

YOUNG american REVOLUTION

YOUNG AMERICANS FOR LIBERTY

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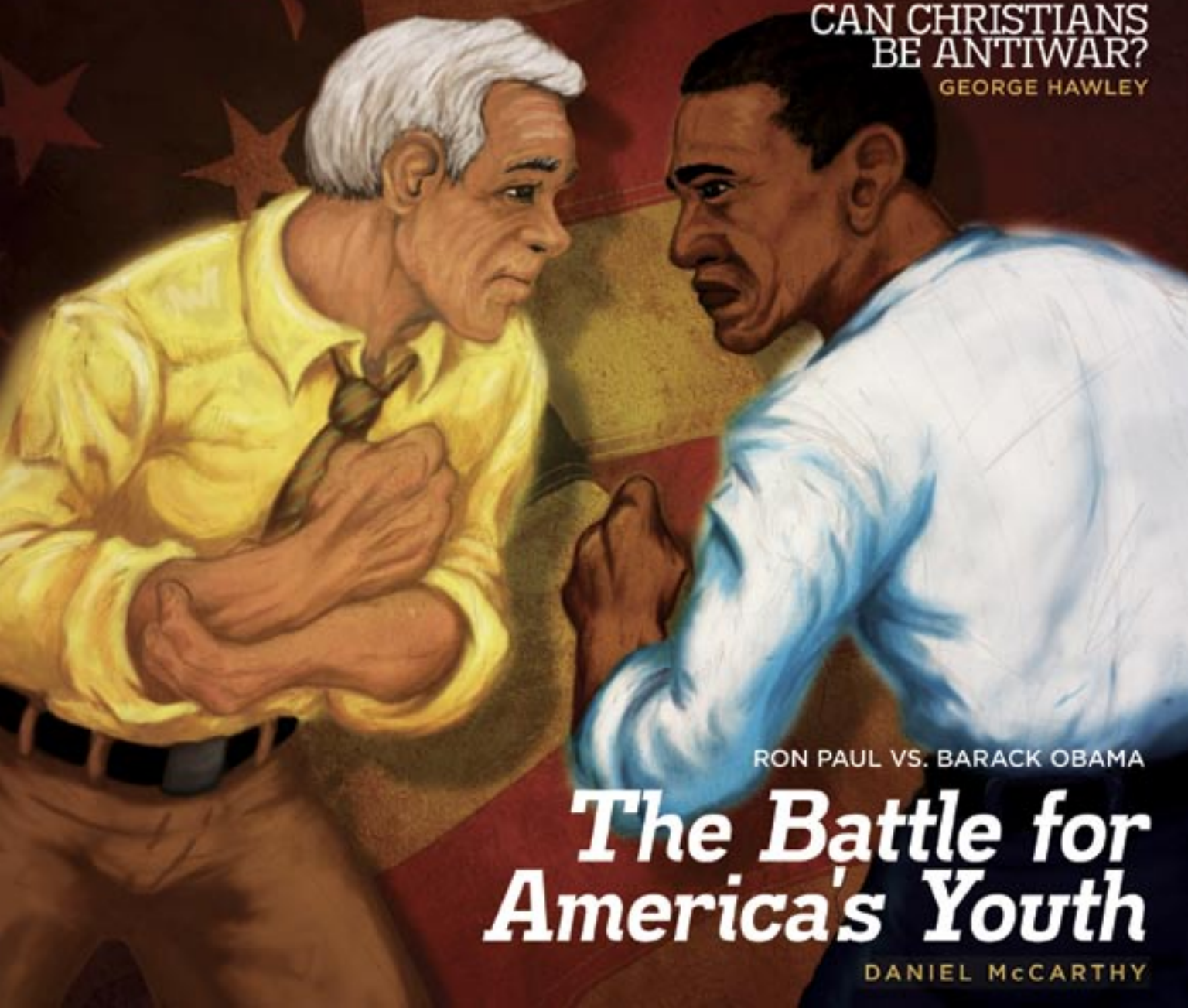
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The Battle for America's Youth

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Young Americans for Liberty (YAL) is to train, educate, and mobilize youth activists committed to "*winning on principle*". Our goal is to cast the leaders of tomorrow and reclaim the policies, candidates, and direction of our government.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

We are the Young Americans for Liberty (YAL). As Americans we recognize the God-given natural rights of life, liberty, and property set forth by our Founding Fathers. Our country was created to protect the freedoms of the individual and is directed by we the people.

We recognize that freedom deserves responsibility, and therefore we hold ourselves to a high moral character and conduct. Integrity emphasizes our stance towards action. Principle defines our outlook towards government. Peace and prosperity drives our ambitions towards our countrymen.

We inherit a corrupt, coercive world that has lost respect for voluntary action. Our government has failed and dragged our country into moral decay. The political class dominates the agenda with a violent, callous, controlling grip. And, for this we do not stand.

We welcome limited government conservatives, classical liberals, and libertarians who trust in the creed we set forth:

WE, as Young Americans for Liberty believe:

THAT government is the negation of liberty;

THAT voluntary action is the only ethical behavior;

THAT respect for the individual's property is fundamental to a peaceful society;

THAT violent action is only warranted in defense of one's property;

THAT the individual owns his/her body and is therefore responsible for his/her actions;

THAT society is a responsibility of the people, not the government.

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Young Americans for Liberty is the continuation of Students for Ron Paul (SFP). In less than 8 months, SFP established over 500 college and high school chapters in all 50 states and over 26,000 students joined the Ron Paul 2008 campaign.

The mission of Young Americans for Liberty (YAL) is to train, educate, and mobilize youth activists committed to "winning on principle". Our goal is to cast the leaders of tomorrow and reclaim the policies, candidates, and direction of our government.

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Opinions expressed in Young American Revolution are not necessarily the views of Young Americans for Liberty.

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Winning on Principle

In 1969 at the Young Americans for Freedom national convention in St. Louis, a young libertarian activist stood up, declared the Vietnam War an imperialist adventure, and burned a facsimile draft card. Hysteria ensued.

Since that moment there has been a deep divide between the conservative and libertarian factions on the Right. Both have gone on bitterly to pursue their own interests, neither side making much of an effort to mend the broken relationship and work toward shared ends.

Three decades later, conservatives can claim great political success, but have stood weak at the knees on principle. Conversely, Libertarians can profess their longstanding principles, but cannot point to any significant political victory. Both movements have failed to limit the size and scope of government and protect our personal freedoms. Our country has only suffered for it.

As conservatives stare in the mirror searching for direction and libertarians ride high on the successes of the Ron Paul presidential campaign, now is the time to reconcile the past and forge a revived spirit of "winning on principle."

Conservatives can no longer campaign for lower taxes, limited government, and personal responsibility then turn around and govern as corrupt big spenders in bed with special interests. This path has resulted in Democratic takeovers in the Congress and the White House. Long-term viability rests on sticking to principle and restoring the American ideals of life, liberty, and private property.

On the other hand, libertarians can no longer fight from the outside looking in. Saying, "I told you so" after losing elections year after year is no longer an acceptable excuse. Developing an attractive message, using the proper political vehicles, and supplying practical answers to mainstream issues are necessary now. Of course, this is not a suggestion to compromise on principle, but rather to shift tactics and get a better understanding of political realities.

Young Americans for Liberty is prepared to restore the split that occurred in 1969 and supply a future generation of leaders. We recognize that political success is only

honorable if we stand for principle, and that liberty will only prevail if we win politically.

- Jeff Frazee

Executive Director, YAL

Welcome to the Young American Revolution

In your hands you hold the premier edition of the *Young American Revolution*, the official publication of Young Americans for Liberty. YAL, with over 116 chapters developing, is a national political organization for students and young professionals between the ages of 15 and 39. YAL is an extension of the Students for Ron Paul groups that flourished during the 2008 campaign cycle. Our principles are sound money, peace, constitutionally limited government, and personal liberty. And our mission is to advance those principles through activism on every level—on campuses, in local political campaigns, and nationally.

Young American Revolution, published twice a semester (at least in these early days), takes its name and inspiration from Paul's best-selling book *The Revolution: A Manifesto*. But our contributors do not always speak with one voice: within these pages, you'll find libertarians, anarchists, traditional conservatives, localists, and others whose views are unclassifiable. What you won't find are rote recitations of the usual Left-Right, conservative-liberal talking points. For that sort of thing, turn on Fox News or watch Keith Olbermann.

With America embroiled in two no-win wars and mired in a debt crisis—which may soon be compounded by a money crisis—the political establishment has effectively discredited itself. Voters registered their disgust with the Republican Party in 2006 and 2008. But before long, Barack Obama and the Democrats will feel the public's fury. Whatever hope is left for our republic resides not in the White House or in any political party, but with the next generation. YAL is working to shape them in the image of the revolution that launched our nation—a revolution against centralized power. We hope you will join us.

- The Editors

The End of Big-Government Conservatism

Nixon, Ford, and both Bushes expanded the state and shrank their party.

W. James Antle III

Despite George W. Bush's many failures as president, in one area he was an unqualified success: demonstrating the impossibility of big-government conservatism. For decades, clever pundits and Republican apparatchiks have been touting this self-evident oxymoron as the path to political success. After eight years in practice, it has proved to be the road to irrelevance and ruin—politically as well as financially.

Ideologies that celebrate the swollen state while traveling under the name “conservative” are nothing new. As the Old Right faded into the modern American conservative movement, Eisenhower-era “Modern Republicans” preached a “dynamic conservatism” that was to be “conservative when it comes to money and liberal when it comes to human beings.” This was followed by the Rockefeller Republicanism of the 1960s, which was essentially Kennedy-Johnson Democratic politics for the country club. Later, the neoconservatives sought to instill reverence for their old patron saints FDR, JFK, and LBJ among their new Republican allies.

