

Hatemongers

What do you call a man who loves his country but is not so enthusiastic about the government that confiscates half of his income? Who takes care of his own family but is not sure why, through tax policies and affirmative action, he is also supposed to take care of the children of other people he does not know? Who believes in charity but believes it begins at home and does not really extend beyond the borders of the United States? Who wishes peace and prosperity to the peoples of the Third World but does not necessarily want to bring them here? Who admires the brave struggle of the Israeli people but does not see why American money and military clout have to be used to do to Palestinians what was done to Jews in the past? Who wishes no ill to anyone else's religion but wonders why non-Christians can use a government funded by mostly Christian taxes to teach anti-Christianity in schools and eliminate Christian symbols and prayers from public places?

I would call such a man, no matter what party he belongs to or principles he espouses, an instinctive conservative. Leftists, however, particularly the leftist tentacles of the institutional octopus of hate that is strangling both civilization and freedom, would call him a bigot and an antisemite. I am obviously referring to the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Anti-Defamation League, the American Civil Liberties Union, People for the American Way, and all other attack-dog organizations, leftist newspapers, anti-Christian magazines, anti-European newsletters, and antiheterosexual websites that prowl the world seeking the destruction of souls.

It is an easy trick of propaganda to portray all natural affections in the dark colors of prejudice. Why would anyone like the South if it were not for slavery and Jim Crow? Who but an antisemite objects to the slaughter of the (semitic) Palestinians? Only a communist or a Jew would oppose the *Führer*.

To change the value of words is a more ambitious project. There was a time when *prejudice* did not mean hatred of other races; when *patriarchy* referred to a specific set of social institutions found,

for example, in the early books of the Old Testament; when *Southern* was not a term of abuse; and when *fundamentalist* and *integralist* were not applied to fanatical Muslims who practice terrorism. Even such words as *fascist* and *right-wing*, *liberal* and *leftist*, once upon a time had agreed-upon meanings. Now they are merely terms of abuse or praise. In Italy, Umberto Bossi, whose Lega Nord favors free enterprise and a decentralized political structure, is routinely denounced as a "fascist," despite the fact that his positions are the opposite of the Fascist Party's program and that modern fascists and ex-fascists hate his guts.

The first impulse on hearing of such travesties is to say, "How Orwellian" and then move on. The phenomenon is far older than Orwell, however, and the corruption lies deeper. Conservatives are fond of quoting Thucydides' (3.82.4) observations on the political distortion of language. In a conventional translation, Thucydides does sound a great deal like the author of 1984, railing against the manipulation of language practiced by the rulers of a revolutionary regime:

Words had to change their ordinary meaning and to take that which was now given them. Reckless audacity came to be considered the courage of a loyal ally; prudent hesitation, specious cowardice; moderation was held to be a cloak for unmanliness; ability to see all sides of a question inaptness to act on any. Frantic violence, became the attribute of manliness; cautious plotting, a justifiable means of self-defense.

Thucydides is not an easy writer to understand, and his opening sentence is particularly difficult. Literally translated, it means something like this: "They changed the customary valuation of words in relation to reality by means of a process of justification." In other words, as Jonathan Price has argued in a recent book, words did not simply change their meaning: Political leaders manipulated the value of words so that good words now had bad connotations and *vice versa*.

Then there is the question of revolution. The Greek word is *stasis*, which means something like a civil war between two political factions. *Staseis* were not always clashes of opposing principles. The conflict might be between rival clans or between contestants for power (or, as in Mytilene during the days of Sappho and Alcaeus, both). Naturally, each party would use every verbal trick in portraying itself as the defender of the better cause, but Thucydides, in describing the *stasis* on the island of Corcyra, goes further, arguing that, during the period of the Peloponnesian War, the Greek cities were morally corrupted. The relevant modern parallel for Thucydides' analysis is not so much the propaganda issued by revolutionary regimes (whether international socialist or national socialist) but the demonization practiced by the leaders of factions, movements, and parties against their rivals.

