

**Mark L. Melcher** Publisher  
melcher@thepoliticalforum.com

**Stephen R. Soukup** Editor  
soukup@thepoliticalforum.com

## THEY SAID IT

Monotheism declares that although the satisfaction of instinctive drives gives pleasure, by itself it ultimately does not give joy; that we seem, rather, to be so constituted – because of our dual, composite nature – as to require for the latter something that goes beyond mere pleasure; that the pursuit of pleasure apart from the spirit leads inevitably to emptiness and despair; that to worship pleasure is ultimately to seek death (a conundrum Freud described, but found no way out of, apparently either for himself or others).

--Jeffrey Burke Satinover, M.D., past president of the C.G. Jung Foundation, *First Things*, October 1994.

### In this Issue

You'd be Angry Too.

We're Winning.

## YOU'D BE ANGRY TOO.

In June 2003, we wrote an article entitled “Democrats’ Descent Into Madness” in which we discussed the extraordinary rage that was just then becoming a recognizable part of the Democratic Party’s public persona. In the past six months or so, this anger among Democrats has become so evident that the term “angry left” is now a cliché among political pundits. In fact, Googling the term provides 242,000 hits, including a blog by that name and a commercial site that sells t-shirts, bumper stickers, and other items that appeal to irate liberals.

Today, one can open almost any newspaper or visit any one of dozens of political blogs and find all sorts of explanations for the Democrats’ vitriol. Most blame it on the loss of political power and the poor prospects for gaining it back. Recently, one pundit attributed it to the realization among liberal baby boomers that their hour upon the stage may have reached its climax during the Clinton years, and that while they have filled their performance with sound and fury, they have failed miserably to “bring down the establishment” or “to change the world” as they set out to do; that indeed many of their prominent leaders from the early days, including Bill and Hillary, have actually become an integral part of the corrupt and sleazy establishment that that they had once held in such contempt.

Now we love this theory. It doesn’t hold up to scrutiny, of course. But we love it anyway because it makes a person think about the relationship between liberal attitudes today and the role of liberalism in the changes that have taken place in America since the 1960s. This is too complex a relationship to reduce to a simple declaration as cited above. But it is a wonderful starting point for a discussion of liberal politics in America today, so here goes.

We'll begin by noting that modern day liberalism is, by its very nature, a petulant project. It is a reactionary movement. It is fueled by anger. The old liberalism that predated the entry of the baby boomers onto the national political stage was very different. It was innovative, progressive if you will. Its oft-stated mission was to use the great power of the federal government to assure that all citizens were able to realize the "American dream," which, by the way, was defined conventionally. In fact, liberalism in those days was an integral part of America's traditional culture. Liberals prided themselves with being champions of Judeo-Christian morals, mores, and values. And they gave no ground to conservatives when it came to publicly proclaiming their faith in God.

For example, shortly after winning the presidency, one of traditional liberalism's great heroes, Woodrow Wilson, informed William McCombs, the Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, that he owed neither him nor the party anything for his victory. "God ordained that I should be the next President of the United States. Neither you nor any other mortal could have prevented that," he stated. Another liberal icon, Franklin Roosevelt, routinely invoked God's name and will. In a radio address in May 1941, he sought to "reassert our abiding faith in the vitality of our constitutional Republic as a perpetual home of freedom, of tolerance, and of devotion to the word of God."

Last week, former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright provided an example of how radically things have changed since those days. Noting that President Bush frequently cites his Christian beliefs in public, she expressed concern that this was alienating Muslims worldwide and thereby exacerbating tensions in the Middle East. She said she was particularly concerned about the President's "over the top" references to God, noting as an example that in 2004 he said in a speech that "we have a calling from beyond the stars to stand for freedom." In answer to a question concerning her own beliefs, she would say only that she had a "very confused religious background."

