



Dana Milbank

**CONSERVATIVE
BATTLELINE
ONLINE**

The "Bold Colors" Conservative Voice in Washington

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Federalism in the Air

by Donald Devine

Issue 162 – August 25, 2010

Pass the smelling salts: the progressives smell federalism in the air and are swooning faint. Every major intellectual on the left is suffering asphyxiation at the idea people may think someone other than their favorite “expert” in Washington can solve every problem in America – and they just cannot stop writing about it in a pandemic of total panic.

The most recent fainting spell hit *The Washington Post’s* resident fussybudget Dana Milbank. Those crazy rightwingers of the Tea Party movement actually want to restore the 10th Amendment to the Constitution. Horrors! From his cozy manse on the Outer Banks seashore, he mused sardonically about “how different things will be here when the South secedes from the Union.”



Dana Milbank

He expressed concern about a statement from former Congressman Zach Wamp that he hoped voters would send a message in the next election “so that the states are not forced to consider separation from this government.” Somehow the highly-paid journalist could not understand the word “not.” Texas Governor Rick Perry, former Rep. Tom Delay, Congressman Ron Paul and Rep. Steve King likewise caused the timid soul to fall into vapors by mentioning separation, although none actually endorsed such a proposition.

After initially frightening his fellow D.C. high pooh-bah vacationers to get their attention, Milbank conceded the “Tenther’s” actual agenda was “succession’s cousin, nullification.” He was terrorized that a Missouri ballot resolution had passed the previous week by a 71 percent margin, declaring the OmamaCare provision requiring that all citizens purchase government-approved health insurance invalid, and a threat to Missouri citizens’ rights. Milbank took hope that such nullification was tried once before and failed, when South Carolina was forced to retreat before the threatening President Andrew Jackson in 1832.



Milbank claimed that to nullify ObamaCare is to void Article VI: “This Constitution and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof...shall be the supreme law of the land.” If people think a law is unconstitutional intoned the Grand High progressive scribbler, all they need to do “is challenge the law in court,” by which he, of course, meant a Federal not a state court, referring to Virginia’s recent case against mandatory health purchases. He did not mention that Virginia had won standing that same week, perhaps missing it far away in the sands of North Carolina. Otherwise, he said, go elect a new president and Congress or pass an amendment to the Constitution.

The good Post journalist did not notice that ObamaCare and all laws must be “in pursuance” of the Constitution and, if not, they are not the law of the land. If ObamaCare or another law is, in fact, not a legitimate power of the Federal government, the 10th Amendment says, “The powers not delegated to the United

States by the Constitution nor prohibited by it to the States are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.” The issue is not supremacy but legitimacy. Who decides? Amendments do but they are supposed to require three-fourths of the states to agree. Courts? Ask the same President Jackson: he told the Supreme Court: you have made your decision, now try to enforce it.

Who decides? The Constitution does and the Constitution is the separation of powers, not merely the courts. Article III lets Congress limit all appellate jurisdiction of the court and presidents can and do turn a blind eye toward enforcing laws they consider unconstitutional, as did most early presidents against returning slaves and most modern ones on ignoring anti-racial preference decisions. Congress can nullify courts as it did “reversing” the *Grove City* discrimination case. As the great Yale University political scientist Robert Dahl proved, Congress has in effect over-ridden Supreme Court decisions throughout history. The informal powers are in fact more important than the literal ones.



Robert Dahl

The states are likewise part of the Constitutional separation of powers no matter how much progressives hate to face that fact. Most Federal programs are in fact administered by the states. Progressives please sit down and take a deep breath. The enforcement of these laws differs greatly by state depending on how important or Constitutional the local officials think they are. Likewise, most Federal court orders are referred back to state courts to enforce and the locals have great discretion in how they respond. Sometime they delay until things become moot, sometime nullification is more subtle. Wise state officials do not directly confront presidents or courts, no more than Congress does, but what they in fact do both with their own and Federal laws is decisive.

Congress, presidents, judges and all state and local officials take a solemn oath to defend the Constitution but oaths necessarily mean, how those who take them interpret the Constitution, not what someone else tells them it means. This is how the checks and balances actually work. As the Constitution’s “father” James Madison put it “ambition must be made to counteract ambition.” The controlling mechanism was not a single entity such as a court but all institutions checking each other. Sometimes, courts are on top as now, sometimes presidents as in wartime or emergencies, sometimes Congress as in the post Civil War and post Depression periods, and sometimes states—as in the Civil War itself, which in fact was fought between states and the northern ones prevailed.

States are coming back in favor because the national government has failed so miserably. Every progressive remedy has been adopted during the present economic crisis and the unemployment rate stays near ten percent, actually much higher as people despair of even seeking work. Entitlements are exploding and national elites fear even to mention the fact they will bankrupt the nation if some radical changes are not made. Anyone who offers a solution is silenced or ignored or a called Tenth or secessionist. Still, a recent Rasmussen poll found that 59 percent of likely voters say states should have the right to opt out of Federal programs, with a mere 25 percent disagreeing.

State Attorneys General are suing the Feds for ignoring the 10th Amendment at a rate previously unknown. There is even a movement to repeal the 17th Amendment. A Firearms Freedom Act has passed seven states and is under consideration in 20 more. Outright nullification measures against the Real ID Act were passed by several legislatures in at least four states. ObamaCare has already provoked seven state sovereignty resolutions. Medical marijuana



laws to preempt Federal laws passed in 14 states and, although overruled in California by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2005, Federal drug laws in those states were not greatly enforced during the Bush Administration and have been de facto nullified by the Obama Administration.

From the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions offered by Madison and Thomas Jefferson in 1798, to the New England revolt against the Embargo Act of 1807, to Wisconsin, Kentucky, Massachusetts and others' de facto nullification of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, to the Obama nullification of *Gonzales v Raich* and the rise of the Tea Party and Tenters today, nullification is as American as apple pie.

And please do pass the salts again to poor Mr. Milbank.

Donald Devine, the editor of ConservativeBattleline Online, was the director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management from 1981 to 1985 under Ronald Reagan and is Senior Scholar at Bellevue University's Center for American Vision and Values.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Keep Sending Your Taxes
by Timothy Carney
Issue 162 – August 25, 2010

Politicians in Washington like to complain about overpaid CEOs, and luckily now they don't have to travel far to find them.

[The Washington Business Journal reports](#) that while nationwide CEOs of top companies saw a 5.5 percent pay hike, Beltway-area CEOs saw a 37 percent raise — more than in any other city.

This may be yet another symptom of the new Giant Sucking Sound: the nation's wealth rushing to the seat of government power in the wake of the Bush Bailouts and Obama's spectacular increase of government's role in the economy.

Other symptoms: DC's housing market is [the second-strongest](#) in the nation according to one recent measure; [the richest county in the nation](#), and 6 of the 10 wealthiest, are DC bedroom communities; and the area's unemployment is [the lowest in the nation](#).

The lesson is clear: government, not the free market, is where money is made these days.

The message from the politicians, bureaucrats, contractors, lobbyists and the rest of those benefiting from government spending in Washington to the rest of the country is clear: keep sending in your taxes.

Timothy Carney writes for the Washington Examiner, where this first appeared.



Tim Carney

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Obama Keynesian Gift Shop
by George W. Liebmann
Issue 162 – August 25, 2010

The economists of this administration hold Keynesian beliefs, but their belief is in one-way Keynesianism. The stimulus package has not produced its expected multiplier effects for several reasons, but one of them surely is its superimposition not on a previously balanced budget but upon enormous structural deficits. No credible proposal has been forthcoming for the phasing out of the Bush tax cuts, or some of them, or for a gradually rising gasoline tax, or for military base and naval reductions, or for curbs on unsustainable social security and federal pension programs. New health care entitlements are to be financed by reimbursement curbs which Congress has failed to enact and is known to be incapable of enacting.



George Liebmann

Expectations of the future feed into the present; the prosperity of the Clinton years was due to a perception that a combination of Democratic tax increases and Republican budget cuts would provide price stability and predictability and a climate supporting employment and investment. No such climate exists now as a result of the Obama administration's self-indulgence in protecting present benefits while deferring the measures needed to produce long-term stability, a course rejected by the British and German governments.

Another difficulty is the choice of beneficiaries for stimulus funds. The Obama administration, unlike that of Franklin Roosevelt, did not undertake to swiftly supply through a Works Progress Administration the maximum possible number of low-wage jobs at the earliest possible date. Nor did it address the possible social, political, and educational costs of 25% youth unemployment by a Civilian Conservation Corps to improve parks or construct a national network of footpaths or in the German manner by tax incentives to foster employment and vocational education of the young.

Instead, the recession was seized upon as an occasion to pay off political supporters and client groups. Nearly half the stimulus was allocated to public education, with the declared purpose of preventing layoffs of the nation's unionized teachers, whose ranks have multiplied as a result of recent campaigns to reduce class sizes which have produced few positive educational results. These are middle-class persons, many with mediocre skills thanks to state certification laws excluding more highly qualified liberal arts and science graduates from the teaching force. The stimulus allowed states to defer long-overdue changes in automatic seniority increases, Cadillac health care plans, and unsustainable pension and retiree health plans for teachers.

The stimulus' undifferentiated transportation subsidies bail out governors like Maryland's Martin O'Malley, who have balanced state budgets by deferring road maintenance and raiding transportation trust funds. Unlike the New Deal public works programs, these subventions yield no permanent residue. Wage-propping measures like the Davis-Bacon Act and administration-promoted 'project labor' agreements also ensure that 'stimulus' construction costs more than usual state and local construction, and much more than private-sector construction.