Leftists, naturally, would seize upon this to issue their usual denunciations of McCarthyism. To some extent, they would be justified. Anti-Marxists have gone overboard, from time to time, in equating all forms of leftism and liberalism with communism. This was a serious mistake, since Marxism was only one of the more perverse expressions of the liberal mentality, though, in fact, feminism, homosexuality, and vegetarianism are even more perverse. The enemy was never really Marxism *per se* but liberalism in all its forms: not just the liberalism of Rousseau but the liberalism of Voltaire; not just the socialism of Marx but the destructive antisocialism of John Stuart Mill.

Conservatives might be pardoned for their excesses in the 1950's. Without understanding how or why, they had been on the losing end of every political, social, religious, and cultural revolution since the 15th century. By the time Senator McCarthy entered politics, men and women with conservative instincts could only use liberal arguments to defend their positions. These were the people who loved their country but did not entirely trust the massive leftist government erected by the New Dealers, and yet, when challenged to state their beliefs, they

could only fall back on the slogans of radical individualism that had been the propaganda terms used in an earlier phase of the revolution. Small wonder that the conservative movement, as it was mistakenly called, was preyed upon by such liberal kooks as Ayn Rand.

To speak of a “conservative mind” in America is somewhat misleading. The average American does have a conservative heart, but his mind has been so addled by bad teachers, bad books, and bad ideas that he often feels guilty if he prefers to limit his charity to his neighbors, if he resents the money squandered on public schools, if he does not share in the general glee over the massive immigration that is transforming the country of his fathers into something he cannot recognize. He is easily intimidated when the left condemns this vague, inchoate mixture of family loyalty and patriotism as the bigotry of the “extreme right.” In fact, the ultraleft Southern Poverty Law Center is always railing against “right-wing extremism,” by which they mean everyone to the right of the *New Republic*—up to and including Matthew Hale.

Reduced to the clichés of politics, conservatives are guilty of hating and oppressing non-European racial and ethnic groups, persecuting non-Christians (especially Jews), exploiting and impoverishing the working classes, destroying the environment, and waging destructive wars. Leftists, by contrast, promote racial and religious tolerance, work selflessly for the welfare of the working classes, preserve the environment, and, to cap it all, they always “give peace a chance.” Leftists know this to be true, despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

In the 20th century, the preeminent leftist governments were the Marxist regimes in the Soviet Union and its satellites in China and Cuba, Vietnam and Cambodia. We did not really need the *Black Book of Communism* to tell us that all these regimes are evil. The regimes in China and the Soviet Union killed over 100 million people, started and waged wars of aggression, stole property from peasants who were reduced to slavery, ruthlessly exploited the workers, and destroyed the environment. As for ethnic and religious tolerance, let the Jews murdered by Stalin or the Tibetans crushed even to this day by China cry out for vengeance.

What about Hitler? whine the leftists, their feelings wounded. In the first place, he is a piker compared with Mao and

Stalin. Second, he was a revolutionary socialist whose only conservative appeal was that he was saving the Germans from the communists. His regime was neither traditional nor Christian, and his propagandists never tired of proclaiming how revolutionary and progressive they were. Though Mussolini had been a leader of the Socialist Party and remained anti-Catholic until the end, Fascist Italy was far more conservative than Nazi Germany. And Fascist Italy, though I find it vulgar and unappealing, was heaven on earth compared with any international socialist or national socialist regime, precisely because the zaniness of Fascist ideology was tempered by the conservative Italian character and by the participation of many non-Fascist conservatives in the government.

Leftists like to apply the “fascist” label to conservatives, and, in the process, they equate *fascist* with *Nazi*, a lie they can get away with because the leftists who control our schools make sure that Americans grow up stupid, ignorant, and helpless. On the other hand, leftists scream bloody murder if their own principles are described as Marxist, socialist, or communist—which they are.

Some years ago, I took part in a symposium devoted to a deceased Southern conservative. Near the end of the final session, two former communists waxed eloquent on their late friend’s failure to speak out against segregation—the worst moral evil of the 20th century. This was too much even for my easygoing disposition. I began quietly, explaining the difficult position which morally responsible Southerners were in, and pointed out that even Faulkner, though he opposed segregation, said he would side with his state against outside meddlers. Finally, I concluded, I had to wonder about the moral sense of people who had spent their adult lives as apologists for Stalin and Mao, dictators who had murdered many tens of millions of innocent people, but were now indulging in moral outrage against separate drinking fountains. They were as hypocritical as the *New York Times* writers who condemned Richard Nixon’s low crimes and misdemeanors without ever apologizing for having condoned Stalin’s mass murder.

