

Then there is the matter of FDR's almost criminal naïveté regarding Joseph Stalin. Roosevelt exerted his influence throughout the normal channels of civil society, from the movies to the press, to promote a wholly fictional and laughably propagandistic view of the great Russian nationalist. (It was only the uncouth, you understand, who persisted in regarding Stalin as a communist.) "[U]nder the influence of the propaganda he had promoted," Flynn adds, "and reinforced by his own eagerness to please Stalin, no one in the country was more thoroughly deceived by it than Roosevelt himself." What it all added up to, ultimately, was that the U.S. government "put into Stalin's hands the means of seizing a great slab of the continent of Europe, then stood aside while he took it and finally acquiesced in his conquests."

Franklin D. Roosevelt was, after Lincoln, the consummate Great President and the chief architect of the present regime, so it should not be surprising that, despite his thorough debunking at the hands of Flynn, FDR should continue to elicit the adulation of professional historians and the ruling elite. As Raico puts it, "It seems that there is no degrading inanity, no catastrophic blunder that is not permitted a truly 'great president.'"

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## Of Rights and Rabbits

by Thomas Fleming

**The House of Atreus: Abortion as a Human Rights Issue**  
by James F. Bohan  
Westport, CT: Greenwood Press;  
256 pp., \$39.95



James Bohan, a Pennsylvania attorney, believes he has elevated the abortion debate above the pedestrian levels of both medicine and religion. However, Mr. Bohan rises above faith and science only to fall back on the well-worn clichés of human rights doctrines found in

the sacred texts of the Declaration of Independence, the writings of Albert Schweitzer, and the various declarations on human rights issued by international agencies. To finish off the argument with a literary veneer, he invokes "Aeschylus's House of Atreus" as an historical-mythical model of a society addicted to irrational killing.

Along the way, the author manages to lose himself in the usual maze of illogic and bad history that has characterized both sides of the abortion debate. He cannot apparently conceive of an unborn child as a human being without according it full legal personhood. He must think that, in societies where women and children are not legal persons, it is open season on wives and minor sons. Because he cannot understand citizenship, apart from the theory of rights, he falls into the usual trap of equating *Roe v. Wade* with *Dred Scott*. Worst of all, he thinks that he can provide a non-religious ethical basis for respecting innocent life, when it is perfectly obvious that even the greatest pre-Christian civilizations allowed infanticide.

It is a familiar trap, which even explicitly Christian defenders of life fall into. Although they may have embraced the faith in their heart, their minds belong to the secular anti-Christian world of the Enlightenment. Intellectually, they are adherents to the religion of human rights: a religion without a particle of historical, natural, or logical foundation. It may be a stretch to ask people to worship the historical Jesus as "very God of very God," but what can we say of people who venerate unexamined abstractions, like "All men are created equal"? It is better to carry a rabbit's foot: Rabbits, at least, are real creatures, but no one has ever seen a right, much less eaten it or cut off its foot. Hares and rabbits are attested all over the world; rights are the peculiar manufacture of liberal intellectuals in modern Europe.

Bohan's scholarship is on par with his theology. Even lawyers can be expected to know that Aeschylus did not write "The House of Atreus" but the *Oresteia*. If he had taken the trouble to read and digest Aeschylus's masterpiece, he might have realized how wrongheaded he was, both about the ancient myth and about his muddleheaded defense of unborn life. It is very dangerous to equate the killing of Clytaemnestra—a woman who needed killing if anyone ever did—with the death of unborn children, and even

Atreus—who killed Thyestes' children and served them up to their father at a banquet—had a rational motive: revenge against a brother who had seduced his wife and tried to steal his throne. What comparable defense can be made by a woman who kills her own child, simply because it is inconvenient? But, then, who in his right mind would equate slavery with murder?

Why be so hard on the poor fellow? He meant well, after all, and worse books are published every month, not only on abortion but on marriage, religious freedom, and "family values." That is the point. With very few exceptions, conservative and Christian books, however well intentioned their authors, are almost entirely without merit. Poorly written, badly argued, unresearched, they succeed only in convincing serious-minded people, both on the left and in the center, that the right has no case to make. Worst of all, in reformulating Christian arguments in the anti-Christian language of human rights, they continue to undermine the rational and historic basis of Christian thought and European civilization.

