## **CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS**

THE RIOTS IN FRANCE were occupying my thoughts at the end of a long day, when the telephone rang. It was a friend who lives in Metz, a quiet town that is a long train ride away from Paris. "I'm looking out my window," he said, "watching an apartment building going up in flames. A police helicopter is going back overhead, but nothing is being done to stop the rioters."

I had been watching the news since the disturbances broke out, and, on All Saints, I noted that, of nearly 300 stories on Google mentioning France, only one was an American reference to the violence. When the Washington Post and the New York Times finally made up their minds that the news could not be suppressed—always a painful decision for them to have to make—we quickly learned about French racism and the plight of the poor Arabs and Africans.

But, if a desire for better jobs is the reason why Muslim young men in France are rioting, raping, setting buildings and women on fire, what explains their behavior everywhere else in the world? In Egypt, where they riot to protest a secular government. In Pakistan, where they stage cross-border raids into India for the sole purpose of killing non-Muslims. In New Jersey, where they went into the streets to celebrate their victory on September 11.

To take the argument back to the source, how do we explain the actions of Muhammad and his followers, who looted, murdered, and raped their way across Arabia and the Middle East? Yes, it is true, an Islamic state, after a few decades of grotesque brutality, will generally let Christians and Jews alone. They need people to pay the taxes, handle the trade, and staff the bureaucracy-talents that are traditionally hard to find in Islamic states. Naturally, the success of non-Muslims will periodically arouse the righteous indignation of the "youths" who spend their time loafing on street corners, and a pogrom per decade is a small price to pay for living under George W. Bush's "religion of peace."

I shall never forget my first experience of this peace. I was traveling in Kosovo about ten years ago, looking at medieval churches, when I was set upon by a gang of Albanian youths who would have killed me, had my driver not had the good sense to carry an AK-47. In those horrifying minutes, I began to understood what it was like to be a Christian or Jew living under Islamic rule.

In fact, the non-Muslims of France are now experiencing what some of their ancestors endured in the days before Charles "the Hammer" beat the Muslims back into Spain. Do not expect French politicians to use such language. Interior Minister Sarkozy, after correctly describing the rioters as scum, now declares his government's eagerness to promote civil rights. France, like most countries of North America and Western Europe, has a leftist government, and only a fascist beast like Jean-Marie Le Pen or Charles de Gaulle would waste time talking about the French nation. Nations, in the eyes of leftists, are an optical illusion.

Leftists in France and the United States actually believe that the Arab youths, as victims of discrimination, are doing exactly what they ought to. Imagine you are a French intellectual approaching 60, forever dwelling on the glory days of the student riots in which you and your pals burned cars in 1968. Isn't this the same scenario? Dispossessed people struggling for freedom and dignity? As a former student protestor myself, I have to say that I have learned to hate my generation. We were nothing but trouble in the 60's, and, now that we rule the world, we are dangerous.

At the heart of the problem in France is not the teachings of a religion of violence but the stupid leftism taught in schools, preached in churches, and blathered endlessly in the media. If you do not believe that there are such things as societies or nations, then you will not object when your country is flooded with immigrants who bring an alien and hostile religion. Religion is all bunk, after all, so what difference can a few million Muslims make? Things are hardly any better here in America, where our government refuses to defend the border, even though evidence is mounting that Al Qaeda operatives are learning enough Spanish to pass as Mexicans before slipping across the border. Wait a few years, and both Paris, Tennessee, and Paris, Texas, will be experiencing the same fruits of multiculturalism that are being enjoyed in Paris, France.

Long before there was a France, there were Franks. They had stolen Gaul from the Romans fair and square, and they were not going to allow the land that fed their children to be taken away and given to feed the children of Muslim aliens. Until the French become Franks once again, until we Americans discover and defend our own identity, you can expect these hooligans to continue on their violent path, destroying every symbol of a West they envy and hate.

—Thomas Fleming

AMERICAN SOLDIERS stumble upon a secret dungeon and discover dozens of emaciated prisoners—173 of them, to be precise—who had simply vanished from the face of the Earth over the previous weeks and months. Horrified GIs walk wide-eyed through the stinking chamber of horrors whose inmates grasp with difficulty that their ordeal is over. Most of the latter bear obvious marks of torture as they are led into sunlight for the first time since their incarceration.

