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Jim Watson/AP/Ceety Images

Team Sarah, the network launched by the prolific Susan B. Anthony List to mobilize support for vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin, continues to organize women (and men) post-election.

Rebranding Fascism

National-Anarchists

By Spencer Sunshine

On September 8, 2007 in Sydney, Australia, the antiglobalization movement mobilized once again against neoliberal economic policies, this time to oppose the APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) summit. Just as during the protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle, Washington, in 1999, the streets were filled with an array of groups, such as environmentalists, socialists, and human rights advocates. And also just like in Seattle, there was a “Black Bloc”—a group of militant activists, usually left-wing anarchists, who wore masks and dressed all in black.

In Sydney, the Black Bloc assembled and hoisted banners proclaiming “Globalization is Genocide.” But when fellow demonstrators looked closely, they realized these Black Bloc marchers were “National-Anarchists”—local fascists dressed as anarchists who were infiltrating the demonstration. The police had to protect the interlopers from being expelled by irate

Rebranding Fascism continues on page 12

Post-Palin Feminism

By Abby Scher

From the podium at the Christian Right’s Values Voter Summit in mid-September, *National Review* Institute’s Kate O’Beirne, 59, pronounced that the “selection of Sarah Palin [as the GOP vice presidential nominee] sounded the death knell of modern American feminism.”

“She’s a prick to the liberal establishment, to the feminists, and to the men who fear them,” she jeered to the audience of Christian Right activists.

And when Phyllis Schlafly, 84, threw anti-feminist red meat to the cheering crowd, a 60-plus woman in the audience turned to me and said proudly she had been with Ms. Schlafly since the campaign against the Equal Rights Amendment in the late 1970s.

But as Palin Power surged through the

Washington Hilton’s halls that day and through the Republican party base in later weeks, her vice presidential candidacy revealed a generational cleavage that these elders may not have expected. Because for some young people in the hall, Sarah Palin was bringing women’s rights and feminism to them and their mothers and that’s a good thing. These young people were not running to buy O’Beirne’s recent book, *Women Who Make the World Worse: and How Their Radical Feminist Assault Is Ruining Our Schools, Families, Military, and Sports*.¹ It may have seemed to them like yesterday’s news. Even Phyllis Schlafly, when asked directly how she felt that Sarah Palin identified herself as a beneficiary of feminism, backpedaled and said, well, there are all sorts of feminists.

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— GUEST COMMENTARY —

The Culture Wars Are Still Not Over

The Religious Right in the States and Beyond

By Frederick Clarkson

In the wake of pre-election punditry that the Religious Right is dead and that the so-called Culture Wars are over, I wrote a piece for *The Public Eye*: “The Culture Wars Are Not Over: The Institutionalization of the Christian Right.”¹ The year was 2001, what many now consider to have been the high water mark of the power and influence of the Religious Right in American politics. During the 2008 election season we have heard similar claims by Washington, D.C. insiders and pundits that the Religious Right is dead, dying, or irrelevant or that the culture wars are over or about to be. Such declarations are as wrong now as they were in 2001.

The Religious Right has developed an extraordinary infrastructure, especially at the state level, that will restore and replenish the movement as the founding generation of Religious Right leaders passes from public life, and will regroup in the wake of national Republican electoral losses in 2008. Additionally, fresh battles will break out on different turf, in different towns and states. Even the issues will evolve. But the culture of denial regarding the ongoing potency and significance of the Religious Right in American public life remains as a stubborn obstacle to meaningful discussion about this powerful movement.

Win or lose from election to election, whatever its ups and downs, the Religious Right is on a mission, or rather a cluster of interrelated missions. The missions are religious in nature and transcend not only electoral outcomes but the lives of most if not all individuals and institutions. This is much of the source of both the movement’s resilience, and its visionary development of a vast capacity to move people and shape events, to raise-up leaders, and to field effective organizations able to wage electoral campaigns

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A San Francisco demonstrator after California voters passed Proposition 8 overturning a gay marriage law.

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Saving Monsignor Ryan

Refuting the Myths of Neoconservative Roman Catholic Economics

By Frank L. Coccozzelli

In October 1936, a Roman Catholic priest and professor of moral theology at the Catholic University of America took to the airwaves to defend the New Deal from scurrilous attacks made by another Catholic priest, the demagogic radio personality of the day, Father Charles Coughlin. Monsignor John A. Ryan's speech was titled "Roosevelt Safeguards America." In many ways, the radio volley between the two priests still reflects debates raging in the church and in American society today. Ryan's explanation of the sources of support for Communist anti-clericalism in Spain that he outlined in his radio address remains important in light of the claims of a small group of contemporary neoconservative Roman Catholic intellectual leaders whose views have had a profound influence on the American Catholic Church, as well as broader American public discourse.

"The great tragedy of Spain," Ryan declared, quoting fellow priest Wilfred Parsons,

was that in the nineteenth century the working masses apostatized from the Church, as Pope Pius X once remarked. And, it is well to remember, it was poverty, destitution and injustice which made them apostatize. They got to hate the Church because they hated the friends of the Church, who exploited them and whom the Church did nothing to rebuke or correct.



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The lesson of all this for us is that we should meet the evil of Communism not merely by denouncing it, and not at all by stigmatizing as communistic all fundamental reforms. We must attack the main causes of Communism. Among these are poverty, insecurity and inequitable

distribution of wealth and income. Failure to remove these evils will do more to strengthen Communism than all the propaganda and all the "boring-in" methods of the organized Communist movement.

If, as Pope John Paul II declared, the

Church has a “preferential option for the poor,” one would be pressed to find it expressed in the works of such contemporary “friends of the Church” as Michael Novak, George Weigel and other Roman Catholic neoconservatives. Indeed, they are prominent proponents of a buccaneer capitalism that exploits the poorest people of God — an idea profoundly at odds with Catholic social teaching for more than a century.

Many believe that neoconservatism is nothing more than a unilateral approach to United States foreign policy. But this is a dangerous misconception. Lost in the focus on a clique of Washington, D.C. militarists (as important as they are) is the role of the highly theocratic brand of neoconservatism. These “theocons” see their philosophy as a mechanism to transform the whole of society into one based upon a highly orthodox, traditionalist form of Roman Catholic morality, a fringe form resoundingly rejected by the vast majority of the Church’s American flock.

Much like its more secular variety, Roman Catholic neoconservatism bases its approach upon three pillars: nationalism (as opposed to patriotism), a national religious orthodoxy (as opposed to an overlapping moral consensus derived from a pluralistic society), and laissez-faire capitalism (as opposed to New Deal legacy capitalism).¹ This is generally at odds with Roman Catholic theology. For example, the concept of nationalism is in direct conflict with the Vatican’s call for universalism (neoconservatives such as Irving Kristol — echoing Leo Strauss — bemoan this as “the end of politics”). This conflict comes into sharp relief when economics comes into play—it quickly becomes apparent that Catholic neocons are more “neocon” than “Catholic.”

In essence, Catholic neocons are attempting to subvert the Roman Catholic tradition of social justice in order to further a greater (and ultimately) nonreligious neoconservative agenda. As we shall see, their take on Catholicism, social justice, and economics is not only inaccurate, but engages in a quietly ruthless form of historical revisionism. I daresay that their

revisionism is one of the more remarkable deviations not only from Roman Catholic teaching, but from basic standards of scholarship in recent American history.

The point of this rewriting of history is quite simple: Roman Catholicism has had a tradition of social justice consistent with the New Deal’s generally pro-worker approach, one that calls for the use of activist government to ensure economic

Roman Catholic neoconservatives ignore the Church’s teachings challenging unregulated capitalism and support- ing worker rights and distributive justice.

equity. Catholic theocons such as Michael Novak are doing their best to efface that tradition.

The Whiggish Revisionism of Michael Novak

Many theocons deceptively use the term “liberal” to their advantage. They will point to continuous papal damnations of liberalism (Pope Pius IX’s 1864 *Syllabus of Errors* immediately comes to mind) dating back to the French Revolution, charging the great philosophy with “nihilism” and “moral relativism,” and warning of its supposed “corrosive nature.”

However, these papal denunciations are of a liberalism that has little to do with the liberalism of today. In fact, the pontiffs were condemning laissez-faire capitalism, which today has taken other names and forms. The “theoconic” economic model is arguably the successor to the very move-

ment that the Church has repeatedly condemned—shaking off all the modern equitable improvements of the Progressive and urban liberal movements of the early 20th century — particularly those of the Protestant Social Gospel movement, the 1919 Program of Catholic Bishops, and the work of Monsignor Ryan. In essence, their goal is to return the Roman Catholic Church’s economic stance to the 19th century when industrial capital was unchecked by the moral vision of the church and the practical power of the state acting on behalf of the citizens. One way they hope to accomplish this task is by having Roman Catholicism again refocus on personal virtues rather than virtues related to the broader economy.

At the forefront of the revisionist movement is Michael Novak, the former Christian Socialist turned Catholic theocon, and a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. Anyone who comes to Novak’s books on Catholic economic ethics, without knowing that he is a theorist of Roman Catholic neoconservatism, may be misled. Novak pays lip service to such concepts as labor laws, for example, but when the rubber meets the road, he excuses the sins of the rich and powerful at the expense of the common man and woman.

Novak’s premier books on capitalism, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* (1982) and *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1993), present a highly tortured version of the Roman Catholic concept of social justice. For the Catholic neocon, ethics are up to the individual and should not be incorporated into government action, but no one should be concerned because laissez-faire capitalism ensures liberty for all. Throughout *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, Novak praises the virtues of “liberalism.” But when he does, he is actually referring to 19th century neoclassical liberalism, the variety that was yet to be humanized by either the Protestant Social Gospel movement or its Roman Catholic variation, Distributive Justice.

Rather than anything remotely like Roman Catholic social teaching on eco-

nomics, Novak embraces the libertarian F.A. Hayek's (1899-1992) view of a very limited role for government.² Like Hayek, Novak describes himself as a "Whig" on economics (referring to the British and American conservative parties that went extinct in the mid 19th century). Government's only concern, he believes, should be the rule of law, letting a "free market" correct itself when recessions and depressions occur. Hayek and Novak believe that the only appropriate corrective measure in the marketplace is loss of profit. They fail to acknowledge that property concentrated in the hands of a powerful few can, and often has, been used to domineer the many. Beyond that, Novak and "Whig-minded" others of the Catholic Right offer no mechanism for extending property ownership to the population at large.

Hayek advocated a *laissez-faire* approach to business, equating it with freedom and liberty. "The planning against which all our criticism is directed," he wrote, "is solely the planning against competition." In this, the Austrian-born economist feared that New Dealism in America, as well as the mixed center-Left economy advocated by Britain's Labour Party, would fall short of a promised "utopia" which in turn would cause unrest and ultimately a slide into strongman tyranny—"Caesarism"—that would refuse to give up the reins of elected power. History, of course, has proven him wrong. In Great Britain, Labor governments have peaceably handed off control to Tories as have liberal Democratic administrations to incoming Republican administrations in the United States.

Novak's embrace of Hayek gives cover to those who invoke the free market to justify bad, even unconscionable, behavior. Contrary to Novak's fear of collectivism or centralized state power, the real issue is *arbitrary power*—whether it is derived from the government or powerful economic interests. Arbitrary economic power can and often does cause hardship, denying the middle, working, and poor classes economic security in the form of a home and meaningful employment. It can also be closely linked to political persecution

and governmental authoritarianism, as concentrated economic power comes to distort politics and government. A close corollary is that the lack of an activist government creates a power vacuum which powerful economic interests are ever-eager to occupy; the Hayek/Novak formulation fails to take this into account.

Theocons such as Michael Novak conveniently ignore Roman Catholic notions of distributive justice, the ethics about economics based in "natural law." Rooted in the thinking of Thomas Aquinas, natural law ethics are the rules God set into motion in the world and also instilled in our own natures. While theocons distort

Monsignor Ryan is an important figure not only in Roman Catholic but in American history.

notions of natural law to justify their views on family planning, stem cell research, and LGBT rights, they ignore this field of ethics when it comes to the economy for good reason: it throws a monkey-wrench into their entire argument.³

First consider this 2003 screed on progressive taxation by Novak:

From President Jefferson to President Theodore Roosevelt there was no income tax in America, and it never entered into the heads of the Democratic or any other party that a limited government should confiscate money from some Americans on the pretext of giving it to others. Nor that in so doing government should pry relentlessly into every item of income.⁴

Whatever one may think of Novak's economic views, they are not rooted in natural law. His shrill ideology also avoids the facts of American history. Contrary to

A Timeline of Key Roman Catholic Economic Justice Pronouncements

1891: *Rerum Novarum* (*Of New Things*) encyclical issued by Pope Leo XIII, subtitled, *The Rights and Duties of Capital and Labor*. It condemned unrestrained laissez-faire capitalism, maintaining the Church's opposition to communism and support of private property ownership. Key progressive components included a living wage and the right for labor to organize.

1906: *A Living Wage*—Monsignor John A. Ryan publishes his first major work that defended the ownership of private property, but simultaneously "spurned overly acquisitive and unregulated free market capitalism as economically unhealthy and morally bankrupt."

1919: *The Bishops' Program of Social Reconstruction*—ghost-written by Monsignor John A. Ryan for the U.S. Catholic bishops. The document called for the right of workers to organize for the purpose of collective bargaining and, as a forerunner of Social Security, retirement insurance.

1931: *Quadragesimo Anno*—A papal encyclical literally meaning "in the fortieth year" (to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of *Rerum novarum*). Restating the message of *Rerum novarum* while pointing out workers' rights' progress that had been made in the last forty years, the document raised concerns for other issues that had appeared since 1891, including the effects of more complex industrialization upon class divisions.

1991: *Centesimus Annus*—A papal encyclical literally meaning "in the hundredth year" (to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*) that revisits Catholic social justice teachings on economics. Pope John Paul II added to the discussion the role of creativity of entrepreneurs and Third World debt.

Novak's slippery assertion above, for example, during the American Civil War our government instituted an income tax system as a means to finance the costs of the conflict. Obviously, the idea of an income tax "entered into the head" of Abraham Lincoln.

Contrast Novak with quotes from Ryan's natural law ethics-based view which suggests that rather than opposing an income tax, Aquinas would probably have been for it:

The principle that ownership is stewardship, that the man who possesses superfluous goods must regard himself as a trustee for the needy, is fundamental and all-pervasive in the teaching of Christianity. No more clear or concise statement of it has ever been given than that of St. Thomas Aquinas: "As regards the power of acquiring and dispensing material goods, man may lawfully possess them as his own; as regards their use, however, a man ought not to look upon them as his own, but as common, so that he may readily minister to the needs of others."⁵

As well as:

The great systematizer of theology in the thirteenth century, St. Thomas Aquinas, who is universally recognized as the most authoritative private teacher in the Church, stated the obligation of distribution in less extreme and more scientific terms: "According to the order of nature instituted by Divine Providence, the goods of the earth are designed to supply the needs of men. The division of goods and their appropriation through human law do not thwart this purpose. Therefore, the goods which a man has in superfluity are

due by the natural law to the sustenance of the poor."⁶

But Novak is not the only Roman Catholic neoconservative whose views on the New Deal run against the grain of Catholic teaching on economics. Consider rejected U.S. Supreme Court Justice nominee and American Enterprise Institute Scholar Robert H. Bork (a convert to orthodox Catholicism in later life), who declared in his book, *Slouching Toward Gomorrah*:

The great political upsurge of equality occurred with Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal and Harry Truman's Fair Deal. . . . The message was that inequality must be cured by government. No other institution is sufficiently comprehensive in its jurisdiction to undertake this task which means egalitarian passion must always lead to greater centralized power and coercion. Lyndon Johnson's Great Society carried forward what Roosevelt and Truman had begun and accomplished the most thorough-going redistribution of wealth and status in the name of equality that the country ever experienced. . . . The fact is that antihierarchical, egalitarian sentiments were on the rise in political movements, whose tendencies were, therefore, collectivism and centralization, with a concomitant decline in the freedoms of business organizations, private associations, families, and individuals.

Of course "the cards have been unfairly stacked." But not in the way that Bork suggests. Before FDR's New Deal in the 1930s, both the middle class and working poor did not have safety nets such as Social Security or the National Labor Relations Board, unlike the very wealthy whose superfluous assets provided every possible cushion for the downturns in life. These are facts typically, and conveniently, left out of the writings of the theocons whose special pleadings for the wealthy are transparent to Roman Catholics well-grounded in the

Church's social justice tradition. What the New Deal provided was far more in line with Catholic teaching than any neocon's sentiments for laissez-faire economics.

More on Whiggish Economics

"The trouble with capitalism is capitalists," Herbert Hoover (nobody's socialist) once said, "They're too damn greedy." But the claims of Novakian theocons notwithstanding, an orthodox practice of religion does not necessarily inoculate one from the temptation of greedy business practices. A particularly good illustration is the business leadership of the late J. Peter Grace (1913-1995).

Grace, the CEO of W. R. Grace and Company, was constantly described as "devoutly Catholic." He was both a Knight of Malta as well as a founding member of Legatus, an organization of Roman Catholic business leaders. On its web site, Legatus describes its mission as "To study, live and spread the Faith in our business, professional and personal lives."