The approach to housing shares similar infirmities. The Hoover and Roosevelt administrations created a Home Owners' Loan Corporation to acquire defaulted mortgages and hold them until they became sound by reason of re-employment of the borrower or increases in property values; it was ultimately closed out with a small profit to the government. The mortgages then prevalent were typically granted for at most two-thirds of value and ultimate soundness could be expected. Since today's sub-prime mortgages should

never have been granted and will never be sound, the former approach has been forsworn in favor of a program of exhortations accompanied by some subsidies to induce the writing-down of mortgages. Since lenders have incentives not to recognize losses and thereby impair reported earnings, this approach has been as effective as pushing spaghetti through a key-hole, it has produced an explosion of vacant, abandoned, or occupied but under-maintained residential properties. What might help is expanded availability of low-cost rental units, which requires a temporary tax credit for the creation of second kitchens in existing homes to foster creation of new accessory apartments and mother-in-law flats and related long-overdue zoning reforms. This approach would create jobs for small home-improvement contractors. But it relies on uniform laws, generates no political patronage, creates no ribbon-cutting opportunities, and is of little benefit to unions; its appeal to Democratic leaders in the House of Representatives is therefore non-existent.

This is also true of land readjustment, a Far Eastern device tailor-made for ruined cities which currently generate more Democratic congressmen than civic betterment. This is a developer-driven device which allows a specified majority of property-owners to cooperatively improve a city block. Owner-occupiers may opt out; other dissenters must be bought out at an appraised value. This involves much milder coercion than Kelo-style eminent domain, but is anathema both to statists and to property rights fanatics.

In the sphere of financial regulation, the administration has forsworn clear prohibitions and predictable rules in favor of a morass of exceptions and discretionary waivers resembling nothing so much as one of the less inspired N.R.A. codes. The prohibition of derivatives as gambling contracts has not been restored, nor have the clear barriers of the Glass-Steagall Act or the prohibitions which the New Deal banking legislation imposed on uses of insured deposits. For good measure, the Frank-Dodd Act confers a retroactive windfall on some hitherto uninsured bank depositors, while permanently elevating insurance limits, contrary to most foreign practice, to a level of \$250,000, far above subsistence savings. For good measure, federal mortgage guarantees are now at the \$800,000 level. While Hoover promised only “a chicken in every pot”, Obama holds forth the promise of federally insured MacMansions for all.

After two years of failure, the approach to stimulus continues to be one of protecting unionized public employees and construction workers, while extending unemployment benefits to one year or even more. Public employee unions were anathema to the Roosevelt administration, as was a permanent dole of the sort that has created an huge white under-class in Britain. The Obama economic policy is that of John L.Lewis—protection of a limited class of union workers and a dole for the rest. If continued, it will convert the United States into a greater West Virginia. Foreign trade and immigration issues have been swept under the rug, at the behest of the unions, leaving South Korea, Colombia and Peru, and the American companies who trade with them, in limbo and leaving millions of Mexican and Central American migrants under threat of summary deportation in an economic never-never land in which they cannot borrow, invest, buy homes, or establish small businesses.

Roosevelt’s economic record was certainly inconstant and flawed. But it maintained public morale, left behind some impressive public works; workable systems of securities, banking, public utility and insurance regulation, now largely repudiated and not restored; a reciprocal trade agreements act, the foundation of postwar prosperity; an administrative procedure act imposing legal rules on an expanded state; federal rules of civil procedure which expanded discovery so as to allow private parties to curb corporate abuses (a system that worked well until the class action rules of the late 1960s); and a general preference, fostered by Justice Brandeis and his acolytes Felix Frankfurter, Dean Acheson, and Benjamin Cohen, for clearly stated and self-executing rules. This contrasts with the administrative principles of the current administration, which have converted Washington into a political gift shop. This is not even the system of the Court of Versailles, which had some regularity to it. It is that of the Ottoman Court, with similar effects on economic development.

*George W. Liebmann, a Baltimore lawyer, is the volunteer executive director of the Calvert Institute for Policy Research in Baltimore and is the author of *The Common Law Tradition: A Collective Portrait of Five Legal Scholars* (Transaction Books, 2005) among other works.*

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Editor**

Birthdays Not News

by Brent Baker

Issue 162 – August 25, 2010

In the first voter referendum on ObamaCare, Missourians overwhelmingly (by 71 to 29 percent) backed Proposition C which called upon the state to enact a statute to “deny the government authority to penalize citizens for refusing to purchase private health insurance,” an outcome the [St. Louis Post-Dispatch described](#) as “rebuking President Barack Obama’s administration.” On Wednesday night, however, **the ABC, CBS and NBC evening newscasts skipped the bad news for President Obama – yet all found time to celebrate his 49th birthday.**

(The Missouri repudiation of a central tenet of ObamaCare came a day after another setback for ObamaCare which the newscasts also ignored: A federal district judge in Richmond rejected the Obama administration’s quest to block Virginia’s lawsuit challenging Congress’ jurisdiction to mandate individuals buy health insurance.)

“At the White House today, they sang to the President,” ABC anchor Diane Sawyer touted over a graphic which declared it Obama’s “Big Day.” Viewers were treated to one stanza of “Happy birthday to you!” before Sawyer related: “He says we’ve watched him go gray, and the photographs since the campaign do show a little speckle in that hair.”

With his wife and one daughter in Spain and the other daughter at camp, “the President [is] flying solo tonight, heading to Chicago to spend his 49th birthday as a bachelor, **with only ‘First Dog’ Bo to keep him company,**” NBC’s Savannah Guthrie sulked, though “Mr. Obama did get a serenade from winners of citizen medals he handed out at the White House today.”

After reciting Michelle Obama’s extravagant resort destination in Spain, Guthrie ended on a heartwarming note:

And we can report tonight that the President got two calls today. Mrs. Obama and Sasha called from Spain, and Malia, who’s on that summer camp sleep-away camp for a few weeks, gets just one call during that time at camp. She saved it for today and called her father to wish him happy birthday.

From the Wednesday night, August 4 newscasts:

ABC’s Word News:

DIANE SAWYER: At the White House today, they sang to the President.

VIDEO OF GROUP: Happy birthday to you!

SAWYER: It is his birthday. He is now 49. He says we’ve watched him go gray, and the photographs since the campaign do show a little speckle in that hair. He is going to Chicago alone tonight to dine with friends. His oldest daughter is away at summer camp. His wife and youngest daughter Sasha have traveled to a resort in Spain with a group of friends from Chicago, moms and daughters.

CBS Evening News:

KATIE COURIC: President Obama is spending the night in his own home for a change. He flew to Chicago today to celebrate his 49th birthday, but only first dog Bo went with him. Michelle Obama and

daughter Sasha are on vacation in Spain. Malia is away at camp. So the President planned a birthday dinner with friends.

NBC Nightly News:

LESTER HOLT: President Obama is in his hometown of Chicago tonight. It's his 49th birthday, but it's kind of an unusual one. His family is nowhere in sight. NBC News White House correspondent Savannah Guthrie is traveling with the President and joins us from the Windy City tonight. Savannah, good evening.

SAVANNAH GUTHRIE: Good evening, Lester. Well, the President is here in Chicago for some Democratic Party fundraising and an event at a Ford plant tomorrow, but he will have a birthday dinner with friends tonight. No family around, though. Daughter Malia is at summer sleep-away camp, and the First Lady and daughter Sasha are on a lavish trip to Spain. The President flying solo tonight, heading to Chicago to spend his 49th birthday as a bachelor, with only "First Dog" Bo to keep him company. Mr. Obama did get a serenade from winners of citizen medals he handed out at the White House today. But the union group he addressed earlier in the day did not let him eat cake.

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA: I'm a little disappointed there wasn't a cake, though. I'm going to have to talk to the Secret Service about that.

RICHARD TRUMKA, AFL-CIO: You got to talk to those guys because they nixed the cake.

OBAMA: They're probably eating it right now.

TRUMKA: They are.

GUTHRIE: Right now Mrs. Obama and younger daughter Sasha are a world away, on a five-day, mother-daughter vacation with a group of friends in the coastal resort town of Marbella, Spain. The family is staying at the luxury Ritz Carlton retreat [Villa Padierna](#) which features five restaurants, a spa and private beach. All the amenities expected of a five-star hotel favored by celebrities, including privacy.

KATE MAXWELL, CONDE NAST TRAVELER: So we understand the Obamas have booked 30 rooms. Suites go up to \$6500 a night, so they're looking at a pretty hefty bill at the end of the four days they're going to spend there.

GUTHRIE: The Obamas will pay their own way, but the cost of Mrs. Obama's traveling staff and security detail will be borne by American taxpayers. And the money she spends will boost the Spanish economy – something the White House declined to get into today.

ROBERT GIBBS: She is a private citizen and is the mother of a daughter on a private trip.

GUTHRIE: A European vacation for a First Lady is not unprecedented, nor is sniping about it.

MYRA GUTIN, FIRST LADY HISTORIAN: Jacqueline Kennedy was criticized for going to Greece and to Italy, so certainly Michelle Obama, the criticism of Michelle Obama would not be a first.

GUTHRIE: Well, the First Family also plans to spend a weekend in the Gulf Coast this month as well as spend 10 days on Martha's Vineyard.

And we can report tonight that the President got two calls today. Mrs. Obama and Sasha called from Spain, and Malia, who's on that summer camp sleep-away camp for a few weeks, gets just one call during that time at camp. She saved it for today and called her father to wish him happy birthday, Lester.

Brent Baker is Vice President for Research and Publications at the Media Research Center.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Journalist Cover-Up

by David Keene

Issue 162 – August 25, 2010

Politicians on the losing side of an issue or argument tend to look for a way to change the subject or redirect the debate to put their opponent on the defensive.

In today's politically correct world, liberals invariably try to change the subject by charging as loudly and as widely as possible that their opponents are racists. Thus, opponents of ObamaCare were racists, the Tea Partiers are racists, Andrew Breitbart is a racist, and Fox News or anyone to the right of, say, Nancy Pelosi is a racist.

It is possible that a few of the folks who throw such charges around actually believe that everyone who differs with them is racially motivated, but most play the race card because it seems to work. This cynical willingness to exploit racial hatred for political or ideological purposes comes through most clearly in the e-mail traffic among the liberal journalists who frequented and perhaps plotted strategy on Journalist, the now happily defunct listserv e-mail discussion group recently outed by Tucker Carlson's Daily Caller.