One cannot help but wonder how concerned this religiously confused icon of today's liberal Democrats might have been if, when she was eight years old, she had been able to listen from her home in London to Roosevelt's radio announcement to the American people that the D-Day invasion had begun, in which he said the following: "Almighty God: Our sons, pride of our nation, this day have set upon a mighty endeavor . . . They will need Thy blessings . . . we know that by Thy grace, and by the righteousness of our cause, our sons will triumph . . . Thy will be done, Almighty God."

In any case, old style liberalism, with its roots in faith and its faith in the inherent goodness of traditional American culture, could not prevail against the force of the 1960's anti-war movement and the entry into the civil rights drive of such counter-culture, violence-prone groups as the Black Panthers. Lyndon Johnson's establishment liberalism and Martin Luther King's peaceful, faith-based movement for social change failed to hold the attention of the baby boomers. They were drawn instead to the exciting, dangerous, and radical liberalism that took to the streets and taunted the President of the United States with chants like "Hey, hey LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?", and they cheered when Malcolm X denounced Dr. King and proclaimed that Western culture and the Judeo-Christian teachings on which it is based are inherently racist. And slowly, but ever so surely, these baby boomers assumed positions of importance in the Democratic Party, and the Party changed from being an integral part and champion of America's traditional, Judeo-Christian culture to a reactionary movement that focused on undermining it.

As we have mentioned before in these pages, the tactical aspects of this movement were modeled on the principles set forth by Antonio Gramsci. While in his prison cell in Turi, Italy in the 1920s, Gramsci pondered why the proletariat revolution that Marx had forecast had never occurred. He concluded that the prevailing culture had infected the working class with the belief that their well being was linked directly to the well being of the bourgeoisie. Marx and Lenin

had never considered the possibility that the workers of the world would become comfortable in a capitalist society. They believed that the only thing that kept them from full-scale revolt was physical force and economic coercion.

Gramsci described the process by which the proletariat was actually kept in check as “cultural hegemony.” His solution to the problem was to abandon the effort to inform the proletariat about the wrongs they were suffering at the hands of capitalism and to focus on tearing down the Judeo-Christian culture that had blinded them to their “unjust” burden. To achieve this end, he proposed taking control of the institutions of the culture, which included the mass media and the educational establishment. Hence the phrase, “the long march through the institutions.”

Needless to say, this tactic has been extraordinarily effective in promoting radical liberalism in the United States. While conservatives focused their attention on politics and business, liberals took effective control of the networks and the nation’s leading newspapers and the humanities departments of the nation’s major universities. And the result is that when the last liberal baby boomers leave the political stage, they will most certainly be able to look back and see that they did in fact bring down the establishment that existed before they came upon the scene, and in doing so they did in fact change the world.

So why are they angry? Have they not been inordinately successful in undermining respect for the traditional morals and mores that once provided the foundation of American culture? Have they not successfully challenged the noxious assertion by John Adams that the American Constitution “was designed only for a moral and religious people” and that “it is wholly inadequate for the government of any other?” Have they not established political correctness as a highly competitive alternative to traditional moral teachings? Do they not think that this brave new world is a much better place as a result of their efforts? So once again, why are they angry?

Well, our answer to this question is that at least some of their frustration relates to the fact that the radical liberal movement is sadly lacking in many of the elements that generally provide members of a political movement with satisfaction.

Gramsci’s tactical formula was designed as a means of achieving a precise and well-understood ideological goal. The culture had to be destroyed, he said, in order to make way for the revolution, which would bring down capitalism and usher in the dictatorship of the proletariat, which would in turn be a prelude to the formation of a communist society. It didn’t work out that way, but one can assume that those who were involved in the struggle felt a sense of purpose and enjoyment.

Radical American liberalism has no such ideologically defined goal or social vision. It is not oriented around a deterministic roadmap toward an idealized form of society. It does not seek to build a better man, or to nationalize the “means of production.” It does not seek to destroy capitalism, or even consumerism. It is, in fact, wedded to the concept of consumption-based happiness, insisting that the best method for measuring the success of government is an inventory of the possessions of the nation’s citizens.