Under Grace's leadership, the company improperly disposed of a highly toxic industrial solvent into the ground water of Woburn, Massachusetts. The substance, trichloroethylene, has been linked to an increase in local diagnoses of leukemia and cancer. The court battle over this incident was the subject of the best-selling book and film of the same name, *A Civil Action*. As *Seattle Post Intelligencer* reported, "Grace was indicted by the Department of Justice on two counts of lying to the EPA in 1982 about the amount of hazardous chemicals it used at its Woburn plant."⁷

And then there was W.R. Grace's role in asbestos dumping in Libby, Montana. In February 2006, the U.S. Department of Justice announced a 10-count criminal indictment against seven senior current and former Grace officials. *Seattle Post Intelligencer* reported that the charges, "...alleged conspiracy, knowing endangerment, obstruction of justice and wire fraud for endangering the people of Libby by concealing well-documented hazards of the tremolite asbestos."⁸ According to the indictment, as far back as the 1970s Grace

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Pat Bagley

and Company attempted to conceal information about the adverse health effects of the mining operation.

Consider as well the case of another Legatus cofounder Tom Monaghan, icon and financier of Catholic Right causes. After building his Domino's Pizza empire, he sold it in 1998 to Bain Capital (an investment company co-founded by Mitt Romney) for a price in excess of one billion dollars. Monaghan has since been investing his fortune in conservative Roman Catholic causes such as the Thomas More Law Center, Ave Maria University, and the militant anti-abortion group Priests for Life, headed by Father Frank Pavone.

Monaghan has thwarted attempts by Ave Maria University employees to unionize. When asked if he saw a contradiction in his actions, since unionization is supported by the Catholic Church, Monaghan replied, "I think that [the church]

hierarchy doesn't know as much about those things as they do about their theology." Monaghan's personalized and paternalistic control of the university singlehandedly exposes the absurdity of Novak's contention that if business leaders merely become virtuous through faith, then government oversight of industry becomes unnecessary.

In his 1990 publication, *Towards a Theology of the Corporation*, Novak expounds on why he believes theology is central to modern business ethics: "Finally, since most Americans are remarkably religious (and since most are of Jewish or Christian background), a truly realistic business ethic should have a theological dimension." Several lines later, he adds, "Thus, a theological investigation of the weaknesses and strengths of a capitalist system or a business corporation supplies a necessary bit of realism. A business ethic without a theol-

ogy is doomed to being a thin sort of gruel, minimalist and unsatisfying to most religious persons."¹⁰

"A necessary bit of realism," indeed! Novak and his cohorts acknowledge that capitalism is "for sinners" and as noted above, fail to provide any remedy for the collateral damage. Their theoconic remedy is to make society as a whole more virtuous, largely as an outgrowth of individual virtue, and little or no government is required. George Weigel, one of Novak's fellow theocons, elaborated in a 1996 interview:

In *Centesimus Annus*, the pope writes that the temptation of wealthy societies (or developing societies, for that matter) is to confuse "having more" with "being more." Spend an hour looking at ads on prime-time television, and you'll see that temp-

tation is omnipresent in America.

Capitalist economies only work when a critical mass of people are possessed by certain habits of the mind and heart (what some of us used to call “virtues”): self-command, the capacity for prudent risk-taking, the ability to form cooperative working relationships, and the willingness to defer gratification. Corporations need to be very careful that, in their marketing and advertising, they don’t promote attitudes and counter-values that will, eventually, cause the market system to implode. “Just do it” is bad morals and bad economics.¹¹

Contemporary liberals understand that the federal government, one representative of the people, needs enough muscle in order to deal with the excesses of centralized economic power of trusts, monopolies, and polluters. A government built upon liberal democratic principles is the greatest deterrent to the centralized power of a plutocracy.

Roman Catholic natural law principles of distributive justice are integral to contemporary liberal economic thought, as we’ll see below. Even John Locke’s notion of natural law in *Two Treatises of Government* thwarts the theocons’ anything goes, free market opposition to economic justice:

It will, perhaps, be objected to this, that if gathering the acorns or other fruits of the earth, etc., makes a right to them, then any one may engross as much as he will. To which I answer, Not so. The same law of Nature that does by this means give us property, does also bound that property too. “God has given us all things richly.” Is the voice of reason confirmed by inspiration? But how far has He given it us — “to enjoy”? As much as any one can make use of to any advantage of life before it spoils, so much he may by his labour fix a property in. Whatever is beyond this is more than his share, and belongs to others.¹²

If anything were ever a tip-off that theocons are using orthodoxy to conceal an inequitable economic system, this is it. They ignore arguments of natural law related to redistribution when it suits them.

It is important for both Roman Catholics and non-Catholics to be able to rebut the theocons and describe the profound theoconic deviation from Catholic teaching on economics, their outrageous historical revisionism, and their misplaced loyalty to economic elites. A key to our rebuttal is, as we shall see, the story of Monsignor Ryan.

**Contrary to Novak’s
fear of collectivism or
centralized state power,
the real issue is
*arbitrary power.***

A Brief Overview of Catholic Economics

So what are basic notions of Catholic social justice and how have they been applied to contemporary economics in the United States?

Modern Catholic social justice economics begins with *Rerum Novarum* (*Of New Things*) which was issued by Pope Leo XIII in May 1891 and was subtitled, *The Rights and Duties of Capital and Labor*. In it, Leo severely condemned unrestrained libertarian capitalism, while maintaining the Church’s opposition to communism and support of private property ownership. Key progressive components included a living wage — the minimum salary necessary for workers to support their family — and the right of labor to organize unions.

While Leo’s encyclical is clearly based upon natural law principles, they are *Neo-Thomistic* natural law principles, based on a school of Roman Catholic thought that

first appeared in mid-nineteenth century Italy and reinterpreted the foundational thinker of Catholicism, Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas defines distributive justice as follows:

...in distributive justice something is given to a private individual, in so far as what belongs to the whole is due to the part, and in a quantity that is proportionate to the importance of the position of that part in respect of the whole. Consequently in distributive justice a person receives all the more of the common goods, according as he holds a more prominent position in the community. This prominence in an aristocratic community is gauged according to virtue, in an oligarchy according to wealth, in a democracy according to liberty, and in various ways according to various forms of community. Hence in distributive justice the mean is observed, not according to equality between thing and thing, but according to proportion between things and persons: in such a way that even as one person surpasses another, so that which is given to one person surpasses that which is allotted to another.¹³

Aquinas addresses something the Roman Catholic neoconservatives conspicuously do not: a duty to distribute with provision to the poorest of society. Theocons such as George Weigel may well point to Aquinas’s talk about inequality, but Aquinas is talking about unequal reward based upon corresponding contribution with an eye towards a minimum requirement of distribution to the most vulnerable, not distribution based upon power. Clearly, Aquinas’ teachings are far closer to the New Deal vision of redistribution and regulated capitalism than that of the Hayek-influenced theocons.

Neo-Thomism is far more flexible than traditional natural law thinking based on Thomas Aquinas. It embraces the spirit of his writings instead of focusing on the letter of the great theologian’s works. Method-

ology trumps static conclusions and equities are more freely allowed to rectify absurd conclusions. It was an important first step in acknowledging the role of historical consciousness in applying classical ethical teachings to contemporary issues. This difference in outlook explains why a traditionalist-minded Catholic would read *Rerum Novarum* and only see it as a condemnation of Socialism while a Neo-Thomist will clearly see Leo's call for bettering the economic conditions of the working class through organized labor and legislative action.

Neo-Thomism acknowledges that Aquinas viewed the world through a thirteenth century lens, and that he would undoubtedly see things differently 800 years later in light of the tremendous advances in science, our understanding of history, and so much more. Beyond addressing the need to reconcile Church teachings with the ideas of Hegel, Kant, and liberalism while addressing contemporary issues, Neo-Thomism is a huge step closer to Aristotle's methodology (Aquinas based his natural law ethics on the works of Aristotle filtered through Maimonides, as well as the works of Cicero) than the static dogmatism of Vatican traditionalists. Neo-Thomism more closely follows the Classical Greek philosopher's admonition that everything that has changed is changing.

Much of the historical Protestant-Catholic tension within liberalism arises from divergent notions of freedom. Mainstream Protestants emphasize the freedom of the individual coupled with a faith in the basic goodness of mankind. They initially also embraced a more Darwinist economic liberalism of the nineteenth century: classical liberalism (now known as economic libertarianism). The Roman Catholic concept of freedom had less to do with the individual and is focused more communally — with an emphasis upon order and general obedience to higher religious authorities.

Nineteenth century Catholicism feared that the Protestant emphasis on the individual's freedom would lead to disobedience and societal disorder — a belief still common among Roman Catholic tradi-

tionists, but rejected by many mainstream American Catholics (as we shall see below, many of today's traditionalist Catholics now tend to worry more about societal disorder where biological issues are concerned, but become diametrically unconcerned on economic issues). At the time, the Vatican was concerned that excessive individualism would result in deplorable living conditions for the working class. But it must be remembered that the Church's criticism was aimed at nineteenth century classical liberal, laissez-faire economics — not the economics of New

Deal liberalism and its legacy.

On the heels of the infamous 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, New York State Assembly Majority Leader Al Smith and New York State Senator Robert Wagner, Sr. along with other Roman Catholic elected officials (mostly in the Northeast and parts of the Midwest) began paying long overdue attention to the needs of the worker-class. While this shift in constituency priorities may have come from the moral outrage of seeing 148 mostly Italian and Jewish garment workers either burn or jump to their deaths, a political calculation

When Ryan's Catholic View Strayed Rightward

Monsignor Ryan's name almost always generates apoplexy in conservative discourse, especially Roman Catholic Right discourse. A Catholic paleoconservative writer for the blog "Culture Wars" excoriated Ryan because he "...continued to serve on the ACLU board with the Communists" while the *National Review's* Jonah Goldberg recently cited Ryan's economic teachings as proof of "liberal fascism."

But although Monsignor Ryan was instrumental in shaping New Deal economics and championing free speech, like a hero of any political or religious stripe, he was not flawless.

Historian John McGreevy documents in his book *Catholicism And American Freedom* (throughout the chapter entitled "The Social Question") how Ryan campaigned against birth control, even going as far as describing couples who practiced it as engaging in "a love of material goods and a self-indulgence." In fact, after economics, it was one of his primary concerns.

Another shortcoming was his attitude towards the Loyalist forces during the Spanish Civil War.

By and large, Ryan was an opponent of fascism. As early as the 1920s he wrote several articles attacking Mussolini's concept of the individual existing for the benefit of the state.¹⁶ And he consistently condemned Hitler, particularly in regard to his antisemitic policies (In the run-up to the U.S. entry into World War II, Ryan openly campaigned to end restrictions on neutrality that prevented providing arms to the Allies). However, on Franco and Spain, Ryan got it wrong.

According to a *New York Times* article published July 14, 1939, "Asks Public to Act on Neutrality Act," subtitled "Mgr. Ryan hits Nazi Ideal; Assails Totalitarian States but Defends Franco," while speaking at the University of Virginia on the need to loosen the restrictions that denied sending weapons to France and Great Britain, both on the verge of war with Nazi Germany, Ryan failed to make a serious connection between Nazi fascism and Franco's Falange. Reporter Winifred Mallon noted, "the Monsignor said... he favored the Franco regime because the government it replaced had been 'Communist controlled, and not a true democracy.'" Clearly, history records that the Loyalist regime assumed power through democratic elections.

If Ryan was anti-Nazi and anti-fascist, which he was, then what explains his apparent sympathy for Franco? Most likely, the Monsignor viewed the situation in Spain through the lens of attacks on the Church. There is the infamous photograph of Loyalist soldiers firing in execution fashion at a statue of Jesus — an image that must have chilled many a Roman Catholic. As a priest he was obviously appalled at some in the Republican forces who were executing approximately 7,000 priests and nuns (it should also be pointed out that Nationalist forces executed at least sixteen priests, not to mention incidents such as the Guernica air raid).¹⁷

It is also worth noting that Ryan never again publicly defended Franco after June 1939.

was involved: Tammany Hall and other Democratic Party machines quickly understood that political power lay with working class immigrants, not the corporate class. Real advances in public health, child labor laws, and workers' rights soon followed.

This is where Roman Catholicism has had one of its greatest influences on modern liberalism: a deeply ingrained sense of community, and the idea that activist government could advance the nation's general welfare. This Catholic notion that we are still mutually and communally responsible for each other helped transform nineteenth century economic liberalism into the more compassionate twentieth century liberalism which would ultimately define the New Deal and its succeeding variants.¹⁴

The Bishops' Program of Social Reconstruction

The next major step in Roman Catholic social justice teaching in the United States came in 1919 with the release of *The Bishops' Program of Social Reconstruction*—ghost-written by Monsignor John A. Ryan. The program, Ryan wrote, "...was issued in response to the general need which men felt after the war for programs for the reconstruction of social justice." It called for the right of workers to organize for the purpose of collective bargaining and for retirement insurance — yet unlike previous Catholic distributist ideas advocating by such thinkers as Hilaire Belloc, G. K. Chesterton and Dorothy Day, it embraced government programs as the means for achieving these goals.

Ryan, a key theorist of Roman Catholic approaches to economics and social justice, is an often-overlooked hero of twentieth century economic liberalism. Born to Irish immigrants in 1869 Minnesota, John Ryan grew up during the age of robber barons and a labor movement with little or no real bargaining power. Ryan was ordained a Roman Catholic priest in 1898. In the course of his career, he blended late nineteenth century Midwestern Progressive Populism with a burning sense of Neo-

Thomist ethics, and became a champion of civil liberties and economic justice. He wed theology to economics and in 1906 published his first major economic treatise, *A Living Wage*, that defended the ownership of private property, but simultaneously "spurned overly acquisitive and unregulated free market capitalism as economically unhealthy and morally bankrupt."¹⁵ In 1915 Ryan attained a professorship at Catholic University where he taught until his retirement in 1939. To the chagrin of today's Roman Catholic Right, he was both an early board member of the ACLU as well being a close friend of the organization's founder, Roger Baldwin.¹⁶

If he were alive today Monsignor Ryan, like many of today's theocons, would oppose artificial birth control, abortion rights, and embryonic stem cell research. But unlike today's strident Roman Catholic Right, he understood that opponents on such matters could be strong allies on economic issues. As the Notre Dame historian John T. McGreevy noted, "The civil liberties lawyer Morris Ernst, before challenging the 1935 congressional testimony of Father John A. Ryan on contraception carefully announced, '(O)n many battle fronts in the fight for freedom of the press, for labor, and so forth, I have fought side by side with Father Ryan.'¹⁷

In 1916, he published the first of several editions of his magnum opus, *Distributive Justice: The Right and Wrong of Our Present Distribution of Wealth*. Drawing

upon Aristotelian notions of natural law ethics, he outlined a very contemporary liberal concept of the just distribution of profit in relation to contribution, merit, and special talents. He later became a confidant of FDR, earning the moniker, "the Right Reverend New Dealer."

His Bishops' Program of 1919 called for a living wage as well as retirement insurance — a forerunner of what in 1935 was to become Social Security.

Ryan and the Bishops were not afraid of crediting Fabian socialists with ideas that could be used to make capitalism fair and more meritorious. This stands in contrast to the unthinking rejection of any and all ideas derived from socialism by today's theocons whose fundamentalist-like faith in market capitalism smacks of idolatry to mainstream Roman Catholics.

At the heart of *Rerum Novarum* (as well as its encyclical restatement in 1931, *Quadragesimo Anno*) and *The Bishops' Program of Social Reconstruction* is a form of natural law ethics: the rules God set into motion in the world and also instilled in our own natures. Echoing the teachings of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas, both works emphasized the merits of moderation. These statements did not condemn ownership's right to take a profit from its business endeavors; rather they required that a proper portion of earnings to be justly distributed to their workers in proportion to their contribution and adjusted to allow that worker to support a family.

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“Humanity is instilled with intelligence with which to make rational choices,” *The New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia* explains, “but its reason is bound by what one ‘ought’ to do — every being has its telos or end to fulfill and it is not for humanity to interfere.”

Rerum Novarum as well as the Program of the American bishops say that the telos for the worker to fulfill is to be allowed to live a reasonable life. That means earning an income that would allow for the purchase of a home, food and clothing for his family. In other words, the worker who contributes to profit is to be rewarded with a dignified wage.

Saving Monsignor Ryan

Monsignor Ryan’s role and legacy in U.S. Roman Catholicism matters for many reasons. Most importantly for purposes of this essay, he is the central figure in the development of modern American Catholicism’s approach to economics and a profound influence on FDR and the development of the New Deal making him an important figure not only in Roman Catholic but in American history.

It seems to be essential to the project to which Novak *et al* have devoted their lives — and the resources of their wealthy patrons — to erode Ryan’s influence and ideas in the American Church. One of their main methods is, as major Roman Catholic authors, to elide him from history. After all, a Catholic Church that advocates for the economic interests of the poor, working, and middle classes can threaten the unfettered practice of buccaneer capitalism. They therefore shift the focus to the micro issues of personal economic evils and away from systemic causes of economic evils. How irresistibly convenient for these neocons and their wealthy benefactors.

There is an important corollary here that is integral to the Church’s capacity to advance fundamental notions of distributive justice, one fully understood by Ryan. When only those of superfluous wealth have the ability to shape policy within historic religious institutions, eventually their economic self-interest will have a cor-

rupting effect; religious organizations lose their independence and their ability to offer social criticism, and their history and theologies are rewritten for them.

American Roman Catholicism doesn’t need any more Novaks channeling Hayek and politically aligning with the Religious Right. It needs thinkers, writers and leaders who advocate for the average worker — an equally and often far more important player in wealth creation than seven-figure CEOs and mega-stockholders. It needs leaders like Monsignor John A. Ryan. ■

End Notes

¹ See Irving Kristol, *Neoconservatism; The Autobiography of an Idea*, (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1999), 365.