But the big-government conservatism of the Bush era pretended to be a continuation of the American Right's limited-government traditions rather than a Tory socialist repudiation of them. It promised low taxes, less regulation, and free markets, an “ownership society” instead of a cradle-to-grave welfare state. President Bush contrasted his vision with that of the Democrats: “a government that encourages ownership and opportunity and responsibility, or a government that takes your money and makes your choices.” What this new conservatism did not aim to do,



Illustration by Kevin Tuma.

however, was directly reduce government spending.

Why? Because spending cuts were for “green eyeshade” proponents of austerity, political losers. Since World War II, Republicans have launched direct assaults on federal domestic spending three times: the “Do Nothing” 80th Congress of 1947-48, which under the leadership of Sen. Robert Taft slashed even military spending; the 97th Congress of 1981-82, which approved the less ambitious—but still terrifying for liberals—Reagan budget cuts; and finally the 104th Congress of 1995-96, Newt Gingrich’s “Republican Revolution,” which dared to propose slower spending increases for Medicare.

Republicans suffered losses at the ballot box each time. In 1948, the GOP lost its House and Senate majorities—the party’s first since the early 1930s—and unpopular President Harry Truman won re-election in no small part by running against the Do Nothing Congress. Republicans lost 26 House seats in 1982, though the party’s hold on the Senate and the presidency remained intact. In 1996, Bill Clinton replicated Truman’s death-defying feat by winning what once seemed an improbable second term as he promised to protect spending on “Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment” from the Gingrich Congress. The Democrats also picked up eight House seats.

In response to this last Republican setback, George W. Bush’s political circle formulated “compassionate conservatism” as a marketing slogan for the idea that voters could have their tax dollars and eat them, too. Fred Barnes, the political reporter and *Weekly*

Standard executive editor who popularized the term “big government conservatives,” still describes them best. “They simply believe in using what would normally be seen as liberal means—activist government—for conservative ends,” Barnes wrote five years ago, “And they’re willing to spend more and increase the size of government in the process.” That means accepting or even expanding the social-welfare programs that Democrats built while channeling the dollars toward faith-based initiatives, abstinence-only sex education, marriage-promotion schemes, and other projects amenable to GOP constituencies.

“The essence of Bush’s big government conservatism is a trade-off,” Barnes continued. “To gain free-market reforms and expand individual choice, he’s willing to broaden programs and increase spending.” *Grand New Party* authors Ross Douthat and Reihan Salam put it a bit differently: “Rather than target the ‘supply-side’ of government, or the amount of government spending, Bush’s focus was on the ‘demand-side,’ or the need for government services.”

Unfortunately, it did not work out this way in practice. The ballyhooed prescription-drug benefit added at least \$8.7 trillion to Medicare’s unfunded liabilities and No Child Left Behind helped drive an 18 percent annual increase in federal education spending, each without even the meager “free-market reforms” initially proposed. Domestic discretionary spending—excluding all homeland-security expenditures, even though they deserve to be included—increased more between 2001 and 2006 than during Clinton’s entire eight years in office.

None of the “conservative” reforms diminished the demand for government services the way welfare reform reduced the welfare rolls in the 1990s. By 2006, enrollment in 25 major federal programs—from Medicaid to Pell Grants—had increased 17 percent over 2000, while the population increased by just 5 percent over the same period. The economy played a role, but so did the demand-side logic of big-government conservatism: To help encourage work over welfare, Congress has expanded eligibility for some other public aid programs. Allowing low-income workers who own cars worth more than \$4,650 to qualify for food stamps extended the benefit to an estimated 2.7 million people, buying more “independence” from one program with greater dependence on another.

By the end of Bush’s term, the Republican Party was identified with costly bailouts of Wall Street and the automobile industry, to say nothing of precursors to Barack Obama’s \$800 billion stimulus package. There were honorable holdouts among congressional Republicans—the Wall Street “rescue” had to be passed with Democratic votes; the Big Three bailout was stalled by Senate Republicans—but the end result was that a Republican president helped transform a \$128 billion annual budget surplus into a \$1.2 trillion deficit.

If big-government conservatism was a failure on its own terms as policy, it has proved equally disastrous politically. In just four years, unified Republican control of the elected branches of the federal government has been replaced with Democratic dominance. Republicans have lost 50 House seats in the last two elections and Democrats are just one vote away from a filibuster-proof

60-seat Senate majority. Obama, once arguably the most liberal senator, won 53 percent of the vote—more than either Clinton or Jimmy Carter ever drew while pretending to be moderates. The GOP has been knocked down to pre-1994 levels in Washington. According to some polls, identification with the Republican Party is down to pre-Reagan levels.

At this point, Rovian spinners would surely protest that things would have been much worse if Bush had tried to cut spending. Republicans would have lost their majorities even earlier if they tried to touch Medicare like Gingrich or Social Security cost-of-living adjustments like Reagan. Bush might not have been re-elected, they argue, if he hadn’t signed the Medicare prescription-drug benefit or No Child Left Behind. But these were short-lived gains at best.

By 2006, the Democrats had regained their traditional advantages on education and Medicare. In fact, they were claiming that Republicans were shortchanging seniors by not including price controls in the drug benefit and shafting children by leaving No Child Left Behind underfunded. Just as was the case with the Bush immigration amnesty gambit, the Republicans did not expand their party’s base. They merely entered into a bidding war with the Democrats that they could not win.

Worse, big-government conservatism contributed to the major national problems that tore down the Republican majorities. Bush initiatives to increase minority home ownership and give loans to borrowers with bad credit helped fuel the housing bubble, which has since painfully burst. Like Clinton before him, Bush encouraged the Federal Reserve’s loose monetary policies and artificially low interest rates. His borrow-and-spend fiscal policies necessitated the printing of more money. And let us not forget the staggering political costs of the war in Iraq, the biggest big-government conservative project of them all.

The political case for big-government conservatism was always suspect. Republicans held onto both houses of Congress and actually gained two Senate seats after the government shutdown in 1996. Republicans held onto a 54 to 46 Senate majority after the Reagan budget cuts in 1982, and President Reagan himself was reelected in 1984. Even the small-government losses of the Taft Republicans in 1948 and Barry Goldwater in 1964 paid dividends for the conservative movement over the long term, the first by staving off a European-style social democracy and the second by facilitating a conservative takeover of the Republican Party.

By contrast, big-government Republicans Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, George H.W. Bush, and George W. Bush were all followed by unified Democratic control of the federal government. Dwight Eisenhower—though admittedly a taxpayer’s best friend compared to Bush—was followed by John F. Kennedy. Rockefeller Republicanism proved good for politicians like Nelson Rockefeller but never helped the GOP as a whole out of its minority status. Unlike the Rockefeller Republicans, however, the mainstream conservative movement embraced big-government conservatism as practiced by Bush because it continued to promise tax cuts.

Yet the era of tax cuts without spending cuts is coming to a close. Even in the extremely unlikely event that President Obama

If big-government conservatism was a failure on its own terms as policy, it has proved equally disastrous politically.

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fails to enlarge our public spending commitments—and even without counting the Troubled Assets Relief Program or the bailouts of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac—federal spending is scheduled to rise to 24 percent of GDP in 2020 and 40 percent by 2050. All that is needed is for the Baby Boomers to retire and existing government programs to continue to grow on autopilot. Borrowing is off the table with \$1 trillion annual deficits as far as the eye can see and \$50 trillion in unfunded liabilities for the major entitlement programs. Without spending cuts, federal tax revenues will need to rise by at least 4 to 7 percent of GDP per year for the next 20 years.

That translates into a \$550 billion to \$700 billion tax increase in today's dollars. And that's assuming the Obama administration does not grow government beyond the levels already demanded by current law and the country's demographics. Forget any future tax relief or saving the Bush tax cuts, which are already scheduled to expire in 2011. Big government will make conservatism—at least the kind of economic conservatism Republicans have campaigned on since the 1980s—mathematically impossible.

Ronald Reagan succeeded in driving down confiscatory marginal income tax rates, a signal political achievement of the conservative movement. But he failed to shrink the federal government, despite early efforts to contain domestic spending. Reagan won a 9.7 percent cut in inflation-adjusted nondefense domestic discretionary spending during his first term, only to watch such outlays rise by 0.2 percent in his second. Military expenditures and entitlement spending grew throughout his presidency, contributing to record deficits.

The Reagan tax cuts helped promote dazzling growth with some noticeable Laffer Curve revenue re-flow effects, convincing many conservatives that supply-side economics offered them

a way to cut taxes while leaving most major spending programs intact. In truth, public concern about rising deficits led to erosions of the tax cuts almost as soon as they were enacted. The business tax cuts were diluted in 1982, Social Security taxes went up in 1983, and the top marginal income tax rate—lowered all the way to 28 percent in 1986 from a once-staggering 70 percent—was raised in 1990 and 1993. Even after the Bush tax cuts, the top income tax rate remains higher than it was when Clinton took office.

By briefly offering what David Frum described as “post-Great Society government at pre-Great Society prices,” the Reagan years deluded conservatives into believing that deficits—and big government—don't matter. In fact, the spending increases nearly jeopardized all the work Reagan did to lower tax rates. Yet it took George W. Bush to illustrate the contradiction most clearly: Bush's record on spending was much worse than Reagan's, and so was his rhetoric. Reagan's speeches kept conservatives focused on the evils of government growth even when his actions did not.

“There's a clear cause and effect here that is as neat and predictable as a law of physics,” Reagan said in his farewell address to the nation in January 1989. “As government expands, liberty contracts.” This is a sharp contrast with Bush's famous line, “When somebody hurts, government has got to move.” The American people agreed and voted Democratic.

Something is hurting, all right: conservatism in a new era of bipartisan big government. Smaller government—preferably returning to the limits imposed by the U.S. Constitution—is the only cure. Those who would lead the Republican Party must be judged by that standard.

