

Our Open (Borders) Secret

The long campaign of 2007-08, already sputtering out in fizzled squibs, childish ploys, and pointless personal re-creations, has offered few of the moments of drama or high comedy that Americans have rightly come to expect of our political candidates. The debates have been as drab as Hillary Clinton's pantsuits, as wooden as Barack Obama's imitation of Al Sharpton, and as predictable as Mitt Romney's second thoughts on abortion and immigration.

For comedy, the best act so far has been Mike Huckabee's appearances in South Carolina, where he was flanked by Chuck Norris and Ric "The Nature Boy" Flair, whom he introduced as his secretaries of defense and homeland security. I think I would rather vote for Naitch, who knows he is an entertainer and not an athlete, than for a politician who would use a rassler as part of his act.

But even Huckabee's clowning, deplorable as it is, falls far short of the performances of Bob Dole, backed up by Sam and Dave imitators singing "The Dole Man," or the unintentional parody of priggish liberalism performed by Happy Hubert Humphrey, or Jimmy Carter's antics (the "adultery in my heart" confession to *Playboy* or, best of all, his proclamation "I will never lie to you"—perhaps the greatest lie ever told by an American politician, and that is saying something). I have not even mentioned Jimmy's wonderful family—his beer-bellied brother Billy or his evangelist sister who "converted" pornographer Larry Flynt. Flynt was so touched by grace that he did an Adam and Eve spread in *Hustler*, naturally in the best of taste. At least we have our memories!

Populists have often provided campaigns both with drama and with actual issues. The peroration to William Jennings Bryan's "Cross of Gold" speech was still being memorized by at least one schoolboy in the 1950's, and Huey Long and George Wallace both scared the bejeezus out of the partitocrats. I do not know why Long was shot, but Governor Wallace certainly gave the GOP a good reason to eliminate him, as Martha Mitchell told the press before being hustled off to an institution. Chuck Colson, who went to Arthur Bremer's apartment allegedly to plant Democrat propaganda, might know something, but he is not talking.

Political assassination is as American as apple pie, and, as I told Pat Buchanan, when he mentioned something about reforming the Republican Party, the last man who tried that was James Garfield, and he was murdered by a professed "Republican stalwart," whose credo was "My party, right or wrong." Threatening to reform either party is like getting between the lion and his prey.

The nearest thing to a populist in this race is the mild-mannered Ron Paul. Despite his timid demeanor—in

the 50's he would have inevitably been compared to Wally Cox—Dr. Paul has his zany side: He believes in the Constitution of the old American republic, and he actually thinks it has some relevance for America today. God

bless him, I would vote for him if only for pretending to embrace such a heartwarming fantasy. As it is, I am convinced he believes what he says. (His candor and sincerity alone are enough to disqualify him as a serious presidential candidate in these United States.) Paul not only wants, in principle, to restore the republic but also opposes the continued erosion of states' rights and U.S. sovereignty.

Ron Paul's most flamboyant gesture in defense of the republic (one in which he is joined by the estimable Duncan Hunter) has been the denunciation of what is sometimes called the North American Union. The NAU is an alleged plot to merge the three countries of North America—the United States, Canada, and Mexico—into a union that will function something like the European Union. If the first step toward unification is represented by the "NAFTA Superhighway"—a free-trade hole in the American border stretching from Mexico to Canada—the apogee will be the issuance of a new common currency, the Amero.

World government has been a treasured bugbear of the fringe right since the heyday of the John Birch Society, and the current conspiracy has supposedly been cooked up by the Council on Foreign Relations, the Bush administration, and the usual globalist suspects. In 2005, the CFR issued a report, "Building a North American Community," whose aspirations were echoed in the Bush administration's plan "Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America" (SPP), released after a meeting among George W. Bush, Vicente Fox, and Paul Martin. The plan, which is predicated on the idea that "our security and prosperity are mutually dependent and complementary," calls for a joint task force to implement the goals: common security and a common market.

Representative Paul has denounced the SPP as "an unholy alliance of foreign consortiums and officials from several governments" that does not even enjoy the legal fig leaf of an official treaty. The more general conclusion he draws is that "decisions that affect millions of Americans are not being made by those Americans themselves, or even by their elected representatives in Congress," but by "a handful of elites [who] use their government connections to by-



pass national legislatures and ignore our Constitution.”

