

can eclipse all else. For instance, facing minimal protest, Mayor Frank Jordan is going through with his "Matrix" program to get certain street people, many of whom can be downright menacing, off the streets.

Meal-ticket civil libertarians and radical clergy have been thrown into a predictable tizzy. But their rallies have failed to draw any significant numbers. One overnight protest in front of City Hall attracted a crowd of only 250, slim pickings for a city with a tradition of drawing throngs for any demonstration demanding "social justice" from City Hall's coffers. The next day's account of the protest in the *Chronicle* spells out why, as the Reverend Robert McAfee Brown of Palo Alto's First Presbyterian Church showed just how divorced from street life some homeless activists are: "We want to make an act of solidarity with homeless people," he said.

But if that's really the case, then, as anyone who works in the City Hall area or has to walk through it can tell you, the Reverend Brown ought to be sipping solidarity from a quart malt liquor bottle or smoking it from a crack pipe only a hundred yards away from City Hall on the steps of the emergency exits from the Civic Auditorium. If the reverend wanted to save souls, this would be an excellent place to start. To get to these homeless he would have to skip over broken bottles, streams of urine, and litter of all kinds, including the occasional soiled condom and used syringe. But by then he might even have second thoughts about Matrix, which links the self-destructive and disoriented to social services and puts criminals with outstanding warrants in jail.

San Franciscans have suffered a compassion breakdown, which is evident by the pathetic anti-Matrix effort—and the amazing tough talk by the city's mainstream media. The usually liberal *San*

*Francisco Examiner*, for instance, sounded downright traditionalist—echoing the Bushian "points of light" voluntarism—in an editorial entitled "Don't Give to Beggars." "Some [on the streets] are hard-luck cases. Some are afflicted with multiple ailments. And some are simply parasites," the editorial read. "No city should have to endure legions of beggars. . . . Give to Glide Memorial. Give to St. Anthony's. Give to St. Martin de Porres. Give to the Salvation Army. . . . Don't give to beggars."

Should it make the streets even remotely more hospitable to the working and tax-paying populace, Matrix may win Jordan, a moderate Democrat suffering from low numbers in popularity polls, a second term. In contrast, former mayor Art Agnos let the homeless have their way, and what aptly came to be known as "Camp Agnos," a homeless Hooverville, sprang up in front of City Hall, causing a long-running national embarrassment to the city. Compared to Agnos's homeless policies, Matrix represents the most responsive government San Francisco has seen in years, even if, as the far-left *San Franciscan Bay Guardian* has reported, "Only about 100 of the more than 7,000 homeless people cited, arrested, or fined since the program began last August have actually been taken off the street."

But absolute numbers don't count. Intent does. Jordan, a career cop, as opposed to Agnos, a career activist and liberal apparatchik (he's now the regional director for HUD!), makes the distinction any average man on the street would: "I separate homeless and street people," he told the *Examiner* in early January. "We should be sympathetic to those who are down and out and need help for a variety of reasons. But there are others who take advantage of all of us, including the homeless."

No doubt some on the streets may

have turned to crime or landed there because of hard times—the usual activist jag deceitfully lays *all* blame for the homeless on the "cold-hearted Reagan-Bush years"—but with the second year of the Clinton enlightenment now virtually over, even most bleeding hearts would have to agree that booze, dope, and the dole have more to do with criminality and life on the streets than does the labor market.

Now, sandwiched between random violent crime and streets more desperate than many in the Third World, San Franciscans are proving even liberals can be pushed only so far. Other progressive cities said to be studying Matrix include Portland and Seattle. Can the day be far off when progressives realize good intentions and even more government services aren't enough for a civil society?

—Jim Christie

**OBITER DICTA:** Back in the Midwest, stores in the St. Louis area that carry *Chronicles* include: World News, 4 South Central in Clayton, Missouri; Piece of Mind Books, 230 South Buchanan Street in Edwardsville, Illinois; and B. Dalton Booksellers, D-466 St. Louis Center in the city itself.

