
FUTURE OF FREEDOM

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The control of the production of wealth is the control of human life itself.

— *Hilaire Belloc*

FUTURE OF FREEDOM

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Why the JFK Assassination Should Matter to Everyone, Part 2

by Jacob G. Hornberger



When I finished reading Douglas Horne's book *Inside the Assassination Records Review Board*, I knew that the Kennedy assassination could no longer legitimately be considered a "conspiracy theory." Horne's book pushed the assassination over the line by establishing beyond a reasonable doubt that the November 22, 1963, assassination was, in fact, a regime-change operation carried out by the national-security establishment.

How did Horne do that? He compiled all of the evidence that established that the autopsy the national-security establishment performed on President Kennedy's

body was fraudulent and then presented that evidence in his five-volume book.

Horne's establishment of a fraudulent autopsy was a game-changer in the Kennedy assassination. As I have repeatedly emphasized over the years, there is no innocent explanation for a fraudulent autopsy. None. No one has ever come up with one. No one ever will. It necessarily means criminal culpability on the part of the national-security establishment in the assassination of John F. Kennedy. There is no way around it.

There is an important, undisputed fact about the autopsy: It was orchestrated and carried out by the U.S. national-security establishment. No one else. Not the Mafia. Not the Soviets. Not the Cubans. Not the communists.

A fraudulent autopsy can mean only one thing

That means that once the autopsy was determined to be fraudulent, there was no way for lone-nut theorists to circumvent the problem: A fraudulent autopsy proves criminal culpability in the assassination.

This is especially true when we realize that the plan to prevent Dr. Rose, the Dallas County medical

examiner, from conducting the autopsy in Dallas, as required by state law, was launched at the moment that Kennedy was declared dead. It is now clear that the reason for that was so that Kennedy's body could be taken to Maryland and placed in the hands of the military, which had the responsibility of conducting the autopsy.

There were two reasons for placing the autopsy under the control of the military: one, the culture of secrecy in the military, and two, the penchant within the military to obey orders. In fact, the Kennedy autopsy was shrouded in secrecy. People who participated in it were forced to sign secrecy oaths and threatened with court martial or criminal prosecution if they ever talked about what they had seen.

But keep in mind something important: Horne's book was published in 2009. That's more than 45 years after the assassination! That is an extremely long time to inculcate people's minds with the notion of "conspiracy theory!" By the time Horne's book was published, the mainstream media, for whatever reason, was not about to revisit the Kennedy assassination. And by this time, many Americans had convinced themselves that anyone who questioned the official narrative

had to be a "conspiracy theorist."

Of course, that's not to say that before the publication of Horne's book there weren't anomalies, contradictions, and inconsistencies in the assassination that pointed toward guilt on the part of the national-security establishment. There were plenty of those things, and there were many excellent books by assassination researchers that pointed them out.

There were two reasons for placing the autopsy under the control of the military.

There were also unusual circumstances surrounding the autopsy that were known before Horne's book was published. But assassination researchers often regarded them simply as acts of incompetence or negligence on the part of the military pathologists who conducted the autopsy. At the risk of belaboring the obvious, incompetence or negligence are completely different concepts than fraud. Fraud entails a deliberate, criminal intent to deceive.

The first evidence of a conspiracy

The first indications of fraud appeared in a watershed book entitled *Best Evidence* by David Lifton,

which was published in 1981. Lifton's book detailed some enlisted men who were claiming that they carried Kennedy's body into the Bethesda morgue almost 1 1/2 hours before the official entry time of 8 p.m. into the morgue. It was something that the military had clearly wanted to keep secret. The reason those enlisted men were talking was because the House Select Committee on Assassinations, which reopened the Kennedy assassination in the 1970s, had released them from the secrecy oaths that they had been forced to take some ten years before.

Horne's book established beyond a reasonable doubt that the autopsy was fraudulent.

While the early, secret introduction of Kennedy's body into the morgue pointed toward some dark shenanigans, it was still not sufficient evidence, at least for me, to convict, beyond a reasonable doubt, the national-security state of autopsy fraud and, therefore, of the assassination itself.

The clear and convincing evidence of autopsy fraud would come out in the 1990s, during the term of the Assassination Records Review Board, on whose staff Horne

served. As I indicated previously, the ARRB was a federal agency charged with enforcing the JFK Records Act, which mandated that federal agencies disclose their long-secret assassination-related records to the public.

But keep in mind that this was more than 30 years after the assassination, when the mainstream media had lost interest in the assassination and when many people had become convinced that the Kennedy assassination was nothing more than a "conspiracy theory."

The problem was that most people, including me, did not study in detail the evidence that the ARRB uncovered. It took Horne's book to do that. He marshaled all the evidence of autopsy fraud uncovered by the ARRB and presented it in his five-volume book. But, again, that was in 2009, almost 50 years after the assassination! That's a long time for secrecy to prevail.

Nonetheless, that's when the Kennedy assassination definitely crossed the line from conspiracy theory to a definite fact of a national-security-state, regime-change operation. Horne's book established beyond a reasonable doubt that the autopsy that the military conducted on Kennedy's body was fraudulent and, therefore, that the national-se-

curity establishment had orchestrated and carried out the assassination.

Overwhelming evidence of fraud

The evidence establishing the fraudulent autopsy is detailed in Horne's book as well as in my three books: *The Kennedy Autopsy*, *The Kennedy Autopsy 2*, and my newest book, *An Encounter with Evil: The Abraham Zapruder Story*. Permit me to give just two examples of fraud in the autopsy in this article.

The military pathologists claimed that there was only one examination conducted of President Kennedy's brain as part of the overall autopsy. Horne and the ARRB's general counsel, an attorney named Jeremy Gunn, discovered that they were lying. There were actually two brain exams, one of which could not possibly have been performed on Kennedy's brain.

It goes without saying that that lie and those two brain exams conclusively establish criminal fraud. And as I indicated early, there is no innocent explanation for criminal fraud. It necessarily means guilt in the assassination itself.

How did Gunn and Horne discover that the pathologists were lying? The official photographer for the autopsy, a highly respected and

competent photographer for the Navy, a man named John Stringer, took photographs of the brain at the first brain exam. He told the ARRB that the pathologists had "sectioned" the brain, which means that they cut it like a loaf of bread. That's standard procedure in an autopsy when the victim has been shot in the head.

But the photographs of the brain in the official record show a brain that has not been sectioned. There is no way that a sectioned brain can be put back together. That necessarily means that there was a second brain exam at which a different brain was used, one that most likely was brought over from the Bethesda Medical Center, which was a teaching hospital. Moreover, when Stringer was shown the official autopsy photographs of the nonsectioned brain, he expressly denied that those were the photographs he took.

There were actually two brain exams, one of which could not possibly have been Kennedy's brain.

That's what is called fraud, which is a criminal offense. Why is that important? As I point out in my latest book, once a person has

concluded that the autopsy was fraudulent, he has automatically concluded that this cannot possibly be considered a “conspiracy theory” any longer, because, again, a fraudulent autopsy necessarily equates to criminal culpability in the assassination itself. At the risk of repeating myself, there is no innocent explanation for a fraudulent autopsy.

The fraudulent autopsy establishes that this was, in fact, a national-security, regime-change operation.

That’s why I don’t spend much time focusing people’s attention on other aspects of the assassination itself. Such aspects are, of course, important in laying out the overall evidence of a regime-change operation. But in my opinion, the other aspects are not dispositive, at least not beyond a reasonable doubt. The fraudulent autopsy, on the other hand, establishes beyond a reasonable doubt that this was, in fact, a national-security, regime-change operation.

