

# The Political Forum

*A review of social and political trends and events  
impacting the world's financial markets*

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### LIES ARE OLD HAT TO DEMOCRATS, THE HYSTERIA IS NEW

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I hate to say I told you so, but I told you so. I told you in my last piece that the Democrats were going to go for the throat early and often, and that the Bush crowd's initial reaction would make a deer in the headlights look confident.

The best news from the Bush camp last week was Dick Cheney's hiring of Mary Matalin. In fact, one paragraph I had written for last week's piece, which I deleted because it didn't seem to fit anywhere, was that Bush needed to hire some advisers with *cojones*. And then I recommended three: Mary Matalin, Peggy Noonan, and Lynn Cheney. Two days later, Cheney hired Mary. Three cheers for him. Now let's hope he listens to her . . . and to his wife.

The thing about this whole exercise by the Democrats that fascinates me is the hysterical nature of some of the attacks on Bush throughout the campaign and more recently on his cabinet appointees.

Who knew, for example, that John Ashcroft was a rabid racist, so fanatical that he would refuse to enforce laws that he, a devout Christian, had sworn on the Bible to uphold? Did the citizens of Missouri know this when they honored him as their governor for eight years and then sent him to the U.S. Senate?

And how about President-elect Bush being somehow responsible for the dragging death of James Byrd, Jr. in Jasper, Texas? If it hadn't been for the extreme radicalization of the NAACP by Kweisi Mfume, I never would have known enough to connect Bush's opposition to a radical version of a hate crimes bill with this atrocity.

Not only that, I had no idea, until Al Gore told me during the campaign, that Bush's racism was so deeply entrenched that when he said he would appoint "strict constructionists" to the Supreme

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Court he really meant that he believed African-Americans should only be counted as three-fifths of a human being. I hope Colin and Condoleezza don't find out.

And what, pray tell, are my parents, who are retired in Florida, going to do when Bush becomes president and their Social Security and Medicare benefits are cut drastically? But, of course, they knew it was going to happen. The Gore campaign countenanced the use of recorded phone messages to the elderly throughout the state telling of this fact, knowing that many among this group are easily frightened and gullible enough to believe such garbage.

Or how about Jesse Jackson, that well known activist for Jewish causes, who charged that George's brother Jeb Bush had deliberately targeted Holocaust victims, "once again," during his handling of the Florida brouhaha, and that Republicans in general had engaged in "Nazi tactics." What a guy.

The best stuff, however, came from those individuals who Lenin would have referred to as the party's "useful idiots," people like Paul Begala, Barbra Streisand, Ted Turner, and Alec Baldwin, who have no real idea what is going on but spout the party line with great enthusiasm and invective, like parrots on a perch.

My personal favorite among this crowd was Cher, a veritable warehouse of political wisdom and social decorum, who told Reuters:

Has everyone lost their f...ing minds? Doesn't anybody remember the illustrious Reagan-Bush years when people had no money and no jobs? What has happened to peoples' memories? It's like they all have Alzheimer's or something. . . I don't like Bush. I don't trust him. I don't like his record. He's stupid. He's lazy . . . If you're black in this country, if you're a woman in this country, if you are any minority in this country at all, what could possibly possess you to vote Republican? . . . The Jerry Falwells of this world will be right in your back pocket. You won't have one f...ing right left.

Yes, of course, the Reagan-Bush years when people had no money and no jobs. All I can say is, "heavy man." Some of this extreme Democratic rancor can be attributed to the phenomenon described in the old fable about the scorpion and the fox, the punch line of which is, "It's the nature of the scorpion."

The use of bombastic lies has been standard operating procedure for the left since socialism was born in the slums of post-revolutionary Paris. Georges Sorel was the first to specifically identify and analyze the tactic. In his classic, 1906 book, *Reflexions Sur la Violence*, which set the stage for World War I, he predicted that it would become *de rigueur* for socialists of the future. He described the procedure as the systematic creation of "social myths," which Max Eastman later characterized as "ideas not valid, but necessary to set the masses in motion."

Less than 20 years after Sorel's book swept across the consciousness of Europe, his prediction was validated on a spectacular scale by Adolph Hitler, whose national socialist movement was a particularly malignant offshoot of the Continent's seething cauldron of leftist thought. With the help of his propaganda minister, Joseph Goebbels, Hitler perfected the concept of the "big lie."