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## Principalities & Powers

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by Samuel Francis

### The Abortion Gambit

Trying to be the chief intellectual in the Republican Party is probably a little like trying to be an admiral in the Swiss navy,

but in the last year or so, that is more or less what Bill Kristol has become. The son of neoconservative godfather Irving Kristol, young Bill made his bones by billing himself as the brains behind Dan Quayle, when he served as the Vice Pres-

ident's chief of staff in the dark age of the Bush era. With the astute sense for the Main Chance we have come to expect from agents of the neoconservative mafia, Mr. Kristol seemed able to make certain that every news story that said

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anything at all nice about Mr. Quayle (there weren't too many) also made sure the reader knew that it was really Mr. K. who was responsible for the niceness. Even then, Bill had his eyes set on something larger than keeping track of the vice presidential cerebrum.

Alas came 1992, and that something did not materialize. Mr. Kristol, along with the rest of his neo family and friends, found himself in the ranks of the Republican unemployed. But not for long. Suddenly there appeared the largesse of those bottomless pits of tax-exempt funds for neoconservative causes, the Olin and Bradley foundations, and now young Mr. Kristol could once again dine at Tiberio's at least twice a week. The vehicle for his new career was the command of a new entity called the "Project for the Republican Future."

It is largely through adroit manipulation of the PRF and his friends in the Beltway media that Mr. Kristol has placed himself at the center of the GOP nervous system. In the course of the national debate on the Clinton health care scheme, Mr. Kristol emerged as the champion of the opposition to the plan by announcing his now-famous line that "there is no health care crisis." Such sentences pass for ineffable wisdom in the ranks of the Stupid Party, and Mr. Kristol's pearl was endlessly regurgitated by Republicans, rightish talk-show hosts, and Beltway pundits, some of whom even understood what he meant by it. Moreover, in what appears to be an endless series of memoranda recording his remarkably unremarkable thoughts of the day, Mr. Kristol has unbosomed himself of even more astonishing mental jewels, for which Republicans in the House and Senate have scrambled like the children of Mogadishu clambered for American lollipops during our recent expedition in global uplift.

But it was this past summer that Mr. Kristol began to unveil his real agenda, when he sponsored, under the auspices of the PRF, a panel discussion of the subject of abortion and what Republicans should think and say about it. Yet before the smoke had cleared, it seemed that perhaps the young man had blundered.

There is, of course, no mystery as to what the Republican Party "thinks" about abortion. Its position has been part of the official party platform since 1980 and was endorsed repeatedly by both Presidents Reagan and Bush and

by Vice President Quayle. That position is that the party is opposed to abortion and commits itself to what is known as the "Human Life Amendment," to wit, from the 1988 GOP platform:

The unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed. We therefore reaffirm our support for a human life amendment to the Constitution, and we endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to unborn children.

The same plank also commits the party to opposition to public funding for abortion. In 1992, despite some grumbling by a handful of pro-choice Republicans, this position was overwhelmingly endorsed and reaffirmed at the National Convention, and the vast majority of Republicans are perfectly happy with it.

But not Mr. Kristol and his neoconservative colleagues, and it soon became clear that the PRF roundtable on abortion was intended as a first step toward dumping the Human Life Amendment and perhaps the Republican Party's general commitment to a "pro-life" position. The roundtable took place in Washington on June 15 of this year and included, for the "pro-choice" side, Doug Bailey, a liberal Republican who now runs the American Political Network; for the "pro-life" side, the eminent Phyllis Schlafly; and on Mr. Kristol's side, the not-particularly-eminent George Weigel, a Roman Catholic neoconservative who runs a Beltway think tank. Mr. Kristol himself served as moderator.

Yet, strangely for a moderator, though not so strange to those who have studied neoconservatives and their ways, Mr. Kristol and Mr. Weigel issued a joint statement about abortion and what the GOP policy on it should be. Essentially, they advocated the abandonment of the Human Life Amendment, the rescinding of the 1973 Supreme Court decision that invented a "right" to abortion, *Roe v. Wade*, and continued opposition to public funding of abortion. In the Kristol-Weigel language, "We support efforts to return to the people their constitutional right to deliberate on this question in their legislatures. We endorse legislative efforts to expand the boundaries of legal protection for the unborn. And we flatly reject the use of

public funds, at the state or federal level, to pay for or encourage abortion."