W. James Antle III is associate editor of The American Spectator.

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The Battle for America's Youth

Obama thinks he owns the future. Ron Paul begs to differ.

Daniel McCarthy

Barack Obama won something bigger than the presidential election last November. By laying claim to the hopes as well as the votes of millions of young Americans, he also won the future. Just as Ronald Reagan's 20-point victory in the 1984 youth vote presaged the Republican takeover of Congress a decade later, Obama's success among young voters foretells a Democratic wave to come. If Republicans are to have any hope of turning back that tide, they must heed the man who excited more students and young people than any other candidate for the GOP nomination—Ron Paul.



Ron Paul vs. Barack Obama. Illustration by Anthony Rousseau.

Republicans have yet to comprehend the magnitude of their loss. In the 2006 midterm elections, young people voted against the GOP by a margin of more than 20 points, 60 to 38 percent. Two years later, they preferred Obama over John McCain by almost 40 points, 68 to 30 percent. The youth vote was big enough and Democratic enough to tip North Carolina into Obama's column—young voters made up 18 percent of the Tar Heel State electorate, and Obama won them by a stunning 74 to 26 percent. These lopsided figures are not just the product of two bad election cycles for Republicans. A Pew Research Center survey conducted between October 2007 and March 2008 found that voters under 30 now identify with or lean toward the Democrats by 58 percent to 33 percent. The Grand Old Party is looking older and less grand by the minute.

Don't say that voters under 30 don't know what the Republican Party is all about. More than a third of their lives has been spent under Republican rule—eight years of Bush, 12 years of Republican control in the House of Representatives, four years of one-party government. Young voters have seen clearly what Republican power means: two wars, a toppling economy, corrosion of constitutional liberties, and bigger government beneath layers of cant and hypocrisy. They made a sensible choice in rejecting

the party of Gingrich and Bush.

But students and young voters did not turn away from every Republican. One in particular got campuses roaring with chants of "End the Fed!" Texas Congressman Ron Paul fell short of his party's presidential nomination. But like Obama, he won a dedicated following among America's youth. He did this while rejecting the politics of class and cultural resentment that had served the GOP so well since the days of Richard Nixon. Instead, Paul challenged the bipartisan consensus that has kept two subjects above all others off the table for public discussion—military interventionism and monetary policy. He predicted the economic collapse well before it happened. He confronted New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani with the discomfiting context behind the 9/11 attacks: that U.S. interference in the Middle East has won us nothing but enmity. Paul's courage in these and other stances—from his defense of civil liberties to his call for strict adherence to the Constitution—galvanized young people. Some 500 Students for Ron Paul chapters, totaling over 26,000 members, sprang up during the 2007-2008 primary season. This youth appeal also translated into overwhelming popularity in online forums and polls. The Ron Paul generation not only has numbers on its side, but technological savvy, too.

So the battle is on. President Obama has in his column the bully pulpit of his office, the sympathy of the mainstream media, and entrenched power on campuses—in faculty lounges, administrative offices, and a plethora of statist student groups from the College Democrats to the affiliates of Campus Progress. Athwart Obama stands Ron Paul with only his convictions and Young Americans for Liberty—the next step in the evolution of Students for Ron Paul—behind him. This is an uphill struggle for Paul and YAL. But the odds are not as long as they seem because the force of new ideas lies with liberty, not with the president.

Obama won in 2008 by breaking with the image of the old Democratic Party—the stereotypes of angry minorities, militant feminists, union thugs, and sexual exhibitionists. “Hope” and “Change” may have been his mantras, but he presented himself as a centrist eager only to return the country to peace and economic normality. Unfortunately, as his rhetoric during the campaign suggested, and as his policies so far demonstrate, Obama’s plan for America is really more of same: continuing the Iraq War through 2012, sending a new surge of troops into Afghanistan, bailing out the big banks, and serving up more federal pork. These policies, or their close cousins, were disastrous under Bush. What makes anyone think they will work better under Obama?

Yet as tired as Obama’s corporate liberalism and Keynesian economics may be, he crushed McCain because the Republicans’ ideas are even less credible. In foreign policy, the GOP has repackaged surplus Cold War paranoia as a perpetual War on Terror. (And, for the really nostalgic types, neoconservative pundits still rattle their sabers at Russia as if 1989 never happened.) In economics, the deep and complex ideas of Hayek and Mises have been jettisoned for the back-of-the-napkin bromides of supply-side. (The trouble is, while the supply-siders are right that cutting taxes can grow the economy, they are wrong to believe that deficits don’t matter.) In culture, meanwhile, movement conservatives still insist that abortion and promiscuity will go away if only Christians vote for more Republicans. But the result is always more war abroad; more wiretapping but never more morality at home.

Obama at least had a fresh style. But young people who want new thinking will not find it in an administration packed with veterans of the Clinton and Bush eras. The liberty movement, by contrast, looks like nothing else that American politics has seen. It’s wildly eclectic, with old philosophical roots but green buds and branches.

The older constituents of this coalition are well known: libertarians, especially those schooled in Austrian economics; Goldwaterite conservatives, including Barry Goldwater Jr. himself; constitutionalists ranging from rugged Jeffersonians to moderates who only want fiscal sanity and a modicum of respect for civil liberties. But the Paul movement and Young Americans for Liberty also draw strength from new currents. Consider the emerging band of “left conservatives” (including blogger Dylan Hales, who contributes to this issue). They combine anti-corporatist sensibilities with a respect for established folkways, whether in city neighborhoods or rural communities. They’re reclaiming the humane side of the New Left for conservatism—the traditions represented by Norman Mailer, Karl Hess, Paul Goodman, and Carl Oglesby. Crucially, they avoid the fatal mistake of their right-wing counterparts—that of opposing a straw-man caricature of “the Left” instead of the brutal realities of the State.

Left conservatives are relatively few. More plentiful are the lo-cavores, whose growing popularity can be traced in part (but only in part) to Michael Pollan’s bestsellers *The Omnivore’s Dilemma* and *In Defense of Food*. These are the “crunchy cons” and localist libertarians whose interests range from non-factory farming and raw milk to peace and political decentralization. Polyface Farms proprietor Joel Salatin—supporter of Ron Paul, author of *Everything I Want to Do Is Illegal*, and in his own words a “Christian-libertarian-environmentalist-lunatic farmer”—is the archetype of this move-

ment. Berkeley doctoral student and blogger John Schwenkler is one of its brightest young thinkers.

Still taking shape is a new hard-money uprising. The revolt against central banking that Paul touched off, which even led to students burning Federal Reserve notes at his campus lectures, is gaining momentum. Paul himself is its leading figure, of course, and Thomas E. Woods Jr.—not yet 40 and already the author of nine books—is fast becoming the voice of the younger generation’s rejection of fiat currency and inflation.

Other new ways of thinking may continue to hive off the liberty movement. In the past decade, the debate over religion in public life has again heated up, pitting fundamentalist Christians against militant atheists, with occasional input from feel-good, Zeitgeist-chasing evangelicals like Joel Osteen and Rick Warren. Absent from the discussion so far has been any representative of the traditional American synthesis of soft-spoken but sincere religious faith that avoids the temptations of political power. Congressman Paul, a believer who never uses his faith for partisan advantage, has something to teach the combatants on both sides. His example, together with a resurgence of interest in Just War theory, may portend a return to religious peace instead of culture war.

These fresh philosophies are pulling in young people. This is real change—even revolution. But will a dying Republican Party embrace it?

Not willingly. The GOP is historically even more hostile to liberty than the Democratic Party is. But for a brief time between the 1930s and the 1960s, a few Republicans of firm principle fought with every ounce of their beings against the push to transform

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our battered republic into a presidential empire. Their names—Robert A. Taft, Howard Homan Buffett, H.R. Gross—are largely forgotten. Yet these men imparted to the Republican Party its subsequently undeserved reputation for fiscal responsibility and devotion to liberty. They inspired the conservative movement that later distorted and betrayed their legacy—though occasionally, in a figure such as Barry Goldwater, one could see a glimmer of the Old Right spirit through the cloud of Cold War ideology. Ronald Reagan spoke their language but rarely practiced what they preached.

At the height of the Cold War, when any kind of resistance to the New Deal/New Frontier/Great Society welfare state was revolutionary, young activists were the conscience of conservatism. Students fortified the backbone of the effort to draft Goldwater for the Republican nomination in 1960. When that failed, the students for Goldwater formed a new group, Young Americans for Freedom, that September at the Sharon, Connecticut home of William F. Buckley Jr. YAF later formed the nucleus of support for Reagan's first presidential bid in 1968. Although the 1960s are typically thought of as a decade of left-wing campus agitation, YAF was longer-lived and arguably more influential than Students for a Democratic Society.

But in 1969, with the Vietnam War raging, YAF came unglued. Libertarians and anti-Communists split over draft resistance and drug policy. Shorn of its most uncompromising antistatists, YAF drifted into the orbit of the Nixon administration. This was the beginning of its end, since YAF could not compete as a GOP auxiliary with the College Republicans and Young Republicans. Libertarians, meanwhile, looked back to 1969 as their declaration of independence. But attempts to institutionalize a separate libertarian movement enjoyed only limited success. The libertarians built a number of think tanks, but the Libertarian Party never be-

came a serious force in politics. And without any strong antistatist influence, the GOP was soon ripe for the takeover by former Lyndon Johnson/Hubert Humphrey/Scoop Jackson liberals—later known as neoconservatives. Libertarians had done the right thing by severing their ties to the militaristic, anti-civil-liberties Right, but the price they paid was political irrelevance.

