollywood's money, or the CEO of Goldman Sachs's money — just the wrong sort of people's money. Every major Democratic presidential candidate and every Democratic senator is on record supporting the repeal of the First Amendment's free-speech protections — i.e., carving the heart out of the Bill of Rights — to clear the way for putting all public debate under political discipline.

Like it or not, you will be shackled to hope and change.

The hysterical shrieking about the fictitious rape epidemic on college campuses, the attempts to fan the unhappy events in Ferguson and Baltimore into a national racial conflagration, the silly and shallow "inequality" talk — these are signs of progressivism in decadence.



So is the brouhaha over the Confederate flag in South Carolina in the wake of the horrific massacre at Emanuel AME Church. For about 30 seconds, the political ghouls of the Left were looking to pick another gun-control fight, swooping in, in their habitually indecent fashion, before the bodies had even grown cold. But that turned out to be a dead end, since the killer acquired his gun after passing precisely the sort of background check that the Left generally hawks after a high-profile crime, regardless of whether it is relevant to the crime. We might have spent some time thinking about whether law enforcement was too lax in the matter of the murderer's earlier encounters with them — the South Carolina killer had a drug arrest on his record but was able to buy a gun because he had been charged only with a misdemeanor. But the Left isn't in any mood to talk about whether the cops aren't being hard-assed enough. So, instead, we had a fight over a completely unrelated issue: the Confederate flag flying at the state capitol in Columbia.

You have to credit the Left: Its strategy is deft. If you can make enough noise that sounds approximately like a moral crisis, then you can in effect create a moral crisis. Never mind that the underlying argument — “Something bad has happened to somebody else, and so you must give us something we want!” — is entirely specious; it is effective. In the wake of the financial crisis, we got all manner of “reform,” from student-lending practices to the mandates of Elizabeth Warren's new pet bureaucracy, involving things that had *nothing at all* to do with the financial crisis. Democrats argued that decency compelled us to pass a tax increase in the wake of the crisis, though tax rates had nothing to do with it. A crisis is a crisis is a crisis, and if a meteor hits Ypsilanti tomorrow you can be sure that Debbie Stabenow will be calling for a \$15 national minimum wage because of the plight of meteor victims.

I bear no brief for the peckerwood-trash cultural tendencies that led Fritz Hollings, then governor, and the rest of the loyal Democrats who ran segregation-era South Carolina to hoist the Confederate flag in 1962. My sympathies are more with John Brown than with John Calhoun. Yet Lost Cause romanticism was very much in fashion for a moment, and not only among Confederate revanchists; Joan Baez, no redneck she, made a great deal of money with her recording of “The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down” in 1971. About every third Western of the era had as its hero a conflicted Confederate veteran, his wounded honor and stoicism in defeat compelling him to roam westward in search of a new beginning. That story lives on into our own time: Who are Mal Reynolds and the Browncoats if not another remnant of the Lost Cause relocated from Virginia to the frontier in space?

Of course the Confederate flag is a symbol of Southern racism. It is a good many other things, too, none of which was the cause of the massacre at Emanuel AME. It is strange and ironic that adherents of the Democratic party — which was, for about 140 years, not only the South's but the world's leading white-supremacist organization — should work themselves up over one flag, raised by their fellow partisans, at this late a date; but, well, welcome to the party. Yet Democratic concern about racist totems is selective: The Democrats are not going to change the name of their party, cancel the annual Jefferson-Jackson dinner, or stop naming things after Robert Byrd, senator and Exalted Cyclops of the Ku Klux Klan. Hillary Clinton is not going to be made to answer for her participation in a political campaign that featured Confederate-flag imagery.

The Confederate flag, and other rebel iconography, is a marker of Southern distinctiveness, which, like American distinctiveness, is inextricably bound up with the enslavement and oppression of black people. But only the South is irredeemable in the Left's view, and it has been so only since about 1994, when it went Republican. Which is to say, the Confederate flag is an emblem of regional distinctiveness disapproved of by 21st-century Democrats. Their reinvented concern is awfully nice: When the South actually was a segregationist backwater

that African-Americans were fleeing by the million — when Democrats were running the show — they were ho-hum. Today the South is an economic powerhouse, dominated by Republicans, and attracting new African-American residents by the thousands. And so the Left and its creature, the Democratic party, insist that Southern identity as such must be anathematized. The horrific crime that shocked the nation notwithstanding, black life in Charleston remains very different, in attractive ways, from black life in such Left-dominated horror shows as Cleveland and Detroit, and the state's governor is, in the parlance of identity politics, a woman of color — but she is a Republican, too, and therefore there must be shrieking, rending of garments, and gnashing of teeth.

This is a fraud, and some scales are starting to fall from some eyes. Americans believe broadly in sexual equality, but only a vanishing minority of us describe ourselves as "feminists." "Social-justice warrior" is a term of derision. The Bernie Sanders movement, like the draft-Warren movement of which it is an offshoot, is rooted in disgust at the opportunistic politics of the Clinton clique. Young people who have heard all their lives that the Republican party and the conservative movement are for old white men — young people who may be not be quite old enough to remember Democrats' boasting of their "double-Bubba" ticket in 1992, pairing the protégé of one Southern segregationist with the son of another — see before them Nikki Haley, Bobby Jindal, Susana Martinez, Carly Fiorina, Tim Scott, Mia Love, Marco Rubio, Ben Carson, Elise Stefanik. None of those men and women is bawling about "microaggressions" or dreaming up new sexless pronouns. None belongs to the party that hoisted Dixie over the capitol in South Carolina either. Governor Haley may be sensitive to the history of her state, but she is a member of the party of Lincoln with family roots in Punjab — it isn't her flag.