² While Novak briefly touches upon Hayek in *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), he leans heavily upon the Austrian-born economist in other works. For example, in *Towards a Theology of the Corporation* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1981, pp. 15-16, footnote 22, he cites Hayek’s 1954 work, *Capitalism and the Historians*, specifically when he claims, “Given the anticapitalist bias of the Roman Catholic Church, of major American and Protestant theologians of the century, and of the Pronouncements of Protestant churches, church leaders are susceptible to systematic misconceptions about the nature of democratic capitalism.” In *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, (New York: Free Press, 1993) pp. 64-67, Novak, while seemingly critical of Hayek’s skepticism about the concept of social justice, echoes him by declaring that social justice is often improperly thought of as a being guided by the state. Novak attempts to redefine social justice as a matter of personal virtue, giving religious faith a role in making citizens virtuous. Ironically, Novak repeatedly says he admires the personal ethics of Hayek who was an agnostic. Ironic because Novak the theologian says only a society that follows orthodox religion can produce virtuous citizens.

³ For a full discussion of their distortions of natural law, see my “How Roman Catholic Neocons Peddle Natural Law into Debates about Life and Death,” *The Public Eye*, Summer 2008.

⁴ Michael Novak, “The Liberal Game Made Obvious.” *The National Review Online*, September 30, 2003; <http://www.nationalreview.com/novak/novak200309300823.asp>

⁵ John A. Ryan, *Distributive Justice*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), p.304. Ryan is citing Aquinas’s magnum opus on natural law, *Summa Theologica*, 2a. 2ae., q. 66, a. 3.

⁶ Ryan, 306

⁷ “The History of W.R. Grace & Co.,” *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, November 18, 1999.

⁸ Andrew Schneider, “W.R. Grace to Pay Record Superfund Fine,” *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, March 12, 2008.

⁹ Susan Hansen, “Our Lady of Discord”, *New York Times*, July 30, 2006. http://select.nytimes.com/search/restricted/article?res=F30916F63_95B0C738FDDAE0894DE404482

¹⁰ Michael Novak, *Toward a Theology of the Corporation*, (Washington, D.C., AEI Press, 1990), 4.

¹¹ George Weigel Interview, “Faith Essential Ingredient of Democratic Capitalism” *Religion & Liberty*, March & April 1996, 6: 2.

¹² John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 117.

¹³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, “Question 61: The Parts of Justice, Article 2.

¹⁴ John T. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2003), 151. McGreevy notes, “To their surprise, Catholics also found an unexpected champion. Just before the 1932 election the Democratic presidential candidate, Franklin Roosevelt, sent a giddy tremor through Catholic circles by quoting *Quadragesimo Anno* before a large Detroit crowd. The encyclical, Roosevelt explained, was ‘just as radical as I am’ and ‘one of the greatest documents of modern times.” See also Harold Meyerson, “God and the New Deal,” *The American Prospect*, November 21, 2004; http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=god_and_the_new_deal

¹⁵ “About Monsignor John A. Ryan,” University of St. Thomas, Minnesota, John A. Ryan Institute site page; Link: <http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/aboutus/ryaninfo.html>

¹⁶ Joseph M. McShane, S.J., “Sufficiently Radical”: *Catholicism, Progressivism, and the Bishops’ Program of 1919* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1986), 30.

¹⁷ McGreevy, 259.

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REBRANDING FASCISM *cont'd from page 1*

activists.

Since then, the National-Anarchists have joined other marches in Australia and in the United States; in April 2008, they protested on behalf of Tibet against the Chinese government during the Olympic torch relay in both Canberra, Australia, and San Francisco. In September, U.S. National-Anarchists protested the Folsom Street Fair, an annual gay “leather” event held in San Francisco.

While these may seem like isolated incidents of quirky subterfuge, these quasi-anarchists are an international export of a new version of fascism that represent a significant shift in the trends and ideology of the movement. National-Anarchists have adherents in Australia, Great Britain, the United States, and throughout continental Europe, and in turn are part of a larger trend of fascists who appropriate elements of the radical Left. Like “Autonomous Nationalists” in Germany and the genteel intellectual fascism of the European New Right, the National Anarchists appropriate leftist ideas and symbols, and use them to obscure their core fascist values. The National-Anarchists, for example, denounce the centralized state, capitalism, and globalization — but in its place they seek to establish a system of ethnically pure villages.

In 1990, Chip Berlet showed in *Right Woos Left* how the extreme Right in the United States has made numerous overtures to the Left. “The fascist Right has wooed the progressive Left primarily around opposition to such issues as the use of U.S. troops in foreign military interventions, support for Israel, the problems of CIA misconduct and covert action, domestic government repression, privacy rights, and civil liberties.”¹ More recently, the fascist Right has also tried to build alliances based on concern for the environment, hardline

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antizionism, and opposition to globalization.

Fascism has become increasingly international in the post-World War II period, particularly with the rise of the internet. One of the most obvious results of this internationalization is the continual flow of European ideas to the United States; for example, the Nazi skinhead movement originated in Britain and quickly spread to the United States. In trade, Americans have exported the Ku Klux Klan to Europe and smuggled Holocaust denial and neo-Nazi literature into Germany.²

The National-Anarchist idea has spread around the world over the internet. The United States hosts only a few websites, but the trend so far has been towards a steady increase. But it represents what many see as the potential new face of fascism. By adopting selected symbols, slogans and stances of the left-wing anarchist movement in particular, this new form of post-war fascism (like the European New Right) hopes to avoid the stigma of the older tradition, while injecting its core fascist values into the newer movement of anti-globalization activists and related decentralized political groups. Simultaneously, National-Anarchists hope to draw members (such as reactionary counter-culturalists and British National Party members) away from traditional White Nationalist groups to their own blend of what they claim is “neither left nor right.”³

Despite this claim, National-Anarchist ideology is centered directly on what scholar Roger Griffin defines as the core of fascism: “palingenetic populist ultra-nationalism.” “Palingenetic,” he says, is a “generic term for the vision of a radically new beginning which follows a period of destruction or perceived dissolution.” Palingenetic ultra-nationalism therefore is “one whose mobilizing vision is that of *the national community rising phoenix-like after a period of encroaching decadence which all but destroyed it.*”⁴

For the National-Anarchists, this “ultra-nationalism” is also their main ideological innovation: a desire to create a stateless (and hence “anarchist”) system of ethnically

pure villages. Troy Southgate, their leading ideologue, says “we just want to stress that National-Anarchism is an essential racialist phenomenon. That’s what makes it different.”⁵

Why should we pay attention to such new forms of fascism? There is no immediate threat of fascism taking power in the established western liberal democracies; the rise to power of Mussolini and Hitler in the 1920s and 1930s occurred in a different era and under different social conditions than those that exist today. Nonetheless, much is at stake.

These new permutations have the potential of playing havoc on social movements, drawing activists out from the Left into the Right. For example, when the Soviet Union collapsed, a number of non-

GLOSSARY

Fascism: Fascism is an especially virulent form of far-right populism. Fascism glorifies national, racial, or cultural unity and collective rebirth while seeking to purge imagined enemies, and attacks both left-wing movements and liberal pluralism. Fascism first crystallized in Europe in response to the Bolshevik Revolution and the devastation of World War I, and then spread to other parts of the world. Postwar fascists have reinterpreted fascist ideology and strategy in various ways to fit new circumstances.

Third Position: Third Position politics are a minor branch of fascist thought. It rejects both liberal capitalism and Marxism for a kind of racially based socialism. Its main precursors are the National Bolsheviks, who were a fusion of nationalism and communism, and the Strasser brothers, key figures in the “left-wing” of the Nazi party. Third Positionists tend to support national liberation movements in the Third World, seek alliances with other ethnic separatists, and have recently supported environmentalism.

Communist left-wing groups suddenly emerged in Russia offering the promise of a more egalitarian society *sans* dictatorship. However, the group that became dominant was the National Bolsheviks, who are probably the most successful contemporary Third Position fascist group (see glossary). Catching the imagination of disaffected youth by taking up many left-wing stances and engaging in direct action, they successfully obliterated their rivals by absorbing their demographic base *en masse*. The left-wing groups disappeared and the National Bolsheviks remain a powerful political movement today with a huge grassroots and youth base. As they grow older, they will remain influential in Russian politics for decades.

Even when small, Jeffrey Bale suggests it is important to pay attention to these fascist sects because they can serve as transmission belts for unconventional political ideas, influence more mainstream groups, and link up into transnational networks.⁶

Over the years, the antiglobalization movement has also created an opening for these Left-Right alliances. The Dutch anti-racist group *De Fabel van de illegaal* pulled out of the anti-globalization movement in 1998 because of its links with far-right forces. Pat Buchanan, the paleoconservative politician who holds racist and anti-semitic views, spoke on a Teamsters Union platform during the demonstrations against the IMF/ World Bank in Washington D.C. in April 2000.⁷ Meanwhile, racists like Louis Beam (who has worked with the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and Aryan Nations) and Matt Hale (of the World Church of the Creator) praised the Seattle demonstrations against the World Trade Organization in 1999.⁸

At the same time, parts of the anti-imperialist Left (including many anarchists) have built alliances with reactionary Islamist movements such as Hamas and Hezbollah, called for open acceptance of antisemitism, and embraced nationalist



Artist's rendering by Debbie Hird

struggles.⁹ This history prompts many cosmopolitan anarchists to worry that the overtures of new-style fascists to radical Leftists could meet with some success.

Sect History and Strategy

The National-Anarchists have their origin in the National Front, a far-right British party with an impressive 1977 dark horse electoral success based on their xenophobic anti-immigrant platform. After the election, the group fractured into many

The extreme Right in the United States has made numerous overtures to the Left.

internal factions before splintering into different sects. Troy Southgate, the main English-language National-Anarchist ideologue, is a veteran of this internecine maze. He joined the National Front in 1984, and subsequently joined a splinter group that eventually split again before becoming the National Revolutionary Faction (NRF), a small cadre organization openly calling for armed guerilla warfare.¹⁰

In the late 1990s however, the NRF started to morph into the National-Anarchist movement; the two were referred to interchangeably for a number of years, until the NRF disbanded in 2003.¹¹ Southgate's ideology does not seem to have changed substantially with the shift, and he continues to circulate his NRF-era essays.

The NRF's only known public action as "National-Anarchists" was to hold an Anarchist Heretics Fair in October 2000, in which a number of fringe-of-the-fringe groups participated. However, when they attempted a second fair, a variety of anarchists and antifascists blocked it from being held. After the same thing happened in 2001, Southgate and the NRF abandoned this strategy and retreated to purely internet-based propaganda.¹²

The fair reflected Southgate's adaptation of the Trotskyist practice of entristism — the strategy of entering other political groups in order to either take them over or break off with a part of their membership.¹³ Southgate argues, "The NRF uses cadre activists to infiltrate political groups, institutions and services... It is part of our strategy to do this work and, if we are to have any success in the future, it is work that must be done on an increasing basis."¹⁴ He claims that the NRF infiltrated the 1999 Stop the City demonstration and the 2000 May Day protest, as well as activities of the Hunt Saboteurs Association and the Animal Liberation Front.¹⁵

Beyond its tactical uses, entrim is a philosophy for the National-Anarchists as they recruit members from the Left and in particular anarchist groups. Instead of simply calling themselves “racist communarians,” they purposely adopt the label “anarchist” and specifically appropriate anarchist imagery. Examples include the use of a purple star (anarchists typically use either a black star, or a half-black star, with the other half designating their specific tendency, i.e., red for unionists, green for environmentalists, etc.), or a red-and-black star superimposed with a Celtic cross (the latter being a typical symbol of White Nationalists). The allied New Right factions in Australia and the UK also use the “chaos symbol” — an eight-pointed star — which they adapt from left-wing countercultural anarchists.

The fascist use of the “black bloc” political formation at demonstrations is also an appropriation of anarchist and far-left forms. In recent years, German fascists calling themselves Autonomous Nationalists have marched in large black blocs, waving black flags (a symbol of traditional anarchism), and even appropriated the symbolism of the German anti-fascist groupings.¹⁶

As far back as 1984, Pierre-André Taguieff, an expert on the European New Right, condemned the “tactic of ideological scrambling systematically deployed by GRECE,” a right-wing think tank that embraced some leftist critiques of advanced capitalism while promoting core fascist ideas.¹⁷ Here we see that ideological scrambling deployed on a grassroots level.

It needs to be stressed that, despite the name, National-Anarchists have not emerged from inside the anarchist movement, and, intellectually, their origins are not based in its ideas. Anarchists typically see themselves as part of a cosmopolitan and explicitly anti-nationalist left-wing movement which seeks to dismantle both capitalism and the centralized state. They seek instead to replace them with decentralized, non-hierarchical, and self-regulating communities. Although similar to Marxists, anarchists are just as adamant in their

opposition to racism, sexism, and homophobia as they are to capitalism. In the United States, anarchists were key players in the formation of labor unions, were the only political faction to support gay rights before World War I, were leaders in the free speech movement, and were active in helping to legalize birth control. The White Nationalists’ embrace of the anarchist label and symbolism is more than little ironic, since anarchists have a long history of physically disrupting White Nationalist events, for instance by groups like Anti-Racist Action. Anarchist military units were even formed to fight Franco in Spain and Mussolini in Italy.

The fascist use of the “black bloc” political formation at demonstrations is also an appropriation of anarchist and far-Left forms.

The Question of “Fascism”

The National-Anarchists claim they are not “fascist.” Still, Troy Southgate looks to lesser-known fascists such as Romanian Iron Guard leader Corneliu Codreanu, and lesser-light Nazis like Otto Strasser and Walter Darré. Part of Southgate’s sleight of hand is to claim to be ‘against fascism’ by claiming he is socialist (as did Nazis such as Strasser) and by supporting political decentralization (as do contemporary European fascists such as Alain de Benoist). Sometimes he proclaims fascism to be equivalent to the capitalism he opposes, or promoting a centralized state, which he also opposes.

Southgate is undoubtedly sincere in his aversion to the classical fascism of Hitler and Mussolini, and has cited this as a reason for his break from one of the National Front splinter groups. He sees the old fascism as discredited, and an abandonment of the true values of revolutionary nationalism. But his ultimate goal, shared with the European New Right, is to create a new form of fascism, with the same core values of a revitalized community that withstands the decadence of cosmopolitan liberal capitalism. This cannot be done as long as his views are linked in the popular mind to the older tradition.

Third Position

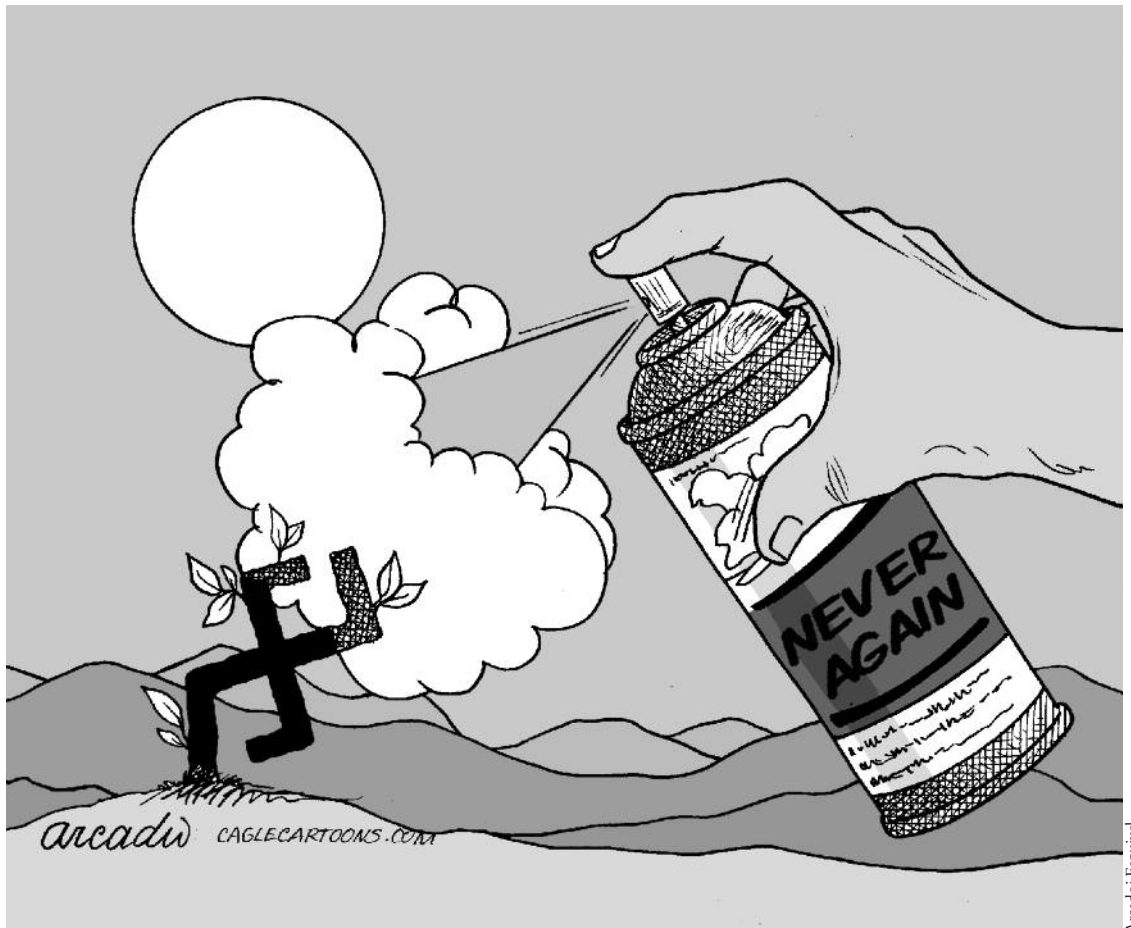
One of the two main influences on National-Anarchists is a minor current of fascism called Third Position. The origins of Third Position are in National Bolshevism, which originally referred to Communists who sought a national (rather than international) revolution. It soon came to refer to Nazis who sought an alliance with the Soviet Union. The most important of these was “left-wing Nazi” Otto Strasser, a former Socialist who advocated land redistribution and nationalization of industry. After criticizing Hitler for allying with banking interests, he was expelled from the party. His brother, Gregor Strasser, held similar views but remained a Nazi until 1934, when other Nazis killed him in the Night of the Long Knives.