David Keene

Ezra Klein, a former Howard Dean campaign walker currently employed by The Washington Post, had hosted an e-mail discussion group among as many as 400 liberal journalists, hacks and academics who during the course of the 2008 presidential campaign actively discussed how to promote Barack Obama and smear his critics.

Those who were a part of Journalist are today attacking Carlson for publishing “off-the-record” conversations among friends that were never intended to see the light of day. It's a curious defense from men and women who in the course of their daily employment regularly violate the privacy of those about whom they write, but even a cursory reading of what Carlson has thus far published explains why they are so upset.

Whether the published material “proves” the 400 participants were involved in an active conspiracy to distort news coverage to benefit Obama is not as surprising as the way some suggested maligning the motives and personal character of Obama's critics as a legitimate way to advance their position without any real pushback from others on the list.

Thus, when the Jeremiah Wright story surfaced and seemed to threaten Obama's momentum, Journalist participants were outraged and dogged in pursuing ways to neutralize the story, defend Wright and Obama or change the subject. Some were willing to ignore the Wright-Obama connection and hope the story would die; others suggested more active measures. Spencer Ackerman of the Washington Independent believed he knew just how to change the subject. What liberal journalists should do, he wrote, was to pick out one of Obama's harshest critics and target him as a racist. To Ackerman, it didn't matter whom they chose to defame: “Fred Barnes, Karl Rove, who cares — and call him a racist.”

Think for a minute about what he was suggesting. To protect their candidate and change the subject, Ackerman seriously suggested to as many as 400 of his colleagues that they make a concerted effort to destroy the reputation, and perhaps the career, of a journalist with whom they disagreed. Let's call him a racist, Ackerman argued, not because he is and not because we have any evidence to support such a charge, but because doing so will change the subject and intimidate his colleagues.

One would expect outrage in response, but there apparently wasn't any. Even those on the list who wouldn't consider following such cynical advice or who shied away from the idea of rhetorically convicting an innocent man of racism weren't outraged enough to expose Ackerman as a modern-day McCarthyite for whom the ends would clearly justify any means.

Ackerman's colleagues didn't march out en masse to follow his suggestion, but many of them obviously share his penchant for cavalierly exploiting racial tensions to advance their agenda. No mainstream journalist covering the protests at the Capitol prior to the passage of the Obama healthcare bill questioned the claim that Tea Partiers hurled racial epithets and spit on minority members of Congress working their way through the crowd, though no tape or independent verification of these allegations has ever come to light. And now these same people are outraged over what they saw as Andrew Breitbart's failure to exercise sufficient "due diligence" in the Shirley Sherrod case.

These folks aren't just biased; they're willing to condone or cover up lying and recklessness in the effort to achieve the results they favor.

And they dare call themselves journalists.

David Keene is chairman of the American Conservative Union

**E-mail the
Editor**

Stone's Hitler "Scapegoat"

by Brent Bozell

Issue 162 – August 25, 2010

It never ceases to amaze that Oliver Stone thinks Ronald Reagan was a dunce. When it comes to judging iron-fisted dictators and anti-American despots, Oliver Stone is the intellectually incurious simpleton. He thinks Reagan was stupid because he clung to an all-encompassing ideology. But so does Stone. He thinks every evil in the world came from corporations, especially American corporations, including those he uses to make himself millions.

How else would you explain the (new) mess Stone (again) has made as he prepares a 10-part documentary for Showtime on "The Secret History of America," including evaluations of Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin. In an interview with the Sunday Times of London, Stone declared Hitler was a monster, but he was apparently still America's fault: "Hitler was a Frankenstein but there was also a Doctor Frankenstein," Stone said. "German industrialists, the Americans and the British. He had a lot of support."

**Brent Bozell**

Stone unfortunately wasn't finished. He proceeded to denigrate the importance of the Holocaust: "Hitler did far more damage to the Russians than [to] the Jewish people, 25 or 30 [million killed]." The reason few people know this, according to Stone? "The Jewish domination of the media," he said. "There's a major lobby in the United States. They are hard workers. They stay on top of every comment, the most powerful lobby in Washington. Israel has f---d up United States foreign policy for years."

The major media thoroughly, and for the most part correctly, punished Mel Gibson within hours for a drunken anti-Semitic rant in 2006. But Stone has drawn a pass, since he's made a raft of leftist films, and never one glorifying Jesus. Not everyone took the week off. Abraham Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League proclaimed "Oliver Stone has once again shown his conspiratorial colors with his comments about 'Jewish domination of the media' and control over U.S. foreign policy. His words conjure up some of the most stereotypical and conspiratorial notions of undue Jewish power and influence."

Stone then apologized for downplaying the Holocaust: "In trying to make a broader historical point about the range of atrocities the Germans committed against many people, I made a clumsy association about the Holocaust, for which I am sorry and I regret." He's made clumsy associations before: in 1997, he was one of 34 celebrities to sign a letter comparing the treatment of Scientologists in Germany with persecution by the Nazis in the 1930s.

This man's affinity for dictators hasn't waned. He even came to the defense of Iranian president (and habitual Holocaust-denier) Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. He slammed the U.S. policy toward Iran as "horrible" and added "Iran isn't necessarily the good guy, but we don't know the full story!"

That's the problem with Stone. He always purports to speak truth to power, but he's never met a truth he couldn't demolish.

What Stone always knows is that America is the bad guy. Anyone with the audacity to oppose this country, and better yet, slander it, is suddenly the sugary apple of Stone's eye. He has made documentaries about hate-filled killers like Castro, and Yasser Arafat, and just last month, Venezuelan strongman Hugo Chavez (with a pathetic box-office gross of \$166,000). But Ahmadinejad turned him

down. “While it is true that Oliver Stone is considered to be among the opposition in the U.S., the opposition is still part of the Great Satan,” proclaimed his media adviser, Mahdi Kalhor.

Stone continues to see the gleam in many a dictator’s eye. In January, Stone told The Hollywood Reporter that “Stalin has a complete other story...Not to paint him as a hero, but to tell a more factual representation. He fought the German war machine more than any single person. We can’t judge people as only ‘bad’ or ‘good.’ Hitler is an easy scapegoat throughout history and it’s been used cheaply”.

Apparently, these mass-murdering dictators are seen too narrowly by Americans: “I’ve been able to walk in Stalin’s shoes and Hitler’s shoes to understand their point of view,” Stone proclaimed. “We’re going to educate our minds and liberalize them and broaden them.” Of course, that included blame for America. “Go into the funding of the Nazi party. How many American corporations were involved, from GM through IBM. Hitler is just a man who could have easily been assassinated.”

Stone’s apologies for his remarks downplaying the Holocaust will probably prevent Showtime from heeding some Hollywood calls for canceling his “Secret History” series. But it’s amazing that Stone’s political and historical buffoonery continues to be presented by some interviewers and media executives as something wise and wonderful.

L. Brent Bozell III is president of Media Research Center.

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Implausible Medicare Report

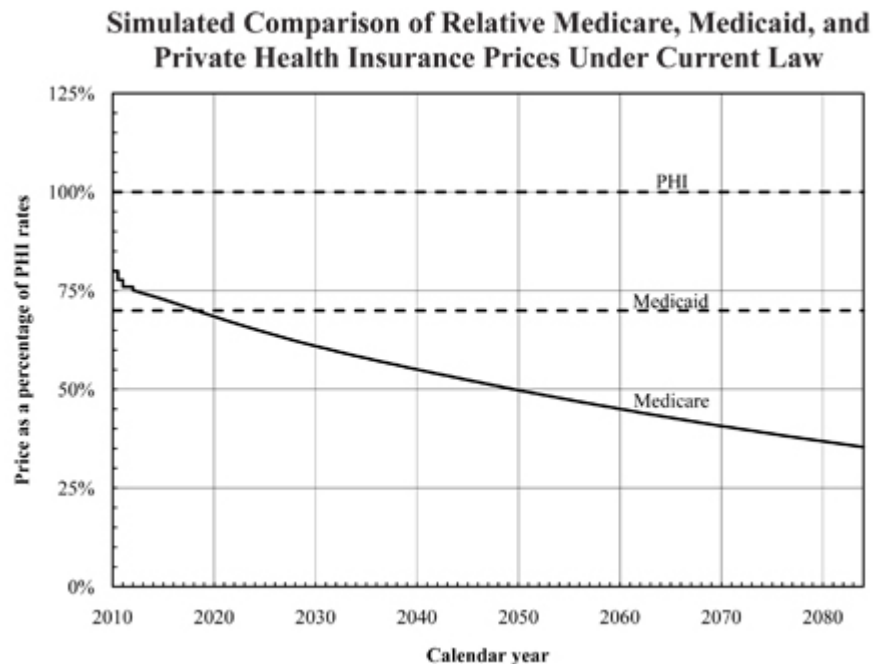
by John Goodman

Issue 162 – August 25, 2010

For the first time in Medicare history, the Medicare Chief Actuary has called the projections in a [Medicare Trustees Report](#) “unreasonable” and “implausible” and encouraged everyone to ignore them and view instead an [“Illustrative Alternative” report](#). The alternative opens this way:

The Trustees Report is necessarily based on current law; as a result of questions regarding the operations of certain Medicare provisions, however, the projections shown in the report do not represent the “best estimate” of actual future Medicare expenditures.

Noting that the formal Trustees report assumes Medicare physician fees will be reduced by 30% over the next three years, Chief Actuary Richard Foster says that’s “implausible.” In addition, the Trustees report assumes Medicare fees will fall below Medicaid rates by 2019 and fall further and further behind private payment rates in future years, as the following chart shows:



As explained in an [April 22 report by Foster](#), the health reform law will cause:

- Cuts in Medicare spending of \$575 billion over the next decade.
- 7½ million members of Medicare Advantage plans to lose their coverage and cause another 7½ million to face higher premiums and benefit cuts.
- About one in seven facilities — hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies, and hospices — to become unprofitable and possibly drop out of Medicare altogether.
- Many doctors to quit seeing Medicare patients entirely.