As such, radical American liberalism is a moveable feast. It is fad driven. Its “hot buttons” change over time depending on a variety of factors that are not at all clear. For example, liberals are quite capable of being almost apoplectic about pornography and groping at one point in time and a few years later allying themselves with Larry Flint, one of the nation’s most prominent pornographers, in a fight against “right wing attacks” on a president whose most recognizable personal trait is that he is a serial groper.

They can unite behind a movement to use the full power of the federal government to ban “offensive language” from the “workplace” one day while opposing all restrictions on the most vile and crude language over the airwaves and in the movies. They can be enraged at even a hint of antagonism toward homosexuality yet sing the praises of militant Palestinians who punish homosexuals with torture and

death. They can demand that women not be viewed as sex objects while placing Hollywood sluts at the top of their list of celebrity endorsements. And as Georges Sorel noted many years ago, even the anti-establishment bias that is fundamental to left-wing political movements waxes and wanes depending on who is in charge of the “the establishment” at any given time.

And finally, since American liberalism recognizes no greater authority than itself, it has no higher source to look to for praise and fulfillment. In fact, the movement has no widely regarded ideological leader, either living or dead, and no widely recognized body of principles beyond a litany of politically correct bromides and some lingering residues of Judeo-Christian-based wisdom.

The result is that radical liberalism routinely produces amazingly illogical, confused, and contradictory policy positions that are almost exclusively based on emotional reactions to the events of the moment, which makes them hard to defend and even harder to convert into law. Naturally, this produces frustration, which in turn produces . . . big surprise . . . anger.

## **WE'RE WINNING.**

It's understandable, we suppose, that the mainstream media would be so obsessed of late with “The Great Immigration Debate of 2006.” After all, this debate, such as it is, contains all of the elements of a great story. It's controversial; it's largely unsolvable and is thus fodder for infinite follow-ups; it features strong emotions on both sides; it involves millions of real people, thereby providing the requisite “human interest” angle; and most importantly, it features Republicans fighting Republicans, with a great many big-name conservatives openly and unabashedly attacking President Bush and accusing him of all sorts of nefariousness on behalf of his big business “masters.” How could a story get any better?

But while the media occupies itself with tales of immigrant woes and other all-time favorite story lines, such as George Bush's woeful poll numbers, the world continues to spin, as it is wont to do, and events continue to unfold. Indeed, several important events have occurred during the past few weeks that have been largely ignored or have received only superficial attention, but which collectively suggest the shape of the emerging post-9/11, post-Iraq global reality. Consider the following.

Roughly a month ago Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad sent a letter to President Bush. It received a reasonable amount of press coverage, though the most important aspects of the story were overlooked. The media and President Bush's political opponents foolishly focused on Ahmadinejad's apparent desire for bilateral discussions with the United States and the potential “thaw” in tensions that that desire allegedly represent. More thoughtful commentators noted that in sending the letter, Ahmadinejad was carrying on an old Muslim tradition that dates to Muhammad himself whereby Islamic leaders attempt to dictate terms of pre-emptive surrender to their soon-to-be-vanquished infidel enemies. In this context, the letter was merely a re-declaration of the Iranian regime's intentions to continue and even to escalate its war against the United States and Israel.

But what has largely gone unnoted is the distinct possibility that the letter and its supplication for direct talks represent a cry of desperation from a regime that is weak and growing weaker and that is afraid of the effect that American actions – covert and overt, in Iraq and in Iran – are likely to have on its long-term prospects for survival.

There is little question that the Mullahs feel threatened by the idea of functional democracies bordering their dysfunctional theocracy on both the east and the west. And this, naturally, explains their aggressive attempts to undermine the fledgling governments in both Iraq and Afghanistan. But problems with their neighbors are hardly the Mullahs' only concern.