The introduction of the NAFTA Superhighway and the SPP into the campaign debate naturally aroused snorts of contempt, and not without reason. The alleged plotters—the leaders of three democratic governments (the United States, Canada, and Mexico), joined by the beloved Republican governor of Texas (Rick Perry) and the most prestigious policy experts at the CFR (which includes most of the important senior members of past administrations)—are no back-alley conspirators. The CFR, of which both Presidents Bush are members, has never made a secret of its commitment to world government, and the American presidents and leading economists who have supported NAFTA, GATT, and the WTO express the consensus, not of the people of America, but of the people who own America and dictate the editorial policies of both the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times*. If you find this statement shocking or surprising, you have not been paying attention to the world around you.

Only a good scout like Ron Paul (or Pat Buchanan before him) could sincerely believe that the erosion of sovereignty is an issue that will arouse the American electorate to cast off the chains of the party state that tells them how to treat their spouses and rear their children, whose children to reward with benefits at the expense of their own, and what to eat and where to smoke a cigar. As an impudent young man, I told my father that his generation—the “greatest generation”—had sold out our liberties by reelecting FDR and by accepting the withholding of federal income tax from our salaries. At least since the time my voice changed, I have known that I do not live in a free country: What I know about republican liberty I have learned from books.

There is no secret plot or conspiracy to undermine our national sovereignty, unless, by conspiracy, we mean the collective will of the political class. Messrs. Fox and Bush would be rightly outraged if they heard rumors of such suspicions. Opposing globalization today is like criticizing affirmative action, challenging women’s rights, or pointing out that homosexuals are a serious drain on our finite medical resources. All right-thinking people, whatever their party or orientation, support globalization. It is a movement whose virtues are so obvious that Cato staffers cannot even understand why anyone could be upset with the idea of a North American Union. Here is young Cato policy analyst Will Wilkinson on National Public Radio’s anti-business program, *Marketplace*:

There are some who believe a grave threat to American sovereignty looms over the horizon. A shadowy cabal, they say, is planning a massive “NAFTA superhighway,” a new North American currency, and a common market in goods and labor. It will all culminate in an E.U.-like North American Union. It turns out this is mostly fantasy. But the fantasy is more dream than nightmare. Because some aspects

of a North American Union would leave Americans and our neighbors both richer and freer.

You see, he explains to the rubes, in making it more difficult for migrants to enter the United States, we have also made it harder for them to leave:

Those who do come now are more likely to stay. And this has increased the permanent population of undocumented Mexicans. The best solution to America’s immigration problem is not a wall or a new crackdown on the hiring of undocumented workers. It’s NAFTA’s unfinished business: a common North American labor market.

The real problem of illegal immigration is that it is illegal. If we simply throw our borders open to the world and say, “Give us . . . the wretched refuse of your teeming shores,” the problem will go away, and we shall all live happily ever after, as Cato’s Steve Moore once said in a debate with Peter Brimelow and me, buying our fruit from Korean grocers and hiring foreign nannies to take care of the children our wives refuse to rear themselves. We could adopt the same approach to other social ills: Legalize rape, and the rapist will be less reluctant to seek treatment for his problem; legalize armed robbery, and the robbers will more readily pay taxes on their earnings.

For the libertarians at Cato, globalization, free trade, and immigration present no problem, because, as the editor of the *Wall Street Journal* once famously declared, “The nation-state is finished.” Many libertarians would add that the demise of nation-states has come none too soon, since they never should have existed. They are not entirely wrong. Nationalism has almost as many sins on its record as the Marxism that killed hundreds of millions in the 20th century or the classical liberalism/libertarianism that destroyed the social and moral order of Europe and the United States. One of the only true insights Marxists ever had was that the liberal ruling class

has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his “natural superiors,” and has left no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous “cash payment.” It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom—Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.

If the international system of large nation-states were to be replaced by confederations of regions and smaller com-

munities, a Chestertonian might rejoice in the possibilities. Such a scenario is hardly likely, however, because it is not in the interest of the groups who preside today over the breaking of nations.