The alternative report says that the number of facilities that would become unprofitable will grow to 25% by 2030 and 40% by 2050 if the health reform law is implemented as written.

John Goodman is President and CEO, Kellye Wright Fellow at the National Center for Policy Analysis

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Cap and Trade Threat

by Paul Driessen

Issue 162 – August 25, 2010

Environmental justice demands that the United States address global warming, the gravest threat facing minority Americans, insist the EPA, Congressional Black Caucus and White House. Are they serious?

The alleged threat pales next to unwed teen motherhood, school dropouts, murder and other crime. But even assuming human carbon dioxide emissions will cause average global temperatures to rise a few degrees more than they have already since the Little Ice Age ended, it is absurd to suggest that any such warming would harm minorities more than policies imposed in the name of preventing climate change.

Human activities have not replaced the complex natural forces that drove climate change throughout Earth's history. But even if manmade greenhouse gases do contribute to planetary warming, slashing US emissions to zero would bring no benefit, because steadily rising emissions from China, India, Brazil and other rapidly growing economies would almost instantly replace whatever gases we cease emitting.

Most important, fossil fuels power the economic engine that ensures justice and opportunity in America today. Policies that make energy less reliable and affordable reduce business revenues and profits, shrink investment and innovation, imperil economic recovery, and hobble job creation, civil rights, and the pursuit of happiness and the American dream.

Whether they take the form of cap-and-trade, carbon taxes, restrictions on drilling and coal mining, or EPA rules under its claim that carbon dioxide "endangers" human health and welfare, anti-energy policies frustrate the natural desire of poor and minority Americans to improve their lives.

As to coping with higher temperatures, restrictive energy policies send electricity prices skyrocketing, making it harder for low-income households to afford air conditioning, and putting lives at risk. They send poor families back to pre-AC misery of bygone eras, like the 1896 heat wave that killed 1,300 people in New York City's sweltering tenements. In wintertime, they make heating less affordable, again putting lives at risk.

I recently documented the connection between energy policies and civil rights. My "Justice through Affordable Energy for Wisconsin" report focuses on the Dairy State, where I grew up. However, its lessons apply to every state, especially the 26 that get 48-98% of their electricity from coal or have a strong manufacturing base. (The full report can be found at www.CFACT.org)

Energy is the foundation for America's jobs, living standards, and everything we make, grow, eat, wear, transport and do. Climate change bills, energy taxes and renewable energy mandates deliberately restrict supplies of reliable, affordable hydrocarbon energy – sending shockwaves through the economy.

Fossil fuels generate three-fourths of Wisconsin's electricity, keeping costs low and enabling its \$45-billion-a-year manufacturing sector to compete in a tough global marketplace. Hydrocarbons sustain thousands of jobs in agriculture, tourism and other sectors of the state's economy. They ensure that hospitals and clinics can offer high-tech diagnostic, surgical and treatment services.



Paul Driessen

They enable school districts, families, churches, shops and government offices to operate in the black. Soaring fuel and electricity prices would force schools to spend millions more for buses, heating and lighting. That would mean higher taxes – or reduced music, sports, language and special education programs. Poor and minority neighborhoods would be impacted worst.

Small and minority businesses are often young and undercapitalized. Increasing their operating costs, while decreasing the disposable income of their customers, puts them on the verge of bankruptcy.

“A single worker in our Rhinelander fabrication plant can do the work of ten who do not have access to cranes, welding machines, plasma burners and all other machinery that allows us to cut, bend and fabricate steel up to six inches thick, and make all kinds of heavy equipment,” says Oldenburg Group executive vice president Tim Nerenz. But the machinery and facilities are energy-intensive. If energy costs rise, the company would have to cut wages and benefits or lay off workers, as contract prices are fixed and overseas competition is fierce.

Indoor pools and other facilities make tourism a year-round industry, sustaining local economies during frigid Wisconsin winters, making resorts like the Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells popular jumping-off points for cross country skiing, snowmobiling and dining. Rising energy costs would reduce family vacations, hammer bottom lines, force layoffs, and cause foreclosures throughout these communities.

In every case, it is blue-collar workers, low and moderate income families, minorities and the elderly that are affected most severely.

Nor are these impacts likely to be offset by “green” jobs. As Spain, Germany and other countries have discovered, wind and solar power require constant infusions of money from increasingly strapped taxpayers and energy consumers. When the economy sours, the subsidies disappear, and so do the jobs.

Wind and solar electricity is expensive, intermittent and unreliable – necessitating expensive gas-powered backup generators, and further damaging family and business budgets. Plus, most of the jobs will be in China and India, where low energy and labor costs, and access to rare earths and other raw materials that America refuses to mine, supply wind turbine and solar panel factories that easily under-price US firms.

The entire cap-tax-and-trade, renewable energy and green-jobs edifice is a house of cards, propped up by claims that humans are affecting the Earth’s climate. As EPA and EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson repeatedly assert, “Climate change is already happening, and human activity is a contributor.”

However, that is not the issue. The issue is whether our use of fossil fuels is now the dominant factor in global warming and cooling, and whether future manmade climate change will be catastrophic. There is no replicable or credible evidence to support that proposition.

Headline-grabbing disaster scenarios forecast for 50 or 100 years in the future are the product of speculation, assumptions, unreliable computer models, and articles by climate activists falsely presented as peer-reviewed scientific papers in IPCC reports, news stories and political speeches. As my Wisconsin study explains, they are not supported by actual data and observations regarding historic and current global temperatures, ice caps, glaciers, sea levels, rainforests or cyclical weather patterns.

Energy taxes and subsidies, renewable energy mandates, soaring prices for everything we need – and severe impacts on families, businesses, jobs, opportunities, living standards and basic civil rights – might be justified if we did indeed face a manmade climate disaster. But even then we should carefully examine the costs and benefits of any proposed actions.

We should determine whether slashing fossil fuel use will stabilize our planet's ever-turbulent climate, and whether our limited resources might be better spent on adapting to future changes, natural and manmade, just as our ancestors did.

If global warming science is inaccurate, dishonest, slanted or fraudulent, there is even less justification.

We cannot have justice without opportunity, or opportunity without energy. We cannot have justice by sharing scarcity, poverty and skyrocketing energy prices more equally – especially on the basis of erroneous, speculative or manipulated climate science.

We must therefore be forever vigilant, to ensure that Congress does not slip cap-tax-and-trade proposals through during a post-election lame-duck session – and EPA does not shackle our economy and civil rights progress with its job-killing “endangerment” rules.

Paul Driessen is senior policy advisor for the Committee For A Constructive Tomorrow (CFACT) and Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and author of Eco-Imperialism: Green power – Black death.

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Editor**

Imperial People?

by George W. Carey

Issue 162 – August 25, 2010

In his “War, Crisis and Centralization of Power,” Winston Elliott III does well in bringing Robert Nisbet’s teaching to bear upon the basic problems we confront. An assigned reading in my contemporary American conservative course at Georgetown is Nisbet’s *Present Age*. While this work incorporates much of his previous thought and findings, I assign it primarily because it is a scathing indictment of our interventionist policies since the First World War.

Nisbet notices the “prominence of war in American life since 1914, amounting to a virtual Seventy-Five years war,” noting as well “the staggering size of the military establishment since World War II.” He contends that there are irrepressible forces at work, namely, “the whole self-perpetuating military-industrial complex and the technological scientific elite that Eisenhower warned against” which shamefully exploits a widely accepted, but sham “American exceptionalism.” I think it fair to say that Bush II’s foreign policy and rhetoric embodied just about everything Nisbet loathed. He would have been disappointed, but not at all surprised, that his “Seventy-Five years war” is now almost a “Hundred years war.”

What I want my students to see from Nisbet’s account is that traditional conservatives are not mindless war hawks contrary to what one might glean from the talking heads on TV or the main stream media. My having to do this, however, only indicates the extent to which neoconservatism has somehow morphed into just “conservatism.”

Be that as it may, Nisbet’s observations, coupled what has transpired under the Bush and Obama administrations, point to a state of affairs that troubles me mightily. Specifically, as I see it, there is a gulf, separation, or disjunction (there are perhaps better words to describe this) between sensible, ordinary Americans and those who are making the decisions to commit our nation to sustain hostilities. In fact, and significantly, the separation is more extensive than this: During the run up to the Iraq invasion virtually all the “opinion leaders” — high ranking officials, the influential editors and columnists, the gurus from the Council of Foreign Relations, the “talking head” experts on cable TV — tacitly seemed to assume that military intervention was necessary.

For the most part, these individuals were not concerned with the questions surrounding whether we should invade Iraq; rather their concerns centered on when we should invade, what our tactics ought to be, what effects the invasion and the removal of Saddam would be on the Middle East or America’s stature in the world, and so forth. While one might have imagined that launching a “preventive war” would have sparked considerable and heated debate, this issue was largely ignored by those in power and their minions. To a lesser degree, Obama’s decision to escalate the war in Afghanistan illustrates the same phenomenon: His ultimate decision, much like Bush II’s to invade Iraq, seemed like a forgone conclusion once the elite establishment publicly pushed the matter to the forefront as involving the security of the nation.

Perhaps better evidence of the gulf or separation to which I refer is the fact that lies and deception are seemingly necessary to gain popular support for wars. It is now well documented, for instance, that Roosevelt II told the people one thing (your sons will never fight on foreign soil) while he endeavored in various ways to involve the nation in hostilities.

Likewise, lies and deception, albeit in a different form, marked our interventions in Vietnam and Iraq. While, in my opinion, this by itself is deplorable, my point is that this practice indicates at least the

existence of a separation in outlook and thinking between the decision makers and ordinary citizens. What other reason would there be for the lies and deception if not to bring the people around? Moreover, as Goebbels remarked, such a transformation is not too difficult for those who control government to achieve.