Now times have changed. Ron Paul has shown that a pure constitutionalist can get elected—with great difficulty—in the modern Republican Party. His success in cultivating a young and diverse base during the 2008 primary season proved that there is a rising constituency for peace, sound money, and constitutionally restrained government. Young Americans for Liberty today represents the path not taken by the conservative movement in 1960—the hard but rewarding road of antistatist principle.

Therein lies the secret of Ron Paul's success. Principle is what young Americans want—coherent ideas, not ranting ideologues. Frank Chodorov, the radical libertarian who founded the Intercollegiate Society of Individualists (ISI) in 1953, said it well: individualism, then as now, “is quite new and quite different these days. And it is, in the true sense of the word, revolutionary. If it is presented that way, as an ideal worth fighting for, it will capture the imagination of youth.”

Ron Paul vindicated Chodorov's hope. Obama and the statist Left have their top-down organizations like Campus Progress. The graying Republican establishment has the College Republicans. But only Young Americans for Liberty is a grassroots youth movement with a serious political philosophy—to the right of the Right and to the left of the Left.

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Molding Statists

How institutions of higher education have become tools of the state

Kelse Moen

Control the school curriculums and you control the populace: that was the program of every 20th-century dictator worth his salt. It was the principle hauntingly evoked in Orwell's 1984, and it guided all those Hitlerian and Stalinist youth movements that still send chills down civilized people's spines. But in America, education is free and wholesome, right?

American education may be less vulgar than its fascist, Nazi, and Communist counterparts, less excessive in its veneration of the state and those who control it. Yet the outcome is remarkably similar: to mold generations of outright statists.

Our institutions of higher education have become tools of the state. Even private universities which had long and noble histories of providing a quality, classical education now produce legions of undifferentiated automatons with bachelor's degrees who think—if they think at all—that Lincoln was the Great Emancipator, that the New Deal ended the Great Depression, that Homer is just a *Simpsons'* character, and that Plato is a mushy toy for children. The more politically astute graduates dream of working at Washington, DC, think tanks or as lobbyists or will join our interminable government bureaucracies. The less politically engaged will go on to work as accountants, as lawyers, as office managers without ever having to formulate an original thought. In short, the political are co-opted, and the apathetic will remain so.

How did higher education fail so badly? How has an entire profession whose maxim has lately been “challenge all received authority” become a mouthpiece for the most powerful authority the world has ever seen? Part of the answer lies in transformation of the university from a place that cultivated an educated elite into a mere stepping-stone for the general public on the way to unrelated careers outside of the academy. This has had a depressive effect on the quality of a college education. Not that wider access to higher education is necessarily bad; the problem is that the vast majority of people who go to college have no real scholarly interests. They just know that four years of this will make them more money later, so they do it. This mass influx has caused Weimaresque degree inflation, hurting serious students by reducing the value of a bachelor's degree to nearly nothing, while the



Colleges and universities inculcate a complacent love of government.

job seekers have wasted four years of their lives in which they could have been making money instead learning skills that will be absolutely irrelevant to their careers as accountants and middle managers.

The rise of the social sciences has also contributed to declining standards of education. Even the name has a cold, collectivist ring about it. These, of course, are the “sciences”—sociology, psychology, political science, economics—that attempt to reduce human behavior to a series of dots on a graph and to deduce from that what is best for individuals and society. The effect is literally dehumanizing.

Humans are unique individuals who cannot be quantified—free rational beings who must make their own choices rather than being treated like children, or rats in a maze, by these alleged experts.

Indeed, history's worst crimes have been those perpetrated by these social calculators. We are wont to think that the gulag and the gas chamber were devised by purely evil men, when in large part they came from the ambitious dreams of mediocre minds who thought they could remake the world according to their imaginations.

This is why the antistatist must stand against the academic doctrines now regnant. And, historically, he has. Take the Austrian school of economics, which uses as its basis of analysis the actions of free, rational individuals. Or consider H.L. Mencken and Albert Jay Nock's defenses of humanistic learning in the face of the great homogenizers who were already growling at the gates in the gates. If the freedom movement is to win the battle of ideas, we must do what the leftists did in the '60s: take back academia. We must reintroduce ourselves to the humanities and those disciplines that emphasize the individuality and sanctity of human beings. These are the disciplines that cultivate self-confident scholars who can realize the true nature of mankind within the world—those too smart to join the ranks of the social calculators and too independent to be their pawns.

Kelse Moen is a senior at Emory University. His column appears regularly in the Emory Wheel.

Don't Blame the Market

How the Federal Reserve caused the crash

Thomas E. Woods Jr.

The free market has failed. That's the verdict of the deep thinkers who populate our political class and our academic and media establishments. They may not have any idea what caused the crisis we're witnessing, but they're sure it has something to do with "capitalism."

As usual in troubled times, government turns for advice to people who were completely blindsided by what happened, had assured everyone that it couldn't happen, and had no idea why it did happen. Because despite how foolish or inept they are and how little they seem to know about why the economy acts as it does, another thing they can be counted on to know for sure is that the solution involves transferring more power to our wise public servants in Washington.

This time around, a few dissenting voices have managed to inject the names of economists Ludwig von Mises (1881-1973) and F.A. Hayek (1899-1992) into the debate. Any libertarian or conservative worth his salt knows who Mises and Hayek are, since they rank among the greatest free-market economists—and indeed the greatest *economists*—of the 20th century. But many of the writers and think tanks that invoke these men's names shy away from their most radical and politically incorrect positions, especially when it comes to central banking, which Hayek and Mises opposed. Yet it is these teachings that the American people most need to hear right now and that young people in particular need to learn cold.

It was Mises who developed what became known as the Austrian theory of the business cycle and Hayek whose contributions to the theory won him the Nobel Prize in economics in 1974. It was thanks to his theory that Mises was able to predict the Great



Thomas E. Woods Jr. speaks at the Rally for the Republic in Minneapolis, MN. Photo by M. Holdridge.

Depression at a time when fashionable opinion insisted that the boom-bust cycle was gone for good. And it is this theory that alone makes sense of what has happened in our own day. There is no more important piece of economic knowledge for Americans to have right now.

It runs like this:

Interest rates can come down (1) if the public saves more or (2) if the central bank (in the American case the Federal Reserve System) pushes them down. Businesses respond to the lower rates by borrowing to finance new projects, which would not have been profitable at the higher interest

rates that had prevailed before. These projects tend to be clustered in what are called the higher-order stages of production—that is, stages of production relatively far removed from finished consumer goods. (The more time-consuming and temporally remote the project, the more sensitive it is to changes in interest rates.) Mining, raw materials, construction, and capital equipment are examples of the higher-order stages.

If the low interest rates are caused by increased saving on the part of the public, then the economy functions smoothly. The public's saved resources provide the material wherewithal to see these new investment projects through to completion. When the free market is allowed to set interest rates, as in this case, they coordinate production across time and encourage businesses to embark on long-term projects only when the public has made available the necessary savings to finance them.

If the low interest rates are brought about artificially, as when the Fed pushes them down, a problem arises. Additional resources do not magically appear just because the Fed has forced down

interest rates. The public has not saved the necessary resources to make possible the completion of all the new projects. With a vast increase in the number of market actors using freshly borrowed money to buy an unchanged supply of factors of production, the prices of the factors rise. It soon becomes clear that the factors of production do not exist in sufficient abundance to make all of these projects profitable. The bust sets in.

The Fed's manipulation of interest rates, in short, disrupts their coordinating function. It distorts the path of investment and causes investors to make decisions they wouldn't have made if the Fed's interventions into the market hadn't prevented them from seeing the economy's true state of resource availability.

In *Human Action*, his magnum opus, Mises offers the analogy of a homebuilder who mistakenly believes he has more bricks at his disposal than he actually has. This faulty appraisal of the situation causes him to make decisions he wouldn't otherwise have made. He builds a different kind of house, and with different dimensions, from the one he would have built if he had had an accurate count of the bricks that were available to him.

When the crisis hits and the malinvestments come to light, the recession begins. It is not during the recession that the damage is done. The damage is done during the boom period, when resources are misallocated, and sometimes irretrievably squandered, in unsustainable lines of production. The recession is the period in which the economy readjusts itself, the malinvestments are liquidated, resources are redirected toward their most value-productive uses, and production is begun again along sustainable lines. Efforts to interfere with this purgative process—e.g., by making emergency loans to failing businesses, thereby propping up the malinvestments instead of letting them be liquidated—only prolong the recession. The depression of 1920, which no one has ever heard of, was over relatively quickly because the government and its central bank allowed these necessary readjustments to take place. The Great Depression, on the other hand, went on for years and years as the government instituted one program after another that interfered with the healthy process of resource reallocation.

Trying to postpone the inevitable recession by pumping still more money into the economy and pushing interest rates still lower only makes the future bust that much worse. Think again of our analogy of the homebuilder. The longer he keeps building while continuing to be misled about his true supply of bricks, the worse his losses will be and the more resources he will have squandered when he finally discovers the truth. Far better that he endure rela-

tively modest deprivation in the present than that he continue a line of production whose inevitable liquidation at some moment in the future will devastate him. Better that he demolish two rows of bricks now and cut his losses than that he go on to build a story and a half, only to find that the second story cannot be completed and the whole structure must be abandoned. The same holds true of the economy: the longer it stays on an unsustainable path, allocating resources into lines of production it cannot support, the more resources will be squandered and the more costly the inevitable adjustment will be.

When in 2001 the Fed decided to inflate its way out of the downturn that came on the heels of the dot-com bust, it sowed the seeds for the much worse problems we face now. Malinvestments were allowed to continue instead of being liquidated. The housing bubble continued to inflate, when a deflation of that bubble would have spared us the years of ongoing malinvestment in housing that has caused so much damage in our own day. The recession of 2000-2001 is the only one in recorded history in which housing starts did not decline. Not surprisingly, it was at that time that the various myths of the housing bubble began to take hold: house prices never fall, a house is the best investment you can make, house flipping is a foolproof way to make money, and so on.