A number of postwar fascists continued this train of thought, including Francis Parker Yockey and Jean-François Thiriart.¹⁸ They saw the United States and liberal capitalism as the primary enemy, sought an alliance with the Soviet Union, and promoted solidarity with Third World revolutionary movements, including Communist revolutions in Asia and Latin American, and Arab anti-Zionists (particularly those with whom they shared antisemitic views). Thiriart’s followers in Italy formed a sect of “Nazi-Maoists” based on these principles, and after a gruesome August 1980 bombing in Bologna which killed 85 people, 40 Italian fascists fled to England, including Robert Fiore.

Fiore was sheltered by National Front member Michael Walker, editor of the *Scorpion*.¹⁹ This paper subsequently spread Third Position and New Right ideas into Britain's National Front, and Troy Southgate openly credits it as a major influence.²⁰ Third Position ideas also spread through the National Front via the magazine *Rising*.²¹ After a 1986 split, this new influence resulted in a reconfiguration of the party's politics. Prominent members visited Qadafi's Libya, praised Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini and forged links with the Nation of Islam in the United States.

Southgate claims to have abandoned Third Position fascism.²² This is a duplicitous claim. He has rejected a centralized state, and therefore its ability to nationalize industry or create an "ethnostate." Nonetheless, National-Anarchists retain the two main philosophical threads of Third Position. The first is the notion of a racist socialism, as a third option between both capitalism and left-wing socialism like Marxism or traditional anarchism.²³ The second is the stress on a strategic and conceptual alliance of nationalists (especially in the Third World) against the United States. Just as the National Front praised the Nation of Islam and Qadafi, the National-Anarchists praise Black and Asian racial separatist groups, and support movements for national self-determination, such as the Tibetan independence movement. Unlike many White Nationalists (such as the British National Party), National-Anarchists are pro-Islamist — but only "if they are prepared to confine their struggle to traditionally Islamic areas of the world."²⁴

As Chip Berlet and Matthew Lyons note, Third Position fascism influenced U.S. groups such as the White Aryan Resistance (WAR), the American Front and



the National Alliance; Christian Identity pastor Bob Miles also held similar views.²⁵ Often overlooked by commentators is the American Front's affiliation with Southgate's NRE, which he boasted of for years.²⁶ Like the National Front, U.S. fascists Tom Metzger and Lyndon LaRouche also forged ties with the Nation of Islam.²⁷ More recently, the National Alliance has incorporated Third Position politics. They attempted to cross-recruit left-wing activists by launching a fake antiglobalization website, and, in August 2002, held a Palestine Solidarity rally in Washington D.C.²⁸

An early attempt to directly transplant National-Anarchist ideology to the United States was made by political provocateur Bill White. Starting his political odyssey as a left-wing anarchist, White briefly adopted a National-Anarchist stance at the height of the antiglobalization movement. He penned an infamous article for *Pravda* online in November 2001, which falsely

claimed that National-Anarchists were part of anarchist black blocs.²⁹ Later White linked up with the National Alliance before embracing the undiluted Nazism of the National Socialist Movement.

Currently there are two U.S. websites directly affiliated with the National-Anarchists.³⁰ One is the work of a prolific Christian ex-Nazi skinhead, while the Bay Area site has established a regional "network." It is this small group that claims to have taken part in demonstrations for Tibetan independence and protests against the Folsom Street Fair.

Additionally, as an identity within the White Nationalist scene, National-Anarchists continue to attract a number of followers in the United States. For example, one of the early collaborators of the Oregon-based magazine *Green Anarchy* affiliated with their perspective.³¹ U.S. National-Anarchists also frequently enter into discussions on Stormfront, the main

internet gathering place for White Nationalists. There they defend their racial-separatist and antisemitic credentials to traditional fascists, many of whom look upon Third Position politics with skepticism, if not outright hostility. Apparently hearing White Nationalists promoting Islamist, Communist, and anarchist thinkers is as difficult for some of the Right to digest as it is for the Left.

Benoist and the European New Right

Besides Third Position fascism, the other major ideological influence on the National-Anarchists is the European New Right, especially the thinker Alain de Benoist. National-Anarchists have adopted his ideas about race, political decentralization, and the “right to difference.”

Benoist founded the think-tank GRECE, and has spent his life creating an intellectually respectable edifice for a core of fascist ideas. Like Southgate, Benoist loudly proclaims that he is not a fascist, but scholars such as Roger Griffin disagree. Griffin says that the New Right “could by the end of the 1980s be credited with the not inconsiderable achievement of having carried out a ‘makeover’ of classic fascist discourse so successfully that, at least on the surface it was changed beyond recognition.”³²

Benoist extended the notion of an alliance of European nations with the Third World against their main enemies: the United States, liberalism, and capitalism. But against the fascists who desired a united Europe under a super-state, Benoist instead calls for radical federalism and the political decentralization of Europe. Roger Griffin describes this vision as:

The pluralistic, multicultural society of liberal democracy was to give way, not to a culturally coordinated, charismatic, and, in the case of Nazism, racially pure, national community coterminous with the nation-state, but to an alliance of homogeneous ethnic-cultural communities (ethnies) within the framework of a federalist European “empire.”³³

Benoist also incorporates many sophisticated left-wing critiques, sometimes sounding like a Frankfurt School Marxist. Today he denounces capitalism, imperialism, liberalism, the consumer society, Christianity, universalism, and egalitarianism; he defends paganism, “organic democracy,” and the Third World. He questions the role of unbridled technology and supports environmentalism and a kind of feminism.³⁴ He also rejects biological determinism and embraces a notion of race that is cultural.³⁵ Southgate follows practically all of these positions, which are not necessarily present in Third Position.

Because of these views, the European New Right is very different from the U.S. New Right, whose Christianity and free market views are anathema to the Europeans. The Europeans are closer to the paleoconservative tradition in the United States, and connect with The Rockford Institute, publisher of *Chronicles*.

Benoist’s main intellectual formulation is the “right to difference,” which upholds the cultural homogeneity and separateness of distinct ethnic-cultural groups. In this sense, he extends the anti-

imperialist Left’s idea of “national self-determination” to micronational European groupings (sometimes called “the Europe of a Hundred Flags”). The “right to difference” has influenced the anti-immigrant policies of Jean-Marie Le Pen’s National Front in France, and a number of GRECE members joined this party, even though Benoist himself rejects Le Pen.³⁶

Benoist has also influenced U.S. White separatism. Usually based around the demand for a separate White nation in parts of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming, this became a popular idea in White Nationalist circles starting in the early 1980s.³⁷ This decentralized regional perspective was matched by decentralized organizational schemas which emerged at the same time. Louis Beam advocated “leaderless resistance,” and the “lone wolf” strategy for far-right terrorism,³⁸ while Christian Identity Pastor Bob Miles started referring himself as a “klanarchist.”

Inverting language, Benoist claims that he is an antiracist. Racism, he argues, is a function of universalistic ideologies like liberalism and Marxism, which purportedly wipe out regional and ethnic identities. He

Left & Right Unite!

The call for the political Left and Right to unite and smash a corrupt centrist regime has a long and ugly history, including the early National Socialist movement that helped usher in the German Nazi dictatorship. While some scholars insist fascism as a political movement terminated with the end of World War Two, a group of contemporary scholars has produced a body of studies which show that fascism flourishes today under a variety of guises. Here are a few of the best:

Robert Antonio, “After Postmodernism: Reactionary Tribalism,” *American Journal of Sociology* 106(1), 2000, pp. 40–87.

Tamir Bar-On, *Where Have All the Fascists Gone?*, Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2007.

Roger Griffin, *International Fascism: Theories, Causes, and the New Consensus*. London: Arnold, 1988.

Roger Griffin, and Matthew Feldman, *A Fascist Century*, Basingstoke England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

In addition, visit PRA’s Sucker Punch collection at http://www.publiceye.org/sucker_punch/index.html.

– Chip Berlet

says “Racism is nothing but the denial of difference.”³⁹ But Taguieff, a keen observer of the European Right, identifies a “phobia of mixing” at the core of this form of racism. It is part of the “softer, new, and euphemistic forms of racism praising difference (heterophilia) and substituting ‘culture’ for ‘race.’”⁴⁰

The influence of these New Right ideas on the National-Anarchists is explicit. In Australia, the National-Anarchist group is for all practical reasons coextensive with “New Right Australia/New Zealand” and at one point they claimed that “New Right is the theory, National-Anarchism the practice.”⁴¹ In Britain, Troy Southgate has been involved in New Right meetings since 2005.⁴² But while Benoist claims that he does not hate immigrants, repudiates antisemitism, and endorses feminism, the National Anarchists show what New Right ideas look like in practice: crude racial separatism, open antisemitism, homophobia, and antifeminism. The “right to difference” becomes separate ethnic villages.

The New Right also has had a limited influence on elements of the Left intelligentsia. In the United States, the influential journal *Telos* (known for disseminating Western Marxist texts into English) moved rightward in the 1990s as its editor showed sympathy for Europe’s New Right and published Benoist’s works.⁴³ It continues to publish Benoist, and explores the thought of Nazi legal theorist Carl Schmitt. Many Leftists now consider the once venerable journal anathema.⁴⁴

Richard Hunt

Although Benoist advocates decentralized federalist political structures, the Australian National-Anarchists make clear that he does not go so far as to advocate anarchism itself.⁴⁵ Instead the claim to “anarchism” apparently stems from Richard Hunt’s notion of “villages.” Originally an editor at the British magazine *Green Anarchist*, which advocated an intensely anti-industrial environmental ethic, Hunt was expelled from the editorial collective for his right-wing views before founding *Green Alternative*, which is seen as an “ecofascist” publication.

Hunt adopted an apocalyptic, Mad Max-esque vision of a post-industrial society. Southgate comments that “to say that we have been hugely influenced by Richard Hunt’s ideas is an understatement,” and Southgate took over the editorial helm of Hunt’s magazine when he fell ill.⁴⁶

Hunt’s critique also reverberated with the environmental strain of classical fascism, such as the views of Hitler’s agriculture minister Walter Darré. Southgate openly gushes over Darré’s “Blood and Soil” ideology in one article⁴⁷ while white-washing him in another, referring to him merely as a

A National-Anarchist denies the charge of antisemitism, claiming that they merely engage in a “continuous criticism of Israel and its supporters.”

“nationalist ecologist.”⁴⁸ Many other contemporary fascist groups, especially WAR in the United States, also embrace environmentalism.

Homophobia, Antisemitism, Antifeminism

The National-Anarchists are quite open about their antifeminism and desire to exile queer people into separate spaces, but tend to hide their deeply antisemitic worldview. Troy Southgate says of feminism, “Feminism is dangerous and unnatural... because it ignores the complimentary relationship between the sexes and encourages women to rebel against their inherent feminine instincts.”⁴⁹

The stance on homophobia is more interesting. Southgate said:

Homosexuality is contrary to the Natural Order because sodomy is quite undeniably an unnatural act. Groups such as Outrage are not campaigning for love between males — which has always existed in a brotherly or fatherly form — but have created a vast cult which has led to a rise in cottaging, male-rape and child sex attacks... But we are not trying to stop homosexuals engaging in this kind of activity like the Christian moralists or bigoted denizens of censorship are doing, on the contrary, as long as this behaviour does not affect the forthcoming National-Anarchist communities then we have no interest in what people get up to elsewhere.⁵⁰

What this means in his schema is that queer people will be given their own separate “villages.” The recent National-Anarchist demonstrations in San Francisco were against two majority-queer events, the Folsom Street Fair and the related fair *Up Your Alley*. Their orchestrator, “Andy,” declares that he is a “racist” who hates queer people.

Andy also denies the charge of antisemitism against National-Anarchists, claiming that they merely engage in a “continuous criticism of Israel and its supporters,”⁵¹ as do the majority of Leftists and anarchists. Once again, this is a typical disingenuous attempt by National-Anarchists to duck criticism. Antisemitism is an important element of the political worldviews of Southgate and Herferth.

Southgate actively promotes the work of Holocaust deniers, including the Institute for Historical Review, and holds party-line antisemitic beliefs about the role of the international Jewish conspiracy. As a dodge, he sometimes uses the euphemism “Zionist”; for instance, he says “Zionists are well known for their cosmopolitan perspective upon life, not least because those who rally to this nefarious cause have no organic roots of their own.”⁵² In another interview he says that, “there is no question that

the world is being ruthlessly directed (but perhaps not completely controlled) by International Zionism. This has been achieved through the rise of the usurious banking system.”⁵³ And he describes the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (a forgery which is the world’s most popular antisemitic text) as a book which “although still unproven, accords with the main events in modern world history.”⁵⁴

Meanwhile, his Australian counterpart Welf Herferth is even more explicit in his neo-Nazi antisemitic views. In one speech, he describes the Holocaust as an “extrapolation” that “has been an enormously profitable one for the Jews, and one which has brought post-war Germany and Europe to its knees,” before referring to Israel as “the most powerful state in the Western world.” Herferth concludes that “by liberating Germany from the bondage to Israel and restructuring a new Germany on the basis of a new ‘volksgemeinschaft,’ the German nationalists will liberate Europe, and the West as well.”⁵⁵

Conclusion

Recently new groups of National-Anarchists, recruited through Southgate’s internet activism, have made the leap from contemplating their idiosyncratic ideas on the internet into making them the basis of really-existing politics, by joining demonstrations in Australia and San Francisco. Web pages and blogs continue to pop up in different countries and languages.

The danger National-Anarchists represent is not in their marginal political strength, but in their potential to show an innovative way that fascist groups can rebrand themselves and reset their project on a new footing. They have abandoned many traditional fascist practices — including the use of overt neo-Nazi references, and recruiting from the violent skinhead culture. In its place they offer a more toned-down, sophisticated approach. The new fascists speak of “difference” and “respect for cultures” instead of using openly racist language and imagery. Their cultural references are the neofolk and gothic music scene, which puts on an air of sophistica-

tion, as opposed to the crude skinhead subculture. National Anarchists abandon any obvious references to the Hitler or Mussolini’s fascist regimes, often claiming not to be “fascist” at all.

Like the European New Right, the National-Anarchists adapt a sophisticated left-wing critique of problems with contemporary society, and draw their symbols and cultural orientation from the Left; then they offer racial separatism as the answer to these problems. They are attempting to use this new form to avoid the stigma of the old discredited fascism, and if they are successful like the National Bolsheviks have been in Russia, they will breathe new life into their movement. Even if the results are modest, this can disrupt left-wing social movements and their focus on social justice and egalitarianism; and instead spread elitist ideas based on racism, homophobia, antisemitism and anti-feminism amongst grassroots activists. ■

NOTE: All internet links active as of September 30, 2008.

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- ³⁰ www.folkandfaith.com is based in Idaho Falls, Idaho. www.bayareanationalanarchists.com/blog is based in California's Bay Area. As unlikely as this location may seem, the NRF-affiliated fascist skinhead gang the American Front originated there as well. <http://attackthesystem.com> is another site sympathetic to National-Anarchists.
- ³¹ See Griffin; The U.S.-based *Green Anarchy* is not to be confused with the UK-based *Green Anarchist*, despite shared ideology. *Green Anarchy* has explicitly denounced National-Anarchism.
- ³² Roger Griffin, "Plus ça change! The Fascist Pedigree of the Nouvelle Droite," draft, August, 1998; p. 5. <http://lah.brookes.ac.uk/resources/griffin/publications.html>.
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- ³⁵ Many fascist intellectuals have held this view, including early Nazi leader Otto Strasser, Italian occult philosopher Julius Evola, U.S. Third Position theorist Francis Parker Yockey, and German Nazi legal theorist Carl Schmitt. For a discussion of "spiritual" versus "biological" race, see Coogan, 313 n38, p. 481. See also Lee, pp. 96.
- ³⁶ "Three Interviews with Alain de Benoist." *Telos* nos. 98-99, (Winter 1993-Spring 1994), pp. 173-207.
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- ³⁸ See Jeffrey Kaplan, "Leaderless Resistance," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 9 no. 3, (Autumn 1997), pp. 80-95; see also Dobratz and Shanks-Meile, pp. 171-74, pp. 267-68. For the influence on Tory Southgate, see Macklin, p. 312. Beam's essay is also reproduced on the Australian National-Anarchist site <http://www.newrightausnz.com/?p=48>.
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- ⁴⁰ Pierre-André Taguieff, "The New Right's Vision of European Identity," *Telos* nos. 98-99, Winter 1993-Spring 1994; p. 123.
- ⁴¹ New Right Australia New Zealand Committee, "Statement of New Right on National-Anarchism and Australian Nationalism." <http://newrightausnz.blogspot.com/2008/03/statement-of-new-right-on-national.html>.
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- ⁴⁶ "Synthesis Editor Troy Southgate, Interviewed by Wayne John Sturgeon," <http://www.rosenoire.org/interviews/southgate.php>; see also Macklin, pp. 312-13.
- ⁴⁷ Southgate, "Blood and Soil." <http://www.rosenoire.org/articles/bloodandsoil.php>.
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- ⁴⁹ Southgate, Sturgeon interview.
- ⁵⁰ Southgate, Sturgeon interview.
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POST-PALIN FEMINISM *continued from page 1*

Sarah Palin's musings about being a beneficiary of Title IX may be as wobbly as her off-again, on-again support for talking about condoms during sex education. [see box] Certainly progressive feminists who see abortion access as a crucial part of the reproductive autonomy women need for equality publicly cringe at her association with the group Feminists for Life.² But Palin gives viable political form to a free market feminism that until now was largely championed by a few intellectuals and pundits based in conservative beltway think tanks. As Republicans wrestle to rebuild power in a world where women's voter turnout is higher than men's, their identification with the Democratic Party stronger, and the number of Republican women in office dropping [see box], this feminism slightly softens the culture war tone that is so off-putting to moderate Republicans and independents alike. We may be hearing more of it in the future.