No, this is not Germany 1945, or Korea 1950, or Mogadishu 1993. The date was November 13, 2005. The jail in question was in a disused air-raid shelter of the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior; the prisoners were mostly Sunni Arabs; and their torturers were members of the Badr Organization, a pro-Iranian Shiite militia that has been given a free hand by Bayan Jabr, the minister himself, who is also a member of the Shiite Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq. The Supreme Council was at the head of the political ticket condoned by Grand Ayatollah Sistani that emerged as Iraq's strongest political force at national elections in January 2005 and now effectively controls much of the government.

Since then, members of the Badr have spread out of their strongholds in the south and killed dozens of men in a sustained campaign of intimidation in Sunni neighborhoods. Last June, media reports documented several instances in which Sunni men who had been detained by uniformed men in police vehicles were later found dead. The latter are also suspected of being involved in the killing of two lawyers trying to defend Saddam

Hussein and his associates. Oppressed for decades under Saddam, Iraq's Shiites are using the American occupation to take revenge on the Sunni community as a whole.

Sunni leader Adnan al-Dulaimi, who had complained to the government about abuses at three other Interior Ministry compounds, has called for an international inquiry. But the United States, whose own troops have faced accusations of prisoner abuse in Iraq, has ruled out any international involvement in an inquiry, saying that the Iraqi government is up to the job. American officials on the ground are perfectly aware that, if the investigation is left up to the likes of Bayan Jabr and his colleagues from the Supreme Council, it will be neither fair nor impartial. They nevertheless think that it is more important to maintain the Shiites' cooperativeness, as the entire Iraqi operation is turning into a nightmare, than to make too much fuss.

Their cynicism is understandable. If one group of Iragis is torturing another and torture is the right term, rather than the euphemistic abuse so beloved of the media and defense bureaucracy—they are only doing what the denizens of the Middle East have been doing to one another for millennia. Our friends Egypt and Saudi Arabia torture prisoners, as do our potential enemies Syria and Iran. Turkey does it but pretends otherwise for the sake of "Europe." Robert Fisk's latest book, The Great War for Civilization: The Conquest of the Middle East (Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), contains a sickening list of electric torture, burnt genitals, sawedoff heads, and mutilated corpses that is not for the faint of heart.

Such practices cannot be eradicated short of uprooting the political culture that breeds them. The task is formidable because of the burden of history and because torture is not deemed sinful per se in the Islamic world. The Koran is full of Muhammad's lovingly elaborate descriptions of agonizing torture; stonings; amputations and decapitations of infidels, sinners, and political dissidents ("those who spread mischief in the land"). In a culture devoid of any sense of natural morality, torture is OK if it is made legal—by the Prophet or by some other authority—and if it serves a good cause.

The United States should not tolerate Shiite mistreatment of Iraq's Sunnis, not because we expect to change the Iraqis' hearts and minds—that battle is lost and had never been winnable on present form—but because we need to engage the Sunni community. The Sunnis must be given a viable stake in postoccupation Iraq in order to enable U.S. troops to come home. Only a deal with the Sunnis may end the insurgency and create conditions for a withdrawal with some honor and dignity. That deal will necessitate the use of American political pressure to uphold Sunni interests vis-à-vis Iraq's Shiite-Kurdish alliance. If the Sunnis agree to enforce a cease-fire in their provinces and clean up Al Qaeda in Iraq, the price is well worth paying.

—Srdja Trifkovic

**RALPH REED** long ago proved that he is no conservative. After Pat Buchanan won the New Hampshire primary in 1996, Buchanan had a legitimate chance to overtake Bob Dole and emerge as the Republican presidential nominee. One of the major reasons he did not was the active (though largely behindthe-scenes) opposition of the Christian Coalition, its founder, Pat Robertson, and its executive director, Ralph Reed. Crucial to the eventual nomination of the Senator From Viagra was his victory in the South Carolina primary, a win that owed a great deal to Reed. Given that Buchanan was as viable a candidate as Dole at the time, Reed's support for Dole cannot be explained as a mere recognition of political reality. Instead, Reed's rejection of Buchanan clearly showed his preference for the type of temporizing, equivocal politics that had long characterized Dole, notwithstanding Reed's public support for the type of strong social conservatism long championed by Buchanan. Indeed, the disconnect was so great between the policies espoused by the Christian Coalition and the record of Dole that some wondered whether Buchanan's Catholicism played a role in the decision to support Dole over Buchanan.

