

BY SELWYN DUKE

Toppled Statues **to Toppled Republic?**

“When systems fall, so do statues,”

noted the online Russia Beyond in 2012. It follows from this, then, that statues falling can portend systems falling. This brings us to a short viral video from a Venezuelan woman who warns: Don’t think “it” can’t happen here.

Elizabeth Rogliani, a Venezuelan actress living in the United States, has seen “it” — a left-wing revolution — before. “Why do I even worry about some silly little statues coming down or some silly little street names changing? Why do I care?” she asked rhetorically in her video, which was posted to the Internet in late June.

“It’s because the last time I didn’t care about this, I was a teenager,” she explained. “I have already lived through this thing, when I was living in Venezuela.”

“Statues came down, [socialist leader Hugo] Chávez didn’t want the history displayed,” Rogliani continued. “And then he changed the street names, then came the curriculum [in schools], then some movies couldn’t be shown on certain TV channels. And so on and so forth.”

“You guys say it can’t happen to you; I’ve heard this so many times. But always be on guard; never believe that something can’t happen to you,” she implored. “You need to guard your country and your society, or it will be destroyed.”

“And there’s clearly a lot of people wanting to destroy the U.S.,” she concluded with an obvious but chilling note.

Also consider what Rogliani said of her native land’s deadly complacency: “Cubans warned us, and we’re like: ‘[We’re] Venezuelans, we know what freedom is like; that’s not going to happen here.’ Yet it happened!”

Perhaps they thought Venezuelan “exceptionalism” would save them, but here’s the first rule: If you’re saying “What’s the big deal about some statues coming down?” you’ve already lost. Statues are symbols of your culture; their destruction is symbolic of your culture’s destruction. Yet since there’s no such thing as an “acultural” civilization, this also means your culture is being replaced.

Not grasping this means you’ll also then have no idea what it’s being replaced with — until, perhaps, it’s too late. And since politics is downstream from culture... You can finish the sentence.

While what we call the “Left” is effecting the change, none of it could occur without wide-scale acts of omission. Apropos to this is philosopher G.K. Chesterton’s observation (and warning), “All conservatism is based upon the idea that if you leave things



alone you leave them as they are. But you do not. If you leave a thing alone you leave it to a torrent of change.”

A universal rule of life is that things tend to move toward disorder without a continual application of energy. Fail to maintain a car or house, just let it sit, and it deteriorates. The same is true of culture. It must be guarded and preserved, actively, with the energy of burning love and passion. Failure to do so leaves it to the devices of others and their, perhaps dark, passions.

Just recently, in a recreational setting, a man said to me (I’m paraphrasing), “We’re just one election away from full-blown socialism.” This sentiment is increasingly common — even, notably, among the erstwhile apolitical — as the moral-and-spiritual-rot-born disease afflicting us becomes more obviously symptomatic.

Yet “freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction,” late President Ronald Reagan famously warned. And if we’re one election away from tyranny, it means too many people didn’t notice when we were one generation away — or two or three.

In this vein, the widespread toppling of statues often reflects the later stages of tyranny’s descent. In fact, it typically occurs in a victory’s wake, such as when an anti-Marxist spirit toppled the USSR, and Lenin and Stalin statues were felled. In our time and place it symbolizes victory, too: the Left’s triumph in the culture war.

“The reality is that there is no culture war,” I wrote in the 2012 piece “Conservatives Rationalize as America Circles the Drain.” “What is occurring now is a *pacification effort*.” Ironically, two sentences before this I’d alluded to restaurant chain Chik-fil-A’s opposition to the cultural revolutionaries. And now, eight years on, chain CEO Dan Cathy is bowing before neo-Marxist group Black Lives Matter (BLM). He has been absorbed.

This pacification effort’s success is why even many “conservatives,” virtually all famous figures, and seemingly all big businesses are showing BLM obeisance. Either they believe the lies or they are intimidated into silence, fearing reputational or career and financial destruction — or worse. They’ve either become pod people or fear their wrath.

Regardless, the result is silence before metastasizing tyranny, and silence equals submission. This is why we must defend our culture; it’s why Statues’ Lives Matter.

Speak up now — while you still can. ■