Once the concept of the fraudulent autopsy seeps into a person’s consciousness, he necessarily has to reconcile it with any notion of “conspiracy theory” that he might hold. His mind necessarily has to grapple

with the fact that there is no innocent explanation for a fraudulent autopsy. That’s why I continue to emphasize the autopsy in my articles, books, and speeches on the Kennedy assassination.

Let me give you another example of fraud in the Kennedy autopsy. The ARRB discovered the existence of a woman named Sandra Spencer. She was a Navy petty officer who worked in the laboratory of the U.S. Navy’s photography lab in Washington. She worked closely with the White House in developing social photography of Kennedy and his family.

She told the ARRB a remarkable story, one that she had kept secret for more than 30 years because she had been led to believe that what she had done was classified top-secret. On the weekend of the assassination, she was asked to develop the official photographs of President Kennedy’s autopsy.

The ARRB showed Spencer the official autopsy photographs that are in the record today. She examined them carefully and then told the ARRB that the photographs showing the back of President Kennedy’s head to be intact were not the ones she developed. The ones she developed, she said, showed a big hole in the back of the president’s head.

If true, then that could only mean one thing: The official autopsy photographs showing the back of Kennedy's head to be intact are fraudulent.

It would be virtually impossible to find a more competent, professional, and truthful witness than Sandra Spencer. In fact, Jeremy Gunn stated that of all the witnesses to appear before the ARRB, he considered Spencer to be the most credible of them all.

Others who saw the hole included treating nurses, two FBI agents, a Secret Service agent, and a newsman.

In fact, Spencer's testimony matched what the treating physicians in Dallas stated immediately after the president was declared dead. They said that there was a massive hole in the back part of Kennedy's head. They weren't the only ones. Others who saw the hole included treating nurses, two FBI agents, a Secret Service agent, and a newsman. They are listed in my book *An Encounter with Evil: The Abraham Zapruder Story*.

As I detail in the book, a related problem arises with respect to the Zapruder film, which captured the assassination. The film, like the mil-

itary's autopsy photographs, shows the back of Kennedy's head to be intact. Thus, if the film is authentic, the photographs would have to be authentic as well. Conversely, if the photos are fraudulent, then the film has to be fraudulent as well.

For decades, the official story was that the film went to LIFE magazine on the weekend of the assassination. And for decades, the CIA said nothing to dispel that official story. Everything changed in the late 2000s, when the whole truth came out, thanks in large part to efforts by Horne and a man named Peter Janney, the author of a great book entitled *Mary's Mosaic: The CIA Conspiracy to Murder John F. Kennedy, Mary Pinchot Meyer, and Their Vision for World Peace*.

As I detail in *An Encounter with Evil: The Abraham Zapruder Story*, on the Saturday night after the assassination, the Zapruder film was secretly shipped to the CIA's National Photographic Interpretative Center lab in Washington, D.C., where a team headed by CIA photography expert Dino Brugioni carefully examined it, made photographic enlargements of selected frames, and placed them on "briefing boards."

The film was then transported to a top-secret CIA photography

operation named “Hawkeyeworks” that was secretly situated at Kodak’s headquarters in Rochester, New York. At that plant, they made an altered copy of the film, which made it appear that the back of Kennedy’s head was intact. The altered copy was then brought back to Washington, where a separate NPIC team made photo enlargements of the altered film and posted them on new briefing boards.

Brugioni was the most renowned photographic interpretation expert in the world.

There is something important to note about these two Saturday-and Sunday-night operations: they were tightly compartmentalized. That is, both teams were sworn to secrecy. The Saturday-night team never learned about the Sunday-night operation, and the Sunday-night team never knew about the Saturday-night operation.

There is something else important to note about the film. When Brugioni was shown the film as it exists today, specifically with respect to the shot that hit Kennedy in the head, he emphasized that what he saw on the extant film was not what he saw on the film he examined on Saturday night. It’s

worth mentioning that Brugioni was the most renowned photographic interpretation expert in the world.

The problem, of course, is the passage of time. By the time the fraudulent nature of the Zapruder film became apparent in the late 2000s, the mainstream press was not about to revisit the Kennedy assassination. Moreover, many people were not about to abandon their feeling that this new version of the assassination was just a “conspiracy theory.”

Why does the Kennedy assassination matter, given that it took place almost 60 years ago? The assassination explains the deeply militarist, interventionist foreign-policy morass in which our nation remains today and, more important, how we can escape from this morass.

Why they killed Kennedy

I highly recommend another FFF book on the assassination: *JFK’s War with the National Security Establishment: Why Kennedy Was Assassinated* by Doug Horne. It explains the motive behind this particular regime-change operation.

Recall what would happen in Chile several years later. On the urging of the U.S. national-security

establishment, the Chilean national-security establishment determined that the country's democratically elected president posed a grave threat to Chile's national security because (1) he was befriending the Soviet Union and (2) his policies, they believed, were leading the nation to doom. To save the country, they violently removed the president from office and replaced him with a rightwing military junta.

As Horne details in *JFK's War*, that's precisely what happened with Kennedy. Because he was befriending the Soviet Union and because his policies were believed to be leading America to doom, Kennedy was deemed to be a grave threat to national security and, therefore, had to be violently removed from power. He was replaced by his vice-president, Lyndon Johnson, who was on the same page as the national-security establishment.

After the Cuban Missile Crisis, Kennedy was in a full-blown war with the Pentagon and the CIA over the future direction of America, especially after his famous Peace Speech at American University, where he reached out to the Soviet Union in a spirit of peace and friendship. The war involved a fundamental conflict of visions. Kennedy was determined to bring an

end to the Cold War and establish peaceful and friendly relations with the Soviet Union, Cuba, and the rest of the communist world.

Kennedy's vision flew in the face of everything the national-security establishment believed, which was that there could never be peaceful and friendly coexistence with the Soviets, the Red Chinese, the Cubans, or the communist world. As far as they were concerned, this was a war to the finish, likely even by nuclear war. In their eyes, Kennedy's vision was hopelessly naive and was certain to lead to a communist takeover of the United States.

Kennedy was determined to bring an end to the Cold War.

There was no way to reconcile these conflicting visions. For example, the Pentagon and the CIA were insisting that combat troops had to be sent to Vietnam to stop the communists. Kennedy, on the other hands, was determined to pull out all U.S. troops from Vietnam. The Pentagon and the CIA were pressuring Kennedy to invade Cuba. On the day he was assassinated, Kennedy had an emissary have lunch with Fidel Castro in an effort to normalize relations between the United States and Cuba.

If Kennedy had won the war, there would have been no more Cold War, no more NATO, no U.S. intervention in Vietnam, and no more extreme anti-Russia animus. The U.S. embargo on Cuba, which targets the Cuban people with death and impoverishment even today, would have been lifted. There would have been no foreign interventionism in the Middle East and, therefore, no terrorist blowback and, therefore, no global war on terror. It is a virtual certainty that the national-security state would have been dismantled and America's founding governmental system of a limited-government restored.

The Pentagon's and the CIA's Cold War mentality and their extreme anti-Russia animus never ended.

Instead, Kennedy lost the war on November 22, 1963. Fifty-eight thousand American men died for nothing in the Vietnam War. The Cold War continued, and so did the national-security establishment, whose power and money grew with each passing decade.

Once the Cold War ended, the national-security establishment went into the Middle East and began wreaking death and destruction, which led to terrorist blow-

back that gave the Pentagon, the CIA, and the NSA a new lease on life with their "global war on terrorism." Terrorism replaced communism as the new official enemy, one that would be used to justify ever-increasing power and money for the "defense" industry. Then came the deadly and destructive invasions and occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq.