More recently, others have begun to see through Ralph Reed. In June 2005, the Weekly Standard ran a devastating portrait of Reed by Matthew Continetti. According to Continetti, Reed spent his time under Robertson "draining the Christian Coalition of much of its explicitly Christian, or even religious, content," going so far as to suggest, in 1996, that "social conservatives ought to seek compromise on the abortion issue." Continetti also documented how

Reed's lobbying firm has earned millions urging evangelical Christians to support such diverse interests as Puerto Rican statehood, the Channel One "educational" television network, and most favored nation (MFN) trading status for Communist China.

Reed is not the only former Robertson lieutenant who has attempted to cash in on his political connections. In November 2005, the Legal Times ran an unfavorable article on Jay Sekulow, who has parlayed his leadership of the American Center for Law and Justice into "a lavish lifestyle—complete with multiple homes, chauffeur-driven cars, and a private jet." But at least the nonprofit organizations that paid out \$2,374,833 to purchase two homes used primarily by Sekulow and his wife are also spending some money to advance recognizably conservative goals. Reed, by contrast, is using the money from corporate clients to bamboozle conservative Christians and make himself rich.

According to a November 17, 2005, article in *World Magazine*, Reed raised millions from corporate interests to support permanent MFN status for Communist China and used that money to fund advertisements claiming that "A nation open to trade is a nation open to ministry" and that "an ill-advised and counterproductive trade war with China . . . would close the door to the Gospel." One of Reed's ads touting MFN for China went so far as to claim that "The progress of democracy and the salvation of millions of souls depends [sic] on it."

But Reed is gaining the most notoriety for his association with ex-lobbyist Jack Abramoff, whom Reed met when both worked at the national office of the College Republicans in 1981. Abramoff is now under a wide-ranging investigation by Congress and a criminal probe by several federal agencies stemming from his raising some \$82 million from six Indian tribes over three years to support their gambling interests. At least \$4.2 million of this money was directed to Reed's lobbying firm, which used the money to campaign against gambling in Alabama. What Reed never disclosed was that his campaign was being funded by the Mississippi Choctaws, who did not want their Mississippi casinos to face any competition from next door.

Many Alabamians opposed to gambling were shocked when they learned who had been bankrolling Reed's campaign. Dan Ireland, executive director

of the antigambling Alabama Citizens Action Program, told World that "I think anyone who is against gambling wouldn't take the money if they thought it had anything to do with gambling." Mr. Ireland is right, just as one doubts that any right-to-life organization would take money from one group of abortionists as part of a campaign to shut down a rival group of abortionists. But, sadly, many of those who have sought to turn conservative activism into personal profit apparently have no such qualms, so long as the checks keep coming.

—Tom Piatak

CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR Arnold Schwarzenegger's slate of fairly modest governmental reforms went down to stinging defeat on November 8, 2005, leading Californians to ponder a future in which their flawed celebrity governor has little power and the public-sector unions—the targets of most of the governor's failed initiatives—are more brazen than ever.

Following the election, I spoke at a panel titled, "Where Do We Go From Here?" My answer: Nevada or Arizona. Kidding aside, California might soon face another exodus of productive, middleclass residents and small-business owners, who have long been fleeing this costly, high-tax, regulation-happy state for destinations throughout the intermountain West.

"Where to go?" has long been the big question at barbecues and parties but was less asked after the recall of an incompetent governor (Gray Davis) who was controlled by the unions. There was a sense of optimism, given that Schwarzenegger at least targeted the right villains. But immediately after his special election defeat, the governor started making amends with the unions. Now, conservatives have reason to fear that a governor who never had a firm commitment to their principles is going to tack to the left to bolster his image.

Proposition 74 would have forced public-school teachers to wait five years, rather than the current two, before getting tenure. Prop. 75 would have forced public-sector unions to ask permission before taking money from members for politics. Prop. 76 would have slowed deficit spending by limiting the growth in government to the growth in revenues from the past three years, while giving the governor additional powers. Prop. 77 would

have handed redistricting to a retired panel of judges. The current system is rigged: In the last election cycle, not a single one of 153 legislative and congressional seats changed party hands.

