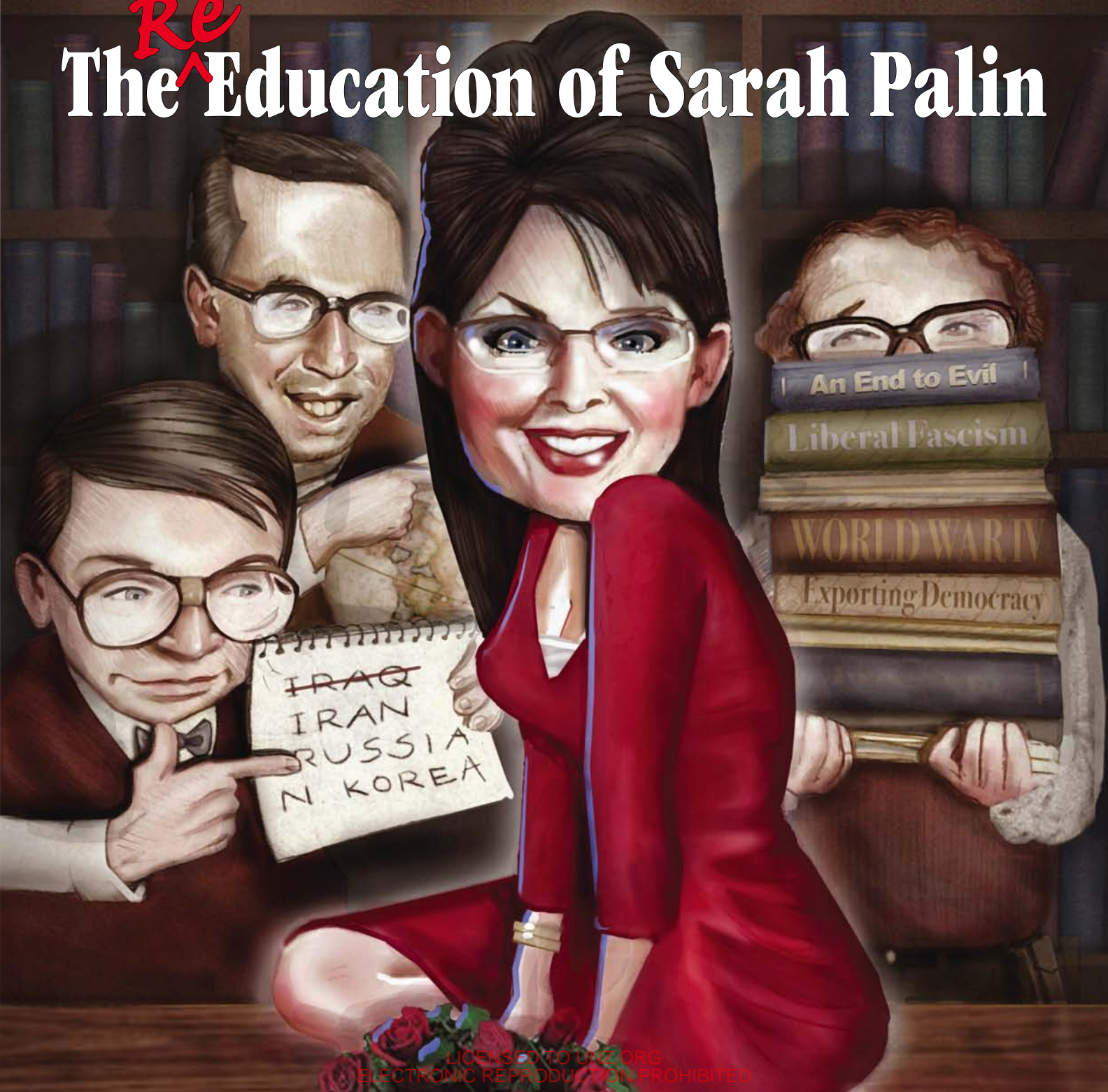


BAILOUT NATION ■ MCCAIN'S FOREIGN COUNSEL ■ LIGHTS, CAMERA, WAR

OCTOBER 6, 2008

The American Conservative

Re The Education of Sarah Palin



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CONNERLY FIRES BACK

I have become accustomed to ad hominem attacks from the Left. But Michael Brendan Dougherty's article ("Connerly Cashes In," Sept. 22) fails every standard of fairness that we assume exists in journalism. The author called me and claimed to be writing a column about our initiatives and the status of signature-collection firms. He gained access under a false pretext. His column is replete with inaccuracies and is one of the worst hatchet jobs I have ever seen leveled against me. For example, anyone who believes that Al Sharpton does what he does for \$4,000 annually is a fool. We did not start "Super Tuesday for Equal Rights" with ten states; it was five, and four of those are still in play.