It also energizes activists in an unexpected quarter—the Christian Right. Some young activists say they have been waiting for a woman like Palin for a long time.

For David Schmidt, 24, the media director of Live Action Films, which goes “undercover” to investigate abortion providers, “the word feminist has so many different meanings. I don't think the term in and of itself is a turnoff to conservative voters. It's a good thing to see women advance. I think it's a wonderful thing.

“I'm more open than someone who is older about women's role. But I haven't seen any push back against it. People may be wrestling a little internally.”

And people were struggling, particularly the conservative evangelicals who believe women's submission to men is theologically given. The Promise Keepers continues to bring men together in fellowship to assume their God-given role at the head of a marriage. The Southern Baptist Convention banned women from serving as pastors in 2000. And some conservative evangelical

Sunday schools still refuse to allow women to teach boys, though men can teach both boys and girls.

Christian nationalist author and lecturer David Barton waged a vigorous defense of Sarah Palin against fundamentalists who saw her candidacy as “un-Biblical.”³

Even before the 2008 election, the number of Republican women officeholders dropped as moderate Republican women were ousted in the primaries.

“We don't need enemies, we have friends,” Barton told interviewer Brannon Howse. “There's some basis for their concern,... but you can take scripture out

of context.” The key Biblical issue, Barton argued, is, “is the wife in rebellion to her husband or are they in accord?”

“If [Sarah's husband] Todd is supportive, then Sarah is not usurping authority over men,” said Barton. “They're doing this as a family.” Barton continued that, “Sarah may be like an Esther or a Deborah that God raised up” in extraordinary times when men didn't step up to the plate.

“You can't say God didn't call her to be a Deborah. I don't think God just calls people. He calls families. If he has told Sarah to be vice president, his children will have an extra measure of grace.”

While Barton defended Palin as an extraordinary woman raised up by God, some conservative evangelical women used the debate to argue that the scriptures do not mandate their subservience to men. After the *Los Angeles Times* covered this controversy (one of the few mainstream media outlets to notice), the comments section was full of conservative evangelical women supporting this view (as well as Barton's). Phyllis Nelson wrote:

I am a 20 year veteran of home education, a small home business owner and a leader in my church and com-

Is Sarah a Feminist?

While many progressive feminists do not accept the idea that former vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin is a feminist, Palin embraced the identity in her interview with CBS News' Katie Couric and claims membership in Feminists for Life, an organization launched by fairly liberal women that now is home for prominent conservatives championing women's advancement and the banning of abortion.²² Palin also is steeped in a Pentecostal denomination, Assemblies of God, with a history of women pastors, even if not all present day leaders like the idea.²³ This is in contrast to other conservative evangelicals, who often take a patriarchal view towards women's role in the church.

More directly, Palin prefers the honorific “Ms.” She credits Title IX for her opportunities, telling Charles Gibson of ABC News, “I'm lucky to have been brought up in a family where gender has never been an issue. I'm a product of Title IX, also, where we had equality in schools that was just being ushered in with sports and with equality opportunity for education, all of my life. I'm part of that generation, where that question is kind of irrelevant because it's accepted. Of course you can be the vice president and you can raise a family.”²⁴

Flanked by Elaine Lafferty, a former editor of *Ms.* magazine, who was a paid campaign consultant, and Shelly Mandell, the president of the Los Angeles chapter of the National Organization for Women, Palin vowed on the stump to a Nevada crowd in late October that she would break the glass ceiling in government, adding, “Working mothers need an advocate, and they will have one when this working mother is working for all of you.”²⁵

Doubts about Palin's self-professed feminism may be linked to Palin's larger credibility problem with women outside the core of the Republican base.

Abby Scher is a sociologist and editor of The Public Eye.

munity. I am also very conservative. I have spent a great deal of time praying about and studying the role of women and do not believe the Scriptures, especially the New Testament indicate the level of subservience taught by some. My husband of 30+ years is the head of our home and an elder in our fellowship, but thankfully holds me, my gifts and talents in high esteem. We work as a team to bring the Gospel to those who have ears to hear.⁴

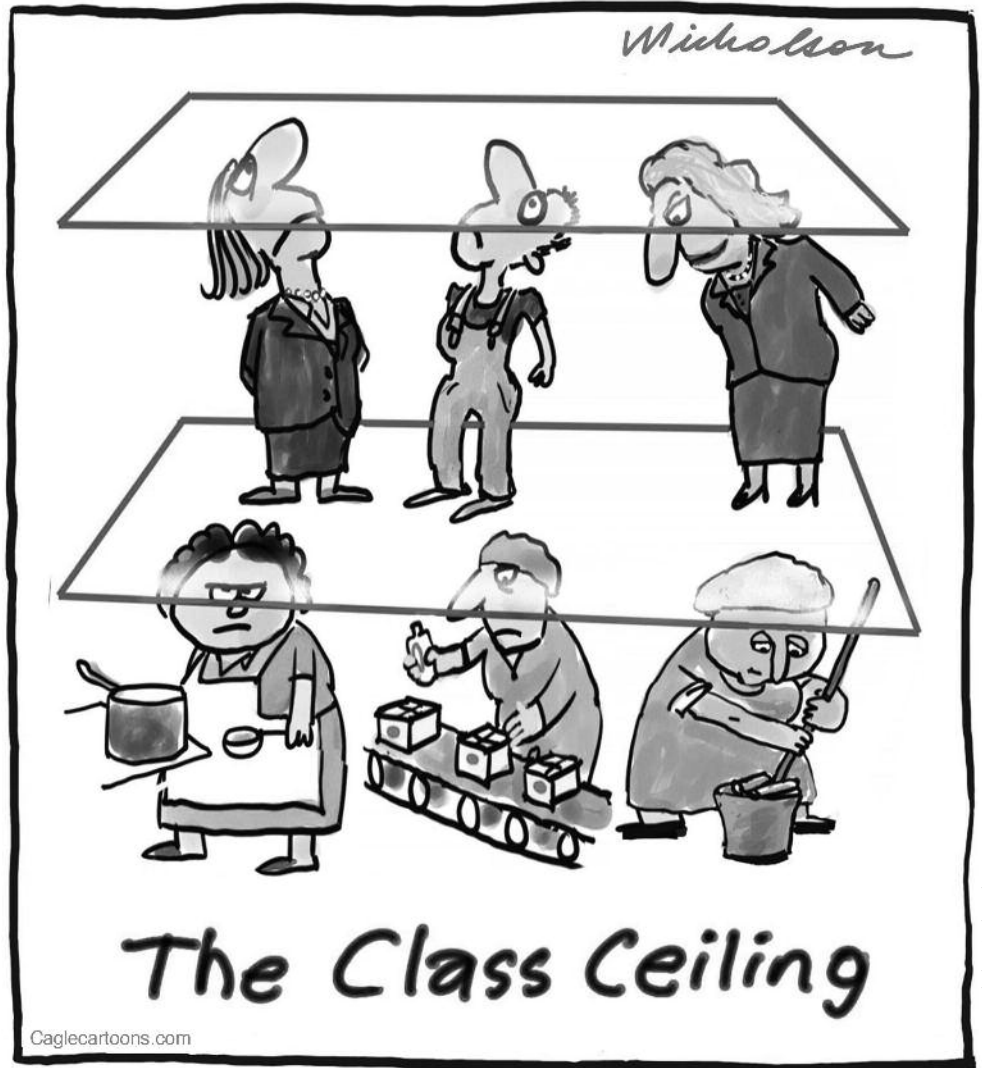
A woman named “Lynn” supported Barton in focusing on Palin’s continued submission to her husband’s authority:

I am a Christian and a stay-at-home mom and a homeschooler. I am under my husbands authority. If Mrs. Palin’s husband supports her in her career and all how can she be wrong to do it?

Feminism is a step too far for these women and for some young people I interviewed at September’s Values Voters Summit. Angelise Anderson, 22, admitted she would have to “look into” Palin’s Feminists for Life membership. Kirsten Dalton, 22, is pregnant with her first child and married to a staffer of Generation Joshua, an initiative training conservative evangelical youth to “reclaim” America through the political process. She had heard about Palin’s membership “and it does bother me. I don’t know what to think about it.”

But it was only enthusiasm from Emily Buchanan, the young executive director of Susan B. Anthony List, a prolife version of the Democrat’s Emily’s List that focuses on electing prolife women to office and claiming 145,000 supporters. The group’s pink and blue Palin Power stickers were stuck on hundreds of Values Voters conference goers and stacked high at its booth. The group’s Team Palin website and network was soon to become home for women at the grassroots inspired by the candidate’s politics. From behind the table, Buchanan said about Palin’s claimed feminism, “That’s great. The early feminists were prolific.”

She embodies the American woman.



Putting Palin in the political mix is either crystallizing new sentiments, or surfacing ones barely visible before.

She’s independent. She speaks her mind. But she also embodies the traditional values that are so important to Americans.

For such a long time, the powerful women in Washington were all touting prochoice as prowoman. People like Senator Hillary Clinton and

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi were the role models... To have a traditional woman, it’s something people can relate to.

Another staffer, Justin Aguila, 23, said “There’s a great picture of her with her son in a sling signing a law,” adding, “My mother is not usually involved in the political process and now she is.”

Buchanan agreed, “She’s paved the way for traditional women in office. I hope we see our mothers running for office, that they see the connection starting at the community level. That’s a place in their life you can relate to.”

To these activists, Palin is “normal,” a word heard as often as “traditional.” She wears makeup. She is pretty. She is an evangelical Christian. She is anti-abortion. She is also White. That is normal

within the sphere of these conservatives. But “traditional” for these young people is no longer a woman who stays home with the children while the husband works, or who submits to her husband. Todd Palin’s active domestic role is not so unusual — on stage at the Values Voters conference was Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers of Washington, whose husband, a retired military man, is well known in this community for taking care of their child who was born with Down syndrome.

There has been a surprising transvaluation of ideas revealed by the Palin campaign. Traditional now seems to be someone who embraces the belief in a heterosexual nuclear family and a conservative Christian embrace of “family values,” not a stay at home mom.

The transformation of the definition of “traditional” builds on larger shifts seen among evangelicals including but not limited to the most conservative who are considered part of the Christian Right. Scholar W. Bradford Wilcox says white evangelical Protestants “typically talk right and, often unwittingly, stumble left,” saying they support “traditional” families while living messy family lives with levels of divorce even higher than other groups of Americans.⁵ They live the same economically challenging lives of the rest of the country, where two-income families are a necessity. The redefinition was inevitable, rendering Reagan-era battles against Title IX irrelevant.

This redefinition was supported by Joy Yearout, Susan B. Anthony List’s legislative and political director, in explaining the continued enthusiasm for Palin a few weeks after the Republican ticket’s defeat. “I’m certain there are going to be more women in the political process.”

If you look at most of the leading women in politics today, they’re older, very liberal. She [Palin] balances work and home, and she embraces conservative family values standing up for human life. She supports traditional marriage. It’s a different paradigm than what we’ve seen at the national level. She does-

not see gender as something that is victimizing. She doesn’t see it as a barrier.”

This suggestion that progressive feminists peddle victimology courses through the Right. It helps distinguish the rightists’ acceptance of women’s equality in the workplace from their opponents’ politics. When I asked Phyllis Schlafly, the leader of the Stop ERA battle and longtime anti-feminist campaigner, a specific question about what she thought of Palin being a member of Feminists for Life, she briefly sidestepped to say the problem is feminist victimology not women’s aspirations to

What it means to be a “traditional” woman is changing. It’s not staying home with the kids.

equality. She said, “There’s some good people in Feminists for Life. . . . The big difference is attitude – women are discriminated against. Victimology. She’s not the kind of person who is complaining because she is a woman. I think women can do what they want.”

You also hear this victimhood story line from the neoconservative feminists operating from the Independent Women’s Forum (IWF). The five core program staff of IWF do not all identify as feminists, though its director Michelle Bernard prominently does when she appears on talk shows throughout the country. Until Sarah Palin hit the scene, IWF was the lonely home of the “free market” feminists who say the key issue is choice and women now have choice so why complain? IWF’s staff say the group offers a feminist alternative to the progressives at National Organization for Women who exaggerate their victimhood to support big government policies

Founded in 1992 after the Clarence Thomas hearings, IWF champions “limited government, equality under the law, property rights, free markets, strong families, and a powerful and effective national defense and foreign policy.”⁶ With only a \$1.5 million annual budget—tiny for a beltway conservative group—its small staff promotes school choice, conservative women’s groups on campuses, and women’s issues in the Muslim world. The group refuses to take a stand on abortion or gay marriage (like its sister organization the Clare Booth Luce Policy Institute which trains young conservative women as leaders). And while O’Beirne, an emerita IWF board member, trashes feminists in general (while saying she always supported equal opportunity in the workplace), others on the Right criticize the group for continuing to identify with the women’s movement at all.⁷ Maybe that’s why its staff so vigorously attacks liberal feminists.

“It is not surprising to see feminist organizations like the National Organization for Women dispute the term ‘feminist’ as it applies to Gov. Palin,” Carrie Lukas, IWF’s vice president for policy and economics wrote on a blog the group set up around the Palin candidacy. “After all, groups like NOW have worked for years to redefine ‘feminism’ to fit their liberal agenda. Anyone who exposes conservative views is not welcome in their feminist club.”⁸

IWF Director Bernard was a popular speaker during the presidential campaign with her message that there can be such a thing as a “limited government feminist,” or a “red state feminist.”⁹

“We are in the midst of third wave feminism,” she said during a radio discussion with Marie Wilson, director of the White House Project, an explicitly feminist and prochoice group that trains women for public office, and Kim Gandy of National Organization for Women. “Young women look at it very differently than Gloria Steinem. Feminism was about women’s right to choose the way they want to live.”¹⁰ When Wilson suggested choices are more

circumscribed for women juggling work and home unless public policies make that balance easier, she exposed the divide in their notions of feminism.

“Equity” or free market feminists like Christina Hoff Sommers of the American Enterprise Institute support women’s equal capacity to men and their right to be treated equally in the workplace and schools, while opposing affirmative action, family leave laws and other government programs to ensure that this equal treatment happens. Like other conservatives, they see it as up to the individual to compete in the market, no matter what background or resources they bring to bear. That goes for women, working class people without resources for college, or a group that had faced a history of discrimination. Sommers took up the gauntlet against “gender feminists” who support government action back in 1994 with her book *Who Stole Feminism? How Women Have Betrayed Women*. Interestingly, Sommers broke with her friends at IWF to admit about Palin that she is “not certain about her qualifications,” while adding somewhat contradictorily that “as a role model for women — she’s superb.”¹¹

“Feminists further[s] a leftist agenda, not the rights of all women,” an intern with the conservative Clare Booth Luce Institute wrote in a *Washington Times* essay posted on the Institute website.¹² Women have won power through struggle and now have the power of choice, as do other middle class Americans, is the story line. This feminism mirrors the feminism you will find in modern women’s magazines, such as *Self*. It is a sort of pop bottom line for more liberated young women. And in its focus on choice, it overlooks the way choices are structured—for low income women or privileged women, for whites and people of color—and how real gender equity could be supported.

Far from being inauthentic, the free market feminism of Bernard, Sommers, and some of the conservative evangelicals is part of a lineage of right-wing feminists that goes back to the National Woman’s Party (NWP), which after suffrage became

Does Post-Palin Feminism Have a Future?

During the Republican convention, the *National Journal* asked, “Can Palin’s Rise Lift the Boats for GOP Women?” Even before the 2008 election the number of Republican women officeholders dropped in the House and at the state level as moderate Republican women were ousted in the primaries. The newspaper found Republicans already promoting Palin’s background as a PTA president and city councilmember to recruit women to run.²⁶

But one lesson of the 2008 election is that women as right-wing as Palin could have a hard time in the general election. Susan B. Anthony List, or SBA List, which promotes prolife women for office, suggests a majority of women want to ban abortion but recent election results don’t bear this out. SBA List reports almost 40 percent of the candidates it endorsed in 2008 (both male and female) suffered defeat in the November elections (it is hard to verify this figure based on available information). This includes two important incumbents: Elizabeth Dole, the North Carolina senator and the only prolife woman in the Senate, and Congresswoman Marilyn Musgrave of Colorado who helped launch and cochaired the House Prolife Woman’s Caucus in the last session. Musgrave was defeated by Betsy Markey, who was supported by the prochoice Emily’s List.

Forty-two percent of the House is now clearly prochoice, according to NARAL Prochoice America, as 20 prochoice members join the next session. The Senate saw six new prochoice members join.²⁷

“We will be bereft of the prolife, prowoman perspective when and if the first Supreme Court President Obama nominee arises. This is an important and necessary perspective to counter the Boxer/Feinstein/Mikulski feminist axis,” Marjorie Dannenfelser, the president of the SBA List, told *National Review Online*.²⁸

“The prolife movement has indeed suffered a great political setback and is on the defensive. Almost 4000 children will continue to die every single day the sun does come up.”