Why did all of these propositions lose?

The governor waited months before responding to a dishonest ad blitz that depicted him as a foe of firefighters, teachers, nurses, and police officers. By the time he mounted a reply to this \$100-million union campaign, it was too little, too late.

The public also reacted against the initiative process itself, voting "no" on all eight statewide ballot initiatives. Every election, Californians face a mind-numbing array of complicated initiatives. Most conservatives and libertarians, myself included, are happy that the Progressive-era reforms of recall, initiative, and referendum exist, given that, without them, there would be no way to derail the state's taxing-and-spending machine. Nevertheless, the public sometimes gets sick of having to micromanage state government, and they show this by voting down everything.

Voters are fickle. They vote for bigspending Democrats for virtually every statewide office, then get mad when deficits surge. But they get mad, too, when anyone talks about slowing the growth of government programs. So they recall the old governor, replace him with an untested reformer, then get mad at the reformer when he tries to institute some of the reforms he promised them.

Schwarzenegger had a confusing strategy. He is so ideologically muddled—his cabinet has been described as the *Star Wars* bar—that it is sometimes hard to know what he is trying to accomplish. He never communicated his goals clearly to the public.

Even if the four Schwarzeneggerbacked initiatives had passed, they would not have ushered in dramatic changes. The big issue was symbolism. The governor took on the special class of people who run California—the unions and lost.

The state's budget is bloated because of the astounding salaries and benefits enjoyed by public-sector workers, and unfunded pension liabilities are now pushing the city of San Diego to the brink of bankruptcy and causing problems statewide. No matter how bad the situation gets, it cannot be fixed because of the stranglehold of the unions. We have reached critical mass, where those

who plunder the system for personal gain are too powerful to be stopped.

Maybe a move to Reno, Las Vegas, or Phoenix isn't that funny of an idea after all

—Steven Greenhut

AMERICAN SOLDIERS have, for more than 200 years, risked life and limb for their country. The politicians who recruited and sometimes conscripted the soldiers routinely painted military service in glorious terms: You are protecting America—even the entire world.

President George W. Bush continued in this tradition last Veterans Day. The Iraq occupation "is vital to the future security of our country," he claimed. And not just that of America. He told troops at Fort Bragg that "you are making possible the security of free nations."

Alas, it isn't true. In fact, Americans are dying in a conflict that is making the United States and the rest of the world less, rather than more, secure.

Telling the truth about political machinations in Washington and U.S. foreign policy in no way denigrates the service of our troops. In fact, their patriotic loss demands political honesty.

We now know that Baghdad possessed no WMDs and was not involved in terrorist attacks on the United States. Thus, the war was not necessary for American security. It certainly did not make the world more secure.

The occupation is proving to be even worse. The invasion has turned Iraq into a terrorist training ground, creating a cadre of violent jihadists, many of whom are now bleeding back to their home countries

The longer the occupation, the greater the hostility against America in Iraq and beyond—and the larger the number of potential terrorists created. Sadly, young Americans are dying in a campaign that actually is making their country less safe.

This has forced war advocates to emphasize humanitarian goals, contending that U.S. troops are doing good. But getting rid of Saddam Hussein was not worth 2,000-plus American lives, with so many more likely to follow.

Even granting the humanitarian case for removing a dictator, it does not justify a lengthy occupation. Hussein is out of power, facing trial. That objective has been achieved.

The argument that America is building

democracy is much weaker. Set aside the difficulty of creating a genuinely free society without the civil and political institutions necessary for sustaining a stable political order. Global social engineering, no matter how well intentioned, does not warrant sacrificing one's countrymen.

The President and others have attempted to justify the war by circling back to U.S. security: Our freedom depends on the freedom of others. But there is no reason to believe that regimes grow more pro-American as they become more democratic.

To the contrary, at least in the short term, democracy in such nations as Egypt, Jordan, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia would likely unleash greater anti-Americanism. That is no reason to stand against democracy, as the United States did during much of the Cold War. However, launching a militarized crusade to force elections in recalcitrant countries is imprudent at best.