The Iranian economy is among the most backward and underperforming in the world. Energy rich Iran is unable even to refine its own crude and thus imports the overwhelming majority of its finished petroleum products. The regime has been under attack for years from outside its borders and in the past few months has been pounded by internal opponents, both religious and secular, both political and ethnic. In the past few weeks, labor tensions have escalated, with a massive, though underreported strike by bus drivers. This period has also seen ethnic disturbances of increasing size and violence, although, once again, you'd never learn this from the mainstream media. Azeris in northwestern Iran, Baluch in the southeast, Kurds in the western part of the country, and ethnic Arabs in Khuzestan province, which produces 80% of Iran's oil, have all challenged the Mullahs with large-scale protests and have, in turn, been brutally suppressed by the regime and its surrogates, including Hezbollah mercenaries.

Ominously for the Mullahs, the Azeri discontent, which began in the city of Tabriz, have sparked protests of support by students in Tehran and elsewhere. It is worth noting, we believe, that both the 1905 Constitutional Revolution and the 1979 Islamic Revolution were preceded by Azeri protests that started in Tabriz and eventually spread to the rest of the country.

With the Bush administration appearing both determined to undermine the Iranian regime's legitimacy and to subject Iran to further economic hardship (either in the form of U.N. action or voluntary economic sanctions), the Mullahs are undoubtedly feeling more than a bit pressured. As columnist Charles Krauthammer noted last week, the Iranian regime is "feeling the world closing in" and is therefore desperate "to relieve pressure on itself." Thus far, its attempts to relieve that pressure are failing and are, in fact, making the situation worse.

Of course, the Mullahs are not the only murderous Islamists who are "feeling the world closing in." In Iraq, the new government led by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has been sworn in, and the long-promised

civil war has become yet another media obsession that proved to be more hype than reality. Terrorist leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi is now openly disdained by most Iraqis and many of his former allies. And his insurgency is increasingly unable to inflict major damage either on American and British forces or on their rapidly emerging Iraqi counterparts. Frustrated and chased out of stronghold after stronghold, Zarqawi has been reduced to threatening to kill ordinary Iraqis if they either fail to adhere to Sharia dress code and behavior rules or sell products made in Iran. In the figurative war for hearts and minds, Zarqawi is winning precious few battles. And in the literal war on the ground, he's winning even fewer.

Meanwhile, there is, in fact, a real and imminent threat of civil war in the Islamic world, though again it has received scant media attention. In the Palestinian territories, the radical Islamist government of Hamas, led by Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, has been openly challenged by the slightly-less-radical Islamists of Fatah, and its leader, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. This weekend, *The Sunday Times* of London reported that a full-blown civil war is possible if something isn't done to stop the dispute between Fatah and Hamas, which is rooted in Hamas's alienation of Western foreign aid suppliers, Hamas's deployment of a 3000-man "security force", and Abbas's call for a referendum on a two-party solution to Palestinian-Israeli conflict. *The Times* reported thusly:

Forces loyal to Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, are preparing for an onslaught against the military wing of the Islamist rival group Hamas in a desperate attempt to sustain his waning power.

"Civil war is inevitable," a senior Palestinian security official said last week. He predicted a bloody denouement to tensions heightened by a warning from Abbas that he will hold a referendum on proposals for separate Palestinian and Israeli states which the Hamas government refuses to accept.

“Time is running out for Hamas. We’ll choose the right time and place for the military showdown. But after that there will be no more of Hamas’s militias,” said the official as he sipped honey-laced mint tea in his sitting room while watching the antics of hooded militants on his television.

Lest he be forgotten, even the old granddaddy of them all, Osama bin Laden, appears to have fallen on hard times of late. While it was reported that bin Laden released yet another tape last week, what was not widely discussed is the fact that this latest tape contains both bin Laden’s desperate insistence that he remains relevant to the global jihad and a plea that prisoners held at Guantanamo be treated with fairness.

While many analysts were impressed by the speed with which bin Laden’s propaganda machine is now able to produce and deliver tapes, we were most struck by the formerly “strong horse’s” newfound weakness. Bin Laden makes no threats and promises no destruction, in large part because he is unable to deliver. He is tired. He is harried. And he has been weakened.