And as we are now seeing ever so clearly, the Pentagon's and the CIA's Cold War mentality and their anti-Russia animus never really ended. While they were waging their "global war on terror" that they themselves had generated with their interventionist foreign policy, they were using the old Cold War dinosaur NATO to absorb former members of the Warsaw Pact, knowing full well what effect that would have on Russia. Knowing that Russia had vowed to invade Ukraine to prevent the United States, through NATO, from installing its nuclear missiles on Russia's border, U.S. officials nonetheless insisted that Ukraine join NATO. Thus, we have now come full circle, with Americans being inculcated, once again, with the same anti-Russia hysteria that Kennedy was determined to bring to an end. Even worse, Americans are being encour-

aged to support policies that move the United States and Russia perilously closer to all-out nuclear war that threatens to snuff out mankind.

John Kennedy pointed the way out, which was why he was considered to be such a grave threat. The Cold War and the anticommunist crusade were nothing but a great big racket, one that brought money and power to the national-security establishment, not to mention the destruction of the rights and liberties of the American people through such totalitarian powers as assassination, indefinite detention, torture, and mass secret surveillance.

The way out of the morass is to bring all U.S. troops home from overseas, abandon all foreign military bases, restore America's founding foreign policy of noninterven-

tionism, dismantle the Pentagon, the CIA, and the NSA, and restore America's founding system of a limited-government republic. That's the way to get our nation back on the right road — toward liberty, peace, prosperity, and harmony with the people of the world. What better way to honor the memory of John F. Kennedy?

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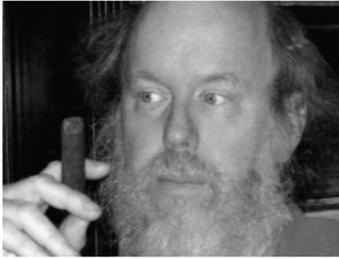
NEXT MONTH:
“How We Got a National-
Security Police State, Part 1”
by Jacob G. Hornberger

A person should seek to reduce, by whatever peaceful means his ingenuity may devise, the power of government — any government — to tell him what to do.

— John Patric

Biden's "Begging for Barrels" Saudi Disgrace

by James Bovard



Why don't you talk about something that matters?" President Biden replied to a journalist asking about why he fist-bumped Saudi dictator Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) during his "begging for barrels" trip to the Middle East in July. Biden hoped the Saudis would rescue his presidency by pumping more oil in order to lower American gasoline prices and prevent the demolition of the Democratic Party in the mid-term elections.

On the eve of Biden's "begging for barrels" tour, federal data confirmed the wreckage of his economic policies. The inflation rate soared to 9.1%, much worse than forecast. Biden has decimated the purchasing power of the dollar as real wages

for Americans declined for the 15th straight month. Biden traveled as a desperate man whose own political party is facing a horrendous pummeling in November.

Prior to Biden's Saudi trip, a top White House official justified forcing Americans to continue paying high gas prices to prop up Biden's plan for "the liberal World Order." This was part of the "Putin's Price Hike" refrain and an attempt to make people feel patriotic when they get skewered at the gas pump. But the PR gesture failed miserably — except perhaps for the coastal elites, who are unaware what their chauffeurs pay to fill the tank.

Biden assured Americans before leaving that "fundamental freedoms are always on the agenda when I travel abroad." Unfortunately, "fundamental freedoms" have never been on Biden's domestic agenda. The Saudi regime preserved decorum by refraining from mass public beheadings of dissidents and scoff-laws during Biden's visit.

Last year, the Biden administration concluded that MBS personally approved the brutal murder of *Washington Post* columnist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018. Khashoggi's corpse was dismembered with a bonesaw after he was lured to the Saudi embassy in Turkey. That

atrocities helped spur Biden to label Saudi Arabia a “pariah” during the 2020 presidential campaign. But such rhetoric was a relic of the era of low gasoline prices.

Biden’s kow-tow to the Saudis

Prior to Biden’s visit, the biggest fear for many pundits and human rights activists was that Biden would pose in a “grip and grin” photo with the Saudi dictator. *Washington Post* publisher Fred Ryan worried that such a picture would signal “to autocrats everywhere that you can quite literally get away with murdering a journalist.” Ryan also fretted that Biden was squandering “our moral authority.” Dude, that train left the station long ago.

After Biden fist-bumped MBS, the *Washington Post* publisher howled even louder: “The fist bump between President Biden and Mohammed bin Salman was worse than a handshake — it was shameful. It projected a level of intimacy and comfort that delivers to MBS the unwarranted redemption he has been desperately seeking.”

The story spiraled downwards amidst mutual accusations of lying. In talking to the American media, Biden claimed he accused MBS of murdering the *Post* columnist. The

Saudi foreign minister went on Fox News and said that didn’t happen. Biden responded by saying that the Saudi minister wasn’t telling the truth, but the Saudi minister did say that Biden “mentioned that the United States is committed to human rights.” So all’s well that ends well.

The U.S. government has
sent \$50+ billion in weaponry
to the Saudis.

Biden was correct that journalists should focus on “something that matters” more. Except that the other issues were even more damning for Biden.

Since 2015, the U.S. government has sent \$50+ billion in weaponry to the Saudis, which was then used in brutal bombing campaigns that killed and injured 18,000 Yemeni civilians, according to the United Nations. Responding to widespread outrage at atrocities, Biden announced in February 2021 that he was ending U.S. government support for Saudi “offensive operations” in Yemen, including “relevant arms sales.”

But Biden’s definition of “relevant” had more loopholes than a congressional ethics reform bill. A recent Government Accountability

Office (GAO) report exposed the farcical nature of Biden's arms halt. The United States continues to approve "defensive" weapons for the Saudis — but federal officials "have no specific definitions of 'offensive' and 'defensive.'" It gets worse. Biden's Pentagon policies prohibit the "the misuse" of U.S. weapons transfers. But GAO noted, "DOD and State officials both said that use that causes civilian harm would not necessarily constitute 'misuse.'"

The U.S. government has not even bothered to investigate high-profile incidents of Yemeni carnage.

GAO reported that the State Department's "assessment is based on the INTENDED use of the weapons, which may or may not match the actual use. State and DOD lack a comprehensive picture of how U.S. assistance has actually been used in the war in Yemen." The U.S. government spends scores of billions of dollars a year on intelligence agencies but cannot be bothered to even compile a list of the carnage the Saudis inflict on Yemeni women and children with U.S. weapons. The U.S. government has not even bothered to investigate high-profile incidents of Yemeni carnage. The Unit-

ed Nations concluded "that U.S.-origin defense articles may have been used in strikes that caused substantial civilian harm in a manner that violated international humanitarian law," GAO reported.

The Saudis and 9/11

The American media completely ignored what should be the biggest barrier to U.S.-Saudi relations. When you look at the New York skyline and no longer see the World Trade Center twin towers, thank the Saudi regime. Saudi government officials directly aided and protected some of the 9/11 hijackers (15 of the 19 were Saudis) after they entered the United States. Biden is the fourth U.S. president in a row to continue covering up key information on the Saudi government role on 9/11.

Anyone who wonders why the vast majority of Americans distrust Washington should consider the government's continuing systematic deceit over the 9/11 attacks. As the Bush administration rushed to exploit 9/11 to justify invading Iraq, a joint House-Senate congressional investigation in 2002–2003 found extensive evidence of Saudi government officials' assistance to the hijackers. The Bush administration succeeded in suppressing the key 28

pages of that congressional report on the Saudi role on 9/11.

The FBI has “just thrown the biggest blanket they can find over everything that has to do with the Saudi role in 9/11.”

The coverup was propelled by the 9/11 Commission, which kowtowed shamelessly to the Bush White House. 9/11 Commission member John Lehman “was struck by the determination of the Bush White House to try to hide any evidence of the relationship between the Saudis and al-Qaeda,” noted Philip Shenon, author of *The Commission: The Uncensored History of the 9/11 Investigation*. If the 9/11 Commission had quoted the 2002 FBI memo stating that there was “incontrovertible evidence that there is support for these [9/11 hijacker] terrorists within the Saudi Government,” Bush might have been seriously damaged. But the commissioners didn’t go looking under any rocks they were told to ignore.