To all of which, say I: pretty damned good for a couple of neocons.

Unlike the Human Life Amendment, the Kristol-Weigel language makes no mention of the deeply flawed 14th Amendment, an illegally passed section of the Constitution that has inflicted untold damage on the Republic and ought to be repealed outright. Unlike the Human Life Amendment, the Kristol-Weigel language endorses and respects the rights of the states and the people of the states to enact laws suitable to their beliefs, customs, and circumstances regarding abortion. And, unlike the Human Life Amendment, the Kristol-Weigel language makes no mention at all of the U.S. Constitution and imports neither theology nor philosophy nor ideology into it. Whatever might be said of Mr. Kristol and his agenda, the language he offered was philosophically sound from the perspective of Old Right political theory.

But the Kristol gambit on abortion did not take place in a political vacuum, and it would be a distortion of the real meaning of the roundtable and the Kristol-Weigel language to fail to understand the context in which it occurred. Within that context, the purpose of the Kristol gambit becomes—insidiously—clear.

That context was the national controversy last summer over the "Christian Right," a controversy in which the Democratic Party (including President Clinton himself), several top-ranking Democrats and their allies among liberal Republicans, left-liberal columnists, and—by what one is certain was merely coincidence—the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith all almost simultaneously joined to denounce the Christian Right as "hatemongers," "bigots," "reactionaries," and, worst of all, people who threatened to defeat liberal Democrats en masse in the forthcoming congressional elections. It was in the midst of this controversy over the Christian Right that the Kristol-Weigel language on Republican abortion policy sprang to life.

Mr. Kristol himself, as well as neoconservative swamis William Bennett and Charles Krauthammer among others, at once marched forth to defend the Christian Right against its enemies, but what was interesting about their expressions of support was that almost all of them defended the religious right by

downplaying the religious dimension as much as possible, excising the radicalism that derives from that dimension and depicting the movement as simply another adjunct of the conservative (i.e., neoconservative) apparatus. Thus, while Mr. Bennett, in the June 26 *Washington Post*, defended the Christian Right's right to take part in politics and the role of religion in informing political affairs, he tried to make out that the religious right is concerned with purely secularist issues—"Things like safe streets, good schools, strong families, nonintrusive government and communities where people care for one another. Good things all. And not, one would think, particularly controversial or 'divisive.'"

Mr. Krauthammer's defense was similar. To him the Christian Right consists of "members of a diverse community sharing a simple if nostalgic agenda returning America to the cultural condition and social values of the immediate postwar era. For them that means two-parent families, schools with authority, limited government, a culture not yet drenched in sex and violence," as well as "government policies that encourage intact families, the teaching of virtue, the encouragement of responsibility and the punishment of criminality." Mr. Kristol's reflections on the religious right, published in the *Washington Times* on June 17 (only two days after the PRF roundtable on abortion) struck a similar theme, namely that the Christian Right is not much more than a coalition of citizens who simply seek the restoration of the manners and institutions of the 1950's and is not at all "out of the mainstream."

What is striking about these neoconservative defenses of the Christian Right, however, is that the issues Mr. Bennett and Mr. Krauthammer mentioned as the movement's characteristic concerns are in fact hardly even blips on its radar screen. The main specific issues of the Christian Right include opposition to abortion, opposition to homosexuality, opposition to the exclusive teaching of evolution and of secular humanism generally, and support for prayer in schools. None of these, in the America of the 1990's, can truthfully be called "mainstream" issues; all of them are in fact radical measures, and all of them seriously challenge the drift of the United States for the last 50 years in their opposition to the country's secularism, its materialism, its libertarianism, and its moral

relativism. By ignoring and even denying the implicit radicalism of the Christian Right, by trying to make out that it is really just a "mainstream" movement worried about good schools and safe streets, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Krauthammer, and Mr. Kristol were essentially seeking to strip the Christian Right of its most promising and refreshing radical aspects and to co-opt the movement, seize moral and intellectual leadership of it, and absorb it within the well-funded digestive tract of the neoconservative imperium.