Back in the Western world, last week saw the official “launch” of the Euston Manifesto, a document produced by a collection of widely respected British liberals (mostly prominent academics, calling themselves “democratic progressives”) who reject the standard leftist line on the war in Iraq and the broader war on terror. They argue that the anti-war movement damages the credibility of the left and violates the principles that all democrats should embrace. The Euston group proclaims that its goal is to take back the progressive left from “those for whom the entire progressive-democratic agenda has been subordinated to a blanket and simplistic ‘anti-imperialism’ and/or hostility to the current US administration.” Journalist Christopher Hitchens, who has been invited to sign the manifesto, described it thusly:

The “Euston Manifesto” keeps it simple. It prefers democratic pluralism, at any price, to theocracy. It raises an eyebrow at the enslavement of the female half

of the population and the burial alive of homosexuals. It has its reservations about the United States, but knows that if anything is ever done about (say) Darfur, it will be Washington that receives the UN mandate to do the heavy lifting.

It prefers those who vote in Iraq and Afghanistan to those who put bombs in mosques and schools and hospitals. It does not conceive of arguments that make excuses for suicide murderers. It affirms the right of democratic nations and open societies to defend themselves, both from theocratic states abroad and from theocratic gangsters at home.

On this side of the Atlantic, last week, General Michael Hayden was confirmed as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency by a lopsided vote 78-15, with even some of his most outspoken Democratic critics ultimately voting in favor of his confirmation. Not only did most Democrats backtrack on their promise to oppose Hayden because of his role in the National Security Agency’s domestic anti-terrorism program, but they also failed even to make an issue of Hayden’s work at NSA.

Indeed, the Democrats put up no real opposition to Hayden at all. Yes, some of the more prominent members of the party, including presidential hopefuls Hillary Clinton, Russ Feingold, Chris Dodd, and John Kerry, were able to vote no and thus cover themselves with the party’s left-wing base. But Hayden’s nomination was never in doubt, despite the party’s initial insistence that the general represented a serious threat to civil liberties.

Finally, last week, British Prime Minister Tony Blair crossed the Atlantic to meet with President Bush, and the two men aggressively defended their common foreign policy and the actions they have taken in defense of freedom and in defiance of terror. This meeting was significant for two reasons.

First, the fact that Tony Blair is still prime minister is, in and of itself, noteworthy. You may recall that just over a year ago, Blair's Labor Party was re-elected to another term in power, but most observers presumed that Blair's tenure at the helm of the party was just about finished and that he would give way to his Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown before the end of the year. We argued the opposite, of course, suggesting that Blair would hold on to power as long as possible, knowing that turning over the reins to Brown would unnecessarily damage the war for Iraq at a critical moment. Needless to say, we were right, and despite his own sagging poll numbers, Blair seems intent to hold on to power as long as he can and to deny the marginally anti-war Brown the opportunity to undo what's been done in the Middle East.

Second, both in his press conference with the president and in his speech the next day at Georgetown University, Blair assertively defended his actions and the role he has played in the post-9/11 transformation of the Middle East, thereby expressing his satisfaction with the idea that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will constitute his legacy. Though most observers of British politics suggest that Blair has fallen out of favor with voters because of his dedication to the cause of reshaping the Islamic world, Blair appears to believe that the history books will judge him more favorably and that whatever current public opinion may say about him, he will be vindicated.

And this, then, brings us to the overarching theme of this piece, which is that the war in Iraq and the broader war on terror appear to be going much better than the public is generally led to believe. Irrespective of what the popular press and President Bush's political opponents may declare, America is winning on both fronts, and everyone involved seems to know it. All of the events detailed above – from Iran to Iraq to Afghanistan; from British liberals to Tony Blair to the Democrats in the Senate – contribute to the growing sense that the fortunes of the Islamists are waning and that President Bush's much maligned strategies for dealing with the Twenty-First century's first grave threat are beginning to bear fruit.

Early last week, when we began this piece, we thought that we would suggest watching for three further signs that would confirm our growing belief that the wars are actually going better than most people suspect. In other words, "we are right that the war is going better if":

■ President Bush becomes more aggressive in claiming credit for the war in Iraq and in identifying himself with his own foreign policy. Not only would this suggest that he believes that events will vindicate him, but that they will do so in time to bolster his sagging approval numbers and therefore to help his party in the midterm elections.

