

John BURTKA

President and CEO

Intercollegiate Studies Institute

Americanism, Conservatism, and One-Nation Conservatism

America is a wild place. It's founding embodied both liberal and conservative ideals—a love of individual freedom and political equality with a reverence for classical, biblical, and yes, English civilization—yet its founders were revolutionaries.

Similarly, American conservatism is a paradox. It was birthed in the mid-twentieth century by Anglican, Catholic, and Jewish intellectuals. Conservatives fought collectivism, communism, and campus radicalism with tweed, tobacco, and a Hollywood actor named Ronald Reagan. They were cultured, but their popular constituents—*conservatives of the heart*, as Pat Buchanan called them—were common.

While the uneasy alliance between conservative elites and the people lasted through the end of the Cold War, decades of deindustrialization, globalization, military adventurism, unchecked immigration, financial inequality, and political correctness took their toll. In 2016, the people revolted and changed the power dynamic. Moving forward, the people would be in the driver seat, taking elites along for the ride.

The rise, fall, —and rise?—of Donald Trump ushered in an era of intellectual ferment on the right as conservative intellectuals updated their political principles for a movement increasingly dominated by the president and his followers. A flurry of new ideas (and institutions) came to the foreground—paleo-conservatism, populism, national conservatism, post-liberalism, integralism, Trumpism, etc.—and staked out their claims on the future of the right.

For all their shades difference, one theme remains constant: Contempt for America's "ruling class" and an urgent sense that American political, economic, familial, and religious institutions must be rebuilt or restored before the coming deluge of debt, decline, and decadence extinguishes the flame of Western civilization forever.

Which way, American man? My paper will explore the ways in which the tensions between the few and the many and freedom and virtue, which have plagued both American life and the conservative intellectual tradition for generations, can be resolved—or at least, ameliorated—by bringing the energy of the American, "new right" into conversation with the British tradition of One-Nation Conservatism, which aims to realign the interests of elites and the people towards the common good.

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