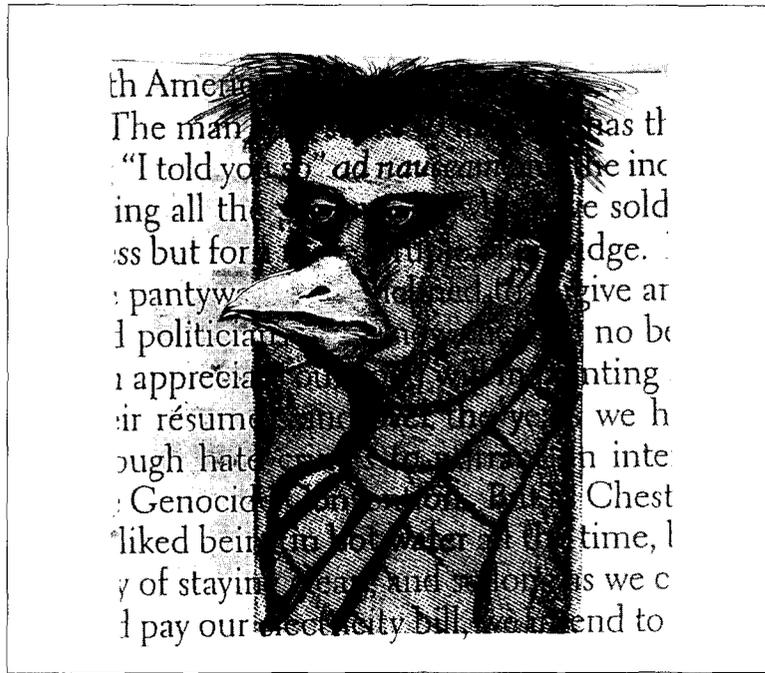
By doing so, Mr. Kristol and his cohorts would win for the neoconservatives what they have never been able to build for themselves—a genuine grass-roots following, and one that in the last couple of years has gained considerable influence in the base of the Republican Party—and at the same time wed the moderate, mainstream, establishment sections of the party to that following, all under their own intellectual (and eventually political) leadership.

That is also what Mr. Kristol was trying to do with his new position on abortion, and that is why he needed Mr. Weigel, who is actually a Christian, to stand up and testify with him. Had Mr. Kristol, who happens to be Jewish, proposed a retreat from the Human Life Amendment by himself, his plan would have been transparent and would have elicited no following among Christian Rightists. But, as his fellow neoconservative and effective press agent Fred Barnes wrote in the *New Republic*, the Kristol-Weigel proposal was received "warmly" by some leaders of the Christian Right, and the proposal is important because "it may allow the GOP to ease its position [on abortion] without an intraparty war. And it would bring the party nearer to the public's view: reduce the number of abortions, but no national ban."

Precisely. The effect, if not the actual mission, of neoconservatism ever since its appearance in the late 1960's has been to muzzle whatever inclinations to an authentic, popular, grass-roots, right-wing radicalism might emerge either within or without the Republican Party. In the early 1970's, as just such a radical movement began to take wing in the wake of the Wallace campaigns, the first generation of neoconservative eggheads showed up and soon ran off with it. The result, when Ronald Reagan entered office in 1981, was an administration nev-

er seriously committed to any of the authentically popular and radical issues on which Mr. Reagan had been elected. Now the second generation of neoconservatives has shown up to undertake the same mission of co-optation against the same kind of radicalism of the right that flourishes today. The neoconservative objective is always to "bring the party nearer to the public's view" and never to perform the mission of a real radicalism, to lead and instruct the public or the nation in where it may have gone wrong. The neoconservative objective is always to avoid "intraparty war," to evade combat on the fundamental cultural conflicts that threaten the nation, and to mute any tendencies to radicalism in hope of gaining political office and influence. Those objectives may safely be communicated (indeed they need to be communicated) in the pages of such periodicals as the *New Republic*, but under no circumstances is this esoterica to be imparted to those at the grass-roots level whom it is intended to dazzle.