Some form of international empire will undoubtedly be the result of the current drive toward reducing and eliminating national sovereignty. This is hardly cause for alarm. Although many conservatives would like to believe that the nation-state is a universal phenomenon, it is, in fact, an historical creation, hardly older than the 15th century. The states of France and England, to name just two successful examples, were created by ambitious monarchies with the assistance of the equally ambitious aristocrats and businessmen who saw the nation-state as a vehicle for their own interests.

Even churches joined the movement—not only the Protestant national churches of England, Scotland, and Germany that toadied to the rulers who confiscated Church assets and distributed them to their friends, but the pliant and venal Catholic bishops of France and, eventually, of the Habsburg empire. In any such enterprise, factions develop, and the grandchildren of Henry VIII's wool lords wrested power from Henry's sister's great-great-grandson, Charles I. However, the goal of the Roundheads was not to weaken the state but to strengthen it. The same can be said of the Jacobin lawyers who murdered the kindest man who ever sat upon the French throne, from Clovis to Napoleon III. Robespierre was as committed to nation-building as Louis XIV.

This is, of course, a Machiavellian point of view, one that concentrates exclusively on power. States and their governments can be looked at from several perspectives. From a Christian perspective, the rulers of this world have been empowered by God to protect the innocent and punish the wicked. From an ethnic and cultural point of view, our form of government reflects the character of the people: A system of loose monarchy, independent nobles, and sturdy freemen was an expression of the Anglo-Saxon character, just as the cult of plutocracy and celebrity, matched by the servility of the people, expresses the American character today. We laugh at the servility of the Indians and Pakistanis who choose party leaders on the strength of their last names (Gandhi and Bhutto), then go out to cheer for George W. Bush and Hillary Clinton.

In swearing eternal allegiance to the divinely appointed Clintons and Bushes, and in revering the traditions of the Morgans and Rockefellers, a prudent man might also take account of the basic facts of power. It was Gaetano Mosca who explained that the character of an elite impressed itself upon the character of the regime, and it is only a small step from Mosca's insight to viewing regimes as the vehicles by which an elite maintains and extends its wealth and power.

What can be said of the nation-state applies to all forms of government, including Marxist dictatorships: They serve the interests of the ruling class or party. Just as the commune of medieval Florence was a corporate association of

the greater guilds in the interest of the bankers and wool merchants, so (as Milovan Djilas argued) communist governments serve the interests of the party members who "eliminate every form of property except their own."

For the old union of the United States, the handwriting has been on the wall for decades. A century ago, national business interests used their clout to eliminate the power of state governments to interfere in their ability to expand and monopolize new markets. Now, since at least the 1970's, transnational business interests are working to eliminate the power of nation-states to interfere in their ability to expand and monopolize new markets. Global markets require global regulation in the interest of the global competitors who seek to be global monopolists, and global regulations require a global state with a global army, global courts, and global police. A Bill Gates or a Ross Perot can make billions by selling to select national governments, but trillions are available to those who will control a global government. Regional integration is only a necessary intermediate step. There is no point in complaining, just as there is no point in blaming the tiger who eats the missionary: The beasts are made this way.

International protests against globalization are led by Marxian leftists, who are the last people in the world to lead such a movement: They have been calling for some form of global regime since the Communist Manifesto. But American conservatives are scarcely in a better position. Since the creation of *National Review*, conservatives have sacrificed every principle of morality, tradition, and civilization upon the altar of a "free market" that has never really existed, certainly not in the United States. To be fair, all that conservatives ever really meant by the "free market" was big business. Today's conservative editorialists are only doing what they have always done: They are shilling for their paymasters. Their intellectual ancestors shilled for liberal nation-states, but, for the conservative-libertarian movement, transnationalism, as the kids would say, is the new nationalism, a pretext for destroying everything real that we have inherited and replacing the reality of peoples and their traditions with the virtual reality sold to us by Microsoft, Wal-Mart, and the Hollywood-New York axis that shapes our dreams.

Our rulers, cheered on by their mouthpieces in the press, have even succeeded in cashing out the family, not only by promoting divorce, public schooling, and adultery, but by driving mothers into the workplace, outsourcing family functions to soccer teams, and persuading families to dine at corporate-owned junk-food restaurants such as McDonald's or Applebee's. Viewed in this light, the North American Union will be a comparatively trivial step in the evolution of post-human America. ©



The Future of Tyranny

My mother, an incurable Democrat, God forgive her, adored Adlai Stevenson. To her mind, he and Richard Nixon offered the extreme and opposite poles of spiritual reality, like Saint Michael and Lucifer.