We spent, perhaps, five minutes out of maybe an hour and a half of interview time discussing my income, and he downplayed the significance of this issue. Had I known that this was his focus, more time could have been devoted to giving him the facts. My firm, Connerly & Associates, has never been a registered "minority contractor" or benefited from sole-source minority contracting preference programs. We were not idle during the years that he claims nothing was being done. ACRI/ACRC has more than two staff members. Our opponents will not agree that nothing of significance has occurred as a result of our efforts. My personal income was greater before I got involved in this issue than it is now. So this issue is not my vehicle for personal wealth accumulation. Finally, I do what I do because of my beliefs, not as a tool of the Right.

WARD CONNERLY
Sacramento, Calif.

Michael B. Dougherty replies:

While Mr. Connerly and I did discuss his ballot initiatives, we talked about his compensation at length—about 25 minutes of a 40-minute conversation. I did not misrepresent myself, and I acknowledged the sincerity of Mr. Connerly's beliefs in my piece.

The figure for Al Sharpton's salary comes from National Action Network's tax forms, listed in the same manner as Mr. Connerly's salary of \$300,000 on ACRI's tax forms. What Sharpton earns as a preacher or media figure is not relevant when discussing nonprofit compensation.

As of this writing, Mr. Connerly's organization's website, SuperTuesday2008.org, states that "ten states are being considered" in his campaign, not the five he claims. Only two ballot initiatives are sure to be on the ballot for November. The other two that Mr. Connerly describes as "in play" are unlikely to clear legal challenges.

Mr. Connerly says that his personal income was greater before he took on nonprofit work. Strictly speaking, this may be correct. But has Connerly & Associates, which is still run by Mr. Connerly's wife and employs another Connerly relative, lost business while Mr. Connerly has been doing nonprofit work? I considered his household income beyond the scope of this piece.

Regarding the status of Connerly & Associates, in a 1995 *San Francisco Chronicle* article, Suzanna Espinso Solis reported that Mr. Connerly's company "received more than \$1 million in state business during the past six years by signing up as a minority contractor." She wrote, "Connerly... acknowledged that his firm participated in the 'repugnant' race-based program, but he denied that it was affirmative action." Instead, he described the program as a "policy that requires that every contract ... include participation of at least 15 percent of minority businesses and 5 percent of women." If there was nothing wrong with this, why does Mr. Connerly call it "repugnant"?

I stand by the reporting in the piece. If I have any regret, it's that I didn't give more credit to the work done by Connerly and others to overturn Michigan's affirmative-action policies. That was a particularly difficult battle—and an important one.

LOSING THE NEW COLD WAR

I share Ted Galen Carpenter's view ("What Russia Wants," Sept. 22) that Kagan, Kristol, Albright, and Brzezinski are wrongheaded. I also agree that Russia presents no threat to the U.S. or Europe in the near future.

But I do believe that there are serious issues of contention emerging. It would be a mistake to interpret the Medvedev's doctrine of *blizhnee zarubyezhye* as simply Russia being content to exert its strategic influence over the republics of the former Soviet Union. Russia has always seen itself as a world player and will use its strategic assets to assert itself globally.

Unlike the Soviet Union, Russia does not wish to achieve its aims militarily or by regional political subversion. The prevailing themes of Russian foreign policy will be, for the foreseeable future, classical, pre-WWII Soviet themes of security and stability.

This is where the "near abroad" category comes to play. Other than having large ethnic Russian minorities, the former republics have strategically important links to Russia's economy. It would be political suicide for Medvedev and Putin to allow the U.S. to squeeze Russia out of these regions. The Caspian oil and gas reserves in Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan are vital to Russian prosperity and modernity.

Russia will resist any American action that threatens its economic interests or nuclear deterrent. It will not attack the U.S. militarily—there are no Saakashvilis in the Kremlin. But it does not have to: the derelict U.S. economy has been doing an excellent job of degrading the hapless giant's capacity to project its wishful thinking militarily.

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The American Conservative welcomes letters to the editor. Submit by e-mail to letters@amconmag.com or by mail to 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA 22209. We reserve the right to edit all correspondence for space and clarity.