The SBA List does not support ballot initiatives, but its cause suffered severe defeats in that arena as well. All three ballot initiatives striving to restrict abortions failed. In South Dakota, an abortion ban was defeated 55 percent to 45 percent, even while the state swung for John McCain as president. Colorado defeated its ban 73 percent to 27 percent, and the state went for Barack Obama. California voters defeated a parental notification requirement for abortions.

At the state level, the number of Republican women legislators in the next session will drop to a level not seen since 1988, even while the overall number of women serving sets records because of the rise in Democrats.²⁹ On the other hand, Republican women have nowhere to go but up since the Southern states that backed John McCain rank lowest for women in elective office, according to the Center for American Women in Politics.

Dannenfelser and Joy Yearout, SBA List’s political director, are two of many prolife campaigners who suggest their candidates lost because of the tsunami of the economic crisis, and it is important to continue to promote prolife legislators who will ban the procedure or support justices who will. But others, particularly Roman Catholics, suggest the defeat of the ballot initiatives and the increase in abortions by low-income women during the administration of George W. Bush mean the movement should refocus on improving social and economic conditions as a way of reducing the number of abortions.³⁰

the home of more privileged women who supported a free market and were vigorously anticommunist.¹³ An NWP member, Vivien Kellems, a small businesswoman from Connecticut, even launched a campaign against the federal income tax in the 1940s, and her anticommunist women's group took the country by storm in opposing what members saw as the dangerous socialism of the New Deal.¹⁴

Such women are entangled not just in feminist politics supporting political and economic inclusion in the system, but in class politics; for them feminism does not lead its adherents to support grander claims for economic justice.

Christian evangelicalism also has deep historical ties to feminism, since the religious movement that gave birth to nineteenth century feminism produced many prominent suffrage campaigners. Championing women's direct relationship with God, these early evangelicals suggested that men are not their lords and masters.

Sommers reminds us of the feminism of Frances Willard, founder of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), who argued women had to "increase their civilizing and humane influence on society" in the name of protecting the home.¹⁵ Sommers misleadingly champions Willard as a "conservative feminist" because her maternalist politics suggested a conservative sense of women's role as civilizers of the world. In fact, Willard and the WCTU in its early years promoted progressive social reform through government action and some members were even populist radicals. Jane Addams is another feminist forbearer and progressive champion of maternalism, valorizing women's role as mothers.

Sommers is correct in reminding us of maternalism, but it is a tendency that weaves through both progressive feminism and rightwing feminism.¹⁶ On the Left, a former NOW staffer is trying to organize progressive maternalists through a new website.¹⁷ On the Right, Kay Hymowitz of the Manhattan Institute suggests "Red State Feminists" like Palin embrace motherhood instead of demonizing it, the way progressive feminists

supposedly do. "She differs from mainstream feminists in that her sexuality and fecundity are not in tension with her achievement and power."¹⁸

The Sarah Palin phenomenon seems to be enlarging the small crew of women on the Right like those at IWF who accept free market feminism—a minimal, bottom line feminism that women and girls should be treated equally under the law, fully participate in public life, and not be discriminated against in the workplace or in schools because of their gender. Equal "rules of the game" not substantive equality is the goal. This is in keeping with the efforts of both the Heritage Foundation and the Christian Right's Family Research Council (FRC) in

Far from being inauthentic, free market feminism is part of a lineage of right-wing feminists that goes back to the National Woman's Party.

explicitly promoting a free market and "small government" ideology among evangelicals and the Christian Right.¹⁹ The tight support conservative Christians now give to tax cuts for the rich, the flat tax (which presidential aspirant Mike Huckabee championed) and other right-wing economic strategies will make these supporters hard to shake from the GOP coalition as some of their old allies want to do in order to win back power.²⁰

For FRC and other "free market" Christians, it is important to shrink the government and institute reforms like creating a system of school vouchers so parents can use the money to pay for Christian schools.

You heard this argument from the new generation of conservative Christian women politicians like Michelle Bachmann, the Minnesota Congresswoman who almost lost her seat after suggesting her colleagues should be investigated for their anti-Americanism. She and Sarah Palin both received their political training as conservative pro-life evangelicals, balance a demanding public life with a large family, and merge their "family values" ideology with market friendly analysis.

These politicians and a handful of others are, like Willard, asserting new roles in transforming the public realm, and moving beyond a surprisingly egalitarian yet segregated space of women's power that scholar Barbara Brasher discovered within conservative churches over ten years ago.²¹

Putting Palin in the political mix is either crystallizing new sentiments, or surfacing ones barely visible before. The young people I spoke with were inspired by her sense of possibility as a liberated woman embracing "traditional" Christian, heterosexual, anti-abortion—and gender egalitarian—values. Where this new energy takes them in a political moment following the greatest defeat for their movement and the Republican Party since the rise of political evangelicalism thirty years ago is anyone's guess. ■

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THE CULTURE WARS *continued from page 2*

at all levels and effectively use the process of state ballot initiatives to drive wedge issues and ultimately their legislative and constitutional agenda.

So let us be clear. The Religious Right will be a major factor in American politics for at least as long as the lives of anyone reading these words. It is important to underscore this point because as the spectacle of smoke and mirrors pours out of the political consultancies and non-profit shops of Washington, DC, so drives our national conversation on these matters with expensively produced, wrong headed narratives and overblown interpretations of polls (see sidebar). One such reality check is what is actually happening on the ground, in the states, where most of American political life and government takes place. We will look at an album of snapshots from the states in a moment, but first, let’s begin at the beginning.

The Defining Moment of the Culture Wars

The speaker who launched the term “culture wars” into our political lexicon did not actually employ the term. Pat Buchanan delivered an inflammatory speech at the 1992 Republican National Convention. It is now known in political circles as “the culture war speech.” “My friends, this election is about much more than who gets what,” Buchanan declared. “It is about who we are. It is about what we believe. It is about what we stand for as Americans. There is a religious war going on in our country for the soul of America. *It is a cultural war, as critical to the kind of nation we will one day be as was the Cold War itself.*” [Emphasis added]²

He denounced the “radical feminism” of Bill and Hillary Clinton, stating that their “agenda would impose on America — abortion on demand, a litmus test for the Supreme Court, homosexual rights, discrimination against religious schools,

women in combat—that’s change, all right. But it is not the kind of change America wants. It is not the kind of change America needs. And it is not the kind of change we can tolerate in a nation that we still call God’s country.”

If this rhetoric sounds familiar, it is because little has changed since these words were shouted to the world on prime time national television at one of the two major party conventions in the most powerful country in the history of the world. It is also because the words express the deeply held views of a wide swath of conservative Christianity.

Buchanan’s speech epitomizes the Religious Right’s general view of the “culture war”—as a “religious war”³ that manifests itself on many “cultural” fronts, most urgently abortion, homosexuality (especially, now, marriage equality), education privatization, and curriculum content of the public schools.

So the culture war is not simply conflict

over abortion or gay marriage. It is a one-sided war of aggression against the civil rights advances of women and minorities and the rights of individual conscience that we generally discuss under the rubric of religious pluralism and of separation of church and state. For these political aggressors, war is not merely a metaphor or the equivalent of a sports analogy. It is far more profound and stems from the conflict of “worldview,” usually described as a “Biblical Worldview” against everything else. It is explicitly understood by its proponents as a religious war and waged accordingly on multiple fronts, mostly in terms we have come to define as “cultural.” How the conflict plays out takes on political dimensions and sometimes physical conflict. This war is theocratic in nature, and seeks to roll back decades, and depending on the faction, centuries of democratic advances.

It is important to note that while violence has diminished overall, this war is already marked by decades of violence, including hundreds of arsons and bombings of abortion clinics, as well as the assassination and attempted assassination of doctors. We have also seen extraordinary violence against LGBT people. There has also been, and continues to be, a multidimensional battle against the Constitutional doctrine of separation of church and state in the service of religious supremacy. This manifests itself in many ways, from efforts to post the Ten Commandments in public buildings, especially court houses and the public schools, but particularly in public education—which offers the opportunity to teach biased, religiously framed versions of human sexuality⁴ and evolutionary science as well as Christian nationalist versions of American history.

We have also seen state and federal funding of proven ineffective and “faith-based”

abstinence education programs as well as anti-abortion “crisis pregnancy centers.” (It should be noted that federal funding for abstinence-only education has continued, despite Democratic majorities in both houses of Congress in 2007 and 2008.)

That the Democrats’ national party recruited, fielded, and massively financed twelve explicitly anti-abortion candidates for the House of Representatives in 2008 is one indication that the culture war is moving more deeply into the Democratic Party.⁵

But probably the more significant battles will be in the states where the Religious Right’s political strength is now greater than in the federal government. For example, Focus on the Family Action, the political arm of James Dobson’s Focus on the Family (FOF), has 35 state affiliates called family policy institutes or councils.⁶ These groups, such as the Massachusetts Family Institute, have taken the lead in state level anti-marriage equality campaigns and ballot initiatives for years; often they work in close collaboration with the Roman Catholic Church. This is a political infrastructure that is far greater than the sum of its parts.

Snapshots from the Culture War in the States

Let’s look at a few snapshots from real life politics in the states in 2008 and what they portend for the future.

Anti-marriage equality initiatives prevailed in Arizona, Florida, and California in 2008. Longtime Religious Right leader Chuck Colson called the California initiative, Proposition 8, “the Armageddon of the culture war.” Maggie Gallagher, president of the National Organization for Marriage said: “This is ground zero in a culture war that the California Supreme Court just declared on Christianity and every single faith.” Tony Perkins, head of the Family Research Council, told *The New York Times*, “It’s more important than the presidential election.” Fueled with tens of millions of dollars from the Mormon Church, as well as such evangelical financiers as John Templeton and Howard Ahmanson, the initiative passed, and for

the first time in American history, rolled back a court ordered advance in civil rights gained by an oppressed minority.

But the battle is far from over. At this writing, major legal challenges are planned and massive street demonstrations protesting the outcome have made national television news for a more than a week in the wake of the election results.

What’s more, while Rhode Island and New York recognize the validity of same sex marriages from other states, the 1996 federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) allows states to refuse to recognize the validity of same sex marriages. The Supreme Court has so far declined to hear constitutional challenges to the federal DOMA, but that could change as more states recognize same sex marriage and more issues of interstate recognition of same sex marriages emerge. Meanwhile, civil rights efforts will go forward on many fronts, and there will be efforts to thwart or roll them back. So far, 30 states have passed anti-marriage equality initiatives; and 10 states passed statutory DOMAs.

New York and New Jersey: Shortly after the November election, the *Associated Press* reported that the coalition of evangelicals and the Mormon and Roman Catholic Churches that passed the stunning reversal on marriage equality in California planned to take the battle to these eastern states where marriage equality has shown signs of advancing in the state legislatures.⁷

Anti-abortion ballot initiatives lost in California, Colorado and South Dakota. The Colorado initiative would have defined a fertilized egg as a person for legal purposes in contravention of *Roe vs. Wade*. The California initiative was a parental notification measure that has been defeated twice before and the South Dakota abortion ban had been defeated once before. These defeats underscore the persistence and ongoing capacity of the Religious Right to wage the battles of the culture war.

Constitutional Convention initiative in Connecticut: Every 20 years, the state is required to have an initiative asking the voters if it is time for a state constitutional convention. In the wake of the October rul-

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ing by the state's Supreme Court legalizing same sex marriage, the Religious Right, led by the Connecticut Family Institute (the state political affiliate of Focus on the Family) and the state's Roman Catholic bishops seized on the initiative as a way of keeping the issue alive, purchasing a large, last minute TV ad campaign. While this effort was ultimately unsuccessful, it is a safe bet to expect further battles in Connecticut.

Failed efforts to get other anti-abortion or antigay initiatives on the ballot: Montana, Arkansas and Massachusetts. Even in losing, the Religious Right has considerable capacity to keep their issues on the front burner.

Texas: The elected State Board of Education is chaired by Don McLeroy, a Religious Right activist who has made a career of seeking to inject the agenda of the Religious Right into the public schools. In October 2008, the board appointed three prominent advocates of the "Intelligent Design" religious theory of the origin of the universe to a six member science review panel. One of these, Steven Meyers, is a vice-president of the Seattle-based Discovery Institute, a Religious Right think tank devoted to the propagation of intelligent design. McLeroy wrote in an October op-ed, "Science education has become a culture war issue" and that the claims of scientists "will be challenged by creationists."⁸

Additionally, the legislature passed a bill that would make it easier for school districts to teach courses about the Bible, but of course, this opened the door to teaching the Bible itself, from particular religious and political points of view. For example, four members of the state board soon made news when they wrote to Texas school districts urging them to use the discredited, Christian nationalist oriented Bible study curriculum produced by the National Council On Bible Curriculum in Public Schools. Experts predict lawsuits if school districts use the program.

Alabama: The State Board of Education first approved a Bible study curriculum published by the Bible Literacy Project for elective use in Alabama school districts. Then, under pressure from the Religious

Right, it voted to approve materials from the even more right-wing and controversial National Council on Bible Curriculum in Public Schools.⁹

Louisiana: In 2008, the legislature passed, and Republican Governor Bobby Jindal signed, a law that critics say is a backdoor way of slipping the teaching of creationism and intelligent design by allowing for "supplemental" materials that feature unwarranted and unscientific critiques of evolution to be used in addition to standard science books in the public schools. The legislation was originally introduced in collaboration with the Louisiana affiliate of Focus on the Family and the Discovery Institute.¹⁰ This kind of action is reminis-

cent of efforts to get around federal and Supreme Court decisions intended to desegregate the schools, or bar the posting of religious documents such as the Ten Commandments in the public schools.

Indeed, the 1987 Supreme Court case of *Edwards v. Aguillard* (1987) ruled a Louisiana law requiring the teaching of creationism in the public schools unconstitutional, pushing advocates of creationism to produce the concept of "intelligent design" and ultimately a rewrite of the creationist textbook *Of Pandas and People* in an effort to get around the ban.¹¹ In 2005, a federal judge ruled that the use of the revised book in the Dover, Pennsylvania public schools was unconstitutional, con-

Numbers Racket

Barack Obama ran an effective campaign pulling millions of voters to the polls and expanding the ranks of those who walked away from the GOP to vote Democratic in 2008. In the election coverage, however, observers used polling data to make claims about the Christian Right and conservative evangelicals that are dubious at best.

The Christian Right did not vanish, and White Christian conservatives voted the way they usually voted. They were simply outvoted by Obama supporters. The main problem is that many comparisons claiming big shifts use polling data for the Kerry campaign in 2004, which was very atypical when compared to previous elections.

For example, pundits note Obama picked up 24 percent of the White evangelical vote, up three points compared to Kerry's 21 percent tally in 2004. This all sounds good until you realize Gore secured roughly 30 percent of their vote.

White Protestants? Obama scored with 34 percent, which is above Kerry's 32 percent. Check 2000, however, and Gore also received 34 percent of the White Protestant vote—no change. But check out Obama's 54 percent of all Protestants compared to Gore's 42 percent, and you see a significant gain—but one that appears due to Black and Latino evangelicals' vote.

Another surprise was Obama picking up 43 percent of those Christians who attend church once a week or more often—"high attendees." Gore only picked up 39 percent in 2000 and Kerry scored 38 percent in 2004. Keep in mind, however, signs that McCain failed to fully mobilize evangelicals in general. Karl Rove speculates that more than 4 million High Attendees who "voted in 2004 stayed home in 2008."

Then there are the young evangelicals, who indeed distrust older Christian Right leaders and are concerned about the environment, poverty, war, and other "moral values." None of this justifies the breathless announcements of the "end of the Culture Wars." Convincing evidence suggests that a small percentage of White Christian evangelicals are swing voters when the Democratic Party stakes out clear and strong stands. Many of these swing voters, even the youth, remain rigid in their opposition to abortion and gay marriage.

Centrist Democratic pundits don't seem to get it. Since 2004 we have seen what Pastor Dan Schultz of Street Prophets calls "the endless parade of Religious-Industrial Complex consultants and activists who tell us that Rick Warren is the epitome of the 'moderate Evangelical' that Democrats should be working to attract." Warren is a nice guy, but he is hardly an ally of progressive activists. As progressives we should be reaching out to people of faith, including evangelicals, but we need to clearly assess who we work with based on real numbers.

— Chip Berlet and Frederick Clarkson

sistent with *Edwards v. Aguillard*. Still, activists continue to push Intelligent Design at high levels of state government in flagrant defiance of the federal courts, demonstrating the insistence and capacity of the Religious Right to pursue theocratic policies.

Kansas: Control over the elected State Board of Education has flipped back and forth between the Religious Right, and moderate Democrats and Republicans since the late 1990s. In 2008, the “moderates” held a narrow and electorally fragile 6-4 majority over the Religious Right, anti-evolution faction. A moderate coalition of Democrats and Republicans increased their majority over the anti-evolution, Religious Right faction to 7-3, at least until 2010 when five seats are expected to be contested.

Iowa: Just weeks after the 2008 presidential election, Gov. Jindal, 37, a Religious Right Roman Catholic, was the headliner at a high dollar fundraiser for the Iowa Family Policy Center, the state political affiliate of Focus on the Family. The event was seen as a foreshadowing of the 2012 Iowa presidential caucuses.