Had the Fed allowed that recession to take its full course, we would not be experiencing the devastation we see around us today. All that additional malinvestment, all the misallocated resources, the additional debt, the illusions about homeownership as a sure path to wealth—all of it would have been avoided.

This is only a rudimentary overview of the Austrian theory, but it is enough to see its explanatory power. The issues it raises are serious and deserve attention that, of course, they do not get. Furthermore, the theory shows that it is not the free market that causes these misallocation prob-

lems and the phenomenon of economy-wide boom and bust. It is the very opposite: the attempt to push interest rates lower than the free market would have set them is what starts the unsustainable boom that the realities of resource availability eventually convert into a bust.

No other school of economic thought has this theory, because all other schools conceive of capital as a homogeneous unit they represent with the variable K . The Austrian theory is based on the idea that capital is heterogeneous and consists of a series of stages that exist across time. When you interfere with the interest rate, which reflects the time component in the economy, you undermine the important interrelationships between the various stages



The Federal Reserve in Washington, DC. Photo by Dan Smith.

of the production process.

“Regulation” is beside the point. The system itself, by making credit artificially abundant, promotes malinvestment and excessive risk, leverage, and indebtedness. Why not go after the institutional framework that gives rise to these problems, instead of merely promising better regulation of the financial house of cards we now have?

Other factors did aggravate the crisis, to be sure. A string of government initiatives, not confined to the Community Reinvestment Act, that were designed to increase homeownership by lowering or eliminating traditional indicators of creditworthiness undoubtedly made the mortgage market more risky. Andrew Cuomo, Henry Cisneros’s successor as secretary of Housing and Urban Development under Bill Clinton, bluntly admitted that affirmative action in lending carried a higher default risk for lenders. The implicit bailout guarantee of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, in addition to the special tax and regulatory benefits those Government Sponsored Enterprises (GSEs) enjoy over purely private mortgage guarantors, directed more capital into home-building than would otherwise have occurred.

And it isn’t just Fannie and Freddie: the whole system operated under an implicit bailout guarantee, thanks to what financial analysts call the “Greenspan put,” after former Fed chairman Alan Greenspan. Having observed Greenspan bail out the big players in particular and the economy in general over his 19-year tenure, some market actors concluded that there was a floor beneath which the central bank would not allow asset prices to fall.

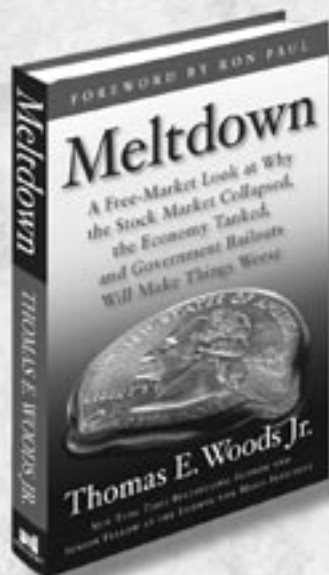
But these and other aggravating factors were a mere sideshow to the massive money creation of a Federal Reserve System that targeted the federal funds rate at one percent and kept it there for a full year, on the heels of a series of rate cuts before that. Other

interventions into the market may have helped to steer the Fed’s newly created money into the housing market, but the bubble in housing could not have persisted without a seemingly bottomless supply of credit to support it.

It has not been edifying to watch conservatives try to blame a crisis of this magnitude on the Community Reinvestment Act or on “the Democrats,” without mentioning or perhaps even being aware of the far more significant role of the Federal Reserve, which enjoys broad bipartisan support. We are living through what could well be one of the defining moments of the 21st century in terms of the shape our country will take, and many conservatives are letting themselves be kicked all over the debating stage. Without any knowledge of Austrian business cycle theory, they have been left grasping at straws to account for how things could have gone so terribly wrong and have been sitting ducks for liberals who know lame arguments when they hear them.

The central bank is a creation of government and an intervention into the free market. Yet when it misleads investors, misallocates resources, squanders wealth, and provokes booms and busts, Americans are taught to blame the outcome on that same free market. Thanks to the Austrian economists, we have a persuasive and powerful case to make in defense of the market against those who would blame depressions on freedom. It’s time we started making it.

Thomas E. Woods Jr. (www.ThomasEWoods.com) is the New York Times bestselling author of nine books, including The Politically Incorrect Guide to American History and, most recently, Meltdown: A Free-Market Look at Why the Stock Market Collapsed, the Economy Tanked, and Government Bailouts Will Make Things Worse.



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If you want to understand what caused the financial meltdown—and why none of the current big-government solutions will work—*Meltdown* explains it all.

Speaking of Liberty

An interview with Ron Paul — on 2012, his next book, and more.

Patrick J. Ford

During the 2008 Republican primary campaign, over 500 Students for Ron Paul groups sprouted up around the country. Known for their intelligence and enthusiasm, college students belonging to these chapters were active in spreading the message of liberty to their fellow students, and their energy dramatically set them apart from student supporters of other Republican candidates.

At the end of the primaries, despite the selection of John McCain as the GOP nominee, it seemed clear that the Ron Paul Revolution on campuses was only beginning. This led to the formation of Young Americans for Liberty. And though the movement has begun to develop its own identity, it remains connected to the 11-term Texas congressman and the causes for which he has fought throughout his political career. In late January, I had the honor of sitting down with Dr. Paul and asking him about his plans for the future, his hopes for the youth movement he inspired, and rumors about his next book.

Ford: Are you interested in running in 2012?

Paul: Not very much. 2012 is a long time off, and right now I'm concentrating on my work here in the Congress because I'm on Financial Services and my number one issue dealing with the economy has always been monetary policy. That's what motivated me in the 1970s to run for Congress in the first place. The overriding issue, of course, is personal liberty, but I've always worked under the assumption that it was the monetary system that did the greatest harm because it promoted welfare and warfare, deficits and borrowing and the mess that we have.

Ford: Why don't you think there is more of a push in Congress for sound money? Why is it that you are the only one fighting for this?

Paul: It's a lack of understanding. That is the most important reason. Probably 99 percent of the members of Congress have been taught in government schools and have been taught Keynesian economics, and it has not fascinated them at all to study any more than that. And there are those individuals who really understand [Keynesian economics] and like it, because there is a lot of power and control when you control money and they want it.



Ron Paul at the 2008 GOP Convention in St. Paul, MN. Photo by M. Holdridge.

For years there has been [the belief that] deficits didn't really matter, they could be monetized, we could keep borrowing, and there was no pain and suffering until this financial bubble built, which was predictable. And now it has burst and we're seeing the consequence. But they go along with it because they don't know.

The impressive thing is that these young people that are responding will and must play an important role. As they graduate and go into teaching and go into journalism and go into politics and influence government this will be the big issue. It has been the big issue. It was a big issue at

the time of our revolution. It was a big issue in the time of Jackson. It was a big issue after the Civil War because they had gone off the gold standard. It was a big issue with the election in 1900. They talked about money, but we haven't really talked much about it since then. So it must be the big issue. The competition has to come from the next generation of Americans who understand sound money and can answer the question of why we should never give this authority and power to a secret central bank like the Federal Reserve to create money out of thin air.

Ford: With the news of the GOP chairman race going on now [in late January], has the Republican Party reached out to you in any way?

Paul: I would say—not really (laughs). It was interesting: I guess many of you may have seen the debate that went on with the potential candidates for the National Republican Party chairmanship. They were all asked that question, "Have you reached out to the Ron Paul people? You know, those young kids that don't know what they're doing..."

Ford: ...but they seem to turn out all the time!

Paul: "...but would you reach out to them?" And every one of them was saying, "Oh yeah! They're very important!" But they never did. The chairman from Kentucky called one time, that's true, and I did meet with him once. But as far as real outreach, it hasn't been there. They don't say, "Why is it that these young people are responding?"

Today I had an interesting incident. Going through the Capitol, another member was walking with me and we were in the public

square, in the center where the visitor center is, and a bunch of young people came up, college kids. But they were Hispanics, and they came up and they were excited, saying, “Ron Paul! Will you take a picture?” And they had the other [congressman] take pictures of us. And we didn’t talk about it, but really, it should send a pretty strong message.

Here is a Republican congressman, who is seen as extremely conservative, getting the attention of Hispanic kids, and they were excited about the financial system and personal liberties and the war and the Federal Reserve. But [the Republicans] haven’t discovered that. They don’t realize the great potential of the message of freedom. And you don’t have to give up any of your conservative values. You stick to the Constitution, and it’s a real reach out to young people. So anyone who has any young group or organization on campus, it has to be so sound economically and politically and constitutionally. And if it is, I believe it will reach out to the individuals and minorities. We shouldn’t even see people as groups, we should see them as individuals. If we see them as individuals and we’re going to protect them as individuals, it doesn’t matter what group you belong to. And that is why I was delighted with our rallies during the campaign, and most of the time I made a comment about it like, “Wow. There is a lot of diversity around here.” People come together because we are not threatening each other.

Ford: Looking forward, do you see any strict-constitutionalist candidates that are electable? There have been a few Ron Paul Republicans and a Ron Paul Democrat, Bob Conley. Do you see this message picking up?

Paul: Well, there’s Conley and B.J. Lawson and others. There have been quite a few. I think we’ve actually got some into state legislatures in Minnesota and Montana and New Hampshire. A lot more happened than I thought would [happen] so quickly, and once again it was spontaneous, it was healthy. They just followed up. They weren’t waiting for marching orders. If it’s going to work, it’s going to be driven by the grassroots. They get the message and get excited about the message and then organize locally. That to me is very encouraging, and I think you’ll see a lot more of it. If you don’t, it’s not much of a revolution.

