

from her fetus in the eyes of the law.” Yet how can any serious person deny the fact that these fetuses are distinct human beings, each of unique moral value?

Similarly disturbing has been the ACLU’s intervention in the “right-to-die” case of Terri Schindler Schiavo. The Florida case received public attention last fall but continues to be fought out in court on almost a daily basis. Schiavo suffers from a debilitating brain injury caused by an unexplained collapse. Over her parents’ objections, her husband won court approval to let her die (or, less charitably but perhaps more accurately, to kill her) by removing her feeding tube. The state of Florida intervened, ordering the tube reinserted. Everyone claims to be representing her best interests and carrying out her wishes.

Though authorities would normally rely on a spouse’s decision, Michael Schiavo may be thinking of more than his wife. He is the trustee of what remains of the cash settlement of a medical malpractice verdict, minus substantial legal fees incurred in the ongoing court battle, which would be his to spend as he likes should his wife die. Money was supposedly set aside for her care, which he has refused to expand. He also is engaged to be married to a woman with whom he has had two children. And there is more than a little testimony that creates suspicion of his motives—such as his public complaint “When is that bitch going to die?”

After the Florida legislature authorized Gov. Jeb Bush to order reconnection of Terri Schiavo’s feeding tube, Michael naturally sued to void the law. And just as naturally, the Florida ACLU jumped in on his side to force his wife’s death.

It would be one thing to defend a person’s clearly expressed

desire to choose death in such circumstances. That, however is not the case here. Schiavo and some of his family members claim that Terri indicated no interest in subsisting on tubes, but he conveniently failed to remember such sentiments when suing for money for rehabilitative care. He also apparently told a girlfriend (acquired after Terri’s collapse) that he and Terri were too young to have considered the issue.

In any case, there is substantial medical dispute over the potential for improving Terri’s condition. Even if she did not desire to live on tubes, would she desire to die if rehabilitative care—barred by Michael—allowed her to function more independently, as many medical experts believe it would? The ACLU is jumping into the middle of a complex family dispute. Why presume that death is the right option, irrespective of whether state officials have intervened? After all, whose civil liberties—among those of Terri Schindler Schiavo, her husband, and her parents—should be protected, and how?

We desperately need an organization that works hard to stop censorship of speech, limit abusive government searches, and ensure that proper criminal procedures are followed. Such efforts are particularly important at a time when even normally sober legislators vote for bills they have not read restricting freedom in the name of fighting terrorism.

Often, however, the ACLU seems to see protecting freedom as merely a means of attacking family and traditional values that it does not like. Parents should not be consulted about educational decisions; religious taxpayers should have no say in the funding of public institutions; and the lives of children and the disabled should be sacrificed in the name of choice. How about an activist organization dedicated to defending both liberty and traditional values, freely expressed?

A Faux-Christian Focus

by Catherine Munch

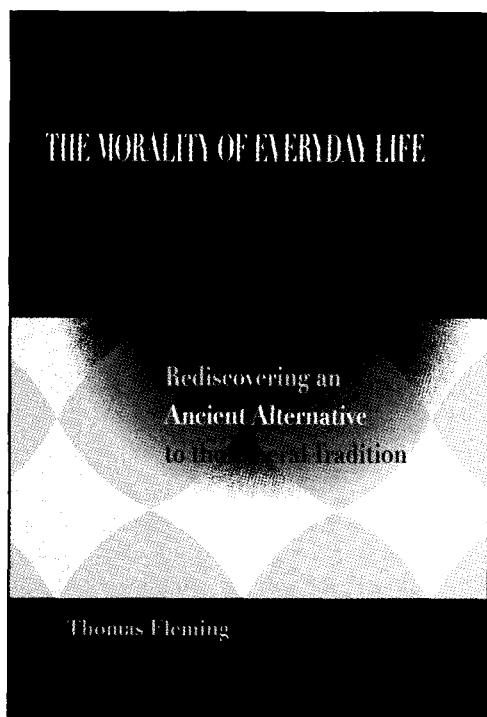
I have struggled all my life
with anger needed but suppressed,
with grief possessed but denied.

A faux-Christian focus
steals determination,
a too-placid acquiescence

subverts passion.
Even Jesus knew outrage,
horror, He begged for release.

How can God speak,
except by tugging
on the umbilical cord,

that excruciating lesson
that blinding rebirth
of unacceptable emotion?



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“Writing much more accessibly and knowledgeably than most modern professional philosophers, Fleming revivifies the body of thought with which civilization was created and without which it is disintegrating.”