*Thomas Fleming is the editor of Chronicles.*

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## Letter From South Carolina

by Clyde Wilson

### The State That Didn't Forget



The Confederate battle flag still flies every day over the capitol building of South Carolina. Readers may remember that I have several times reported in these pages on the attempts to remove this lonely anti-imperial symbol from public view. One discussion a few years ago even elicited a complaint to *Chronicles* from then-Governor David Beasley. Mr. Beasley, alas, is no longer governor, having to console himself with a part-time position at a Harvard think tank. Having promised not to mess with our flag, he turned around and mobilized the entire Republican establishment to take it down in order to catapult himself into the national limelight, claiming to have received instructions from the Almighty. He thus did the only thing that a Republican could do to ensure that he wouldn't be reelected. A fourth of the Republican voters defected and elected a lackluster Democrat who also promised not to mess with our flag. His sincerity, of course, is already in question. (I sadly must tell folks that they are mistaken if they believe that Republicans in South Carolina are rock-ribbed conservatives. The Republican establishment is merely a pork-barrel machine, though manned by folks who are instinctually more conservative than their compatriots in Connecticut or Illinois, which is why none of our federal judges has interfered in this matter. The legendary Strom Thurmond long ago traded the role of Dixiecrat for that of the World's Greatest Patronage Artist.)

The battle has been joined again, with the NAACP declaring a boycott of the state until the flag is removed. So far, this has had little effect. In some quarters, there have been expressions of satisfaction: "Does this mean Myrtle Beach won't get to host Freaknik?" But the social forces that have so far defeated an anti-flag campaign backed by Big Politics, Big Business, Big Civil Rights, Big Reli-

gion, and Big Media are worth some attention.

To begin with, members of the legislature, which has the deciding say in the matter, have to listen to real voters rather than to banks and newspapers—at least part of the time. And *pace* Samuel Francis, the Council of Conservative Citizens was not responsible for saving our flag. Its efforts, including rallies by tattooed motorcycle thugs and David Duke followers, have been resoundingly counterproductive—just what the media wanted.

Rather, the battle has been won because we are still a people, nearly unique among turn-of-the-millennium Americans, with a real historical memory. A lot of us know how great-grandfather died with the colors at Gettysburg or was starved and frozen to death by the Yankees at Elmira. Or how great-grandmother was burned out of house and home and had the jewelry ripped from her ears by liberators in blue.

We also know that we made a bargain at the end of Reconstruction: As long as we served the United States loyally, our history would be a respected part of the American story. We have done our share—or perhaps more—in every one of the wars since. The other side, as usual, has failed to keep its part of the bargain. There is now a concerted effort to expunge us. Several U.S. military directives have banned "the Confederate flag, the Nazi swastika, and curse words" from the empire's property. In neighboring North Carolina, civilian employees of the Coast Guard were threatened with security investigations for having Sons of Confederate Veterans stickers on their private vehicles. Isn't this the way ethnic cleansing starts?

Recently, a Catholic academy in Greenville fired its best teacher because he refused to remove a small Confederate flag that hung in his classroom along with a number of other historical American flags. The demand for removal resulted from a complaint by a *prospective* parent, a recent arrival from Jamaica, who also complained about the crosses.

And St. Michael's Episcopal Church, one of the two most historic churches in historic Charleston, has, because of the flag, refused to permit the Sons of Confederate Veterans to hold a memorial service for the heroic crew of the CSA submarine Hunley. (This is the second

crew, not the one the movie was made about. They are still at the bottom of the bay.) Not only does St. Michael's yard contain the bones of numerous Southern heroes, but its steeple was used as a rangefinder by the Unionists during the brutal 1863-65 siege of the city. The Episcopal hierarchy continues its apparently irreversible slide into communism and sodomy.

The Confederate battle flag, someone should tell the authorities at St. Michael's Church, is only one of two national flags in the Western Hemisphere that is based on a Christian, rather than a Jacobin, design. The other flies in Quebec.

We begin to see a pattern here, and one we don't like. We are not going down that slippery slope if we can help it. So our flag on the capitol has become an issue transcending a merely prudential matter. The main argument for removal has been that the flag offends black citizens. (Opponents also claim it is bad for business, which is patently untrue.) But it is not at all clear that black citizens, as distinct from their self-appointed spokespersons, feel this way. And interestingly, according to polls, a good half of the thousands of Rust Belt refugees who have settled among us in recent times are pro-flag. Indeed, I would think even admirers of Old Abe and Billy Sherman would take alarm at the anti-Confederate hatred that is in full cry these days.

The real impulse behind the well-financed anti-flag campaign is imperialism. Columbia, South Carolina, is not to be permitted to differ from Columbus, Ohio, except in cutesy ways that will attract outsiders who will graciously employ our people to change their sheets and fix their toilets. Our newspapers, which used to be local, are now owned by chains and manned by lowbrow creatures from Detroit. The Columbia paper is Exhibit A. Founded by a family that included a Confederate cavalry general and an heroic Cuban revolutionary (pre-1898), it is now the property of Knight-Ridder. The paper recently invited an articulate local citizen to write a pro-flag op-ed. They changed his language to mean the opposite of what he had said in order to make it sound "racist."

Yours Truly has been interviewed numerous times by journalists, several of whom have told me that everything re-