A true revolution has nothing to do with partisanship. If it’s there to protect the Republican Party then it’s not going to work, but if it’s there to influence the Republican Party, then it’s good. But if the ideas are there and pervasive and right and true and necessary, then it’s going to influence the Democratic Party as well. So I think there are some healthy signs.

Ford: You got into politics, initially, because of Nixon’s move to get off the gold standard. Why did you decide to become a Republican as opposed to a Democrat?

Paul: Well, I didn’t decide to become a Republican, I was raised Republican in a Republican family. And they generally were more conservative and less outwardly supporting the welfare state, so I was naturally a Republican. The truth is, though, in 1973 when I thought about it—I ran a race in ’74—I went to an attorney and

asked him “What are the conditions to run as an independent?” Immediately I found out that the conditions were very difficult.

At that time, it was a Watergate year, no other Republican wanted to run for Congress in a district that was Democrat, and there were only three [congressional] Republicans in Texas. So it was sort of an open invitation because nobody else would do it. And my goal mainly was to talk about the issues. It was the furthest thought from my mind that I would actually win.

Ford: Since the system is stacked so much against independents (and third parties), you were forced to make a decision...

Paul: Yeah. And I’ve worked with the Libertarian Party as well, but it’s just too difficult. The laws are biased because the Democrats and Republicans write all the laws, and their job is to keep the monopoly because at the top level the views are the same. Just look today: I don’t see major differences with Barack Obama,

and John McCain is applauding his appointments. So it makes the point I’ve been making for years, which is that there’s not much difference. Others have made that point a long time ago, there was a guy by the name of [George] Wallace that said there wasn’t a dime’s worth of difference. I’ll say there isn’t a dollar’s worth of difference.

Ford: A lot of young people are very cynical about government and a politician’s ability to stick to principle and get reelected. How have you managed to continually be reelected considering the strong stances you’ve taken on issues?

Paul: I think that becomes the issue itself, that we live in an age of distrust of politicians, and one thing I do hear from my constituents is that “one thing we know is that you’ll do what you say, and we

trust you. We don’t agree with everything that you do, but at least we know where you stand.” So that, in a way, becomes a political positive.

This also blends in with the reason people vote. They vote for people. They want to like the person, and they want to trust the person. And other things are important—they want to know about your family as well, and once you get in office, they want you to do your job right. Even though I don’t endorse many [government] programs, I still try to make the system work. I make sure the money isn’t wasted, and if an agency took our money and is supposed to provide services, I think they should do [the] job. So, though I don’t vote for funding the bailout of hurricane victims, all the money is still taken from us, and we try to make it work. If they have government insurance, we call FEMA and say, “Look this is supposed to be your job.” People know we’ll go to bat for them. So in a way, that’s pragmatism.

Some people criticize by saying we’re making a bad system work and that we shouldn’t do that, but that’s my approach. I work real hard to make sure veterans get their benefits. Social Security should never have been passed, and it’s not working and it’s bankrupt, but I still have bills in that would make it solvent, you know,



Dr. Paul at the Ron Paul Nation Celebration. Photo by M. Holdridge.

bills saying that you can't spend [the social security trust fund] in the general revenue and that try to preserve the fund. So people know that. And interestingly enough, I take a very strong stance against the system but we do very well in my district with the elderly people, and they do know that if we live within our means they are more likely to have Social Security last.

Ford: Younger people, specifically members of Young Americans for Liberty, are looking for ways to educate themselves. What was it that initially interested you in Austrian economics and liberty, and what were some of those fundamental texts that have led you to where you are now?

Paul: It was a lot more difficult to find books when I was in high school and college, and I didn't have a whole lot of interest in college, it was more when I got into medical school that I started looking around. In the late '50s, I read all the Ayn Rand novels, *Dr. Zhivago* got my attention, Hayek got my attention with *The Road to Serfdom*, and from there I went one book to another and got interested in Austrian economics. But the group that helped me the most back then to get the literature was the Foundation for Economic Education, which is still located in a town called Irvington on the Hudson in New York. So when everything was Keynesian and we had no Mises Institute, no Cato, none of these things existed, the Foundation for Economic Education did provide a lot of literature.

I can remember getting Bastiat's *Law* from there, and that is still a great little book. Later on, I did get to meet a lot of the Austrian economists. I heard Mises lecture, I met Hayek and had dinner with him, knew Murray Rothbard real well, knew [Hans] Sennholz very well, and I stayed close to that whole movement. And now, of course, we have the Mises Institute, a group that I

helped start in the early '80s. I think Lew Rockwell does an excellent job providing literature today. To find the texts, if you are really interested, in Austrian economics you have to know about the Mises Institute.

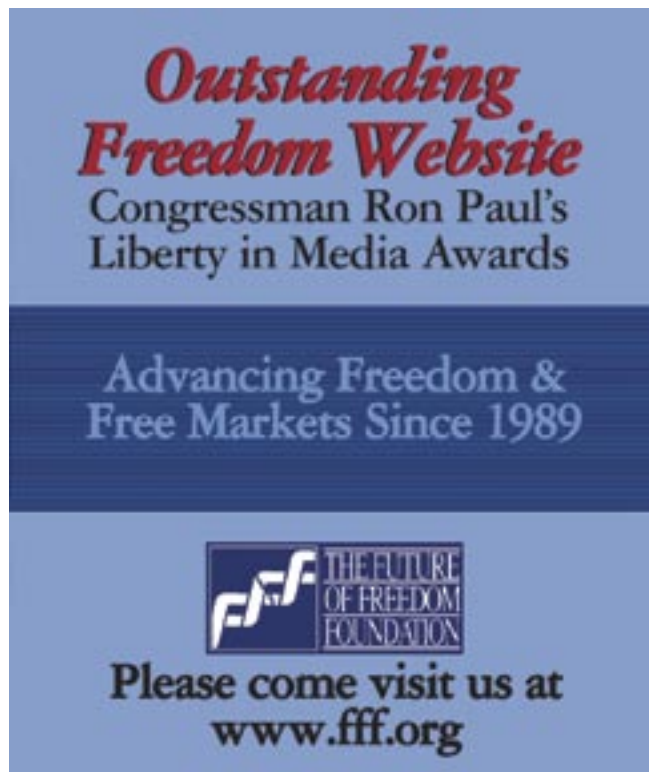
Ford: Now that the Students for Ron Paul groups have molded into Young Americans for Liberty, what are your hopes for the organization moving forward, and what kind of role does activism on a college campus have for the freedom movement at large?

Paul: Well, it is to galvanize and to educate. On campuses you are supposed to be learning, so I would hope it is more than just a political action group that will chant and cheer "Republicans over Democrats." That would be pretty boring. I think the number one thing is education and campuses are a good place to do that. Then becoming politically active. There are local elections, there are state elections and referendums and all these kind of things, and our biggest receptions were on college campuses. So I think to keep the spirit alive is a very important role for the Young Americans for Liberty.

Ford: Now that the economy has taken a sudden turn for the worst, it is becoming a struggle for some students to pay for college. What sort of things are you planning on doing personally to prepare for a deeper recession, and what sort of recommendations would you have for families?

Paul: Well, I'm not going to do anything differently because I have anticipated the problem for a long time. I'm surprised it held together for so long. Personally, I invest a lot of time into education and to understanding why it's important to have our freedoms. Then I've invested a lot of time into political activity to try to change people in politics. So it's an investment that has cost me a lot of money in many ways because it takes away from my income, but it was something I thought was important. But individually, and this is something I learned a long time ago, the most important thing a young person can do personally is to study and understand the issues. Don't worry about "What am I going to do in life and how am I going to save the country?" I think that is the wrong way to go. I think [the right way is by] becoming an expert in explaining the free market: turn it around on those that say, "Free enterprise is just a bunch of selfish individuals that don't want to pay taxes." The real story is that it is the only humanitarian system there is to provide great wealth and distribute it fairly.

That to me is a great investment. But on an individual level, because I went through the '70s when we did have a lot of inflation, I knew that as long as you print money the value will go down. So when gold was back at \$35 an ounce, I started buying gold coins and that is a security that I have, sort of my safety net. And now you can't buy one of those gold coins for less than a thousand dollars, and sometimes you can't find them at all. So buying silver and gold coins, I think, is a way people can protect themselves. And if you don't have a great income, buy silver dollars. Just as this financial system came ungled rather quickly—we didn't slip, the housing crisis came rather quickly, that's what happens when a financial bubble bursts—the dollar bubble still exists. People are still grabbing dollars, thinking that it is the last thing that we can hold, so there is a bubble in short-term treasury bills. They are way



too expensive and you don't get any interest, and people are still buying them. So I would say that people have to be prepared for that [crash], and it's not easy.

Probably the most important thing a young person can do in college is—regardless of the circumstances—to have a way to earn a living. Not just saying “I am studying to be a congressman and am going to work for the government.” You should have the ability to provide a service. Develop talent. And it varies, it depends on what you like. A talent might be writing, a talent might be teaching, a talent might be manufacturing. Who knows what it would be, but there are a lot of professions. I always felt relatively secure because I could invest my time in what I've done, and I keep my medical license up to date, and that gives me a bit of security.

I never had to use my gold coins. But it didn't hurt me [to have them]. Even if people thought this way when Bush came into office, guess how much their investments would have gone up? 300 percent. Gold was \$268 when he came into office, now it's \$850. So what if the same thing happened during eight years of Obama? You're talking about \$2400 gold. That only reflects the devaluation of the dollar; it doesn't mean it's the best investment in the world. But compared to the way people are sweating it out now with stocks and bonds and housing prices and all—history shows that gold wins out in the end.