Former FBI Special Agent Stephen Moore, who led one of the key FBI teams investigating 9/11, stated in a 2017 affidavit: “Based on evidence we gathered during the course of our investigation, I con-

cluded that diplomatic and intelligence personnel of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia knowingly provided material support to the two 9/11 hijackers and facilitated the 9/11 plot. My colleagues in our investigation shared that conclusion.” Former Senate intelligence committee chairman Bob Graham said in 2018 that the FBI has “just thrown the biggest blanket they can find over everything that has to do with the Saudi role in 9/11,” as Brian McGlinchey reported. Former FBI agent Danny Gonzalez told CBS News that disclosing FBI documents on the case would reveal more links between Saudi government officials and the hijackers.

But Biden and the media ignored the Saudi role in terrorist attacks that killed thousands of Americans. Pundits may have preferred to gas-bag about the fist bump because it did not require any reading or thinking. The AFP News Agency swooned: “It took less than 24 hours in Saudi Arabia for US President Joe Biden to tarnish an image he has long cultivated: that of a fierce defender of human rights.”

Biden’s long history of groveling to dictators

Such rhetoric set the media baseline for coverage — even

though the premise was absurd, if not disgraceful. Biden has a long record of groveling to foreign regimes with sordid human rights records. Biden's boasting of string pulling to get an anticorruption prosecutor fired in Ukraine should have permanently obliterated any pretenses of his decency beyond the U.S. territorial limits. But the media expunged Biden's sordid past in the rush to get him elected in 2020.

"Why is Joe Biden going to Saudi Arabia for oil while suppressing the American energy industry?"

The media completely ignored the other atrocities that the U.S. government is helping spawn in the Middle East. The Obama administration commenced arming Muslim terrorist groups in 2013 to try to topple the Assad regime. The program was a catastrophe from the start: CIA-backed Syrian rebels ended up fighting Pentagon-backed rebels. Much of the U.S. aid ended up in the hands of terrorist groups, some of whom were allied with Al Qaeda. Providing material support to terrorist organizations is a federal crime except when the weapons are sent by U.S. government agencies. Federal appeals courts used absurd rationales to prohibit disclo-

tures on the CIA's weapons-for-Syrian-terrorists program. The U.S. military effectively invaded Syria and is now occupying a huge swath of that nation. But it is a nonissue for Biden and the American media.

The media also ignored the underlying absurdity of Biden begging the Saudis for more oil. Biden kowtowed abroad at the same time he scorns our nation's heartland. As Rep. Yvette Herrell (R-NM) asked, "Why is Joe Biden going to Saudi Arabia for oil while suppressing the American energy industry?" Sixty-eight members of Congress co-signed her letter to Biden demanding an answer to that question. Herrell complained that "Biden and the radicals in his administration seem hellbent on destroying American oil and gas." Perhaps Biden prefers pleading for favors from foreign tyrants to unleashing his fellow citizens to deliver bounties in the marketplace. After Biden in June accused U.S. oil companies of making excessive profits, the American Petroleum Institute issued a list of 10 steps Biden could take to reduce supply disruptions, including ending obstruction of permitting on natural-gas projects, lifting development restrictions on federal lands and waters, and ending Trump-era steel tariffs.

Biden’s Saudi trip should have driven the final wooden stake into his pious pirouetting on the world stage. But the scorekeepers — the media elite and their establishment allies — thrive on the illusion that the U.S. government is the world’s savior and policeman. This is the dogma that is spurring the Biden administration to seek to prolong the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Biden is letting the bloodshed continue as long as he can profit by portraying himself as a savior of democracy for supporting the corrupt regime in Kiev.

James Bovard is a policy advisor to The Future of Freedom Foundation and the author of the ebook Freedom Frauds: Hard Lessons in American Liberty, published by FFF, Public Policy Hooligan, Attention Deficit Democracy, and eight other books.

NEXT MONTH:
**“Biden the Bogus
Benevolent Dictator”**
by James Bovard

Your principle has placed these words above the entrance of the legislative chamber: “whosoever acquires any influence here can obtain his share of legal plunder.” And what has been the result? All classes have flung themselves upon the doors of the chamber crying: “A share of the plunder for me, for me!”

— Frederic Bastiat

Justice being taken away, then, what are kingdoms but great robberies? For what are robberies themselves, but little kingdoms? The band itself is made up of men; it is ruled by the authority of a prince, it is knit together by the pact of the confederacy; the booty is divided by the law agreed on. If, by the admittance of abandoned men, this evil increases to such a degree that it holds places, fixes abodes, takes possession of cities, and subdues peoples, it assumes the more plainly the name of a kingdom, because the reality is now manifestly conferred on it, not by the removal of covetousness, but by the addition of impunity. Indeed, that was an apt and true reply which was given to Alexander the Great by a pirate who had been seized. For when that king had asked the man what he meant by keeping hostile possession of the sea, he answered with bold pride, ‘What thou meanest by seizing the whole earth; but because I do it with a petty ship, I am called a robber, whilst thou who dost it with a great fleet art styled emperor.

— St. Augustine

Two Agendas

by Laurence M. Vance



Although the next U.S. presidential election is not until 2024, this is still an election year. Most candidates are running for state and local offices. On the national level, voters in the 50 states only vote for three offices. They select members of the House of Representatives by district for two-year terms, two senators for six-year terms, and, by means of the Electoral College, a president every four years. In the November election, all 435 seats in the House are up for grabs. However, in the Senate, senators are divided into three classes with staggered terms. Thus, only one-third of the Senate seats can normally be contested at any election. This year, 34 of the 100 Senate seats are up for regular election, plus special elections in Oklahoma and California.

Republicans are salivating at the prospect of regaining control of the House and Senate in the upcoming midterm election. They last controlled both Houses of Congress during the last two years of Obama's presidency and the first two years of Trump's presidency. Not only does the political party of the president historically do poorly in midterm elections, but high price inflation, a low presidential approval rating, the retirement of many House Democrats, and a Democratic Party that has moved increasingly leftward have even some Democratic strategists predicting that the Democrats will suffer huge losses in the election. Republicans would like to think that it is their agenda that will appeal to voters this November and not just that the voters are turning away from the Democrats in droves and have no other real alternative in our two-party system.

Earlier this year, Republican members of the House held their three-day annual retreat, the House Republican Issues Conference, in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. During an interview with Fox News at the conference, eight-term House member and current minority whip Steve Scalise of Louisiana said the 2022 midterm elections will be "issues-based" and "contrast-based."

He maintained that Republicans have a “bold conservative agenda” that will highlight “not only what Democrats are doing wrong” but what Republicans would do “differently.” He believes that “both domestically and abroad,” Americans “are not happy with the direction of the country” and “are just so hungry for conservative ideas.” From that perspective, “there has never been a better time to run on a conservative agenda and show people what we would do, and then have a mandate to go and do it.”

There are really only two agendas worth considering: conservatism and libertarianism.

Republicans are “proposing a very different and better agenda.” Scalise insisted that “non-traditional Republican voters” are looking toward “a conservative message right now.” “They didn’t like the shutdowns, they don’t like all the big-government socialism, they care about their kids’ education,” he said. Republicans have “phenomenal candidates, a lot of military veterans, a lot of minorities, a lot of people from different walks of life who are running as Republicans in places we haven’t always seen.” They can “get our message out in places

where people are open to new ideas right now, even if they have been voting Democrat.” Because Americans “are not happy with the direction that Biden and Pelosi are taking the country,” Republicans “have an opportunity to win in places where we haven’t won in a while.”