—Ray Olson
Booklist

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Rediscovering an Ancient Alternative to the Liberal Tradition
by Thomas Fleming

What passes for conservatism today is really nothing more than the impossible moral and social theories of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, in which universal abstractions, such as democracy and equality, are presented as hard truths, when, in fact, they have never existed in any society in human history. Nonetheless, they are to be applied worldwide, at the tip of a spear (or cruise missile) if necessary. Dr. Fleming's alternative is rooted in “everyday life,” the local realities of blood and soil, custom and tradition, friendship and faith, and in the wisdom born of the experiences these realities beget. This wisdom finds expression in folktales and fables, in ancient Hebrew Scriptures and Greek philosophy, and in medieval casuistry. It is the method to solving ethical problems great and small, and it is the method that undergirds authentic conservatism.

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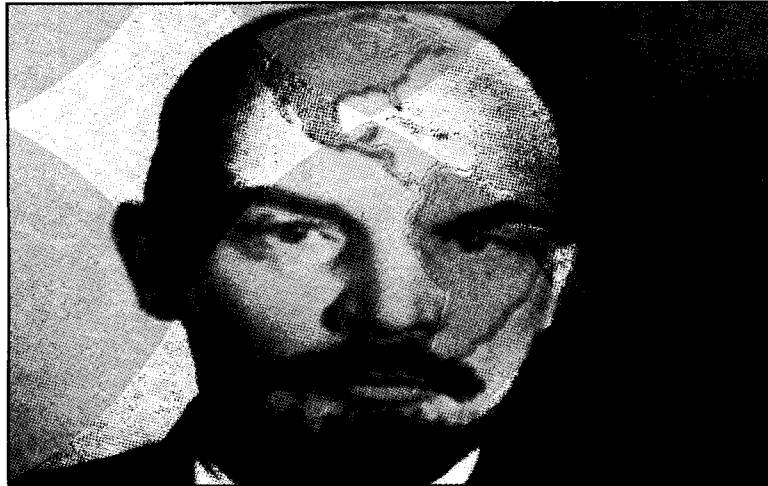
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The Myth of an Antiglobalist Left

Marx, Waiting in the Wings

by William R. Hawkins



As I write, Washington has just been subjected to a weekend of left-wing protests that even the conservative-oriented *Washington Times* estimated brought 500,000 demonstrators to the nation's capital. The March for Women's Lives, with its shrill advocacy of abortion, overshadowed the antiglobalization rally protesting the meetings of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and G-7 finance ministers. Since mobs disrupted the Seattle session of the World Trade Organization in 1999, the antiglobalization movement has staged protests at every major event associated with the "New World Order" of transnational corporate banking and industry.

That the two rallies should overlap is not surprising, but there is one aspect that has not received the attention it deserves, not even from critics on the right. The promotion of abortion is a direct assault on the family. There is another function of the family that is also under attack by the left, however: its role as a unit of production meeting material needs with dignity and independence.

The popular case for capitalism has long rested heavily on the image of the entrepreneur—the self-reliant, imaginative, independent business owner who is the backbone of the middle class and of republican government. This image is not weakened by the fact that most people are not entrepreneurs but employees. They benefit from the role businessmen play in their community and aspire to join their ranks. The ideal entrepreneur is seen working alongside his employees, rearing a family, and participating in local affairs. Personal success brings a wider prosperity and a sense of social responsibility.

The eclipse of the independent businessman (and woman) by the spread of the large corporation has bothered traditional conservatives. When entrepreneurs become managers, local

stores are driven out of business by large retail chains, and factories that serve as the basis for a community's economy are moved overseas by distant corporate directors, conservatives see vital pillars of social stability destroyed. And as the expansion of global supply chains have put the competitive squeeze on middle-class American incomes, families have been further endangered by the means chosen to cope with the stress.

The division of labor in the family between breadwinner and homemaker has been largely eliminated by the need for two incomes to meet expenses, often putting children at risk without parental supervision. Increasing consumer debt has undermined the dream of home ownership as refinancing feeds equity into the maw of deficit spending. The inability to save for retirement and to fund the education of children makes families ever more dependent on government programs such as Social Security and public schools.

The campaign against globalization and transnational capitalism would seem to give those on both the left and right a common enemy. The left, however, cares no more for the family business than it does for the family itself. Its agenda is entirely hostile to the concerns of conservatives across the board.

The foundation of the left's approach to all economic issues comes from Marx and Lenin. At the Washington rally, there was even a protester waving an old Soviet flag. In Marxist theory, the long-term trend of capitalism is for the largest firms to gobble up all of the smaller ones. The corporations with the greatest financial resources survive and expand, exploiting the economies of scale that come from mass production and market power. Ownership of industry becomes more centralized in fewer and fewer entities until a few great financiers control it all. This remaining capitalist class becomes increasingly wealthy, in contrast to the growing misery of the proletariat, which has been expanded by the downward mobility of the

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