

A Biden counterrevolution would be a disaster for democracy, solidarity and freedom

By Brendan O'Neill, Editor, Spiked Online, 7 November 2020

A victory for Joe Biden would embolden the regressive woke elites across the Western world.

Make America Boring Again. Remarkably, this has become the rallying cry of many in the Joe Biden camp. 'Vote Biden and make the presidency boring again', [instructs](#) the *New York Daily News*. 'The delightful boringness of Joe Biden', as *Vox* [puts it](#). 'Joe Biden is a boring candidate. That's why he is doing well', says a writer for [the Guardian](#). After the fire and the fury and the lies and the bluster of the first Trump term, what America needs right now is a big ol' 'dose of monotony', says [one observer](#).

This all captures what is motoring the extraordinarily uniform pro-Biden outlook across the old political establishment, the media class and the celebrity set. Every now and then these people will use words like 'renewal' to describe a Biden presidency. They even occasionally claim he is riding on a similar wave of 'HOPE' to the one that swept [Obama](#) to power in 2008.

But in truth, at root, what the cultural elites love about Biden is that he would render politics dull again. He would help to restore calm and normalcy and, most importantly, order. More specifically, he will restore *the* order, the old order, the pre-Trump order in which politics was a fundamentally boring, technical, managerial affair, the business of educated elites rather than of loudmouth populists and the swarms of excitable people who come to hear them and cheer them. Make no mistake: the celebration of Biden's tedium speaks to an elitist longing to drain the popular democratic spark from political life and return politics to the aloof, bureaucratic clerisy who had been running things before [Trump](#) came along.

The most important thing about [Joe Biden](#) is not the man himself – it is what has been invested in him by the establishment. This is why those who go on about Biden's age and his bouts of mental confusion and the stark possibility that he wouldn't survive a four-year presidency are kind of missing the point. Biden, for the purposes of this election, this election that the elites tell us is the most important of everyone's lifetime, is not a politician; he's a mascot. He's a flag. He's a largely symbolic figure, primarily symbolising Not Trump and Not Populism, whose presence in the White House will, the old establishment hopes, help to embolden their efforts to rebalance politics away from the frankness and populism of the last

four years and return it to what a writer for the [Los Angeles Times](#) refers to as the ‘expertise’ of the pre-Trump era, which is apparently preferable to ‘the authenticity’ of a political figure like Trump.

So what will happen today is not really a normal election. Rather, it is an attempted *restoration*. A restoration not of monarchy but of technocracy; not of a king but of the status quo ante and its conduct of politics in a removed, disconnected way. Not only in the US but across Europe and elsewhere in the world, the political and moral clerisy see the restoration of their preferred order in the US as an essential first step in their longed-for rollback of the populist rebellions of the past few years. This is why *spiked* thinks a victory for Joe Biden will be a disaster for the world – because it would further embolden the most regressive, anti-democratic, woke strains in Western political life. If Biden wins, we all lose.

One of the most revealing justifications for voting for Biden is that he would relieve people of the burden of thinking about politics. As [one writer says](#), the main horror of the Trump era is that it made ‘politics and government’ into ‘the omnipresent centre of gravity in our daily lives’. With a monster like Trump in the White House, many people, apparently, could think about little else other than politics and what a shitshow it had become courtesy of the ‘deplorables’ who elevated Trump to power. And the great thing about Biden’s rule is that it ‘promises to return the outsized stature of politics to its rightfully *diminutive* place’ (my italics). Diminutive: extremely or unusually small. That is the presence politics should have in most people’s lives, apparently: an infinitesimally small one. Don’t think about politics – just let other people get on with it. And that is [what Biden promises](#) – ‘a government you simply don’t have to think about all that often’.

This has become a common cry in the vast pro-Biden lobby. It is a central component of the Make Politics Boring Again worldview. They want a world where most people – *ordinary people* – don’t have to worry themselves about issues of governance. They can just leave that stuff, the business of the national destiny, to the competent classes (‘competence’, alongside ‘boring’, is another buzzword of the Biden lobby). As the *Los Angeles Times* says, this election is really a reckoning between ‘experts’ and the ‘authentics’. The experts are the likes of [Hillary Clinton](#) and, latterly, Joe Biden (eight years in the Obama administration ‘boosted his expert credentials’, [says the LA Times](#)), and the ‘authentics’ are people like Trump. And what we need to restore is ‘the expertise’ and ‘reliance on science’ of that pre-Trump class, against ‘the feral frankness’ of the Trump era, the *LA Times* says.