Two agendas

There are only two agendas worth looking at as we draw closer to the midterm election. But these two agendas are not the contrasting agendas of the Democrats (liberalism) and Republicans (conservatism). With its emphasis on abortion on demand, Medicare for all, social justice, free college, wokeism, the transgender movement, and climate change, the progressive Democratic Party of today has moved so far leftward that it is unrecognizable when compared to the liberal Democratic Party of Bill Clinton in the 1990s. For anyone who believes that the government should be a limited one that follows the Constitution, that markets should be free, that individual liberty should be fostered, and that property rights should be respected, there are really only two agendas worth considering: conservatism and libertarianism.

Now, at first glance, it might seem like conservatism and liber-

tarianism share common ground. After all, conservatives regularly recite their mantra of fidelity to the Constitution, federalism, limited government, fiscal conservatism, private property, less government, lower taxes, less regulations, individual liberty, the free market, free enterprise, and a strong national defense. Before he was elected president of the United States, Ronald Reagan (1911–2004) was interviewed by the libertarian *Reason* magazine about his political philosophy.

Whether the Republican agenda is a “very different and better agenda” than the Democrats’ agenda remains to be seen.

The first question he was asked was about the difference between conservatism and libertarianism. Said the Gipper: “If you analyze it I believe the very heart and soul of conservatism is libertarianism. I think conservatism is really a misnomer just as liberalism is a misnomer for the liberals — if we were back in the days of the Revolution, so-called conservatives today would be the Liberals and the liberals would be the Tories. The basis of conservatism is a desire for less government interference or less

centralized authority or more individual freedom and this is a pretty general description also of what libertarianism is.”

But not all conservatives agree on the connection between conservatism and libertarianism. Conservative icon Russell Kirk, while acknowledging that conservatives and libertarians “share a detestation of collectivism” and “set their faces against the totalist state and the heavy hand of bureaucracy,” nevertheless warned against the “many and grave failings” of libertarianism. Said Kirk:

I venture to suggest that libertarianism, properly understood, is as alien to real American conservatives as is communism.

What else do conservatives and libertarians profess in common? The answer to that question is simple: nothing. Nor will they ever have. To talk of forming a league or coalition between these two is like advocating a union of ice and fire.

But regardless of any connection between conservatism and libertarianism, Republicans certainly have a conservative agenda. How-

ever, whether it is a “very different and better agenda” than the Democrats’ agenda remains to be seen.

The conservative agenda

The best way to examine the conservative agenda is to view it as one coin with two sides: domestic and foreign. On the domestic side, there are the issues of education, victimless crimes (drugs, gambling, prostitution), welfare, government grants and subsidies, health care, gun control, the minimum wage, Social Security, taxes, unemployment benefits, government regulations, and antidiscrimination laws. On the foreign side, there are the questions of foreign aid, disaster relief, free trade, foreign policy, the military, foreign wars, overseas military bases, travel, immigration, sanctions, embargoes, and national defense.

Contrary to the image that many liberals have of conservatives, the conservative agenda has plenty of room for things like welfare payments; the minimum wage; food stamps; government grants for scientific or medical research; government subsidies for art, culture, or agriculture; and unemployment benefits. Conservatives just want to be able to set the amount of the payments, the minimum wage, the

food stamps, the grants, the subsidies, and the benefits. Conservatism is not opposed to government involvement in banking, housing, retirement, education, or health care. Conservatism is not even against taxes, gun control, government regulations, and antidiscrimination laws. And conservatives are the biggest advocates of legislation against victimless crimes.

Conservatism is not opposed to government involvement in banking, housing, retirement, education, or health care.

The conservative agenda likewise has plenty of room for foreign welfare in the form of foreign aid and disaster relief. Although conservatives think these things should be reformed, they never question the giving of American money and supplies to foreigners and their governments unless some country refuses to do what it is told. Surely conservatives believe in free trade? Many conservatives talk about free trade, but their support of trade organizations, trade agreements, trade treaties, “fair trade,” and Trump’s tariffs show that they have no concept of what free trade actually is. Although conservatives give lip service to the movement of

goods, they openly want to restrict the movement of people when they support things like travel bans to Cuba and immigration checkpoints far from the border. Conservatism is at its worst when it comes to issues relating to foreign policy and the military. The defense budget — which should really be called the offense budget — is never large enough. Instead of a foreign policy of neutrality and nonintervention, conservatism much prefers a foreign policy that is imperialistic, belligerent, and meddling. Ending foreign wars, closing overseas military bases, and bringing the troops home have no place in a conservative agenda. But there is certainly room for sanctions and embargoes that harm foreigners and military aid that enriches defense contractors.

Conservatism is an authoritarian philosophy that looks to the state to arrest people and then fine them, appropriate their property, or lock them in cages for engaging in private consensual behavior or peaceful activity that doesn't violate the personal or property rights of anyone. Conservatism has no philosophical objection to the federal government's taking money from some Americans and redistributing it to other Americans. Conservatism

is the philosophy of state-coerced morality and virtue. Conservatism maintains that the government should protect people from harming themselves. Conservatism does not demand the separation of school and the state, charity and the state, the market and the state, retirement and the state, health care and the state, commerce and the state, or science and the state.

Conservatism is at its worst when it comes to issues relating to foreign policy and the military.

So Russell Kirk was right about conservatives and libertarians not having anything in common. He was just on the wrong side — the authoritarian side that seeks to use the state to order society. In this respect, conservatism is much closer to liberalism than it is to libertarianism. On the important issues of the day, there really is not much difference between the conservative agenda and the liberal agenda. One seeks a government run by conservatives while the other seeks a government run by liberals.

The conservative mantra of fidelity to the Constitution, federalism, limited government, fiscal conservatism, private property, less

government, lower taxes, less regulations, individual liberty, the free market, free enterprise, and a strong national defense is all a ruse, a smokescreen, a façade designed to ensnare grass-roots conservatives who genuinely hold to these things to identify with the conservative movement, donate to conservative organizations and their causes, and vote for Republican candidates.

The libertarian agenda

Like conservatives, libertarians have an agenda. But the best way to examine the libertarian agenda is to view it as a cube, not a coin. A cube, it should be remembered, has not four sides, but six. The libertarian agenda is that of individual liberty, the free market, commercial freedom, private property, limited government, and peace.

Libertarianism holds that people should be free to live their lives any way they choose as long as their conduct is peaceful, their interactions are consensual, and their actions don't violate the personal or property rights of others. Libertarians believe that every crime needs a tangible and identifiable victim who has suffered measurable harm to his person or measurable damages to his property. Vices should never be considered crimes, and

neither should bad habits, immoral actions, poor judgment, risky behavior, unhealthy living, dangerous activities, sin, self harm, addictive conduct, or financial irresponsibility. Because libertarians believe in absolute freedom of association, freedom of assembly, and freedom of conscience, they oppose any and all attempts to prohibit or punish discrimination practiced by private individuals.

**Libertarians believe that
all goods and services can and
should be provided by the
free market.**

Libertarianism holds that the marketplace of goods and services should be free from government intervention. This is known as *laissez faire*. The government should not interfere with exchanges between willing buyers and willing sellers. No industry or sector of the economy — or individual business — should receive government subsidies, loans, or bailouts. International trade should be completely free of all tariffs, quotas, and regulations — without 1,000-page trade agreements. Libertarians believe that all goods and services can and should be provided by the free market. There should be a free market in

education, health care, job training, charity, banking, housing, and retirement.