What's left is a moral argument for spreading democracy. Democracy is laudable, but merely one aspect of a free society. Authoritarian, demagogic systems that hold occasional elections do not warrant significant effort by Washington, let alone the sacrifice of American lives.

Even the best intentions do not guarantee the best results. In Iraq, for instance, there is no guarantee that the most liberal constitutional provisions will be enforced; what Iraqi politics will look like even a couple years from now is impossible to know. Americans likely are dying today for something far different from U.S.-style political liberty.

This does not mean that democracy is not worth promoting; it is not worth pursuing through war, however. To say that the occupation of Iraq is not in America's interest is not to say that the sacrifices made by American servicemen and women are not noble. Rather, it means that their deaths are unnecessary and unjustified.

Indeed, despite the eloquent rhetoric in which conflicts—Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, and more—are routinely packaged, the crusade for democracy possesses an ugly underside. There is more than a little whiff of imperialism in the claim that the United States is entitled, unilaterally and coercively, to determine political systems in other nations.

This presumes that Americans have not only the right but the knowledge, understanding, and sophistication to reorder the world. It is hubris on a global scale. The point is not that Americans' intentions are not good, but that the consequences of war are usually unpredictable and often counterproductive.

"Power tends to corrupt," intoned British historian Lord Acton, and "absolute power corrupts absolutely." America as sole global superpower is not immune.

For what are Americans dying in Iraq? Nothing that justifies their heroic sacrifice.

We must win, explains President Bush and his allies. In effect, Americans must die to vindicate those who died before pursuing goals that have since been exposed as fraudulent or unrealistic. Political leaders in both parties must not be allowed to hide behind the soldiers whom they have put in harm's way. We must hold accountable the architects of this misbegotten war.

—Doug Bandow

**OBITER DICTA**: This issue marks the opening of the 30th volume of *Chronicles*. (Watch for a special 30th anniversary issue in July.) With this issue, we are pleased to add two new editors to our masthead. Contributing editor **Tom Landess**, of Charleston, South Carolina, has written numerous books, some of which have been published under his name. He is a former professor at Vanderbilt University, Converse University, Furman University, and the University of Dallas.

Corresponding editor **Claude Polin** is a professor of philosophy at the Sorbonne. He is the author of numerous works, including *La cité dénaturée*: Cité classique contre cité moderne.

In addition, with this issue, we are pleased to welcome back **Joseph Sobran** as a contributing editor. A syndicated columnist, lecturer, and speaker, Mr. Sobran is the author of three books, including his most recent, *Hustler: The Clinton Legacy*.

Our poet this month is **Paul Lake**, who teaches English and creative writing at Arkansas Tech. His second collection of poetry, *Walking Backward*, was released by Story Line Press. The author of *The Measured Word: Essays on Poetry and Science* (University of Georgia Press), Mr. Lake has published poems in the *Formalist*, the *Hudson Review*, the *Sewanee Review*, and the *Paris Review*, among others.

Our cover is a reprise of the July 1991 cover, by renowned artist **Warren Chappell**. The subtitle, "Small Is Beautiful," is in honor of E.F. Schumacher's book of the same title.

Our interior art is provided by our designer, **Melanie Anderson**. Mrs. Anderson received her B.F.A. from Northern Illinois University.

Additional interior art is provided by **Elizabeth Wolf** of Chicago. Miss Wolf received her B.F.A. from the School of Art at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



by Thomas Fleming

## Fortifying the Backyard

"Cincinnati is no mean city," one of my Greek professors used to say when he wanted to illustrate the use of litotes. I lived not too far north of Cincinnati for three years and spent a good deal of time in what was and is one of the few cities of the Midwest to survive the depredations of suburban sprawl and urban renewal. Built on seven hills rising up from the Ohio River, Cincinnati inevitably invites comparison with another city—this one, on the Tiber. The hills of Rome have often served to push apart the sections of the city into distinct neighborhoods, and a modern Roman from the artificial hill of Testaccio – a poor neighborhood built over a trash dump of potsherd and debris—will still claim to be the truest of Romans.

Rome on the Ohio has also been a collection of strong-minded neighborhoods. At a cocktail party, I once asked a lady where she was from.

"Wyoming."