If I am essentially correct, forces other than those identified by Nisbet are at work to keep the nation on war footing; that is, the military-industrial complex and the scientific elite to which Nisbet refers have powerful allies in the elite establishment.

My concerns with this state of affairs are multiple, but I am now most intrigued by the question of what accounts for the separation between the leaders and opinion elite, on the one hand, and the ordinary citizens on the other. What accounts for the difference in views? Is it that those who have or seek power possess an imperial mindset which sets them off from ordinary individuals? Is it that the preoccupations of the elite — i.e., international relations and national security — are such that they are blind or insensitive to the wider world about them? Could it be that since foreign policy, broadly speaking, is relatively free from the obstacles encountered in formulating domestic policy, the elites have little sense of accountability? Or might it be that somehow the military-industrial complex now has the means to bring elite opinion around?

I don't pretend to know the answer to this question. But I do believe that there is a relatively incestuous elite — officials and opinion leaders — that holds to markedly different views regarding America's role in the world than probably a very healthy majority of the general population. Given enormously tragic consequences of our following interventionist policies — hundreds of thousands have been killed, even more who have been wounded and maimed, millions have been displaced, and the entire effort is estimated to have cost us over two trillion dollars — I hope I am right about the basic good sense of the American people. They constitute perhaps the best hope we have to put an permanent end to these policies.

Are there other ways to rein in this elite short of a popular uprising of sorts. Is it possible to bring its views more into line with that of the American people? I can think of two. One would be the institution of a draft that would make our decision makers think real hard about any future intervention; it would probably preclude anything along the lines of Bush II's preventive war. (That a draft would have this impact is further evidence of the gulf or separation to which I refer.) Of course, a draft is pretty much out of the question. So long, however, as our military consists of volunteers, prospects of curbing interventionism are significantly reduced.

A second means of control would take the form of a healthy war tax. Certainly the decision makers would have to take popular opinion into account knowing that such a tax would be levied. The mere prospect of losing an election over such a tax is more than sufficient to insure a healthy moderation.

The bottom line is this: We live with a dissonance. For reasons I can't determine our decision makers and elites embrace imperial ends. Yet, the American people are simply not an imperial people; they are unwilling or incapable of making those sacrifices necessary for empire. I would submit that our republic, if we can still call it that, is endangered so long as the imperialists have their way.

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Is Neoconservatism Dead?

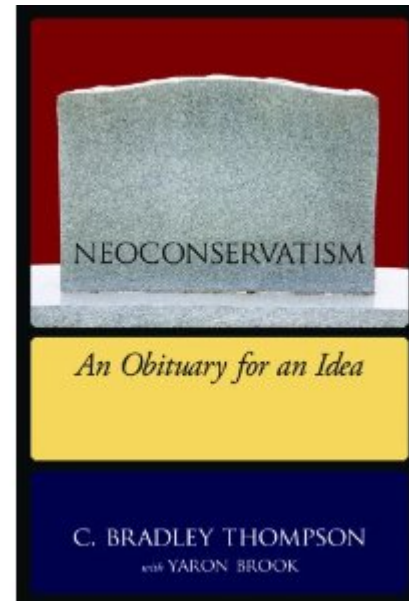
by Burgess Laughlin

Issue 162 – August 25, 2010

Neoconservatives today dominate conservative think tanks and foundations; they have a major presence in the media; and they are entrenched in America's universities. Well-known neoconservative intellectuals such as [Michael Ledeen](#), [William Kristol](#), and [David Brooks](#) are regular contributors to the *National Review*, *Weekly Standard*, and *New York Times*. They all appear frequently on Fox News and PBS. They are the public face of the conservative movement.

Given their high levels of prominence and productivity, how can the question of the death of their intellectual movement even arise?

C. Bradley Thompson and Yaron Brook, authors of the newly released [Neoconservatism: An Obituary for an Idea](#), have an answer, a rather complex one. In part, the subtitle of their book is ironic. Their "obituary" might become a cause of death.



Thompson is the Executive Director of the Clemson Institute for the Study of Capitalism, and the author of *John Adams and the Spirit of Liberty*. Brook is the executive director of the Ayn Rand Institute. They have attempted to produce the deepest and most comprehensive analysis of neoconservatism yet written. They begin with a puzzle. Leading neoconservatives deny that neoconservatism is a political philosophy. Neoconservatives instead have called their approach a "persuasion" or "mood," thus disarming serious critics.

The neoconservatives do offer a "philosophy of governance." The general character of that "philosophy" is now clear. It is a set of ideas that includes a rejection of fixed ethical and political principles in favor of beliefs such as: amoral political "prudence" (Machiavellianism); "moderation" (strengthening the state through gradualism and compromise); and pragmatically "coping" with situations as they arise short-term. These guidelines are for the rulers, the statesmen. What will common people follow? Whatever religious and customary rules happen to prevail at a particular time and place, say the neoconservatives, who have illustrated their point with tolerance for an Islamic constitution in Iraq's new regime won with American blood and treasure.

One consequence of that cynical view of morality is a "third-way" politics. Neoconservatives want to combine socialism as their end with capitalism as their means of paying for it. Neoconservatives therefore support the welfare state, but differ from liberals mostly in wanting to make it more fiscally responsible and sustainable. David Brooks's support for massive federal bailouts is an example. The label "conservative welfare state" comes from Irving Kristol (1920-2009), the "godfather" of the movement. To appease supporters of capitalism within the Republican Party, the neoconservatives offer the palliative of "free-market solutions" to social problems, but the solutions are not free market at all. They leave the state in charge.

"Neoconservatives," Thompson and Brook observe, "agree with the underlying moral principles of the socialists; they disagree merely over the best means to achieve their shared ends." The core of their ethics

is altruism, the doctrine of self-sacrifice for the sake of a “higher” cause. For example, to achieve “national greatness,” the neoconservatives say, government should play an active and decisive role in shaping the nature and direction of a nation as an organic whole; in controlling education as a major means to that end; and in expecting individuals to sacrifice themselves — their property, their time, and even their lives — for “the nation.” Such a political philosophy, Thompson and Brook show, goes against the grain of Americanism, by which the authors mean a stream of Jeffersonian ideas such as individualism and government serving only as a night watchman, not as a shepherd of our lives in a collective.

A more descriptive title for Thompson and Brook’s book might have been “Neoconservatism: Its Philosophical Nature, Historical Roots, and Poisonous Fruit.” Thompson and Brook delimit their in-depth study to those neoconservatives influenced by Irving Kristol, who in turn was deeply influenced by the political philosopher, Leo Strauss.

Having shown the political philosophy of neoconservatism, the question of historical origins arises. If the neoconservative philosophy came from Strauss, where did Strauss get it? The authors examine new evidence to show that the philosophical grandfather of neoconservatism was immersed in and largely agreed with the basic principles that were common in Germany during the Weimar Republic (1919-1932), when Strauss was a student there. Strauss rejected the anti-semitism and barbarism of the Nazis but agreed with elements of the generalized fascism common in that time among European intellectuals. Strauss added what he said were the classical virtues of “prudence” and “moderation” in applying those principles. Go slowly, go softly. Irving Kristol and other neoconservatives took the next step of appearing to Americanize the notions of national crusades to unite the citizenry, sacrifice for the group, and the state as a parent to the common man.

Throughout their book, the authors compare neoconservatism to another stream of conservatism, one tied closely to the Founders of the Republic. That stream is variously known as classical liberalism, Goldwater conservatism, and Jeffersonian republicanism. “In conclusion,” Thompson and Brook say, “the neoconservatives are the false prophets of Americanism, and neoconservatism is America’s Trojan horse. Those who wish to defend America’s Enlightenment values and the individual-rights republic created by its revolutionary Founders must therefore recapture from the neocons the intellectual and moral high ground that once defined the promise of American life.”

No, neoconservatism is not dead. Its advocates may be temporarily out of federal power, but the intellectual movement is very much alive in journals, books, institutions, and individuals who carry its ideas forward. However, Thompson and Brook’s book — which exposes neoconservatism’s previously hidden nature to a harsh light — may be a step toward the movement’s demise. With the principles of neoconservatism’s philosophy finally articulated and systematized, the Jeffersonians in the conservative movement can now confront their opponents in open debate.

*Burgess Laughlin, a publications manager long retired from the electronics industry, is the author of *The Power and the Glory: The Key Ideas and Crusading Lives of Eight Debaters of Reason vs. Faith.**

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Editor**

West Doomed To Drought?

by Dennis Avery

Issue 162 – August 25, 2010

Does the modern warming doom the western U.S. to drought? Two climate experts have just noted that the region now has “the worst drought since measurements began,” and they predict a future of soaring temperatures and declining snow-packs.

“The climate changes in western North America, particularly in the Southwest, have outstripped change elsewhere on the continent, save perhaps in the Arctic,” say Jonathon Overpeck of the University of Arizona, and Bradley Udall, of the University of Colorado. “In the past decade, many locations, notably in the headwaters region of the Colorado River, have been more than 1 degree C warmer than the 20th-century average.”



Dennis Avery

Funny they should mention the Arctic, which the back copies of the *New York Times* testify was as warm in the 1920s as it is today. The Russians confirm a 70-year cycle in Arctic temperatures and sea ice.

Could today’s warming and drought in the American Southwest be cyclical too?

Even as the Overpeck/Bradley study was released, the University of Miami published a countervailing study strongly suggesting that the sun is a far more powerful climate force than human-emitted greenhouse gasses. The Miami researchers used fossil coral from a Central Pacific island to measure sea surface temperatures between 1320 and 1462 AD, the era in which Columbus discovered America.