Libertarianism holds to commercial freedom. Right now, there is no area of American commerce that government does not regulate. Because of occupational licensing, some Americans must get permission from the government to open a business, engage in commerce, work in certain occupations, have a particular vocation, or provide a service to willing customers. Businesses must comply with a dizzying array of environmental regulations, safety regulations, antitrust regulations, advertising regulations, employment regulations, licensing, and permits. Predatory-pricing laws make it illegal to set one's prices too low. Price-gouging laws make it illegal to set one's prices too high. Libertarians believe that consumers, consumer protection groups, and the free market can regulate business better than government agencies and bureaucrats.

Libertarianism holds to the sanctity and inviolability of private property. The U.S. government has about 80 means-tested welfare programs that provide cash, food, subsidies, and a variety of social services to poor, disabled, and lower-income Americans on the basis

of the beneficiary's income or assets. But the government has no wealth of its own. To provide welfare it must first expropriate the property of Americans via income transfer and wealth redistribution according to the myriad number of federal, state, and local taxes. Anti-discrimination and public-accommodations laws are other ways that government violates property rights. Libertarians believe that Americans should be able to keep the fruits of their labor; that all charity should be individual, private, and voluntary; and that property owners should decide who is allowed on their property and what the requirements are for being there.

Libertarianism holds to the sanctity and inviolability of private property.

Libertarianism holds that government is the greatest violator of individual liberty, free markets, commercial freedom, and property rights. As former Foundation for Economic Education president Richard Ebeling has well said, "There has been no greater threat to life, liberty, and property throughout the ages than government. Even the most violent and brutal private

individuals have been able to inflict only a mere fraction of the harm and destruction that have been caused by the use of power by political authorities.”

Government would be prohibited from intervening in, regulating, and controlling peaceful activity.

In a free society, government would be limited to the protection of rights. All government actions — at any level of government — beyond reasonable defense, judicial, and policing activities would be illegitimate. Government would be prohibited from intervening in, regulating, and controlling peaceful activity. Government would never punish individuals or businesses for engaging in entirely peaceful, voluntary, and consensual actions that do not aggress against the person or property of others. As long as people don't infringe upon the liberty of others by committing, or threatening to commit, acts of fraud, theft, aggression, or violence against their person or property, the government would just leave them alone.

How limited should the government be? As limited as possible, and then some. As limited as it was in the nineteenth century when there

was no occupational licensing, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, welfare, stimulus plans, income tax, FTC, EPA, OSHA, ATF, Federal Reserve, minimum wage, immigration controls, price controls, FEMA, CIA, FBI, NSA, food stamps, drug laws, wealth redistribution, unemployment compensation, EEOC, FDA, FCC, TSA, or antidiscrimination laws. As limited as it was when the only contact that most law-abiding Americans had with the government was when they went to their local post office. And in a free society, even the post office would have to compete with private industry for mail delivery.

Libertarianism holds that peace is always to be preferred to militarism, imperialism, the warfare state, and the national-security state. The best way to maintain an agenda of peace is for U.S. foreign policy to be one of neutrality and nonintervention. No military alliances should be entered into. No regime change should be undertaken. No foreign wars should be fought. The defense budget that enriches defense contractors at the expense of the American people should be slashed. The military should only be used for truly defensive purposes. Nuclear weapons are immoral because they kill indiscriminately on a massive

scale. All foreign U.S. bases should be closed and all U.S. troops brought home. Our two vast oceans should be our first line of defense, as Thomas Jefferson pointed out.

So, which agenda will it be: the agenda of the coin with its authoritarianism, militarism, and wealth redistribution or the agenda of the cube with its liberty, peace, and property?

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NEXT MONTH:
“When Will Congress Admit Its Mistakes?”
by Laurence M. Vance

The powers of the general government are only of a general nature, and their object is to protect, defend, and strengthen the United States; but the internal administration of governments is left to the state legislatures, who exclusively retain such powers as will give the states the advantages of small republics, without the danger commonly attendant on the weakness of such governments.

— Francis Corbin

Do you not see, first, that — as a mental abstract — physical force is directly opposed to morality; and, secondly, that it practically drives out of existence the moral forces? How can an act done under compulsion have any moral element in it, seeing that what is moral is the free act of an intelligent being? If you tie a man's hands there is nothing moral about his not committing murder. Such an abstaining from murder is a mechanical act; and just the same in kind, though less in degree, are the acts which men are compelled to do under penalties imposed upon them by their fellow men. Those who would drive their fellow men into the performance of any good actions do not see that the very elements of morality — the free act following on the free choice — are as much absent in those upon whom they practice their legislation as in a flock of sheep penned in by hurdles.

— Auberon Herbert

Liberalism, True and False

by Richard M. Ebeling



The death of liberalism has been hailed or feared for well over a century now. In the United States, the tribal collectivists of identity politics and critical race theory insist that America has never been about freedom. It has always been a racist society born with the institution of slavery. The idea of liberal individualism is a ruse to hide the oppression and exploitation of women and “people of color” by capitalist white males.

Among conservatives, liberalism is rejected for not fostering a proper moral sense in people and creating a group loyalty of something outside of and better than “merely” the autonomy of the narrowly self-interested individual, both inside and outside of the marketplace. The role of a properly led political order is to

inculcate and instill such views and values in the American citizenry. A renewed sense of national identity and purpose is necessary to save the “soul” of America.

Both on “the left” and among conservatives, there is an intolerance and vehement dislike for many, if not all, forms of intellectual and cultural diversity (the latter having nothing to do with the scam notions of “diversity” among the “politically correct”). There is a deep desire among both these political groups for a far greater homogenization of humanity in thought, deed, and societal identity.

“Progressives” and conservatives want to plan your life

This is reflected in their respective willingness to turn to those in political power to use the coercive authority of government to impose their dogmas on the general population. Those on “the left,” in the name of “racial and gender justice” and saving the world from “climate change,” wish to use the government to control, regulate, and plan the economic and social activities of everyone in society. Their ideal is the centrally planned economy under which “right-thinking” people in government (that is, people like “them”) would determine and dic-

tate the wages we could earn and the prices we might pay, the types of employment and workplace environments we would be required to accept, and the variety of goods and services and the means of production to provide them.

Most conservatives are still determined to ban or severely restrain a wide variety of actions among “consenting adults.”

Our use of words is to be circumscribed to fit their ideological lexicon of race and gender. But if someone is looking for a revised dictionary of clearly defined new terms and meanings that can serve as a “safe space” to assure one does not offend any in society, they will not find it. Male and female and all imaginable things in-between are now amorphous concepts that have no linguistically certain meanings. What else are we to think when a president of the United States says that his selection for a new appointment to the U.S. Supreme Court had to be a “black woman,” but when that nominee was asked during the Senate confirmation hearings if she could define a “woman,” she declined, saying that she was not a biologist. So, a “black woman” accepts being nominated for the

highest court of the land, but she cannot explain what makes her eligible for that appointment under the declared criteria.

Among a good number of conservatives, the continuing desire is to control, regulate, or prohibit the personal and interactive choices and decisions of their fellow Americans and many others around the world. Most conservatives are still determined to ban or severely restrain a wide variety of actions among “consenting adults.” For well over a century, now, the U.S. government has been fighting a “war on drugs.” The idea that individuals should be at liberty to peacefully ingest whatever substances they choose without interference of others, while, of course, being legally liable for any rights-violating actions on their part while under the influence of such substances, is unacceptable to those who want to force others to be morally “good people.”

Many conservatives want to restrict what we might read or watch, the social media forms and content we choose to use, or the “life styles” some might wish to follow. In other words, they want to impose a good number of things on others in society, with simply a different content and purpose than those on “the left.”

The idea of just leaving people alone, as long as they are peaceful and honest in whatever they freely choose to do on their own or in voluntary association with others is just unacceptable to those determined to mold society in their preferred image. That is why so many on “the left” and among conservatives reject and condemn “liberalism.”