Among today's politicians, Sen. Barack Obama inspires the same rare kind of devotion. I am not suggesting that this passion is warranted; on the contrary, I think it is, *sub specie aeternitatis*, ridiculous. Obama is a reflexive liberal who was reduced to absurdity last summer by a simple question. He had just delivered a tirade against dogfighting when a member of his audience asked why, if he is a professing Christian, he finds dogfighting more outrageous than legal abortion.

Obama, of course, had no answer to this. Rather desperately, without his typical aplomb, he muttered the usual formulae of his party about women, "choice," and so forth, but he had nothing even slightly illuminating to say about the actual subject: the deliberate killing of innocent human beings before birth.

His duel with Hillary Clinton and her husband came to a head during the annual obsequies for Martin Luther King, Jr., an exercise in vacuous piety I have never been able to understand. King's courage commands my respect, but his words, now quoted like Scripture, are offensive to reason, quite apart from their hypocrisy. I found them irritating long before the sordid sides of his character were revealed. I felt disappointed in Obama when he seemed to assent to King's apotheosis without reservation. It seemed an abdication of his intelligence and a surrender to social pressure.

Still, Obama undeniably has that magical appeal to millions. Why? Much of it is because of his fine racial ambiguity. He is technically "black," in the sense that he has from his Kenyan father an African genetic endow-

ment, but he was reared by his Caucasian mother, and his style and bearing are utterly "white." He has no family history of slavery, segregation, sharecropping, the ghetto, adverse discrimination, and all that. Racial resentment seems entirely alien to him. He attended Harvard Law, for Pete's sake! He seems as reassuring to whites as a "black" man can possibly be.

Obama has become a symbol of the old liberal dream of integration and the color-blind society. He looks black, but sounds white. He dresses immaculately, looks "clean" (as Joe Biden so explosively observed), and has the manners of an Ivy League prof. His skin color is as superficial as liberals have always wanted to insist that race is. If he were your neighbor, you would have no impulse to burn a cross on his lawn, even if you were the grand dragon of the Ku Klux Klan.

Not since Colin Powell has a man of African lineage exerted such a powerful tug on the hearts of white Americans. And Powell, too, had no ancestors owned by white masters. That was a key part of his appeal: He was a free man and the son of free men, rather than a victim to whom whites felt they owed groveling apologies.

In the silly squabbles politely mis-called "debates," the Democrats have inanely called for some unspecified "change," never mind from what, or into what, though one assumes that they mean at least relief from George W. Bush, a prospect even most Republicans surely hunger for. We have seen plenty of change since 1861: The original constitutional order of 1789 has been turned into exactly the kind of polity it was supposed to prevent forever, a single "consolidated" state capable of usurping any powers it chose to grab. None of the presidential contenders realizes this, except for the magnificent Ron Paul, whom the others agree is quite irrelevant to the great issues we are said to face in 2008.



Against this background, Bill Clinton chose to assist his wife's presidential campaign by attacking Obama. This appeared a disastrous miscalculation—first, because it seemed an act of weakness (did she need her husband to do her fighting for her?); second, because it confirms the Clintons' reputation as a pair of unscrupulous old political cynics (ganging up on the younger man is unseemly); and third, because it will leave lasting hard feelings among two classes of Democrats (the blacks who have adopted Obama as "one of us" and the romantics who see him as an angel, an Adlai; and after all, it is ill advised to kick Adlai in the groin). On top of all that, the tag-team approach served to elevate the quick-witted Obama, who proved more than capable of taking care of himself.

Besides, the Clintons have become tiresome; and who wants to be hectored by her raucous voice for the next four years? Like so many American women, Hillary is very attentive to her looks, but quite unaware of how grating she sounds. Her election would be punishing to our ears.

But would she be any worse than any of the other hacks who are now begging for our votes? They all agree on the great legacy of centralized power that has supplanted the original plan since the days of Lincoln. It would be as hard to get rid of entitlements now as to restore constitutional government, though it would amount to the same thing. For the foreseeable future, we are to be burdened with what our forebears would know to be tyranny; what difference does it make who administers it? 