The best description of Sorel's forecast of the advent of "social myths" as a political tool of the left was presented by Thomas Mann. His great, classic 1947 novel, *Dr. Faustus*, vividly described the society of pre-Nazi Germany, in which the elite were so smug, so comfortable, and so seeped in moral neutrality that they were unable to identify propaganda as lies, and such moral cowards that they wouldn't have had the courage to raise their voices against the outrage against truth even if they had understood it as that. Mann put it this way:

But even more trenchant and telling was its [Sorel's book] perception and statement of the fact that in this age of the masses, parliamentary discussion must prove entirely inadequate for the shaping of political decisions; that in its stead the masses would have in the future to be provided with mythical fictions, devised like primitive battle-cries, to release and activate political energies. This was in fact the crass and inflaming prophecy of the book: that popular myths or rather those proper for the masses would become the vehicle of political action; fables, insane visions, chimeras, which needed to have nothing to do with truth or reason or science in order to be creative, to determine the course of life and history, and thus to prove themselves dynamic realities.

But not all of the rancor that America's extreme left-wing has directed toward the Bush administration can be attributed to traditional leftist political tactics. Some of it, I believe, is fueled by the panic and fear that a Bush presidency instills in the party's radical leadership.

This fear, I might add, is not fear that the Bush administration will wreck havoc on the lives of minorities, women, the poor and elderly, gays and lesbians, and working people. It is fear that nothing at all dire will happen to these communities of interest, that life will go on in much the same way that it has gone on throughout the Clinton years, and would have gone on had Al Gore had been elected.

It is fear that some of the more astute members of these groups, and even some of the most ignorant, will wake up to the fact that their "leaders" were exploiting them with lies, not "for their own good," but for selfish ends, related to a lust for perquisites and political power.

Throughout the campaign, for example, John Sweeney, the leftist radical who runs the AFL-CIO, and his stooges were constantly inventing new "social myths" about how horrible things would be for "working men and women" if Democrats should lose the White House. "Workers," they said, would "lack the pay and benefits it takes to feed and house and love a family." Some would be "forced to choose between the food that sustains them and the drugs that save them." And on and on and on it went, *ad nauseam*.

Yet, virtually everything Sweeney says and does now indicates that what he really feared is that the Bush administration would provide those "working men and women" who belong to one of his unions the option of not donating a substantial share of their weekly earnings to support his left-wing propaganda machine.

This just happens to be one "choice" that Sweeney doesn't favor, because he knows that a very large share of his "rank and file," possibly a majority, view his socialist political agenda as abhorrent, and would choose not to support it with a nickel.

But Sweeney knows what is good for Sweeney, and for the other big shots in the AFL-CIO. Under his leadership, his organization has become little more than a giant shakedown racket for the Democratic party, which repays this largess by turning a blind eye to the corruption that is pandemic within some of the AFL-CIO's member unions and which, by many accounts, reaches into AFL-CIO headquarters.

And this brings up the other thing that Sweeney fears more than the possibility that the Bush administration will take food off the table of the "working men and women of this country." It is that Bush might put a person in charge of the Justice Department who is both honest and alert, and who has the crazy idea, that never apparently occurred to Janet Reno, that everyone in the United States, including its union members, would be better off if some of the nation's most powerful unions were not mobbed-up.

Sweeney is, of course, not the only radical leftist "leader" whose status could be threatened by a Bush presidency. One can't help but wonder, for example, whether such great creators of "social myths" as Jesse, Kweisi and Al Sharpton are really worried that a Bush administration will trample on the rights of blacks, or if their fear is that none of their hysterical predictions will materialize under a Bush presidency; that Bush won't, and wouldn't if he could, "turn the civil rights clock back to the days of Jim Crow," as Jesse is fond of saying he will.

African-Americans turned out in record numbers to vote for Democrats last year. This was a feather in the cap of Jesse, Al, and Kweisi. But the driving force behind much of this turn-out was a disgusting campaign of lying, race baiting, and fear mongering, which could lose some of its effectiveness next time if a racial Armageddon does not materialize.

Republicans represent the *bête noire* that these so-called "civil rights leaders" need to keep their constituents in fear and in victimhood, and thus in support of their organizations. A Bush presidency could threaten this mythical beast, and in doing so, could pave the way for a new generation of black leaders who are more attuned to helping with the real needs of black Americans, such as bad schools, high taxes, high crime rates in predominantly black neighborhoods, rampant drug use, and social decay.