The importance of principled liberalism

But what is liberalism? We can get both clarity and confusion from a little book published in 1919 called *Is Liberalism Dead?* by Elliot Dodds. It is indicative of the trends in liberal thinking over the last 100 years or more. Many people thought that in the wake of the First World War and the vast government controls and regulations that had accompanied the conflict, much of the personal and economic liberty of the prewar period would now be gone, a thing of the past, in the face of war-created paternalistic and planned economies.

The book contained a preface by Charles F. G. Masterson (1873–1927), a relatively well-known British liberal politician of the time who served nearly 10 years as a member of Parliament. He forthrightly declared:

Only by the Liberal outlook and the Liberal spirit can the world be saved.... Liberalism can never die unless the world is to turn back its history of progress in emancipation, and man’s soul to abase itself before new tyrannies as ruthless as the old. The death of Liberalism would mean the suicide of the hope for man.... Liberalism ... finds Socialism and Conservatism — both upholding the principle of Authority, and both careless of individual Freedom — in many respects more allied to each other than each allied to itself.

**“The death of Liberalism
would mean the suicide of the
hope for man.”**

The author, Elliot Dodds (1889–1977), was a journalist who was active in liberal political causes for a good part of his life. He tells the reader that, “Its purpose is to rediscover the fundamental principles of the Liberal faith and to restate them in the terms of modern needs.” He insists, however, that, “Policies may change but principles remain.” Too many in politics have “thought too much in terms of expediency and too little in terms of principles....

Playing for safety never yet won a vote, and (more important) playing for safety never yet established a principle.” His primary justification for writing the book was, “I claim only the enthusiasm of one who has been born and bred a Liberal, and believes that in Liberal principles lies the best hope for the peaceful and orderly development” of modern society.

**Too many in politics have
“thought too much in terms of
expediency and too little in terms
of principles.”**

In a series of chapters, Dodds summarizes the history and ideas of liberalism. Fundamental to the British political experience was the “insistence on law against prerogative ... the attempt to curb the law-making power of an irresponsible and autocratic monarch.” As part of this centuries-long fight for freedom was John Milton’s “magnificent appeal for freedom of thought, of speech, of press ... and his political tracts may be taken as the textbooks of modern Liberalism.”

Natural rights as the idea underlying individual liberty

Equal to this was John Locke’s “all important thesis of government

by consent” the goal of which was “the realization of individual liberty within the commonwealth.” Dodds said that John Locke and others following him introduced the concept of rights: “The high explosive which destroyed the old order was, philosophically, the doctrine of ‘Natural Rights.’” Quoting from the original French declaration of the Rights of Man, Dodds says, “the end of every political association is the conservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man, which rights being the rights to liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.” Added Dodds:

The first object of [liberal] reformers became the limitation on the functions of government to their minimum, and the extension to every citizen of the fullest opportunity to exercise the ‘rights’ of which he had been deprived.... The limit which was set upon the exercise of “Natural Rights” is that no man, by his free action, shall impair the rights of another. Beyond that, let us have done with government: the individual is supreme.

Not too surprisingly, in his brief overview of the history of liberal

ideas and policies, Dodds devotes a chapter to the “Manchester School,” the British proponents of freedom of trade at home and abroad that was led by the likes of Richard Cobden and John Bright. They campaigned for and helped bring about the unilateral end to, especially, agricultural protectionism in the mid-1840s. Behind the fight for free markets, Dodds explains, was a particular philosophy of man and society:

“Enlightened self-interest” was the guiding star of its philosophy.... This attitude was based on a legitimate and necessary respect for individual liberty. Its object was the freedom of each citizen to work out his or her own salvation.... Its ideal was that of “self-help,” and its purpose was to encourage individual initiative and enterprise.

Up to this point in his narrative and analysis, Dodds laid out a fairly clear and readable case for the classical-liberal ideal of a society of free individuals, secure in their respective rights to life, liberty, and honestly acquired property, with human relationships based on mutually advantageous voluntary associations and exchange both inside and out-

side of the marketplace. The role of government in a classical-liberal social order, therefore, is limited to the narrow, though essential, duty and responsibility for the legal recognition and securing of such individual’s liberty and interpersonal freedom from the use of force or fraud by others in society.

The “new” liberalism of state compulsion for “right living”

But after this, Dodds’ exposition demonstrates the tragic and dangerous turn that too many of those who continued to declare their loyalty and devotion to the ideals of liberalism made in the twentieth century. He now informs the reader that for all of the important, even “majestic,” work that the older liberals had undertaken with great success to free the individual from the oppressions and abuses of arbitrary governments in the past, this was not enough. Following the lead of nineteenth-century British philosopher Thomas Hill Green (1836–1882), especially in his posthumously published *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation* (1885), it is not enough to be free from the threat or use of force and fraud by others if each is to be “truly free.”

He quotes Green saying, “True rights are powers which it is for the

general well-being that the individual (or association) should possess, and that well-being is essentially a moral well-being,” which meant that true “rights” mean “a positive power of doing or enjoying something worth doing or enjoying.” In Green’s view, it is not enough for the state to protect each individual’s “negative” rights from the aggressions of others. Freedom means having a sense of a purpose beyond and outside of yourself in the form of a moral obligation and commitment to the greater society in which an individual lives and within which he is permitted degrees of personal liberty. Educating members for a good society means ensuring that they have an awareness of a wider “common good” and that their “rights” depend upon such a shared allegiance to a “common good.”

Green, therefore, advocates government-provided compulsory schooling given that parents or other societal associations fail to inculcate the proper sense of a common good in the young. When first imposed, the generation forced to send their children to government schools may consider it an infringement on their liberty to educate their offspring as they think best, but Green was confident that by the

next generation, it would be taken for granted and not even viewed as an inappropriate abridgment of liberty. Or as Green put it, “in the second generation, though the law with its penal sanctions still continues, it is not felt as a law, as an enforcement of action by penalties, at all.” Over time, in other words, a loss of liberty is no longer seen as a loss of liberty even though it remains so.

As Green put it, “in the second generation, though the law with its penal sanctions still continues, it is not felt as a law.”

In the same way, Green’s conception of real freedom requires the government to restrict urban life to the forms determined and defined as ensuring health and proper types of living, including limiting how many people may be employed and clustered in particular industries in various geographical locations.

From natural rights to social conventions as a basis of liberty

On what basis might a government interfere in such ways with the free choices of individuals and the uses they make of the property they may own, and the associations into which they may enter with oth-

ers? Green rejects Locke's notion of property as a "natural right" as the basis of which people enter into a "social contract" for mutual protection of their life, liberty and property. Instead, Green argues that rights, including rights to property, are social conventions that have arisen historically. This includes the right to our own life, "since the right to free life rests on the common will of the society." Thus, what property you may own and its use is equally a matter of consensus and custom.

Green argues that rights, including rights to property, are social conventions that have arisen historically.

Green further argues that in modern society, land and material wealth have been appropriated and concentrated in a few hands compared to the many who lack such means. This created a situation in which many do not possess the material means without which "in fact they have not the chance of providing means for a free moral life." Worse, "A man who possesses nothing but his powers of labor and who has to sell these to a capitalist for bare daily maintenance, might as well, in respect of the ethical purposes which possession of property

should serve, be denied rights of property altogether."

In a "Lecture on Liberal Legislation and Freedom of Contract" (1880), Green endorsed the state's takeover of schooling and education from parents; supported restrictions on child labor and the employment of women in various occupations and work hours; and hailed regulatory controls on housing and workplace conditions. More generally, Green declared:

When we speak of freedom as something to be so highly prized, we mean a positive power or capacity of doing or enjoying something worth doing or enjoying, and that, too, something that we do or enjoy in common with others. We mean by it a power which each man exercises through the help or security given him by his fellowmen, and which he in turn helps to secure for them....