Robert Burgman, the lead Miami author, says Pacific sea temperatures dropped only one-tenth of a degree C in that long-ago period—but that was enough to trigger whole decades of drought in what’s now the southwestern U.S. The severe dryness collapsed the Anasazi Indians’ rain-fed agriculture in southern Colorado and northern New Mexico. Warfare broke out over food, so the Anasazi built their dramatic cliff-side fortresses. But even these were eventually plundered. The Anasazi refugees then walked to the Colorado Plateau, but the drought there turned out to be even worse. A few survivors finally settled in the lower reaches of the Colorado River.

In Europe, say the coral researchers, farmers suffered three years of torrential rains, which led to the Great Famine from 1315 to 1320, and marked the transition from the Medieval Warming to the Little Ice Age. Extremely cold and unstable weather then bedeviled Europe with crop failures and famines through the rest of the 14th century.

Burgman says the “marriage” of complex climate models and paleoclimate evidence is helping us understand the workings of the long, moderate Dansgaard-Oeschger Climate cycle which brought us the Roman Warming, the Dark Ages, the Medieval Warming and quite recently the Little Ice Age.

Burgman finds the earth has had much more severe droughts during its natural cycles than we’ve seen recently—including two century-long droughts in California between 900 and 1200 AD.

Will \$8-a-gallon gasoline and quintupled electric bills stave off the droughts and crop failures? Probably not. The correlation between our thermometer record and CO₂ is weak—only 22 percent. The correlation

with the sunspot index is a powerful 79 percent. That says giving up fossil fuels will do no more to change the climate than did the Aztecs sacrificing thousands of human victims on the alters of their weather gods. This time, the human sacrifice might be in the millions.

We'll have to adapt. Fortunately, we can do this far better than the hapless Anasazi and the hunger-stricken French peasantry 600 years ago. We can move livestock, grow crops in far-flung regions where the rain does fall, and desalinate drinking water for San Diego. We can even evacuate a whole region, without the huge death toll suffered by the Anasazi and the European peasants of the Little Ice Age.

Remember earth's history, be grateful, and stay flexible.

DENNIS T. AVERY, a senior fellow for the Hudson Institute in Washington, DC, is an environmental economist. He was formerly a senior analyst for the Department of State. He is co-author, with S. Fred Singer, of Unstoppable Global Warming Every 1500 Hundred Years, Readers may write him at PO Box 202, Churchville, VA 24421

Resources: Jonathon Overpeck and Bradley Udall, "Dry Times Ahead," Science, vol. 328, p. 1642; June 25, 2010 and Robert Burgman, et al., "Role of tropical Pacific SST's in global medieval hydroclimate: A modeling study," Geophysical Research Letters, vol. 37, 2010.

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Editor**

Conservative Ideologues

by Gillis J. Harp

Issue 162 – August 25, 2010

New media have shaped our political culture. Some, like talk radio and all-news cable stations, are developments of older, established technologies. Others, like internet blogs, are based on comparatively new technologies. Yet, both venues have provided congenial habitats for that enemy of reasonable, constructive political discourse: the ideologue. What exactly is an “ideologue?” Merriam-Webster defines it as “an often blindly partisan advocate or adherent of a particular ideology.” Everyone, of course, works from a certain set of assumptions and argues for particular policies based upon their presuppositions. Nothing is wrong with that. But the ideologue is blindly loyal to certain partisan positions, regardless of the facts.

As political philosopher Robert Nozick explains, “The moment a person refuses to examine his or her beliefs is the moment that person becomes an ideologue.” Sociologist Daniel Bell argued in *The End of Ideology* (1960) that ideology’s role is to mobilize mass movements by inflaming popular zeal; therefore, ideologues “simplify ideas, establish a claim to truth, and, in the union of the two, demand a commitment to action.” Unfortunately, this zeal and oversimplification often overwhelm rational debate. They produce a lack of civility in political discussions and a loss of focus in seeking the common good.

In the 1960s and 1970s, most of the ideologues I encountered were on the political left. Some were Marxists who refused to accept the existence of political prisoners in China or Cuba. Others were radical feminists who declared that all men were potential rapists. Recently, however, conservatives seem to have become more like the ideologues they criticized 40 years ago. They have long excoriated “knee-jerk liberals,” but have many conservatives actually become knee-jerk ideologues on the right? There are a few warning signs that the transformation may be well underway.

For instance, conservatives denounced Clinton for intervening in Bosnia but championed Bush’s intervention in Iraq. Or, as another example, conservatives supported cutting taxes when the country was fighting two expensive wars but, soon after, denounced dangerous deficits. These are merely two examples that point to the triumph of blind partisanship.

One last example: Participating in anti-Vietnam protests during the late ’60s, some protestors carried pictures of Lyndon Johnson decorated with swastikas. Today, a few Tea Party activists carry placards with President Obama portrayed as Hitler. Refusing to consider complicating facts, ideologues assume that their opponents are demonic.

It is sad to see conservatives morphing into rigidly partisan ideologues, enabled by a mass media that generates more heat than light by seeking the lowest common denominator. Some programs on Fox News sound more like Jerry Springer than they do Bill Buckley’s old decorous debate show, “Firing Line.” Some of the founders of the post-World War II conservative renaissance would be horrified. Russell Kirk argued that conservatives, with their realistic recognition of human limitations and their preference for prudential, incremental change, were fundamentally anti-ideological. The conservative, commented Kirk, “thinks of political policies as intended to preserve order, justice, and freedom. The ideologue, on the contrary, thinks of politics as a revolutionary instrument for transforming society and even transforming human nature. In his march toward Utopia, the ideologue is merciless.” Facts don’t matter, and character assassination is permissible. The shouting, weeping egotists who speak on behalf of the conservative movement today don’t strike me as very, well, conservative.

Besides conservatives, I can think of at least two other (overlapping) groups who should scrupulously avoid becoming ideologues.

First, are academics. I encountered a few examples of this sort of animal back when I was an undergraduate. A teaching assistant in political science refused to discuss the Soviet Gulag; an historian wouldn't acknowledge that religion ever served any positive role in history. There still aren't many conservatives in American academe today, but the solution to that imbalance isn't to import right-wing ideologues to replace the left-wing ones. Again, Daniel Bell can help us understand how the authentic scholar differs from the ideologue: "The scholar has a bounded field of knowledge, a tradition, and seeks to find his place in it, adding to the accumulated, tested knowledge of the past as to a mosaic. The scholar, qua scholar, is less involved with his 'self.' The intellectual [i.e., the ideologue] begins with his experience, his individual perceptions of the world, his privileges and deprivations, and judges the world by these sensibilities." Accordingly, ideologues seek to make the world fit into their tidy personal molds, regardless of untidy facts.

A second group: Christians should also be the least inclined to embrace the approach of the ideologue. Though they are prepared to be dogmatic about the core essentials of the faith, they should wear human-devised systems very lightly. While Christians should be prepared to defend those propositions contained in Holy Writ, they hold no special brief for man-made systems. Though they recognize that some systems have had a more benign influence in human history than have others, they should refrain from absolutizing particular historical arrangements in a fallen world. Although certain social, political, or economic structures may be superior to others, Christians need to remember that they are only relatively better.

In many ways, I am preaching to myself. As a professor at an evangelical college, I have found it salutary to reflect on the pitfalls of ideology. American conservatives these days might do well to ponder the dangers as well.

Dr. Gillis J. Harp is professor of history at Grove City College and member of the faith & politics working group with [The Center for Vision & Values](#) where this first appeared.

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Editor**

ObamaCare Repeal
by Doug Edelman
Issue 162 – August 25, 2010

As we bask in the afterglow of Missouri's Proposition C, and the failure by the Feds to obtain dismissal of Virginia's lawsuit against ObamaCare, it is once again time to revisit what should be the strategy of Conservatives in Congress (and those seeking office in 2010!) to re-affirm the will of the people in health care?

If I may humbly offer my best suggestion; the time is NOW for Conservative lawmakers to craft, UNANIMOUSLY Co-Sponsor and introduce new legislation that would:

- **REPEAL**
- **REPLACE**
- **REFORM**
- **RESTORE**

REPEAL AND REPLACE: Simultaneously! We cannot simply repeal ObamaCare and leave a void. We must simultaneously REPLACE it with the HealthCare Bill we WOULD have liked in the first place. The bill's opening statement should read something to the effect that: "The Affordable HealthCare Act of 2009 is hereby repealed in its entirety and replaced by the following..."

REFORM: The replacement bill must address the real problems in the pre-ObamaCare healthcare system. It must provide for purchasing insurance across state lines. It must sensibly address pre-existing condition exclusions. It should ALLOW cafeteria-style coverages; so a 20-year old healthy single male may reduce costs by purchasing a policy that does NOT cover pregnancy and mammograms... Or a 65 year old woman can choose a plan that covers long term care, but doesn't include prenatal vitamins and well-baby care! It should expand Health Savings Accounts. It should ENCOURAGE private sector competition. It MUST include Tort Reform and malpractice insurance reform. It must CLEARLY DENY any federal funds in any form, at any time, for abortion services – and must restrict funding to any organization which provides abortion services or referrals in such a manner as to insure no funds can be redirected toward such services – whether domestically or abroad.

RESTORE: The legislation must RESTORE the Republic by re-affirming the supremacy of individual liberty and of State-Sovereignty. It must re-affirm the constitutional LIMITATION on the Federal Government. It must DENOUNCE federal mandates upon individuals. It should make a clear statement that the Federal Government acknowledges its limited role, and its requirement to govern by the consent of the governed.

Once this legislation is crafted – it should be IMMEDIATELY introduced, in both the House and the Senate Simultaneously, bearing the co-sponsorship signatures of EVERY member who wishes to be considered Conservative and liberty-loving.

Every conservative candidate seeking a Freshman House or Senate seat should, as a requirement of endorsements and campaign assistance, be required to pledge to co-sponsor and vote for the bill, should they be elected.

The 2010 elections should be FRAMED as the opportunity to rid us of ObamaCare once and for all – and it should be the first act of the Congress upon swearing in of the new session in 2011.

If this simple plan is adopted and implemented – not only will ObamaCare be ended early in 2011, but if properly communicated to the American Public – will result in a massive turnover of power in the halls of Washington.