Washington, D.C.: The *Los Angeles Times* published an article just before the election that shows that little has changed with the dynamics of the Religious Right in the GOP in two decades: “In skirmishes around the country in recent months, evangelicals and others who believe Republicans have been too timid in fighting abortion, gay marriage and illegal immigration have won election to the party’s national committee, in preparation for a fight over the direction and leadership of the party.... The Religious Right is contending with party moderates for control of the Republican National Committee. It was frustration with the Bush-led Republican National Committee that prompted a number of conservatives this year to try to upend the system. Conservatives won seats representing California, Iowa, Alaska, Texas, North Carolina, South Carolina and Michigan. One new member is a popular black preacher from Detroit, Keith Butler, who presides over a mega-church.”¹²

Alaska: Republican Governor Sarah

Palin, who was vetted by the Religious Right-dominated Council for National Policy and forced onto the Republican Party ticket has emerged as a leader of the Republican Party and of the Religious Right, along with such Religious Right figures as Gov. Jindal, former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee (currently a *Fox News* program host) and arguably Mitt Romney (a Mormon who has moved towards the Religious Right since functioning as governor of Massachusetts).

Even a cursory flip through snapshots from the culture war shows that the Religious Right remains strong in the Republican Party, intends to, and is capable of, waging and winning theocratic battles against LGBT and women’s civil and human rights, as well as disrupting secular public education. The religious war Buchanan described in 1996 has shown that it can transcend the wins and losses of any given election season. The only way the culture war could be over or nearly over is if one or another side is clearly winning or losing, their capacity to wage the war has been significantly enhanced or degraded, or they are about to call a truce or to surrender. None of these things is happening.

Innovations

At a national meeting of the American Catholic bishops held shortly after the election, many passionately declared that there was no acceptable compromise on abortion, and denounced the prochoice views of President-elect Obama. Some also condemned Catholics who had argued it was morally acceptable to back President-elect Obama because he pledged to reduce abortion rates.¹³ Nevertheless liberal Roman Catholic columnist E.J. Dionne wrote in *The Washington Post* a few days after the election that Obama should seek common ground on abortion by not rescinding Bush-era anti-abortion executive orders — such as the infamous “global gag rule”¹⁴ and otherwise not pursuing prochoice policies. Mistaking capitulation with compromise is an all-too-common pattern among those who would sacrifice the civil rights of others in the name of common ground.¹⁵

Meanwhile, Focus on the Family rolled out a new “Truth Project,” a religious and ideological indoctrination program that is touring the country. In addition to discussing family issues and sexuality, the project aggressively promotes intelligent design and features, among others, Ben Stein, the producer of the anti-Darwin propaganda film *Expelled*. Young people of “college age” are a particular target. Analysis of current polling may show trends among young White evangelicals on the hot button matters of the culture wars. (See box on page 27). The Religious Right is certainly looking at the same data. Focus on the Family and the millennially militant organization The Call, among many others intend to aggressively contend for that same demographic.

The Call is a national parachurch youth organization head by the Los Angeles-based Lou Engle, which played a dynamic role in the California campaign to roll back marriage equality. Engle is a member of the Apostolic Council of Prophetic Elders, which leads the international Pentecostal movement called the New Apostolic Reformation (also known as the Third Wave) and is headed by former Fuller Theological Seminary professor C. Peter Wagner. The Third Wave gained considerable attention during the 2008 election season, due to the involvement of GOP Vice-Presidential candidate, Sarah Palin.¹⁶ It sees itself struggling in a demon infested world, with the job of invoking supernatural powers of “anointing” and “spiritual warfare” to drive out witches and demons and reform the culture. Many understand themselves to be part of group called Joel’s Army, a biblically prophesized unit that will do battle with the forces of Satan to establish a theocratic order in the End Times.¹⁷

The Call enjoys the support of such top Religious Right leaders as Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council, Father Frank Pavone of the militantly anti-abortion Priests for Life, and former GOP presidential contender Gary Bauer.

In August of 2008, Engle mobilized 50,000 young people for a rally on the Mall in Washington, D.C. The crowd was

addressed by GOP presidential primary candidate Mike Huckabee among other conservative leaders. *Church & State* reported: “Pieces of bright red tape with the word ‘LIFE’ covered their mouths as young Americans rocked back and forth, swaying their arms in the air to loud Christian music while they listened to the raspy voice of their leader, Pastor Lou Engle. Engle... summoned the young generation to ‘revive’ the nation from what he often refers to as ‘forces of darkness.’”

“I believe...that God has thrown a window open,’ Engle told *Charisma*, a leading Pentecostal magazine. ‘We have entered a season of time in a massive [spiritual] war. It’s Pearl Harbor. It’s Nazirites or Nazism. We are in a war, and if we don’t win, we lose everything.’ Some young evangelicals who are part of Engle’s movement see themselves as soldiers in this ‘war.’ They view it as their duty or calling to end the nation’s immorality and stop what they consider the ‘dark forces,’ such as legal abortion and gay marriage.”

“Abortion is not another social issue,” says Engle, “Abortion is fueling the demonization of our whole culture.”¹⁸

Engle was featured in the Academy Award nominated, 2006 documentary *Jesus Camp*, in which he indoctrinates young children in anti-abortion ideology and takes them to the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court where they wear the same bright red tape over their mouths with the word “LIFE” written in black on it as was used at the rally on the Mall.

The Call actively campaigned for the anti-marriage equality ballot initiative in California, culminating with a 10-hour election eve prayer rally in a San Diego stadium headlined by James Dobson and Tony Perkins that attracted some 33,000 people. Rally speakers, including Engle, called for “martyrs” and predicted that there would soon come a time when “we will have to risk our lives.”¹⁹ Dobson promoted the rally on his national radio show, and according to one report was, “Choking up as he said he felt the hand of God telling him to go. ‘The Lord must be involved in this,’” Dobson said. [Yes on 8’s

Rev. Jim] Garlow agreed, saying they were ‘crying out’ to God in spiritual desperation to save California, as they were ‘watching the destruction of Western civilization.’” Focus on the Family, even while facing a budget crisis that has resulted in recent layoffs, nevertheless poured \$539,000 in cash into the “Yes on 8” campaign and FOF board member Elsa Prince kicked in \$450,000.²⁰

When significant leaders of the Religious Right such as Dobson say such things, it is important to take notice. But if we view such events solely through the lens of the “culture war”—which is to say, narrowly framed disagreements over abortion and homosexuality, one is risking the error of reductionism. Dobson, Engle and their supporters are powerfully motivated by and committed to their worldview, which is religious, militant, and comprehensive—and not merely a grab bag of hot button issues.

Conclusion

Pat Buchanan was right. There is a religious war going on in America against civil rights advances at odds with conservative religious orthodoxies. This poses one of the central challenges of our time for those of us who are not part of the Religious Right. Those of us for whom religious pluralism and constitutional democracy matters as reproductive freedom and marriage equality, and free, quality, and secular public education are important values need to pay attention to how the Religious Right adapts to the changed political environment. And in order to do this, we must view announcements of the death of the Religious Right and the end of the culture wars, with considerable skepticism, every time. ■

End Notes

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⁸ Don McLeroy, “Biology standards and reasonable doubts,” *Waco Tribune-Herald*, October 19, 2008.

⁹ Phillip Rawls, “State school board approves 2nd Bible textbook,” *Associated Press*, November 14, 2008. <http://www.mongomeryadvertiser.com/article/20081114/NEWS02/8111403371009>.

¹⁰ Barbara Forrest, “The Discovery Institute, The LA Family Forum, and the LA Science Education Act,” *Talk to Action*, June 26, 2008. <http://www.talk2action.org/story/2008/6/26/18920/8497>.

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¹⁷ Casey Sanchez, “Arming for Armageddon, Militant Joel’s Army Followers Seek Theocracy,” *Intelligence Report*, Fall 2008. <http://www.splcenter.org/intel/intelreport/article.jsp?aid=964>.

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Book Review

Remaining in Exile

Sliding to the Right: The Contest for the Future of American Jewish Orthodoxy

By Samuel C. Heilman

University of California Press, 2006, 363 pages.

Reviewed by Eleanor J. Bader

Sociology professor Samuel C. Heilman's fascinating—albeit limited—study of the half million Orthodox Jews living in the United States, *Sliding to the Right*, asks an important question: Why has this community become increasingly observant and rigidly bound to Talmudic principles over the past three decades?

The book centers on New York City because one-quarter of America's Orthodox population lives there and, Heilman writes, standards set in New York influence Orthodoxy in the rest of the country. He describes two groups, the Haredi Orthodox who eschew contact with the secular world—think black-coated Hasids from Williamsburg, Boro Park or Crown Heights, Brooklyn—and the modern Orthodox, who keep kosher and dress modestly, but typically pursue education and work outside the Jewish community. The latter group, he writes, “now finds itself losing the ideological battle for survival. *Frum* [religiously observant] is giving way to *frummer*” (p. 13).

The question is why. Heilman's exploration touches upon the political conservatism that dovetails with devotional conservatism, but he does not linger there. Instead, he seeks to deconstruct how a population that once planted its feet in both Jewish and secular America has given way to one that prizes insularity.

He begins by assessing the impact of the Holocaust on both the native-born and those who immigrated to the United States post-war, and reports that while some Jews turned from a God who allowed Hitler's atrocities to happen, others concluded that “no culture, however attractive or open, could be trusted. Judaism, especially Judaism in its most traditional form, was the only reliable treasure” (p. 26). What's more, this faction argued that by holding fast to this treasure, the Jewish community was collectively thumbing its nose at those who wished to exterminate it. That is, surviving—or better, thriving—was proof positive that Jews were neither passive nor easily defeated. Traditional garb—from married women donning wigs, to men displaying previously hidden ritual garments and covering their heads with yarmulkes—became marks of defiance.

Clearly, the impulse undergirding these behaviors was a profound discomfort with the non-Jewish world. As the 1940s and 50s gave way to the 1960s, Heilman reports that “Orthodox estrangement seemed to grow and...doubtful about the wholesomeness of America, looked for continuity with its traditionalist right wing” (p. 47). Similar to those who embraced Christian conservatism, the Orthodox community bristled at liberalized sexual mores and protest movements that questioned gender and race relations. Those who had previously straddled both Orthodoxy and worldliness began to fear that the latter would send them onto dangerous turf. As a result, many Orthodox people—especially those who attended Orthodox synagogues on holidays but otherwise lived in secular society—retreated. While a small number opted to leave Orthodoxy completely, the bulk hunkered down into the security and rules of an ordered Jewish life.

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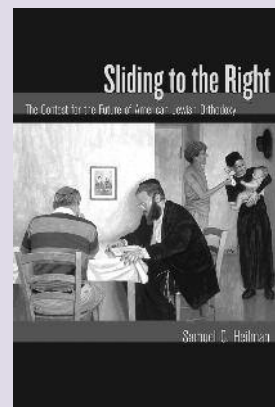
Those who had previously straddled both Orthodoxy and worldliness began to fear the latter.

Once there, they had decisions to make regarding the degree to which they'd interact with mainstream New Yorkers. Should their kids go to public schools, or should they send them to a yeshiva or private Jewish day school? If they chose the latter, what did they want their kids to learn?

Heilman's chapter on Jewish education is particularly insightful since he sees the schools as essential players in the community's rightward shift. As he tells it, families' relinquishment of responsibility for the education of their kids to Judaic authorities, coupled with the increased religiosity of teachers, and the emergence of virtually mandatory post high school study programs in Israel, contributed to the increasing conservatism.

Factor in National Jewish Population surveys that documented high rates of intermarriage and assimilation, and you get a sense of the survival panic that enveloped the already uneasy community. The revelation that young college grads were among “the most assimilated and prone to intermarriage” made the idea of sending offspring to far-off colleges seem risky (p. 98). The culture wars had invaded the Orthodox village square.

For their part, Heilman writes, Jewish day schools and yeshivas began to dwell on religious doctrine, as if sacred texts alone would keep community members from secular temptations. On top of this, since the late 1980s, the majority of teachers have come from the Haredi sector since few modern



Orthodox students are opting to become educators. Small surprise that Torah, Talmud, and Midrash have taken precedence over reading, writing, social studies and arithmetic.

Worse, writes Heilman, Haredi teachers promote passivity: “When [pupils] established a relationship with a rabbi they had to subordinate themselves, accepting the rabbi’s opinion as superior and nullifying their own opinions before him. Democracy and autonomy, values that modern Orthodox at least claimed to hold dear, paled in the face of da’as Torah” (p. 109).

Then there’s the year in Israel, deemed a “booster shot of Torah life,” (p. 113) that reinforces the idea of a necessary separation from all things *goyish*.

Upon their return to the States, decisions loom. In addition to finding a suitable opposite-sex mate, still-teenaged returnees can attend a nearby college or find work. In addition, males can enter the community-supported “scholars’ society” and devote themselves to prayer and study.

For those who opt for the work world, avoiding sin—from nonkosher food, to rock and roll, to Internet porn or exposure to feminists, queers, leftists or atheists—remains paramount. As Heilman writes, “They look for a place that will minimize their exposure to what they consider the seductions of sex and seek to avoid environments where contact between men and women is free and easy, particularly where women are ‘immodestly’ dressed” (p. 168).

It’s a tall order.

Yet for all this, Heilman’s explication of Orthodox fears and the retreat into dogmatic spirituality as a way of maintaining Jewish cohesion fails to fully explain the Jewish community’s support of Republican politicians or the alliances they’ve made with Christian conservatives. Polls showed three-quarters of the Orthodox voting for McCain, while the Jewish community as a whole reported that level of support for Obama. *Sliding to the Right* would have been a better book had it more thoroughly interrogated these trends. At the same time, it is an enlightening, if introductory, look at New York’s Orthodox population, from the Satmar Hasidim of Williamsburg, to the Lubavitchers of Crown Heights, to the modern Orthodox of Manhattan’s Upper West Side and Flatbush, Brooklyn.

And it explains the shift an Orthodox friend has described to me. Growing up in the 1970s, she remembers that everyone watched movies and ate nonmeat entrees in restaurants. Now a mother of two, she complains about her sons’ increasing dogmatism and expresses shock at their contempt for television, secular music, and films. Still, she feels unable to challenge pervasive community norms and sees the slide to the Right as already complete.

Heilman isn’t as sure and concludes that while the ultra-observant agree that being aware of “boundaries between themselves and the proverbial other” is important, the question of whether the boundary can be traversed remains unresolved. “The Haredi group is certain that to be Orthodox means recognizing that one

remains always the stranger, always holding onto a sense of being in exile, and that lines remain that can never be crossed,” he writes (p. 296).

At the same time, he continues, the community is practical and, in order to support themselves and their families, both men and women have little choice but to become mired in a multicultural workforce. Indeed, financial realities—especially for families boasting seven to nine children—may ultimately trump remaining cloistered. In the end, economic survival may push the community outward, no matter the demons that lie in wait.

Images of Hope, Images of Fear

Obsession: Radical Islam’s War Against the West

Directed by Wayne Kopping, Produced by Raphael Shore

DVD Release Date: September 11, 2007, Running time: 77 minutes, \$14.95.

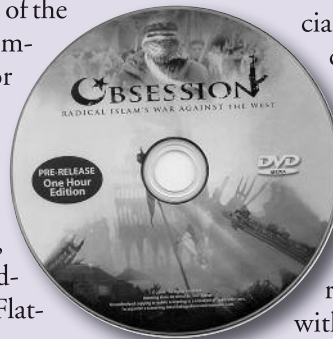
Reviewed by Adem Carroll

With relief and some surprise, much of the nation has been congratulating itself on finally electing an African American president, even one with a “Muslim middle name.” As the cathartic images of hope begin to fade from our screens, however, let us pause to reflect on those image-makers and image destroyers who worked hard to incite voters’ fears about Barack Hussein Obama.

In the course of the campaign, infomercials and speeches circulated depicting Barack Obama as a terrorist sympathizer, a socialist, as well as a secret Muslim. Viral political messaging and mobilization on the internet energized that 12 percent of Americans who insisted up to the election that the Democrat was a Muslim and hated him for it. In response, the Obama campaign worked to distance their candidate from controversial associates—and from the vilified Muslim and Arab communities.

As part of the early fall election season vilification of Muslims, 28 million DVDs of a documentary called *Obsession: Radical Islam’s War Against the West* were distributed free inside more than a dozen major newspapers across the country. Cleverly framed as a pseudo-scholarly report on radical Muslim movements, together with sensationalist imagery, the *Obsession* DVD is actually misleading and hateful in its messaging. It is also fairly effective as propaganda, well paced and visually engaging. One must really pay close attention to note its many misrepresentations and confluences.

After a gentle beginning, the DVD argues that there is a vast Islamic conspiracy to dominate the world through violence and trickery. Warning that failure to see the situation in these apocalyptic terms constitutes appeasement, speakers in the film repeatedly suggest links between Nazi and Muslim ideologies. And despite a brief disclaimer, the film implicitly and explicitly



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depicts all Muslims, including the five million U.S. Muslims, as a threat to the United States and to Israel.

Distributed by the Clarion Fund, a spin off of a well-known organization called Aish HaTorah, the video seems intentionally designed to appeal to the fears and concerns of American Jews as well as Christian Zionists. Twenty eight million is obviously an enormous number of DVDs, and advocacy groups noted that a majority of them were distributed in battleground states, apparently to influence the election. (This possibility prompted the Council of American Islamic Relations (CAIR) to lodge a complaint to the Federal Communications Commission that a foreign-registered group underwriting the DVD was interfering in U.S. politics.)

A few months earlier, the website Jews on First reported that the Republican Jewish Coalition apparently teamed with Christians United for Israel (CUFI), a conservative evangelical group, to send thousands of Jews the *Obsession* DVDs tucked into a book by the CUFI director.

Despite its evident failure to sway Jewish voters in the presidential election—78 percent supported the winner, according to Pew—it may have helped the Obama/terrorist/Muslim storyline take hold among some conservative Christian voters. Rightist interests will almost certainly continue to use this video to incite fear, marginalize Muslims and Arabs, and influence national discourse on national security and international relations.