There, in a nutshell, is the difference between them and us. Our fathers and grandfathers told race jokes and belonged to restricted clubs; their fathers and grandfathers shilled for Stalin or the equally bloodthirsty Trotsky. No, we are not per-

fect, and, yes, conservative societies have, on occasion, betrayed their deepest principles and committed terrible crimes. They, however, since the days of Robespierre, have committed mass theft and mass murder *on principle*. And, when they lack the power to kill and rob, they make do with corrupting the young with pornography; destroying marriage with feminism and homosexuality; undermining our morals with Freudianism and behaviorism; warping our sense of beauty with free verse, abstract expressionist painting, and Bauhaus architecture; and, if we dare to complain, they cry, “antisemite,” as if Jackson Pollock or the Bauhaus architects were Jewish.

Yes, in addition to their other fine qualities, leftists are chronic liars about every subject they discuss, from Athenian democracy to the dangers of secondhand smoke. Even the term they often use to describe themselves, *liberal*, is a lie. American liberals are nonrevolutionary socialists, and their allies to the left are unreconstructed Marxists. We ought to forgive them, I suppose, because they have no choice. When your entire worldview is based on counterfactual assumptions about human nature—the equality of the sexes, the immorality of private property and status, the artificiality of the family, etc.—you cannot help lying about everything, whether the subject under discussion is women in the military, the dangers of asbestos, the “epidemic” of father-daughter incest, or the effectiveness of public education.

Why should any conservative care if he is attacked by the leftists of the SPLC and ADL or those of the *New York Times*? These people have lies in their mouths, blood on their hands for the great genocides of the 20th century, and guilt on their consciences for the seduction of the innocent and the destruction of our civilization. Our task, as our late friend Mel Bradford put it, is to remember who we are and stop our ears against the siren songs of the revolutionists, which have proved to be not the anthems of a new dawn but a message of hate and filth that leads to destruction.

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HARD Right

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Cholesterol *by David Middleton*

—For Robert Herrick (1591-1674), Anglican priest and poet, and author of the poems “His fare-well to Sack” and “The Welcome to Sack”

i. Farewell

My annual checkup and its blood work done
And three months' fast to drive bad numbers down
I swing by Popeye's for a tub of thighs,
Mashed potatoes and gravy, greasy fries,
Proud of myself as I am every year
Crash dieting to avoid yearlong regimes
I'd have to accept to get those pills renewed
I need to keep my heart pump quiet and strong.
But this time, three days later, comes the call,
My G.P. preaching on the “good” and “bad”
Cholesterol—a morality play
Of chemicals with Blood Sludge as the Vice.
So now I run on the treadmill, do dead lifts,
And live on tofu, lettuce, and O'Doul's
Slimming until suspenders must be bought
To keep up pants around new buns of steel
And washboard abs young girls stare at again.
But, Lord, I'm fifty. What's this good health for?
To wander through a nursing home at ninety,
Then curl up like a fetus on the floor?

ii. Welcome

So what's the point? I've got a year of pills
Renewed and I can plead heredity—
My father who ran marathons near sixty
With numbers past 300 like my own
(Why was my draft number only half that high?)
Or his own mother who approached the same
Yet died of sheer old age at ninety-five.
And what are my doctor's numbers, pray tell,
My dietician's in the checkout line
Stocking up on vodka, cheddar, Boston butt?
So taking one last look at the weird thrill
Of a fifty-year-old body teenage lean
With half a head of hair, a mind half daft,
And wrinkles where old bullied muscles bulge,
I bid farewell to grim irenic dreams,
Then go eat in New Orleans at K Paul's,
Down buttered bread, shrimp gumbo, Chardonnay,
Watch abs of iron relax toward abs of flab,
Just grateful I've had fifty years, and sod
This liver and the metabolic gods.