And one thing, going back to studying literature—you guys have it much easier than I had it. We had trouble sending away and paying five bucks for a book and waiting to get it. Now you can get this instantaneously on the Internet. Not only is education faster and more available, but what you're trying to do as a group of young people in spreading a message is easier. Could you imagine me trying to do this in college and trying to organize a national group? Just think of how much money [William F.] Buckley spent trying to do it. Of course, I think he misled us in organizing young people, if you look at what it has brought us. But the use of technology in getting information and its use for studying and spreading your message—it presents great opportunities.

Ford: You mentioned the Obama administration before. Has there been any effort to reach out to them or have they reached out to you?

Paul: They haven't reached out to me, and they know what I stand for. If they were interested, they would call. I'm not going to impose myself. He has reached out to Republicans. It was very dramatic that he reached out to “conservative Republicans” like Bill Kristol and other neoconservatives. I think that's the kind of reaching out they do because the leadership of both parties is controlled by individuals that believe in internationalism, inflationism, the Federal Reserve, welfarism, eternal spending, worldwide control of natural resources, and that, of course, is one of the reasons why we're in the Middle East.

Ford: There have been some rumors that you're writing a book on the Federal Reserve. Is that true?

Paul: It is true, and if the publishers accept the title—which they probably will if I insist on it—I came up with a title that someone came up with at one of our rallies: *End the Fed*. That might have

been one of the greatest parts of the campaign, college kids all of a sudden chanting, “End the Fed!” and without prompting. So I have written it, and I am having some editors work with me. It's not going to be big. Just like *The Revolution* was a small book, easy to read, easy to distribute since the goal is to distribute it. And hopefully within a few months we'll have it done...

Ford: ...and *The Revolution* was first on the bestseller's list so if a message about the Fed can get out in that sort of way...

Paul: I keep getting a bit concerned that the Fed itself get the attention because even though we did well with the other book, I travel all the time and I never saw the book in bookstores once. I still saw books right in front of [the store] from the other candidates—you know, Huckabee and all them—and they had their books out, but I never saw *The Revolution* out front. It is the strength of the message that sells it.

But there is still a profit motive out there. In fact, the publishers so far have expressed a lot of interest. Even though book sales might go down in a recession, our book sales might go up. But there is certainly a lot more interest in the Federal Reserve today than there has been in a long, long time—and I say it's about time!

Ford: Dr. Paul, thanks so much for sitting down with us.

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Preparing for the Crash

Each issue, the Revolution asks a number of scholars, writers, businessmen, and public figures an open-ended question. Our first is, “If the economy takes a sudden turn for the worst, what are you doing personally to prepare for a greater depression?”

Stocking up on beer and ammo.
— *James Bovard, author of Attention Deficit Democracy.*

My wife and I do expect an economic collapse. She has already lost her job (and with it our health insurance) and my work as a self-employed contractor is down by half. Our house has lost 35 percent of its value and our 401ks are down more than 50 percent.

To reduce our expenses, we have refinanced our house and traded our pickup for a fuel-efficient four-cylinder sedan. We are converting unneeded items into cash on eBay. We are buying food in bulk to create a six-month strategic reserve, stockpiling our prescription medicines, and installing a wood-burning stove for cooking and heating.

Civil unrest is possible. I have taught my wife how to shoot and we have guns and ammunition, plus three dogs. We will not believe anyone from the government who tells the public that everything is just fine.

— *Philip Giraldi, contributing editor, The American Conservative, and fellow, American Conservative Defense Alliance*

Our family is learning greater self-sufficiency, and embracing the challenges of “high-brain, low-tech” solutions, such as permaculture backyard gardening, instead of relying on a “low-brain, high-tech” consumption-driven lifestyle. We’re reaching out and developing networks of folks in the community with useful skills with whom we can collaborate in times of need. I’m also not relying on other companies to create jobs but am working on an entrepreneurial opportunity in healthcare that will improve the lives of physicians during challenging economic times.

— *B.J. Lawson, 2008 Republican nominee, North Carolina’s Fourth Congressional District.*

These are ideas for increasingly dire scenarios: 1.) Two weeks of cash in your pocket at all times, in case there is a banking holiday and checks and credit cards stop working; 2.) one month of food and water in your closet; 3.) 12 months of food and water in your basement, and maybe a gun; 4.) a victory garden, and definitely a gun to defend it.

All liquid wealth turned into gold.

— *Patrick Byrne, founder and CEO, Overstock.com*

Into what sectors of the economy is all the Fed’s fiat money going to go? My guess is that, because of supply destruction, it will first go into commodities and consumer staples, driving the prices of things people need much higher. Obama’s energy plan is also going to have a negative impact on energy supply. In anticipation of this, I’ve built a greenhouse and am considering alternative energy for my home, such as a wood-burning furnace and solar electricity, as well as reworking my savings and investment strategies.

— *Glenn Jacobs, writer and professional wrestler*

I’m going to develop as many skills as possible, and make sure that at least some are marketable. That’s not entirely difficult given that most people in the age of the welfare state and cheap credit aren’t interested in developing any skills at all. That’s especially true of people who have languished in classrooms for 25 of the first 30 years of their lives.

— *Jeffrey A. Tucker, editorial vice president, www.Mises.org*

What I always do: stockpile food and ammunition.

— *Tucker Carlson, senior political correspondent, MSNBC*

I’m doing the opposite of what the government recommends: I’m spending less and saving more. This means eating out less, buying fewer frivolous things, and watching my expenses more closely. Good investments include precious metals and, for the long term, contributions to pro-liberty groups that help to educate the public about economics for a brighter, freer future. I recommend being prepared for emergencies, holding some value in gold as well as Federal Reserve notes (in case of a bank run), not panicking, working hard, and speaking the truth.

— *Anthony Gregory, editor in chief, Campaign for Liberty*

1.) “How can I cut back on expenses?” It could be something that might benefit you like cutting back smoking, drinking, or eating fried food.

2.) “How can I increase my income?” If you can’t find work for money, substitute volunteer work that helps others or improves your skills and networking.

3.) “How can I be more self-sufficient?” Grow your own food, or volunteer to help others with their food gardens. Learn how to do things that you pay others to do for you. You could develop an interesting life-long hobby.

The most important thing is not to worry about it—relax. You can add things like prayer, mediation, exercise, or writing a letter to a friend or to the local newspaper or a favorite webpage endorsing freedom in America.”

— *Mark Thornton, senior fellow, Ludwig von Mises Institute*

Submit a question for upcoming issues of the Revolution by sending an email to contact@yaliberty.org.

God Is Antiwar

The freedom movement provides a better home
than the Religious Right for Christian conservatives.

George Hawley

Eight years of the Bush administration have made it abundantly clear that to many conservatives “strong national defense” really means “unnecessary wars.” Yet the best traditions of conservatism are antithetical to militarism. An unbiased observer should have no trouble at all figuring out which of these things is not like the others: family values, pro-life, limited government, individual liberty, free enterprise and ... war. Nonetheless, foreign policy remains the least examined plank of the conservative manifesto, and conservative Christians—whose faith enjoins them to value peace—unfortunately remain the most loyal supporters of America’s wars. Those believers who associate with the Religious Right have been led astray, for their interests are actually best served by an antiwar, pro-liberty agenda.

Young Christian conservatives rarely seem to question the notion that their conservative instincts necessarily require them to support militaristic political platforms. Unfortunately, politically aware young conservatives tend to gravitate toward bloodthirsty (but ostensibly Christian) commentators like Sean Hannity. Making matters worse are the so-called conservative Christian lobbying groups such as the Christian Coalition and the Family Research Council. The latter organization, in its 2008 voter guide, declared: “We are engaged in a war against Islamo-Fascist terrorism. And there is no substitute for victory because the alternative is unthinkable. The fight for freedom is never over.” These groups give the impression that “voting your values” means giving the government a blank check for war.

Much of the Religious Right’s leadership is happy to lend the politicians they support moral sanction for dropping bombs on other nations. In some cases, they actively encourage it. In 2007, Pat Robertson, host of “The 700 Club,” called on the United States to assassinate Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, saying, “we have the ability to take him out, and I think the time has come to exercise that ability.” Apparently, the Bible’s clear injunction against murder does not apply to those foreigners who prove inconvenient to the U.S. government.

Robertson is hardly the only Religious Right leader to embrace military adventurism on shaky theological grounds. In 2003, the late Rev. Jerry Falwell penned an article titled, “God is Pro-War,” in which he explained why Christians should support American militarism. To make his point, Falwell argued that in the Bible,



Photo by Chris Robertson.

“there are frequent references to God-ordained war.” True enough. But is there any evidence that our invasion of Iraq was “God ordained”? Did Falwell really believe American presidents receive their policy initiatives from God Himself? If so, how could Falwell or anyone else on the Religious Right have ever believed in any limitation on government? Such rhetoric provides theological cover for tyranny, and all freedom-loving Christians would be wise to reject it.

Christianity does not necessarily demand pacifism. The book of Ecclesiastes, after all, explicitly says there is “a time of

war.” Nonetheless, the church has always seen violence as a final resort. Yet many conservative Christian leaders are happy to serve as cheerleaders for the American war machine. What makes this especially distressing is the fact that most of the Religious Right’s domestic political platform is theologically sound and worthy of support. Rejecting Republican warmongering does not require that Christian conservatives abandon their principles in domestic politics. Far from it: to truly vote their values, young conservative Christians should embrace a political philosophy of peace such as that championed by Ron Paul.

The liberty movement, for its part, must reach out to the grassroots Religious Right. To a significant extent, libertarians have ignored culturally conservative Christians, rejecting them as potential political allies. Lew Rockwell and Jeffrey Tucker, in a 1990 article for *National Review*, attributed this phenomenon to the influence of Ayn Rand and her militantly atheist followers, noting that “Miss Rand asserted undying war between faith and freedom.” Now, with Rand long gone and her movement all but forgotten, the stage may be set for a rapprochement between antiwar libertarians and conservative Christians.