Hence, even though the position Mr. Kristol and Mr. Weigel deposed in their roundtable may, from the abstract perspective of Old Right political theory, be the correct position, it is, in the perspective of its real meaning, a strategic retreat from the more radical posture the Christian Right has succeeded in implanting in the platform of the Republican Party. Hence, whatever its theoretical merits or even its practical advantages, it is not a position the party should adopt or serious men and women of the right endorse. Its net effect at this time would be the effective compromising or silencing of what is now the only remaining organized expression of a popular radicalism of the right that challenges the dominant regime in anything like a serious way, the effective emasculation of the Christian Right, and the effective take-over of that movement by forces that seek only to thwart rather than to fulfill its radical tendencies. Mr. Barnes may be correct in remarking that some leaders of the Christian Right embraced the Kristol-Weigel position "warmly," but it's doubtful that that has been or will be the response of the rank-and-file of the movement those leaders purport to lead, and once the chief intellectual of the Republican Party perceives that, he may begin to understand why it was that his gambit on abortion was a blunder from which he and his allies may not be able to recover. ©



## A Philanthropic Journalist

by Thomas Fleming

If representative government requires a free press, as the founders of this Republic believed, then it is small wonder that the citizens of the United States no longer enjoy the benefit of free elections. For elections to be free, there must be a choice from among well-defined positions and characters: John Quincy Adams or Andrew Jackson, Lincoln or Douglas (or Breckinridge, for that matter). The degree of choice depends upon the degree of polarity, the sharpness of definition in the positions taken, the clarity of debate. In a small community, gossip and personal experience may be sufficient to inform the people on the respective characters of Cimon and Pericles, although in that case the available information did not prevent the Athenians from making the wrong choice. But in a larger country, governed according to the representative principle, these purposes can only be served by something like a press, and for such a press to do its job, it must consist of antagonists, not impartial observers, because it is only in the crude dialectic of the adversarial press that the sides of a debate or an election can be defined.

No journal or journalist is unprejudiced, but when newspapers used to declare, even advertise their party affiliation, readers were able to discount their partisanship. Today, the problem with America is not that the leftist press is biased—of course it is biased, more so, perhaps, than at any time in our history—but that there is only one set of biases that is represented, and when leftist journalists protest that there is no liberal bias in the media, they may even be halfway sincere, since they have never in their life been exposed to a conservative opinion.

The Anglo-American system has generally been a conflict

between two parties which, although they have gone by very many names, have been summed up by Clyde Wilson as the Court Party and the Country Party. The Court Party, since it represents the magnates and those who control the nation's treasury, has never had any trouble in buying itself a press corps of poets laureate and journalists looking for State Department sinecures. The gentlemen of the Country Party, on the other hand, have had to dig into their own pockets to fund journals of opposition and patronize the writers who like nothing better than to stick their fingers into the eyes of arrogant Cabinet ministers, archbishops comfortable in their heterodoxy, and foundation heads grown presumptuous from handing out other people's money.

In different ages the opponents of the Court Party might have stood in the ranks of the gentlemen who opposed the tyranny of Elizabeth I and her more moderate successors, or with Samuel Johnson and the defenders of King and Church against the Whig magnates. More typically, they may find themselves at different times in both camps, like Halifax the Trimmer, who always moved into opposition as soon as his own faction came to power. It was Halifax who said that "the best party is a kind of conspiracy against the nation" and compared the party spirit to faith without works: "They take it for a dispensation from all other duties." William Cobbett began life as a peasant radical and turned Tory without compromising his principles, and there is no more exemplary model for the modern reactionary radical than "Peter Porcupine," a true populist who, when like so many down-at-heels English journalists he came to America, stood up to the Jacobin press of Benjamin Franklin