Then the Conservative Congress can turn their attention to Un-Doing the rest of the damage done by the Pelosi-Reid Congress!

Doug Edelman is a conservative political analyst and commentator, and has been a contributing editor for The Conservative Voice. His work is also seen on Western Front American, Small Government Times, Western Journalism, News By Us, The American Daily, The Post Chronicle, New Media Journal, Capitol Hill Coffee House and more. Mr. Edelman is also an IT Consultant/Contractor and owner of a Computer Services Business. He has taught PC Maintenance & Repair and Networking at his local Community College, and maintains a blog at <http://starboard.blogtownhall.com>.

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Attacking Rights

by Michael Connelly

Issue 162 – August 25, 2010

The right to vote is perhaps the most cherished and important of the rights guaranteed to Americans by the Constitution. Without the right to vote we literally have no way to control the Federal government and keep it from taking away our other rights. Yet, it is precisely because of that fact that the so-called progressives in this country are now trying to severely limit the right to vote, and unfortunately the efforts are coming at us from all three branches of government. We can also expect them to intensify as the November elections grow closer.

First, we have the attack by the Congress on the 1st Amendment right of all businesses and groups to participate in the election process. This came in the form of the Disclose Act, which thanks to the efforts of you and many other Americans has at least temporarily stalled in the Senate after passing the House of Representatives.

Then, we have the blatant actions of Attorney General Eric Holder and the Department of Justice (DOJ) in making a decision to drop the civil suits against members of the Black Panther Party who were videoed during the 2008 election intimidating white voters in Philadelphia. According to J. Christian Adams, a former DOJ attorney, he and his colleagues were informed that the office would not prosecute any minorities for voter intimidation, but would only prosecute whites who intimidated minority voters.

Apparently, that was only the beginning. Historically, members of the military and their families have voted overwhelmingly for conservative political candidates who support the values that the troops are fighting for. This has always been an irritant to the left so there have been increasing efforts by the progressives in some states to derive ways to keep absentee votes from the military from being counted. These tactics have primarily involved waiting so late to send out the ballots to the troops that it would be virtually impossible for them to return them by the election deadline.

In October of 2009 President Obama signed into law a bill introduced by Senator John Cornyn (R. TX) that required the Secretaries of State in each state to mail out absentee ballots to military personnel no later than 45 days prior to the election. This could only be avoided by the Secretary of State getting a waiver because of something unforeseen happening that would prevent the ballots from going out on time.

It sounds great doesn't it? A left wing controlled Congress passing such legislation and Obama actually signing it. Yet, now it has been learned by the few members of the media who will report on this that at a recent meeting between DOJ officials and the Secretaries of State of various state governments, the DOJ told them not to worry about getting waivers or complying with the law. They were told that the Department of Justice had no intention of enforcing it. In other words, the whole thing was a ruse. The Executive Branch of government has no interest in protecting the right to vote of the men and women fighting for and dying for us overseas.

So, as you can see there is two pronged attack on the right to vote coming from Congress and the White House. First, Congress will do everything it can to limit the free speech efforts by people who disagree with this administration from influencing the election. Secondly, the DOJ has virtually declared an open season during the 2010 election for groups supporting the left to do what is necessary to intimidate voters who might oppose the progressive agenda. At the same time, the DOJ will do its part to help eliminate from consideration votes coming from our heroes overseas in the war.

As unbelievable as all of this is, it gets worse when you look at what has been done by the third branch of government, the Judicial Branch. Certain far left Federal Judges who have their own political agendas have decided to adopt the approach that if you don't vote for the things I support, your vote won't count. This has clearly been the case in the recent rulings on the Arizona Immigration Law and the California Marriage Law.

In both of these cases we have the voters of a sovereign state passing legislation that applies only to their states. Yet, because the progressives don't like these laws they are essentially telling the citizens of these states that you no longer have the right to vote. Do not let yourself be fooled by the decisions that these two pieces of legislation were unconstitutional. Nothing in the Constitution of the United States prohibits the State of Arizona from passing a law allowing its police officers to enforce an already existing Federal law.

In addition, there is nothing at all in the Constitution dealing with marriage whether heterosexual or otherwise. Therefore the states have this power under the specific provisions of the Tenth Amendment that says: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."

That is very clear. Whether you agree or disagree with the prohibition of gay marriage by the people of the State of California the fact is that the decision is up to them and when a Federal judge takes that power away from the people, they are being denied their right to vote. That, by the way, is a right clearly granted to the people by the Constitution and can't be legally taken away by any branch of the Federal Government.

Michael Connelly blogs at <http://michaelconnelly.viviti.com/>, where this first appeared. He is author of "The Mortarmen" a book about his father's unit in WWII; "[Riders in the Sky: The Ghosts and Legends of Philmont Scout Ranch](#)"; and a just released novel "[Amayehli: A Story of America](#)", and teaches at www.ed2go.com.

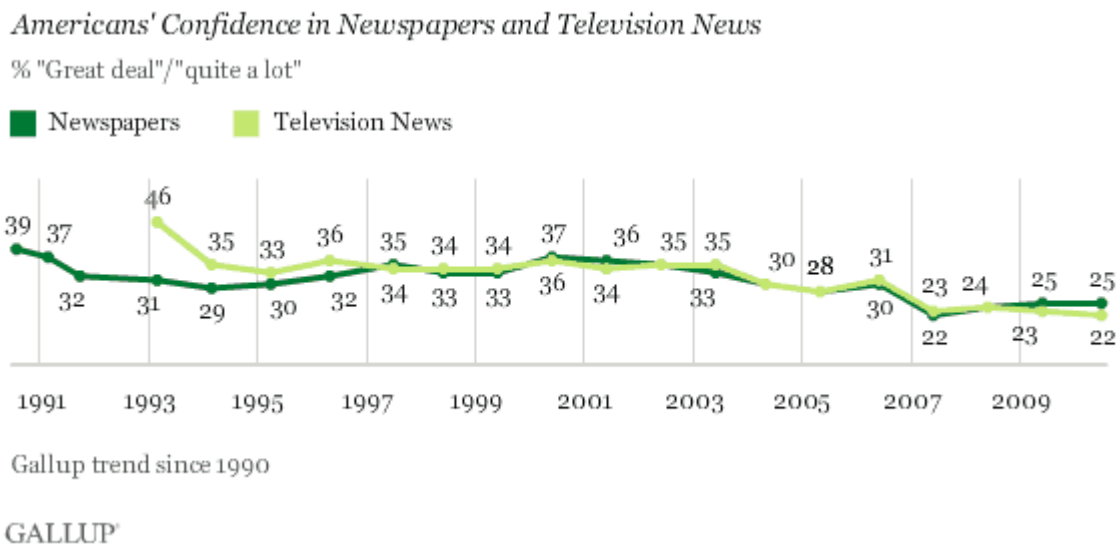
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Media Confidence Is Rare

by Lymari Morales

Issue 162 – August 25, 2010

Americans continue to express near-record-low confidence in newspapers and television news — with no more than 25% of Americans saying they have a “great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence in either. These views have hardly budged since falling more than 10 percentage points from 2003-2007.



The findings are from Gallup’s annual Confidence in Institutions survey, which found the military faring best and Congress faring worst of 16 institutions tested. Americans’ confidence in newspapers and television news is on par with Americans’ lackluster confidence in banks and slightly better than their dismal rating of Health Management Organizations and big business.

The decline in trust since 2003 is also evident in a 2009 Gallup poll that asked about confidence and trust in the “mass media” more broadly. While perceptions of media bias present a viable hypothesis, Americans have not over the same period grown any more likely to say the news media are too conservative or too liberal.

No matter the cause, it is clear the media as a whole are not gaining new fans as they struggle to serve and compete with growing demand for online news, social media, and mobile platforms. The Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism’s annual report on the State of the News Media, released in March, found for a third straight year, only digital and cable news sources growing in popularity, while network news, local news, and newspaper audiences shrink. These findings align with a similar 2008 Gallup poll that found cable and Internet news sources growing in popularity while all others held steady or declined.

While it is unclear how much respondents factored in the online and cable offshoots of “newspapers” and “television news” when assessing their confidence in these institutions, their responses do not provide much encouragement for the media more broadly. Confidence is hard to find, even among Democrats and liberals, who have historically been the most trusting of the news media. While 18- to 29-year-olds express more trust in newspapers than most older Americans, Gallup polling has found they read national newspapers the least. Younger Americans also expressed more confidence than older Americans in several other institutions tested, including Congress, the medical system, and the criminal justice system, suggesting younger Americans are more confident in institutions in general.

With nearly all news organizations struggling to keep up with the up-to-the-minute news cycle and to remain profitable in the process, Americans' low trust in newspapers and television news presents a critical barrier to success. The Pew report asserts that 80% of new media links are to legacy newspapers and broadcast networks, making clear that traditional news sources remain the backbone of the media. But so long as roughly three in four Americans remain distrustful, it will be difficult to attract the large and loyal audiences necessary to boost revenues.