When we measure the progress of a society by its growth in freedom ... the mere removal of compulsion, the mere enabling a man to do as he likes is in itself no contribution to true freedom.... We rightly refuse to recognize the highest development on the

part of an exceptional individual or exceptional class, as an advance toward the true freedom of man, if it is founded on a refusal of the same opportunity to other men....

The institution of property being only justified as a means to the free exercise of the social capabilities of all, there can be no true right to property of a kind which debar one class of men from some such free exercise.

Liberalism converted into compulsory paternalism for a common good

Not surprisingly, since Green considered the role of the state to assure a “common good” of “moral” men, “There is no right of freedom in the purchase or sale of a particular commodity, if the general result of allowing such freedom is to detract from freedom in the higher sense, from the general power of men to make the best of themselves.” Thus, Green had no hesitation to support governmental means to oppose drunkenness. “We know that, however decently carried on, the excessive drinking of one man means an injury to others in health, purse and capability to which no limits can be placed.... Here, then, is a wide-spread social

evil, of which society may, if it will, by restraining law, to a great extent, rid itself, to the infinite enhancement of the positive freedom enjoyed by its members.” As for waiting for voluntary efforts to work on people to learn to live better lives, Green had no patience. “We reply,” he said, “that it is dangerous to wait.” The state had to act as the agent for “everyone,” in the here and now, to make each of us better persons in all that we do or do not do.

Green considered the role of the state to assure a “common good” of “moral” men.

Though little talked about today, Thomas Hill Green, who taught philosophy at Oxford University, was an important intellectual force in the late nineteenth century for moving liberalism away from its classical basis in strictly restrained government for the securing and protecting of individual rights and liberty to, instead, a “new liberalism” that increasingly advocated “positive” rights of guaranteed conditions of life beyond protection from the violent acts of others. So, when presenting a case for “liberalism” in the post–World War I era, Elliot Dodds adopted all of Green’s presumptions, saying:

The Liberal State must provide for all its members the opportunity for a humane and useful life. It must secure to them such a minimum as shall prevent them from falling beneath the level of subsistence, and must protect from the fluctuations of trade. It must offer to all a career ‘open to the talents’... In ‘the removal of encumbrances,’ it must include ... the provision of conditions conducive to a healthy and moral existence.

This “new” liberalism was and is, in fact, a false liberalism.

This “new” liberalism was and is, in fact, a false liberalism. How are some in society to be assured an access to what others have unless those who have that greater material means at their disposal are compelled to “share” it through forced redistribution of wealth? And who decides, in the name of the “common good,” how much some are to be taxed and how much others are to receive to bring about the minimally needed capacity for a “moral” existence as defined by those like Green?

What is the meaning of personal liberty and property rights, if it is

now claimed that all such notions are merely arbitrary outcomes of customs and traditions that are the result of the accidents of history in different times and places? And that may fundamentally change in changing circumstances? Government regulations and controls over the marketplace become based upon what seems “fair” and ethically “right” at particular times. But are we not, then, back to the imposing and arbitrary government against which the older, classical liberalism had so long fought? This is no longer the liberalism of John Locke or Adam Smith or the economic liberty of the Manchester School advocates of freedom of enterprise and trade.

Modern American liberalism the wrong type of paternalism

Let us return to where we started from. This modern American liberalism is, in reality, a blend of the socialist critique of “capitalist” society and the conservative insistence on the moral molding of all those in society into good citizens. The “progressive” and “politically correct” in American society reject this twentieth-century “liberalism” because it is not radically “leftist” enough, that is, it does not do away with enough of the remaining rem-

nants of the older liberalism in that it still does not redistribute and regulate and centrally plan the society enough, particularly in the face of just how “racist” and “sexist” it has now been discovered America has always been.

With moral arrogance and lustful desire for power, they all want to remake people and society into the image they want to see created.

A variety of conservatives reject modern American liberalism because they disagree with the morality (or “immorality”) it cultivates and fosters in schools and society at large. They want less of condom-use training and gender reassignment prodding in grammar schools, and, instead, more pledges of allegiances to the flag and more emphasis on sexual abstinence, along with inculcating a need for individual sacrifice for a higher “national purpose.”

In other words, “the left” and these conservatives reject modern American liberalism not because they disagree with the means chosen — the use of governmental power to control, regulate, redistribute, and indoctrinate — but because they object, respectively, for what ends compulsory and coercive

means are to be applied. With moral arrogance and lustful desire for power, they all want to remake people and society into the image they want, respectively, to see created. What is wrong with the American liberalism of the last 100 years or so is that it is the wrong kind and intensity of paternalism in the eyes of those more radically on “the left” or more “traditionalist” among conservatives.

Classical liberalism the rejected alternative by all

Lost in all this is that older, classical liberalism, which all of them (“leftists,” conservatives, and “new” liberals) reject from their own ideological perspectives. The older, classical liberalism said that each human being should be recognized and respected in his personal liberty so he could plan and direct his own life as he saw fit, guided by his own ideas of the good and happy life — even if others did not share or always approve of the path he had chosen for himself. The older liberalism insisted that there was no moral good outside of or greater than the individual’s good. All that was expected from each person was his respect for the equal rights of others to freely go about their own peaceful and honest business.

That some were materially better off than others was not a secret to the older, classical liberals. Their defense of freedom and free enterprise was not only that it was morally right but that it has shown itself as the great engine for wealth creation and rising prosperity for an ever-increasing number of people, bringing about the end to poverty and want nearly everywhere around the world.

There was an underlying humility in the older classical liberalism that assumed that each person could better find his own way.

Furthermore, the classical liberals considered that charity and philanthropy were meritorious sentiments reflecting an appropriate benevolence toward others not as well-off as ourselves. But an ethics of liberty required the decision to offer helping hands to be left with free individuals, and that competition among voluntary charities was as important in finding the best ways of helping those less well-off as it is in the profit-oriented marketplace in the service of consumer demands.

There was an underlying humility in the older classical liberalism that assumed that each person

could better find his own way than to presume that political paternalists could make better decisions for them. There was a tolerance for recognizing that there was no “right fit” for society as a whole, since society did not exist separate from the individuals comprising it. A “higher morality” of the “common good” was considered a smoke-screen for those who did not like the patterns created by a society of free people, and instead wanted to force everyone into the patterns considered better by those who wished to compel people’s submission to a politically engineered design.

So, to give our own answer to Elliot Dodds’ question, “Is liberalism dead?” Not for as long as there are any who cherish the liberty and autonomy of every human being, along with their own freedom. Not as long as it remains the inescapable truth that free markets deliver the goods and offer the widest opportunities for the improvement of all without the false illusions of paternalism and planning. Not as long as there remains in any of us the desire to say “No” to those who want to force us into the role of pawns on their compulsory chessboard of social engineering. Not as long as there remains you and me.

Richard M. Ebeling is the BB&T Distinguished Professor of Ethics and Free Enterprise Leadership at The Citadel. He was professor of Economics at Northwood University and at Hillsdale College and president of The Foundation for Economic Education, and served as vice president of academic affairs for FFF.

NEXT MONTH:
**“A Swiss Oasis of
Liberal Sanity in a
Totalitarian Europe”**
by Richard M. Ebeling

In the exercise of this power of intermeddling with the private pursuits and individual occupations of the citizen, a Government may at pleasure elevate one class and depress another; it may one day legislate exclusively for the farmer, the next for the mechanic, and the third for the manufacturer, who all thus become the mere puppets of legislative cobbling and tinkering, instead of independent citizens, relying on their own resources for their prosperity. It assumes the functions which belong alone to an overruling Providence, and affects to become the universal dispenser of good and evil.

— William Leggett

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