THE NIGHT WE WAVED GOODBYE TO AMERICA

Anyone would think we had just elected a hip, skinny and youthful replacement for God, with a plan to modernize Heaven and Hell - or that at the very least John Lennon had come back from the dead.

The swooning frenzy over the choice of Barack Obama as President of the United States must be one of the most absurd waves of self-deception and swirling fantasy ever to sweep through an advanced civilization. At least Mandela-worship - its nearest equivalent - is focused on a man who actually did something.

I really don't see how the Obama devotees can ever in future mock the Moonies, the Scientologists or people who claim to have been abducted in flying saucers. This is a cult like the one which grew up around Princess Diana, bereft of reason and hostile to facts.

It already has all the signs of such a thing. The newspapers which recorded Obama's victory have become valuable relics. You may buy Obama picture books and Obama calendars and if there isn't yet a children's picture version of his story, there soon will be.

Proper books, recording his sordid associates, his cowardly voting record, his astonishingly militant commitment to unrestricted abortion and his blundering trip to Africa, are little-read and hard to find.

If you can believe that this undistinguished and conventionally Left-wing machine politician is a sort of secular savior, then you can believe anything. He plainly doesn't believe it himself. His cliché-stuffed, PC clunker of an acceptance speech suffered badly from nerves. It was what you would expect from someone who knew he'd promised too much and that from now on the easy bit was over.

He needn't worry too much. From now on, the rough boys and girls of America's Democratic Party apparatus, many recycled from Bill Clinton's stained and crumpled entourage, will crowd round him, to collect the rich spoils of his victory and also tell him what to do, which is what he is used to.

Just look at his sermon by the shores of Lake Michigan. He really did talk about a ‘new dawn', and a ‘timeless creed' (which was ‘yes, we can'). He proclaimed that ‘change has come'. He revealed that, despite having edited the Harvard Law Review, he doesn't know what ‘enormity' means. He reached depths of oratorical drivel never even plumbed by our own Mr. Blair, burbling about putting our hands on the arc of history (or was it the ark of history?) and bending it once more toward the hope of a better day (Don't try this at home).

I am not making this up. No wonder that awful old hack Jesse Jackson sobbed as he watched. How he must wish he, too, could get away with this sort of stuff.

And it was interesting how the President-elect failed to lift his admiring audience by repeated - but rather hesitant - invocations of the brainless slogan he was forced by his minders to adopt against his will - ‘Yes, we can'. They were supposed to thunder ‘Yes, we can!' back at him, but they just wouldn't join in.

No wonder. Yes we can what exactly? Go home and keep a close eye on the tax rate, is my advice. He'd have been better off bursting into ‘I'd like to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony' which contains roughly the same message and might have attracted some valuable commercial sponsorship.

Perhaps, being a Chicago crowd, they knew some of the things that 52.5 per cent of America prefers not to know. They know Obama is the obedient servant of one of the most squalid and unshakeable political machines in America. They know that one of his alarmingly close associates, a state-subsidized slum landlord called Tony Rezko, has been convicted on fraud and corruption charges.

They also know the US is just as segregated as it was before Martin Luther King - in schools, streets, neighborhoods, holidays, even in its TV-watching habits and its choice of fast-food joint. The difference is that it is now done by unspoken agreement rather than by law.

If Mr. Obama's election had threatened any of that, his feel-good white supporters would have scuttled off and voted for John McCain, or practically anyone. But it doesn't. Mr. Obama, thanks mainly to the now-departed grandmother he alternately praised as a saint and denounced as a racial bigot, has the huge advantages of an expensive private education. He did not have to grow up in the badlands of useless schools, shattered families and gangs which are the lot of so many young black men of his generation.

If the nonsensical claims made for this election were true, then every positive discrimination program aimed at helping black people into jobs they otherwise wouldn't get should be abandoned forthwith. Nothing of the kind will happen. On the contrary, there will probably be more of them.

And if those who voted for Obama were all proving their anti-racist nobility, that presumably means that those many millions who didn't vote for him were proving themselves to be hopeless bigots. This is obviously untrue.

I was in Washington DC the night of the election. America's beautiful capital has a sad secret. It is perhaps the most racially divided city in the world, with 15th Street - which runs due north from the White House - the unofficial frontier between black and white.

But, like so much of America, it also now has a new division, and one which is in many ways much more important. I had attended an election-night party in a smart and liberal white area, but was staying the night less than a mile away on the edge of a suburb where Spanish is spoken as much

as English, plus a smattering of tongues from such places as Ethiopia, Somalia and Afghanistan.

As I walked, I crossed another of Washington's secret frontiers. There had been a few white people blowing car horns and shouting, as the result became clear. But among the Mexicans, Salvadorans and the other Third World nationalities, there was something like ecstasy.

They grasped the real significance of this moment. They knew it meant that America had finally switched sides in a global cultural war. Forget the Cold War, or even the Iraq War. The United States, having for the most part a deeply conservative people, had until now just about stood out against many of the mistakes which have ruined so much of the rest of the world.

Suspicious of welfare addiction, feeble justice and high taxes, totally committed to preserving its own national sovereignty, unabashedly Christian in a world part secular and part Muslim, suspicious of the Great Global Warming panic, it was unique.

These strengths had been fading for some time, mainly due to poorly controlled mass immigration and to the march of political correctness. They had also been weakened by the failure of America's conservative party - the Republicans - to fight on the cultural and moral fronts.

They preferred to posture on the world stage. Scared of confronting Left-wing teachers and sexual revolutionaries at home, they could order soldiers to be brave on their behalf in far-off deserts. And now the US, like Britain before it, has begun the long slow descent into the Third World. How sad. Where now is our last best hope on Earth?

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