Another group of Democratic party experts at "social myth" making whose status as "leaders" could be threatened by a Bush administration are the nation's voices of radical feminism. These ladies harped hysterically throughout the campaign that the "rights" of women would be threatened by a Bush presidency.

One of my favorite examples was when the National Organization of Women swore that they would not "let the Republicans eliminate poverty by letting the poor die of starvation, exposure and untreated diseases."

Now death by starvation, exposure and untreated diseases is, I believe, a new concern for these leftist ladies, and an odd choice given that deaths of this sort are not one of the big problems faced by most women today. In fact, such deaths aren't even a big problem for "the poor" anymore.

What appears to be going on here is that the ladies are desperately trying to create the impression that abortion rights is not the only issue that concerns them, since the “morning after” pill could make this a much less urgent issue in the not-too-distant future.

The problem they face is that their soft spot for that “cute” Bill Clinton made the task of diversification a bit difficult for them by eliminating a natural issue, that of sleazy male bosses taking advantage of young female employees. Their new position, that it’s okay if the young woman “wants it,” and that every boss gets one free grope, is hardly the kind of thing that will rally most American women behind their leadership.

And finally, gays and lesbians are highly likely to find that the hysterical predictions of their noisy, self-appointed “leaders” were way off base also; that they will not be “forced back into the closet,” by a Bush administration, but will most likely find that the gains they have made in recent years in acceptance by mainstream Americans will be reinforced with continued legislative and bureaucratic initiatives to protect their legitimate rights.

This will include Bill Clinton’s principal legacy to them, what he himself recently described as “that dumb-ass ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ thing.” Potentially more frightening for the nation’s gay “leaders” than the possibility of an antigay campaign by Bush, is the possibility that some gays might find that Republicans are no different than Democrats in dealing with them and their issues, and may be better in some ways.

Bush’s tax program, for example, is much better for gays than the one put forth by Al Gore. This was pointed out by one of the most high profile and articulate gay men in the United States, Andrew Sullivan, in a recent piece on his Web Site concerning the problems gays face because they can’t marry.

A husband and wife can inherit each other’s property and gifts without taxation, but gay spouses cannot. An end to the estate tax, on W’s lines, would go a long way to solve that problem. Ditto private Social Security accounts.

If a gay man dies, his de facto husband gets nothing of this Social Security savings. It all goes back to the feds. But if we had some private Social Security accounts, we could pass them along to our spouses legally, and keep them from the grubby hands of the federal government . . .

One of the ironies of Gore’s “tax cuts” is that they were essentially heterosexual tax benefits--designed to favor those with legal spouses and children. W’s simpler tax proposals didn’t ask you if you were gay or straight. They just asked you how much tax you paid. Too much!

And then Sullivan added the kicker, the one that questioned the relevancy of some of the gay community’s chief “leaders.” He put it this way:

Needless to say, no one should expect the major gay groups to be bothered with the actual interests of real homosexuals. They’re too busy asking for money for the thought police to go around searching for more hate crimes.

Now I am not saying here that I believe that substantial numbers of the members of these and other major interest groups that make up the majority of the Democrat party are suddenly going to become Republicans. I am simply saying that the choleric, hysterical rhetoric of the radical leaders of these groups indicates that they themselves may be worried that the agendas they use to keep their constituents interested in their ranting might be becoming more than a little hackneyed, and that they may be in danger of becoming shepherds of rapidly shrinking flocks.

What happens to their sinecures, they must be wondering, if the “social myths” that their organizations spew out as a matter of course are revealed by the Bush administration as nothing more than lies?

What happens to their sinecures, they must be wondering, if some of their followers begin to think of themselves not as an oppressed minority under dire threat by the evil Republicans, but as one or more of the following categories: taxpayers who are being gouged; parents whose kids are trapped in failing schools that are frozen in time by teachers’ unions; Christians, Jews and Muslims who are disgusted with the anti-religious nature of the mainstream of the Democrat party; and decent human beings who are concerned about the ethical and moral rot that is permeating American society.

Time will tell whether the Bush administration will actually succeed in marginalizing their leadership positions. But their fears that such a thing could happen are justified. And that’s good news both for the Republican party and for a nation that is being hurt by a constant barrage of “social myths.” Or should we just call them lies?

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