So the wave of pro-Biden sentiment among vast swathes of the establishment is not merely about changing policy in the White House, as most elections are. (Indeed, it is striking how much of the pro-Biden commentary says Biden’s policies don’t actually matter. ‘It’s not the

policies that count’, as the *Guardian* says.) Rather, it is about negating the ‘[feral](#)’ [populism](#) of recent years and restoring the rightful rule of the smart set, of those who can be trusted to govern while the rest of us just get on with our lives and never think about politics. A Biden presidency is a ‘[protest against protest](#)’, in the words of the *Guardian*. That is, it would be a protest against the protest votes cast by vast numbers of ordinary people in 2016 for a different, more democratic way of doing politics. There’s a word for ‘protest against protest’, of course: counter-protest, or counterrevolution. That is what the elite Biden wave represents: a counterrevolution against the populist cries and democratic demands of the 2016 era. ‘Feral’ means having escaped from domestication and become wild. That is how much of the cultural and media elites view the masses in the post-2016 era: we disobediently broke free of the domesticating force of managerial politics and became beast-like, ignorantly voting for Trump or Brexit. The Biden reaction, the Biden counterrevolution, is fundamentally a project of redomestication, of returning the masses to the tamed state in which they do not concern themselves with politics and instead leave it to ‘America’s system of checks and balances’, as *The Economist* says in its [pro-Biden leader](#).

If successful, this ‘protest against protest’, this elitist reaction against the feral demands of the people for change, would be bad not only for America but for other parts of the world, too. It would be particularly bad for the [Brexit](#) spirit. We know that Biden is hostile to Brexit, viewing it as a Trump-like phenomenon. We know that he is keen to reward the [European Union](#) for its steadfastness in the face of the Brexit revolt and of the various challenges to its authority from the East, especially from Poland and Hungary. The masses’ democratic impulse would suffer both in the US and in Europe if the self-consciously domesticating force of technocracy is restored to power in Washington, DC.

The desire to make politics diminutive again, to return decision-making to ‘the experts’, speaks to the overarching aim of the technocratic impulse – to insulate political life from the pressure of the masses. The elite meltdown of the past four years, in both the US and the UK, has been motored by a great fear that the votes for Trump and Brexit tore away the insulation of politics from popular pressure. This project of insulation had been taking shape for decades, in the form of the European Union, of the increased juridification of political decision-making, of quangos and checks and balances. In questioning the authority of the EU and the expertise of the Clinton-style establishment, British and American voters started to pull apart this insulation and make the case for more direct forms of democracy and decision-making. The ‘delightful boringness’ of Biden, his promise to make politics ‘diminutive’ again, his implicit invitation to ‘the experts’ to take authority back from ‘the authentics’, is

fundamentally a project of restoring the insulation between politics and the masses. This will be a deeply concerning backward step for [democracy](#).

The restoration of the pre-2016 order would not only insulate public life from people's feral political demands but also from our cultural and moral values. It would redomesticate the masses morally as well as politically. A Biden victory would embolden the [woke mobs](#) of the new elite and their tyranny of cancel culture. Under the imperfect instrument of Trump's often crude, narcissistic presidency, ordinary people have had a mechanism through which they could express their disdain for the eccentric, divisive, identitarian crusades of the new elites, on everything from transgenderism to the nonsense of 'white privilege'. The defeat of Trump, the removal of one of the few anti-woke leaders in the West, would green-light the intensification of those crusades. We should expect to see an even keener assault on the apparently outdated family values and community concerns of the 'deplorable' sections of society by a newly emboldened elite.

Trump's victory fundamentally represented a rude intrusion by ordinary people into the democratic life of America. It was an assertion of their democratic, moral concerns against an establishment that wasn't only not listening to them but which was treating them with open contempt and hostility. The elite Biden wave is about reversing this rude intrusion and returning the people to their apparently natural state: one in which their role is merely to be governed, not to think about government. You might not want Trump to win, and that's fine. But you should want Biden to lose. A Biden counterrevolution would be a disaster for democracy, solidarity and freedom.

Brendan O'Neill is editor of *spiked* and host of the *spiked* podcast, [The Brendan O'Neill Show](#). Subscribe to the podcast [here](#). And find Brendan on Instagram: [@burntoakboy](#)