What's going to happen between now and November 8 of next year will be a political campaign on one side of the aisle only. On the other side, it's going to be something between a temper tantrum and a panic attack. That's excellent news if you're Ted Cruz, Scott Walker, Marco Rubio, or Carly Fiorina. It's less good news if you live in Baltimore or Philadelphia.

## Contentions

### [A Welcome Tipping Point for Republicans and the Confederate Flag](#)

by Peter Wehner

As everyone knows by now, in the wake of the massacre at the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina last week, allegedly perpetrated by a racist, Dylann Roof, there have been renewed calls to remove the Confederate flag from state grounds.

Among Republicans, those calls have come from prominent lawmakers from South Carolina, most especially Governor Nikki Haley, who is playing a significant role in transforming this debate. Among those running (or are likely soon to run) for president, Jeb Bush and Rick Perry signaled early on they wanted the flag taken down. Scott Walker, after days of hesitation, then followed. So, now, has Rand Paul. (Here's a [good score card](#) of who stands where.)

Yet several others — including Ted Cruz, Rick Santorum, Mike Huckabee, Bobby Jindal, Ben Carson and Marco Rubio — have said it's a decision best left to South Carolinians. They have so far remained basically neutral when it comes to rendering a judgment on the Confederate flag.

They shouldn't. In politics there are a lot of hard calls; this isn't one of them.

As the old arguments in favor of allowing the Confederate flag to fly on state grounds crumble before our eyes — they already seem bizarrely antiquated — it's worth recapitulating the reasons the debate has changed in such a decisive way. The first one has to do with the history of the Confederate flag. For all the talk from defenders of the flag who insist otherwise, it was a symbol of slavery, white supremacy, and the dissolution of the Union. The flag was fundamentally about hate, not heritage; about subjugation, not Southern ancestry. There is a reason white supremacist groups embrace the Confederate flag as their symbol, and it doesn't have to do with its aesthetic appeal.

The second reason has to do with the history of the Republican Party. It was founded in the 1850s by anti-slavery activists and in opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Its slogan in 1856 was "free labor, free land, free men." The first Republican president, Abraham Lincoln, was America's "great emancipator" who freed the slaves. So the Confederate flag was never a symbol associated with the Republican Party — including in South Carolina, where the flag was first flown over the statehouse in 1962, at the request of Democrats in the state like Governor Fritz Hollings and Representative John A. May. Yet the Republican Party has somehow found a way to get itself attached to this toxic symbol of division and repression.

The third reason it's an obvious decision to call for the Confederate flag to come down is political. Among those who have a reaction to the flag, [more than three times](#) as many say they have a negative reaction as a positive reaction.

Beyond that, the United States is rapidly changing. It's becoming increasingly non-white. One reason Republicans are consistently losing presidential elections is that they are doing dismally among minorities. For example, in 2012 the Republican nominee won just 17 percent of nonwhite voters. (The white share of the eligible voting population has been dropping by about two points every four years, and next year minorities may make up a record 30 percent of the vote.) Republicans are unlikely to endear themselves with this rising demographic if they refuse to take a stand against flying the Confederate flag.

There is, finally, the issue of civic comity. The Confederate flag not only represents the ugliest part of our history; it is a symbol that makes many Americans feel like outsiders in their own land, alienated from their fellow citizens. Not giving that kind of offense is a basic commitment of democratic life.

But there are still holdouts. In his appearance on NBC's *Meet the Press* on Sunday, presidential hopeful Mike Huckabee, who in 2008 finished second to John McCain in the Republican primaries delegate count, claimed the Confederate flag is not an issue for someone running for president. Governor Huckabee [told](#) host Chuck Todd, "if you can point me to an article and section of the Constitution in which a United States president ought to weigh in on what states use as symbols, then please refresh my memory on that." Set aside the fact that people running for president weigh in on matters beyond the scope of the Constitution all the time. (A few weeks ago Huckabee spoke out on the matter of Caitlyn Jenner's sex-change operation, an issue on which the Founders were silent.) It seemed entirely lost on Governor Huckabee that the Confederate flag was the symbol of a rebellion against and violent assault on the very Constitution Mr. Huckabee invoked.

To their credit, in just a few days a rapidly growing number of Republicans — Governor Haley and the presidential candidates I mentioned, RNC chairman Reince Priebus, Senator Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, 2012 presidential nominee Mitt Romney and others, with many more to follow — have urged the Confederate flag be taken down. We're clearly at a much-welcomed tipping point. The tragic event in Charleston, and the [extraordinary grace demonstrated by the](#)

[families of the victims](#), seems to have allowed long-standing arguments to gain traction in ways they never had before. And for those Republicans who are still agnostic or ambivalent when speaking on this issue, they need not be. They should view this as an opportunity to finally put to rest an issue that has bedeviled their party; to stand four-square against a symbol of cruelty and, in so doing, remind voters that theirs is the proud Party of Lincoln.