Results for this Gallup poll are based on telephone interviews conducted July 8-11, 2010, with a random sample of 1,020 adults, aged 18 and older, living in the continental U.S., selected using random-digit-dial sampling. For further information on Gallup's polling methodology, visit <http://www.gallup.com>

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Reader Comments

Issue 12 -August 25, 2010

**CONSERVATIVE
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Editor: "Co-Opt Tea Party?" is an excellent piece. Well done. Warmly, Craig Shirley

Editor: Regarding "Co-Opt Tea Party?" I must fall in to that category of 'unwanted' that Sen. Lott describes. I'm a 53 year old white female physician who worked for, earned, and borrowed my way through medical school. I paid back every single dime, and I've paid enough taxes in the last 30 years to support at least another 5 families – and now I'm being told that I haven't done enough? I've worked 40-60 hrs a week for the last 28 years, and I'm sick and tired of having the government dictate to me where the product of my labors must be spent, for whom, and on what. Maybe the real problem is people like Trent Lott. He's one of the Republicans that have FORCED many of us to become active 'rabble-rousers'. Although I call myself a Republican and a conservative, he absolutely DOES NOT REPRESENT ME! Ok – enough venting for today. Just another "rabble rouser," L.Gay Bernitsky, M.D. Albuquerque, New Mexico

Editor: Regarding "Co-Opt Tea Party?" it was a strange coincidence that I received the email regarding Trent Lott's opinion of the Tea Party supporters. I had just received a call from the Ohio Republican party asking for support. Trent Lott's attitude is exactly the reason that I have stopped sending donations to the Republican Party and rather support specific candidates. I have told the callers that any number of times, but they just do not seem to get it. Ashley S. Hilton

Editor: I'm sorry to be dense, but am I misreading something. Did Trent Lott really say that in "Co-Opt Tea Party?"? I have lived in Mississippi all my life and Trent Lott served us well until his resignation. Since the quotation marks stop and start I'm not sure just what he really did say. A direct cut and paste copy of what was written in the Donald Devine article: "We don't need a lot of [conservative Republican Sen.] Jim DeMint disciples," who actually believe in conservative principles and want to tackle real reform. "As soon as they get here, we need to co-opt them" into our ways. Thank you, Julia Peteet

Editor: Regarding "Co-Opt Tea Party?" I am an independent/tea party member and Republican and I feel Trent Lott is simply trying to anger most of us who are like me and divide us; instead of uniting us. Tony Ogden

Editor: Regarding "Co-Opt Tea Party?" Senator Trent Lott is one of the brand of mushy Republicans in the Senate that are just RINOs (Republicans in name only) who was just as likely to join the liberal Democrats in liberal legislation as they are oppose them! He and his ilk are the cause of the trouble our country is in because they have refused to act like Republicans and oppose the radical appointees, legislation and policies Obama has pushed with Pelosi and Reid's overwhelming support. Add Lindsey Graham to the list of those who are in the forefront of the RINOs. With adequate pressure from ALL Republicans in the Senate and the arm twisting they could do, collectively, we may not have been stuck with the latest Supreme Court justice. The Tea Party and their leadership are just what the country needs to help select and promote thinking, honest, capable conservatives in our legislatures. People who are concerned with freedom and liberty are needed now to make the United States thrive again. RJN

Editor: "Co-Opt Tea Party?" is a well written article. We need to tell the likes of Trent Lott to shut-up and go away. Lee Vail

Editor: Your article about co-opting the Tea Party is a true gem and stated with remarkable insight. Not only have we become dependent on the Federal Government we must abide by the code of conduct on speech that mirrors the liberal thought process. It was implied that both parties want and work toward the same goal. Sometimes, there is a fine line on some issues but do not believe this to be true overall. It has become clear to me that over the last few years, the Democrats have swung far to the left and want us to move toward Socialism. Now, the Republicans agenda is toward smaller government but still don't have it right on some issues such as immigration. I was told by a Major in the U.S. Army back in 1969 they were discussing a scenario regarding the future of the United States. It was a political science class. He related there were people high in our present Federal Government, former high level officials and very influential people who were working toward a world government based on Socialism and one currency. I didn't think too much about it at the time until former Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara became president of the world bank. Then came the European Common Market and one currency, the Euro. There is talk in South America regarding this as well. The Administration, President Oama and Congress have already made a few moves toward Federal Control of Banks, stock market and some parts of our industry. They were forced to back off on some things but it did give them an idication to how far they can push. They found the people and industry were not going to buy it and so along comes the Tea Party. Now the Democrats in Congress are beginning to swing the other way and abandon some of the Administration policy. Their problem is they played the game far too long and now it will cost them in November. Congress seems to corrupt even the most well intentioned person and the replacements in Washington ultimately will be as well unless they limit the tenure to two terms. It is a trade off where you have people with less experience but would have a more honest Congress. I see this to be true with our Senator Nelson from Florida. A few years ago he served us well, honest and we agreed on a number of issues. He turned radical and to the left with this Administration. It has come to the point that he no longer represents us but solely the party line and this Administration. A recent e-mail from me expressed the fact he had lost touch with the people of Florida and should resign from office. Didn't get a response but know I spoke for the majority. The polls indicate they were clearly not in favor of the Health care Bill and Cap and Trade which he voted for. Albert Grounds

Editor: Regarding your "Co-Opt Tea Party?" my view is that both your magazine and the Tea party organization are not helping to identify the real conservatives in the primaries. The result is too many liberal RHINOS spenders are being included as new conservatives. Daniel Kormanik

Editor: I enjoyed your article, "Co-Opt Tea Party?" about the Tea Party and Progressivism. Trent Lott's comments may sum up the attitude of the Republican Party at its highest levels, they certainly do in Illinois. The Tea Party is different, a truly grassroots movement that I am familiar with as both a Republican candidate and as a participant. Your description of the Progressive Movement describes it up fairly well, although there are more details to consider. First, Trent Lott is a professional politician; that's been his whole life. He is riding whatever wave there was to carry him to the land of milk and honey, and it served him well. That is it provided him a comfortable, well-to-do lifestyle, even if he rode rather than led. Yes, he was a leader of other politicians, but not of the ideas which brought conservatives to power in 1980 or 1994. The Progressive Movement was a product of American success in commerce, which created a powerful engine of customer satisfaction. The United States thrived on the Industrial Revolution much more so than even the most successful countries of Europe. The reason was simple, the fuel was individual liberty, the freedom to produce and consume as Americans pleased. There was no aristocracy to get the first shot at capital and favorable regulation; everyone was equal under the law. From that came a cornucopia of products and opportunities to make the average citizen's life better: because that's where the money was. Supply-side economics has a long history in free markets. Among those who benefited were families like Theodore Roosevelt's. They made enough money that he didn't have to work and could enter politics as a "reformer". A great many of the Progressives shared that pedigree and had the time and education to second guess the population. As a matter of fact, many were of the opinion that the country had evolved as far as it could and needed their direction. In the Ancient Regime, this would have been called noblesse oblige, the duty of the ruling class to help those beneath it live their lives properly or at least better. Of course people such as Trent Lott enjoyed being drawn into such majestic circles. In many it was a technocratic movement, enamored of itself and what its members had achieved. This is how fascism evolved out of it in Europe, rejecting the absolute leveling of society in Communism, to say nothing of Lenin and Stalin's barbarism terrifying the burgers of Middle Europe in the post-WWI chaos of fallen empires. The paternalism that emerged allowed them to keep their material achievements in return for more and more of their liberty. Mussolini was admired by many in England and the U.S. for cleaning up the disorder in Italy: he "made the trains run on time." This was recreating a class structure in a society run by "councils of wise men." In return for increasing amounts of individual liberty, the state would protect people and companies from competition to solidify their position in society. In the United States, we didn't have political characters running around in uniforms wearing black or brown shirts; but we had President Hoover telling people not to compete or lay off workers and passing the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to save favored businesses. After him, came Franklin Roosevelt to pick up the mantle of the Wilson Administration for real and create an alphabet soup of federal departments to run industries and the economy. Fortunately, the Supreme Court killed the National Recovery Act, although we did get the Philadelphia Eagles out of it. C. S. Lewis observed, "Of all tyrannies, a tyranny exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It may be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated; but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end for they do so with the approval of their own conscience." Does this sound like the Food and Drug Administration, the Securities and Exchange Commission or the Anti-trust Department? How about seat-belt laws and smoking bans? Don't worry, there a plenty more to protect us from ourselves. What this creates is a deadening bureaucracy that despises and discourages any sort of change. It has become more stifling to innovation and the freedoms it needs than even the court etiquette of Louis XIV and his successors. It has

become the welfare state for the welfare state. This became glaringly evident during the recent BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, when bureaucratic procedure blocked the use of equipment and efforts immediately needed to stop oil from coming ashore. Without the proper studies and reports, federal agencies were simply not going to respond. Just as there was only one proper way to gain access Louis XIV's court and address his august personage at any given time of the day, so was it impossible to move on the Gulf crisis without observing the proper formalities of the new imperial court of bureaux. This does not sit well with Americans. They were willing to put up with bureaucracy as long as it kept its distance from our daily lives. Once the Federal Reserve and a bunch of bailouts ruined their lives and fortunes, the system had gone too far. Even the Bush Administration could not abide the collapse of big New York banks that had loaded up on junk paper; it had to protect the status quo, lest people it knew and went to school with lose their jobs. Well, it didn't work, but did leave a pile of money for a Chicago politician in the White House to dole out to his pals. The Progressive aristocracy has indeed gone too far. Washington may have forgotten that 1789 represents more than a fine restaurant in Georgetown; it was the last time an upper class tried to take advantage of government and insulate itself from the effects in a well developed country. There may have been three estates in France before the revolution: the clergy, nobility and the common people; but, there is only one in the United States today. And, now they have come for tea. I know; I was there on 9/12. Henry W. Meers, Jr.

Editor: Robert Weisberg is correct in "NAACP v Tea Party." The Tea partiers are correct and the NAACP has no facts and soon will go poof and be gone. BD

Editor: Please thank S.T. Karnick so much for his article "Two Cultures in Conflict." I have blasted this to all my conservative friends and a few of my embarrassed liberal acquaintances. I keep telling my friends that politicians on both sides of the aisle are draping a flag of "It is your right" around everyone's character flaws and then when it leads to economic and moral sodomy they reach into our pockets to pay for them and at the same time use these welfare schemes to enrich themselves. Thanks for articulating much better what I believe. Keep up the good work. Dan Hallman

Editor: Regarding S.T. Karnick's "Two Cultures in Conflict," read "Lessons of History" by Will and Ariel Durant, wherein they show that freedom and equality cannot exist together, as in a utopia. Those with superior abilities want freedom to grow and rise. Those with inferior abilities want equality – enforced by government! Equality requires sacrifice of freedom. This is an eternal conflict. Jack Stuart

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