■ There is some increase in the radical anti-war left's growing hysteria with issues unrelated to the ultimate outcome of the war. We reasoned that if the war effort is showing signs of success, the anti-warriors will abandon their strategy of painting the war as a failure and argue instead that the outcome of the conflict is beside the point and that the conduct of the war is what really matters. So what if we are winning, they will ask, if victory has to be purchased with the sacrifice of American ideals.

■ New York's junior senator, who not only stands to gain more than any American politician other than President Bush from American victory in Iraq but who is also married to one of the greatest finger-in-the-wind political trend-readers in American history, begins to sound off more enthusiastically about the prospects for progress in Iraq and elsewhere. Such a turn would strongly indicate that both she and Bill have decided that Bush is going to win this battle for public opinion and that this presents an opportunity for her to undermine the credibility of those challenging her from the left (Kerry, Feingold, etc.) and to undercut the need for those who will challenge her from the right (McCain, Giuliani, etc.) We hate to be cynical, but with Hillary, there's no other way to approach things. If she gets on board with the war effort now, it's because she's convinced it that supporters of the war will emerge as the political winners in this struggle.

Now, careful observers will note that two of the signs we thought readers should look for have already begun to manifest themselves. Over the weekend, the President addressed the graduating class at West Point and was more aggressive about the course of his presidency than he has been in a long time. Comparing the war on terror to the Cold War and himself to President Truman, Bush promised that “America will fight the terrorists on every battlefield. And we will not rest until this threat to our country has been removed.”

Foreign policy author and blogger Austin Bay lamented that the President had not given such a full-throated defense of his foreign policy before now. We suspect that Bush will try to make up for that failing going forward by making similar speeches as often as he can.

Also over the weekend, anti-warrior and Vietnam veteran, Congressman Jack Murtha took to the airwaves to denounce the apparent massacre of civilians by Marines at Haditha last November and to claim that this lone incident is enough to impugn the entire war effort, regardless of its outcome. We don't mean to minimize the heinousness of what purportedly took place in Haditha, but we do think that Murtha's hysteria is indicative of both the anti-war left's inability to distinguish the good guys from the bad guys and its desire to paint this war as a failure, no matter how far from reality they have to stray to do so.

If what has been reported about Haditha actually took place, war crimes were committed and Marines and their superiors should and will be punished. But the simple fact that we are debating this issue at all and that there is a formal investigation that will almost certainly result in disciplinary action is proof that the

left's moral equivalence is ridiculous. Nevertheless, as the actual on-ground efforts in Iraq begin to show more obvious signs of progress, look for the left to continue to rely on this moral equivalence crutch and to scream that the actions of a few misguided Marines serves an indictment of our entire “war-mongering” civilization.

And that leaves only Hillary. Pay close attention to what she does over the next several weeks. If she defends her vote in favor of the war; if she supports the Iraqi liberty won with American blood; if she in any way backs President Bush's efforts, you will know without a doubt that the sentiment among our political elites is changing.

We tend to believe that even without Hillary's endorsement, the anecdotal evidence suggests that the tide has turned. Final victory may be many years away, but signs of victory are emerging everywhere. And if the mainstream media can ever be bothered to tear itself away for even a moment from the endlessly fascinating battle between the respective chairmen of the House and Senate Judiciary committees over the shape of comprehensive immigration reform, then it is entirely possible that the rest of the country will be apprised of these signs as well.

Copyright 2006. The Political Forum. 8563 Senedo Road, Mt. Jackson, Virginia 22842, tel. 540-477-9762, fax 540-477-3359. All rights reserved.

Information contained herein is based on data obtained from recognized services, issuer reports or communications, or other sources believed to be reliable. However, such information has not been verified by us, and we do not make any representations as to its accuracy or completeness, and we are not responsible for typographical errors. Any statements nonfactual in nature constitute only current opinions which are subject to change without notice.