"But I thought you were a native," I said in some confusion, though I ought to have recalled that Chilton Williamson's adopted state shares a name with a Cincinnati neighborhood.

Most vast conurbations are, in fact, divided into sections in which some semblance of village localism is maintained within the urban context of Florence or London. Neighborhood rivalries, even when they turn violent, are a healthy expression of man's devotion to a particular place, though I do not know if Chesterton's beloved Notting Hill is ready for secession.

Conflicts between rival clans and competing quarters were as much a feature of medieval Italy as were the wars waged between the cities of Tuscany. Like most Tuscan towns, Siena was notorious for the rivalry and lethal brawls among its contrade. The violence was eventually sublimated into the (now) semiannual horse race, the Palio delle Contrade. Though the Palio may seem like a phony spectacle concocted to attract tourists, jockeys and drummers of the neighborhoods take it as seriously as a medieval tourney, and, all over town, people proudly fly the symbolic banners of their section. When my daughter spent a term in Siena, it was a matter of usually friendly controversy in her host family that the husband and wife came from different *contrade*.

Although no match for Rome or even London, Cincinnati is a real place with its own traditions of good music and food (the gift of German settlers) and nicer manners than is common north of the Ohio. (The city was also settled by Virginians.) Cincinnati is home to a decent symphony orchestra and a music festival that takes advantage of the city's excellent church choirs. The school of music at the University of Cincinnati is almost as well known as the university's program in classical archeology.

It was the bust of Carl Blegen I saw this morning that set me to thinking of Cincinnati. The bust was set up in front of the little museum in Chora (which, in modern Greek, means merely "village"), where the many artifacts from Nestor's Palace are housed. Blegen was the University of Cincinnati archeologist who led the American team that excavated the site not far from the modern town of Pylos, perched at the entrance to Navarino Bay, where, in 1829, the fleets of France, Britain, and Russia destroyed the Turkish fleet and sealed the doom of the Ottoman Empire's 350 years of misrule in Greece.

Excavations are expensive, and UC's work at Pylos was financed by Mrs. William Taft Semple, whose fortune came from Procter & Gamble. What inspired philanthropy, to unearth a Bronze Age palace complex that had been visited by Telemachus in search of his lost father, Odysseus, while, at the same time, putting Cincinnati and its university squarely on the map—not just of Ohio or of the United States, but of the civilized world! I cannot think of another pairing of "sister cities" that has done so much good.

Modern Pylos is a pleasant town of some 2,000 souls, where the locals sit in the park drinking iced coffee, watching the ships pass by. This morning, there were two small naval vessels and two black submarines floating on the surface like exhausted whales. This afternoon, a container ship is drifting past my balcony, and there is only a freighter, painted pond-slime green, tied up to the dock



where yesterday, about 5:30, I watched a navy ship unload a squad of armed sailors who marched to the park, where they were joined by a military band and a bevy of local beauties dressed in folk costumes. As the band played, in turn, the "Marseillaise," "God Save the Queen," and the Russian and Greek anthems, the respective national flags were taken down and entrusted to the young ladies. Then, to the accompaniment of a crisp tune, the sailors marched back to the ship, followed by the girls gravely carrying the outspread flags. They parted at the waterfront, as the sailors marched onto the ship and the girls turned the corner and disappeared with their symbolic tributes to the victors of Navarino.

If I had a boat, I might sail up the coast toward Odysseus' island of Ithaca that lies across from the Echidnae Islands, where Don John of Austria and the Venetians (including a few ships from Kotor) battered the Turkish fleet that had sailed out from Naupactus, known in the West as Lepanto. Between the Echidnae and Naupactus lies another great scene of battle, Missolonghi, where Lord Byron found the death he had been seeking. Skeptic and rationalist that he was, Byron dreamed that Greece—and England — might be free, and, although he was as weary a world traveler as his Childe Harold and Don Juan, he gave his treasure and his life helping the Greek subjects win their nationhood. Now, the leader of Greece's "conservative" party, Prime Minister Karamanlis, supports the Turks' reentry into Europe. Though public opinion is solidly against admission of Turkey into the European Union, only the tiny Orthodox People's Party (see Makis Voridis's "Letter From Turkey" in this issue) has had the courage to speak out.

The Turks and the equally pernicious European Union seem very far away here