

The rise of Bernie Sanders – the fall of America

All eyes may be on the Republican primary and the brewing battles between Donald Trump and Sen. Ted Cruz, and Donald Trump and Fox News, and Donald Trump and National Review, and Donald Trump and fill-in-the-blank – but the Democratic race is where the real news is happening.

The fact that Sen. Bernie Sanders, a self-declared Socialist, is heating up the campaign trail against the one-time presumptive primary winner, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, is one of the biggest tragedies facing America right now. It also happens to be one of the most under-reported.

Flash back to February 2009 when the cover of Newsweek blared forth the shocking headline, “We Are All Socialists Now” and the inside article elaborated with the subtitled query: “Can America Adopt a More European Model, Only With a Faster Rate of Growth?” Then there were the widely watched “Hardball” interviews of July 2015 and January 2016 when MSNBC host Chris Matthews asked the Democratic National Committee’s Debbie Wasserman Schultz and Mrs. Clinton, respectively, to define the differences between their political party and Socialism, with the ensuing results in both cases being wide-eyed stutters and off-guard stumbles. Then there was the should-be-historic reach-out of President Obama to Socialist Mr. Sanders with a January 27 closed-door meeting at the White House, the nation’s highest hallways of power, to trade thoughts on ISIS, foreign policy and other matters of political importance.

Anybody else see the alarm here?

Add in Mrs. Clinton’s lagging poll numbers, due in large part to her own doing, and the simultaneous rise of Mr. Sanders’, and what we have is a seismic shift in politics, one that says bluntly, It’s okay to admit being a Socialist. The tag doesn’t bring a blacklist. It brings an invite to the White House.

True, Democrats have been leaning Socialist for some time. But

they've been masking it as progressive policy.

Mr. Sanders now represents for Socialists what Michael Sam, the first openly gay NFL player, represented for the homosexual rights movement – legitimacy. His Simon and Garfunkel "America" all-court press has freed Socialists from the shadows. Their stigma is gone. And that – not the poll numbers, or the day-to-day politicking, or the he-said, she-said arguments, but rather the sad disappearance of America's noble republic, complete with principles of limited government as based on God-given rights – is the big story, the media-missed picture. Giving Mr. Sanders such a large platform is a startling commentary on the state of U.S. politics and culture. Watching his Socialist race be greeted with such favor is a pitiful discovery that speaks volumes about the country's demise.

The fact that some argument has popped from the far-left camps condemning Mr. Sanders as little more than a Socialist wannabe, and that the candidate himself often says he's more a Democratic-Socialist, is little comfort to those who see America in the same vein as the Founding Fathers – or little matter. It's the movement of Socialism into the mainstream, in either hyphenated form or stand-alone, that's the larger concern, the loudest outrage.

Thomas Jefferson was said to have written, "It is to secure our rights that we resort to government at all." Mr. Sanders, on the other hand, offered this, in a January 19 Twitter post: "Our job is to tell every kid in this country, that if they work hard, regardless of family income, they will get a college education." Or this, the same day: "I got a message for the Walton family of Walmart: Get off of welfare and pay your workers a living wage." Or this a day earlier, of a Martin Luther King Jr. quote: "Call it democracy, or call it democratic socialism, but there must be a better distribution of wealth."

These are the ideas that are gaining steam in America.

Truthfully, they have been for years, and from both sides of the political aisles. The disappointing and depressing realization, though, is that thanks in large part to Mr. Sanders and his steaming charge through Iowa toward New Hampshire, outing them out as Socialist is not dimming their appeal.

© 2016 Cheryl Chumley – All Rights Reserved