Indeed, the producers of the *Obsession* DVD are planning future films (such as “The Third Jihad”) targeting Muslim American community institutions like the CAIR and Islamic Society of North America. One is left to wonder if the largely immigrant communities the group’s serve will continue to be marginalized under a new administration, as a result.

Images and Message

Obsession begins with a disarming disclaimer that not all Muslims are terrorists. This may allow newspapers distributing the DVD to say it is not hate speech targeting all Muslims but the statement is consistently belied by sensationalistic images of violence, children training for martyrdom, concentration camps and other horrors. National independence movements among Iraqis, Chechens, and Palestinians are conflated with religious zealotry. Frequently, important context is missing. Many of the examples of so-called Islamist propaganda deplored in the film are actually footage of the war in Iraq or videos including such news material. As noted, the images also conflate widespread Muslim hostility to Israeli occupation with the massive crimes of Nazi antisemitism.

Obsession builds its argument concerning the Islamic Threat with a thread of statements from “academic” commentators—producing at least the illusion of scholarly consensus. Yet speakers like Dr. Khaleel Mohammed of San Diego State University and Imam Ahmed Dewidar have complained that their remarks were put into false context.

For the most part, however, the film relies on right-wing

favorites like the professional Christian convert Nonie Darwish, author of *Now They Call Me Infidel: Why I Renounced Jihad for America, Israel and the War on Terror*; whose remarks follow a standard neoconservative line; neoconservative academics like Itamar Marcus, the founder of Palestinian Media Watch; and the infamous Walid Shoebat, a Muslim-born Palestinian convert to Christianity who claims to have been a Palestinian terrorist—a claim found not credible by the *Jerusalem Post*. Shoebat introduces the term Islamofascism to amp up the invective—and claims that with 55 predominantly Muslim countries in the world, they “could have the success rate of several Nazi Germanys.”

Shoebat also undermines the argument that the word “jihad” has many meanings by remarking, “*Jihad* may mean self-struggle... but so does *Mein Kampf*.”

Infamous pundit Daniel Pipes tries to sound “reasonable” and talks about empowering “moderate Muslims” towards the end of the film. He speculates that that radical Muslims may be about 10 percent or even 15 percent of the over one billion Muslims worldwide, without telling us what “support” for radical Islam means or what evidence backs this statistic. Instead we are left with the idea that hundreds of millions are a clear and present danger to our existence.

As noted in www.changethestory.net, the vast majority of Western Muslims—the same percentage as other Americans or higher—reject terrorism altogether. Predominantly Muslim nations around the world have varying understandings of terrorism, but studies have shown that only in Nigeria did a majority show sympathy for terrorism. However, negative views about the U.S. government have increased among Muslims and in most nations around the world.

Negative speech or views should not be equated with support for terror—opinion must be dealt with through dialogue, not military drones and cluster bombs. This type of conflation, however, occurs throughout the DVD—and as a depressing catalogue of Muslims behaving badly, the film can indeed seem effective.

As a Muslim, I am aware of the unhelpful, reactionary, and irresponsible rhetoric one can come in touch with in the Muslim world. Racist, class, and tribal distinctions may hide themselves in the green flag of Islam as well as in the red, white, and blue. But as Rabbi Arthur Waskow of the Shalom Center has observed, “*Obsession* does not address this tug toward violence as it infects all our communities. It pretends that only Islam is infected, and all Islam at that. And by doing this, it distracts us from addressing the real changes we need to make to wash away the bloody streaks in each and all of our traditions.” (www.shalomctr.org/node/1462)

For more information on the DVD, visit Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting’s Smearcasters website which discusses some of the experts interviewed (www.fair.org), and a faith-based critique at www.obsessionwithhate.com.

.....Reports in Review.....

REPORT OF THE MONTH

On Immigration: Clearing Smoke, Cracking Mirrors

The Anti-Immigrant Movement that Failed: Positive Integration Policies by State Governments Still Far Outweigh Punitive Policies Aimed at New Immigrants

Progressive States Network, New York, September 2008.

<http://progressivestates.org/files/reports/immigrationSept08.pdf>

Since Minutemen border vigilantes burst onto U.S. television sets in the spring of 2005, the anti-immigrant movement has successfully utilized national news outlets to exaggerate — and to build — its size and momentum. Various cable news pundits serve as virtual mouthpieces for anti-immigrant groups (e.g. Lou Dobbs and Glenn Beck) and until the financial crisis and presidential campaigns eclipsed coverage, mainstream news venues regularly featured stories on the growing anti-immigrant backlash — even as polls indicated that a majority of the population favored a path to citizenship for the country’s estimated twelve million undocumented immigrants. The Progressive States Network’s recent report, *The Anti-Immigrant Movement that Failed*, comes as a welcome — if partial — corrective to the media hype.

Given the impasse of federal immigration reform, over the past few years most policy action has been at the state and municipal levels. By the end of the most recent legislative season in June, 39 states had enacted 175 bills and resolutions regulating immigrants from 1,267 such measures introduced, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. In 2007, 46 state legislatures passed 240 of the 1,562 measures introduced that year — triple the number enacted in 2006. Anti-immigrant policy appears to be sweeping the nation.

Not so fast! argue Caroline Fan and Nathan Newman of the Progressive States Network. In 2008, the authors find that only 14 states enacted “punitive or somewhat punitive” policies, whereas seven states passed “mixed” and seventeen passed “integrative or somewhat integrative” packages. More telling, “only 11 percent of undocumented immigrants live in states that have enacted comprehensive Punitive policies” on immigration. By comparison, over 50 percent of undocumented immigrants live in states in which they are eligible for in-state college tuition.

Shifting the emphasis from the number of states with reactionary immigration policies to the numbers of unauthorized immigrants affected by such policies, the authors see a glass half full: “The states with the largest numbers of undocumented immigrants... have been quietly promoting a whole range of policies based on integration of new immigrants.”

The report argues that only states dominated by rightwing leadership won more punitive laws in 2008. This glosses over the fact that national policy campaigns often build off momentum generated in the states, where campaigners pick the low-hanging fruit at sympathetic legislatures. As important, this backlash has framed the terms of debate well beyond a few retrograde statehouses, putting new immigrant communities on the defensive even in “integrative” locales like New York, where in ’07 then-Governor Spitzer withdrew his driver’s license plan for the undocumented under a hailstorm of criticism. The creation of an anti-immigrant climate, in which unauthorized immigrants are reduced to the criminal label “illegals,” is itself an achievement for the White nationalists who comprise the backbone of the movement.

Some readers may also take exception to the report’s state rankings. While a “mixed” Colorado did manage to repeal a one-year residency requirement of those seeking hospital treatment for tuberculosis, only the chronically optimistic would consider the state’s ’08 immigration record to be anything other than harsh. Indeed, rights activists describe being on the defense in the legislature’s toxic environment, where nothing pro-immigrant passed and “victory” was killing 19 anti-immigrant measures even nastier than those ultimately enacted.

The report’s title, *The Anti-Immigrant Movement that Failed*, raises hopes that, alas, remain unfulfilled. Deflating exaggerated media characterizations of the anti-immigrant movement’s size and momentum is important, and this report makes a valuable contribution. As the issue of immigration resurfaces post-election, we can permit ourselves the audacity to hope for great things if we also commit to the tremendous organizing challenge we face — in our communities, our legislatures bodies, and, yes, the news media.

— Tarso Luís Ramos

Other Reports in Review

Charitable War on Terror

Collateral Damage: How the War on Terror Hurts Charities, Foundations, and the People They Serve

By Kay Guinane, Vanessa Dick, and Amanda Adams, OMB Watch and Grantmakers

Without Borders, July 2008.

http://www.ombwatch.org/npadv/PDF/collateral_damage.pdf

The financial war on terror has been a direc-

tionless, misguided disaster with philanthropic and charitable foundations receiving a big hit, according to this report. The financial anti-terror campaign under the USA PATRIOT Act gave the executive branch and the U.S. Treasury Department clearance to blacklist disfavored individuals and groups, and impose guilt by association. Broad surveillance powers combined with unregulated and evolving standards allow the Treasury Department to skirt due process.

Rather than be considered “innocent until proven guilty,” the Bush Administration assumes philanthropic organizations are at fault. Charities are shut down immediately, without given the latitude of for profit companies to pay fines and defend themselves. One example is the charity KindHearts USA, which closed in February 2006 after the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) alleged the organization was created from Holy Land and the Global Relief

Foundation (GRF) — two groups shut down in 2001.

The writers suggest charities like KindHearts cannot predict what constitutes illegal behavior given the flaws in the Treasury's guidelines for nonprofits, the Anti-Terrorist Financing Guidelines: Voluntary Best Practices for U.S.-Based Charities and the Risk Matrix for the Charitable Sector. Charities must probe their associates and donors, but have no legal protection despite adherence to their voluntary self-inspection. An organization may not automatically defend itself when investigated: its attorney must first procure a special license from the Treasury Department before representing the accused charitable foundation. Criminal prosecutions routinely employ shoddy evidence, manufacturing the link between non-profits and terror groups.

The report suggests that the solution in part can be found in the U.S. Department of State's existing *Guiding Principles for Government Treatment of NGOs* which would allow the government to fight terrorism without harming the philanthropic world's ability to do its work. —*Maria Planansky*

One More Band-Aid

An Unequal Burden: The True Cost of High-Deductible Health Plans for Communities of Color

By FamiliesUSA, September 2008.

<http://www.familiesusa.org/assets/pdfs/unequal-burden.pdf>

The high-deductible health plan is the latest quick-fix scheme to expand healthcare coverage that we should avoid, according to Families USA. Low premium payments make such plans attractive, but the cost of deductibles forces families to pay large sums of money out-of-pocket when they actually seek health care.

FamiliesUSA uses hard data and statistics to show that high-deductibles are greatly beneficial—but largely to relatively healthy Caucasians. Communities of color are reported as being in poorer health than whites of similar income, with more chronic diseases and illnesses. In the end, the high-deductibles burden people with more healthcare costs. The bottom line is high deductible plans are just too expensive for many low income people and especially people of color. Rather than seek out aid, they will avoid receiving med-

ical attention.

In the end, this band-aid approach ultimately will exacerbate and worsen the healthcare access gap. —*Maria Planansky*

Homophobia and the Power of the Media?

How The Real World Ended “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell”

By P.W. Singer, Brookings Institute, August 2008.

http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Files/rc/papers/2008/08_military_singer/08_military_singer.pdf

Seven strangers have made “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” obsolete, or so Peter Singer would have you believe. MTV’s popular reality show *The Real World*, premiering the same year President Bill Clinton enacted the military policy letting gays and lesbians remain in the military as long as they keep their sexual orientation a secret, features a youthful, seven-member cast ranging in age from 18 to 25. This group represents different races, genders, religious and political beliefs, and sexual orientations. Singer uses the reality show’s discussions about homosexuality as a barometer of national feelings about gays in the military.

Singer lists LGBT strides in the media such as Ellen DeGeneres’ talk show and *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* and credits this visibility for shifting public opinion. When the military policy was first enacted, allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military was controversial. By 2007 CNN found that 79 percent of Americans think people who are openly homosexual should be allowed to serve in the U.S. military.

The 18 to 25 demographic is not only MTV’s intended audience, but also accounts for the age range of prospective servicemen and women in the U.S. military. What is clear is that “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” isn’t working. Unit cohesion in the military is more threatened by banning homosexuality than accepting it, and the military simply cannot afford to discharge any more members. Hit especially hard are the “high demand/low density” positions, including pilots, combat engineers, and Arab linguists. With only 15 percent of American youth deemed as “qualified military available,” Singer urges the military to embrace the cultural changes and start “getting real.”

—*Maria Planansky*

Muslims and the Media

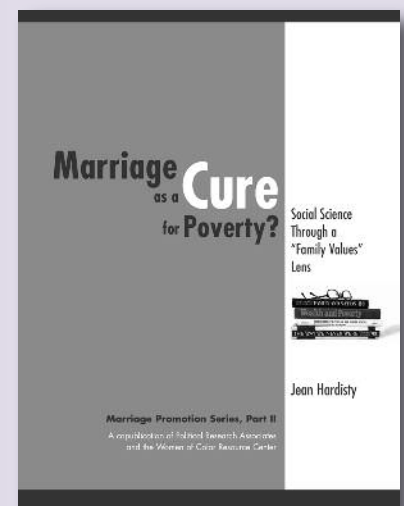
Smearcasting: How Islamophobes Spread Fear, Bigotry and Misinformation

By Steve Rendall, Isabel Macdonald, Veronica Cassidy and Dina Marguerite Jacir, *Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting*, October 2008.

<http://www.smearcasting.com>

This report profiles twelve of the most vitriolic anti-Muslim pundits, exposing a loose, albeit powerful, network of prominent right wing commentators who regularly broadcast misinformation, lies and innuendo through the mainstream media that marginalizes Muslim Americans and manipulates public attitudes.

Among the “dirty dozen” are Daniel Pipes, founder of the Middle East Forum think tank, who claimed that the “enfranchisement of American Muslims” entailed “true dangers for American Jews” and led a campaign to oust the principal of an Arabic language public school in Brooklyn. Prolific blogger Michelle Malkin referred to Islam as “the religion of perpetual rage,” and Rev. Pat Robertson, on his Christian Broadcasting Network, referred to Islam as a “worldwide political movement” determined to “subjugate all people under Islamic Law.” Political commentator Bill O’Reilly made the list for justifying greater surveillance of Muslim Americans, labeling it “criminal profiling.” —*Andrew Smith*



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Eyes RIGHT

OBAMA WIN: A MANDATE FOR THE RADICAL HOMOSEXUAL LOBBY?

Matt Barber, Director of Cultural Affairs at the Liberty Council and Liberty Alliance Action, warns President-elect Obama to recognize that many of his crucial supporters also voted to ban same-sex marriage in California, Arizona, and Florida. As he put it, "...Obama, who has pledged full support for every single demand of extremist homosexual pressure groups, must recalibrate his far-left positions on these and other social issues if he wishes to be an effective leader... President-elect Obama owes his African-American supporters and the rest of America assurances that he will work to protect the cornerstone institution of legitimate marriage and reject the free-speech killing, religious liberties chilling agenda of the radical homosexual lobby."

Source: "California Proposition 8 Poll Results: Voters Again Reject Artificial 'Gay Marriage' by Matt Barber, November 5, 2008, The Post Chronicle. http://www.postchronicle.com/commentary/article_212183991.shtml

PROLIFE GROUPS REFLECT ON THE "OBAMANATION"

Father Frank Pavone, Director of Priests for Life, is breathless in his video statement spelling out the harsh challenges facing the prolife movement under an Obama administration. Obama's win is "one of the biggest mistakes that the American people have made in the entire history of our nation" because "we have a president-elect who cannot tell the difference between serving the public and killing the public." Ultimately, while Father Pavone recognizes that the prolife movement will no longer be able to work "inside the White House," he believes pro-lifers will be victorious through greater voter education and lobbying.

Source: "An Obamanation: Father Frank Responds," YouTube, November 5, 2008. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CKIFqrUQCIM>

AMERICANS MUST CHOOSE FREEDOM OR SOCIALISM

Occasional Presidential candidate and publishing heir Steve Forbes offers his two cents on the road ahead in fighting President-elect Obama's liberal tax policy in a mailing from the anti-tax, anti-union, anti-regulation group FreedomWorks. The organization has been at the vanguard of successful efforts to prevent workers from forming all-union workplaces and led numerous smear campaigns to discredit environmental and consumer watchdog groups. Rather than the economic meltdown, Forbes most fears the "nanny state" which he says can be fought with flat-rate taxes, private healthcare, and economic deregulation. The choice, as he says, is "Freedom or Socialism." That seems like a plan to show who's in charge.

Source: Direct mail letter from Steve Forbes, Vice President, FreedomWorks Foundation November 7, 2008, PRA files.

"OBAMA-PROOF" YOUR INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO

Vulnerable Americans need investment tips to face off the "tsunami of big-government" and "redistributed wealth" that comes with the Obama victory, says Mark Skousen, a prolific economist. Just follow his seven "Obama-Proof" investments to help individual investors survive, and thrive, as Obama leads "the nation toward the kind of socialism now operating in Western Europe-where production and growth can be charitably described as stagnant." Essentially, Skousen encourages people to withdraw their money from the American market and invest it in "areas of the globe whose booming growth doesn't depend on what's happening with the U.S. economy." The precise investment tips are available for a steep price in Skousen's *Obamanomics & Your Money: How To Profit From The Coming Big-Government Tsunami*.

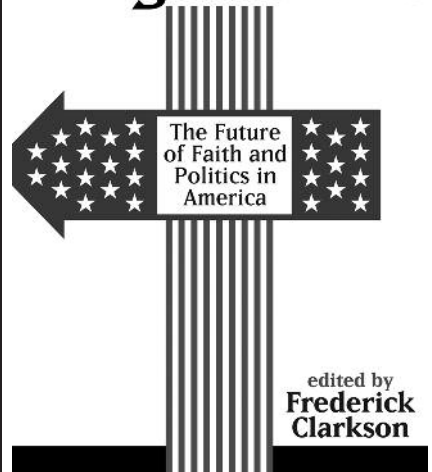
Source: "Obama-Proof" Your Portfolio" by Mark Skousen, promotional insert into Human Events.

Eye LASHES

"The Hand of God Has Been Removed from this Nation."

-Internet Evangelist Bill Keller upon the election of Barack Hussein Obama as the 44th president of United States, www.liveprayer.com.

Dispatches from the Religious Left



"Finally, the Religious Left has found its voice."

-JOAN BROWN CAMPBELL

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