Differing dispositions are another hurdle in the way of a Christian-libertarian alliance. Antiwar libertarian activists think of themselves as radical figures and embrace the rhetoric of revolution. And to be sure, the Ron Paul supporters who rallied behind his message of peace and constitutionally restrained government were calling for revolutionary change. Yet in some ways the Ron Paul Republicans were downright reactionary in comparison to either John McCain or Barack Obama.

Most conservative Christians believe our culture has changed for the worse in recent decades. But the cultural revolutions that swept the United States and the rest of Christendom over the past

century were not instigated by libertarians. To a great extent, they were precipitated by wars. War is the ultimate revolutionary force. During armed conflict between states, traditional ways of life are in constant danger of annihilation, even for communities that do not experience the fighting directly. During America's many war years, any excuse at all was sufficient for the state to forget about traditional protections on civil liberties—and those civil liberties had a curious tendency to remain forgotten even after those wars ended. In order to maximize production, old ways of doing things were sacrificed on the altar of efficiency. Wars tore men from their communities, causing entire generations of children to spend formative years without their fathers. Regional diversity gave way to cultural homogeneity, and political power further centralized in Washington. Service to the state, especially if that service involved killing people, was elevated to a great and noble calling.

Is it any wonder that the postwar “Baby Boom” generation seemed remarkably uninterested in its cultural inheritance? Is it really a shock that, after the tragedy of two World Wars, European culture was completely exhausted and easily conquered by cultural Marxists bent on civilizational suicide? Is there any reason to believe the never-ending “War on Terror” will not have similar consequences?

Conservatives who criticize the decline of traditional families and gender roles are quick to point their fingers at the left-wing radicalism of the 1960s. They never bother to note the influence of war. During World War II, as American men were busy fighting on the other side of the globe, women who would have otherwise looked after their families were shuffled into armament factories. The female work force grew by 50 percent as six million women plugged the labor gap. Examining this record, the great conservative sociologist Robert Nisbet noted that there is a causal relationship between the “breakdown in moral standards in all spheres—economic, educational, and political, as well as in family life—[and] the effects of two major wars—celebrated wars!—in this century.” Indeed, the conflicts most conservatives celebrate were far more destructive to American families than Betty Friedan.

The real radical of the 2008 presidential election was not Ron Paul. The radicals were all those who accepted the premise that America should remain engaged in perpetual conflict and nation-building across the globe. That included both John McCain and Barack Obama. The pro-foreign-intervention platform offered by both major parties would inevitably bring drastic, permanent changes to our politics and culture. As the Patriot Act demonstrates, the road to an American police state is being slowly paved by our political class's stated intention to “defend freedom.”

Antiwar libertarianism is the appropriate political philosophy for religious conservatives and others who wish to hold fast to what little remains of our traditional ways of life. Mainstream Republicans have long pandered to Christians by proclaiming their devotion to family values, yet Christians have received nothing in return for their support beyond deficit spending, sons in body bags, and an increasingly intrusive state. The cultural trends that the Religious Right long assailed did not reverse even as Republicans continued to win national office; attempts to use the government to bring about culturally conservative ends have failed. It is time for conservative Christians to recognize that the state is, and always will be, their enemy.

The antiwar movement, furthermore, has a stronger conservative pedigree than Rush Limbaugh or the editors of the *Weekly Standard* care to admit. The late Russell Kirk, a devout Christian considered a founding father of American conservatism, is often at the top of the list of authors young men and women of the Right are told to read. The hawkishness of most conservatives is a testament to how rarely they do so.

Long before MoveOn.org and other leftist groups attacked the current Iraq War, Kirk decried the first Persian Gulf Conflict as a “war for an oil can.” Conservative Catholics should remember that Pope John Paul II—who was also beloved by many conservative Protestants—indicated that the Iraq War did not meet the standards of a just war.

The antiwar, pro-liberty movement cannot expect a huge influx of culturally conservative Christians anytime soon. Reverend Hagee, for example, is not about to endorse any peace-loving candidate. Nor will the more theologically immature dispensationalists—who seemingly manage to discover a biblical prophecy fulfilled by every newspaper headline—abandon their belief that the U.S. government has some divine sanction to hasten Armageddon. Nonetheless, there are surely many conservative Christians receptive to the notion that, despite what they've been told by their leaders, they have no religious or patriotic duty to sacrifice their children as cannon fodder for the state.

At present, the political spectrum does not give politically aware Christians with anti-state instincts much of a choice. The Religious Left is not really a viable alternative. Although liberal Christians are often sincerely antiwar, they are certainly not anti-state. The Religious Left's constant prattling about “social justice,” the avarice of corporations, the supreme importance of “diversity,” and the need for ever more government intervention in our lives will keep most conservative Christians from embracing the Left's theology or political agenda. Mistakenly convinced that they do not have any better options, they will stay where they are.

Nevertheless, the mainstream Right is not a natural home for culturally conservative believers. Saber-rattling is not a traditional Christian value and, despite the best efforts of the mainstream conservative media to prove otherwise, there is no biblical justification for wars of choice. Christian conservatives will see their values best advanced by an antiwar, anti-state political movement. As Lawrence Vance, a Christian libertarian writer, noted, “There is nothing ‘liberal’ about opposition to war. There is nothing ‘anti-American’ about opposition to militarism. And what could be more Christian than standing firmly against aggression, violence, and bloodshed?”

It is in the antiwar, pro-liberty movement's best interest to reach out to conservative Christians. The men and women who currently associate with the Religious Right represent the largest possible base for a freedom movement. If not from them, where else will pro-liberty candidates find votes? What other large group has even vague anti-state instincts? If libertarians do not make a successful appeal to conservative Christians, they will remain nothing more than an intellectual curiosity, and Christian conservatives will remain unaware that they have a better option.

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Buchanan Was Right

Does the Ron Paul Revolution have a place for Pitchfork Pat?

Jack Hunter

Keith Olbermann: “Of all the serious contenders this evening Pat, is there one who adheres closest to your conception of classic conservatism?”

Pat Buchanan: “Ron Paul.”

For many young Americans, when Barack Obama was inaugurated as the nation’s 44th president the heavens shined down, angels soared, and choirs sang. To Obama’s true believers, it was an unforgettable moment with the power to move hearts, mold politics, and change lives.

My moment occurred while standing on an historic Revolutionary War battlefield in Lexington, Massachusetts, where a man running for president invoked the Founding Fathers and warned of the dangers of American empire and the foolishness of interventionist wars. I had long been interested in politics and had even considered myself a conservative. But this man, this Republican, spoke about issues his fellow Republicans didn’t even consider issues. Recognized by all as a man of the Right, sometimes he sounded more like a liberal. And as an outsider looking in at a GOP that would rather he just went away, this presidential candidate’s popularity swelled along with his influence. His campaign promised a revolutionary new conservatism rooted in the old and a movement that would extend beyond the election, challenge the status quo, and change American politics.

It was 1995 and I was 21 years old. And Patrick J. Buchanan cured my apathy.

When Ron Paul’s 2008 bid for president began to gather momentum, the parallels between the Buchanan and Paul campaigns were glaring. Whereas Buchanan’s cry of “America First!” was an explicit nod to the Old Right of the early 20th century, Paul not only used the same phrase frequently but also referenced 1950s conservative standard-bearer Sen. Robert Taft in a national televised debate. Stressing that America was “a republic, not an empire,” Buchanan’s constant warning of the dangers of foreign intervention were similar to Paul’s, who sounded the same alarm throughout his campaign and right up to his “Rally for the Republic” last September. Buchanan’s anti-imperial stance led him to make common cause with like-minded leftists such as consumer advocate Ralph Nader. On foreign policy, Paul’s supporters sometimes overlapped with those of Democratic Congressman Dennis Kucinich, and Nader made common cause with Paul for much the same reasons he did with Buchanan. And in each candidate’s primary battles, Buchanan and Paul were virtually the only Republicans to oppose managed trade deals like NAFTA, to address national sovereignty concerns, and to oppose the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

Perhaps above all, both Buchanan and Paul stood for the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in a way that was not just rhetoric. They embraced an all-American political tradition

that the Founding Fathers would have immediately recognized—even if the Republican Party didn’t.

The similarities between “Pitchfork Pat” and “Dr. No” were not lost on Buchanan’s former supporters, many of whom, in my experience, also enthusiastically supported Paul. And the inspiration Buchanan once gave me was rekindled by Paul, as this former member of the “Buchanan Brigades” happily signed on as a foot soldier in the Ron Paul Revolution.

Of course, any Republican who dares raise the banner of the Old Right can expect the empire to strike back, and it’s no surprise that Buchanan and Paul’s battles have usually been against the same foes.

Former Bush speechwriter and neoconservative David Frum, who told Jon Stewart of “The Daily Show” that Paul was a “disturbing personality,” declared Buchanan an “unpatriotic conservative” in 2003 for his opposition to the Iraq War. The *New Republic*’s attempts to smear Paul as a racist by dredging up decade-old newsletters was comparable to neoconservative pundit William Bennett’s statement that Buchanan “flirted with fascism” by questioning U.S. policy toward Israel. Buchanan’s platform of nonintervention was decried time and again as “isolationist,” a pejorative label all too familiar to Paul supporters. And Buchanan’s claim that the neoconservatives had “subverted” and “hijacked” the conservative movement led that gang to warn of the alleged dangers of “Buchananism”—a “dangerous ideology” that they believed would destroy the Republican Party, if not the country.

Echoing charges once leveled at Buchanan, Paul’s fellow presidential contenders condescendingly suggested the Texas Republican was out of step not only with his party but with reality, calling him a “libertarian” in a way that implied his philosophy was somehow outside the realm of respectable conservatism. When Buchanan began to gather steam in 1995, his rivals for the GOP nomination, the leaders of his party, and many pundits not only suggested he was detached from reality, but emphasized the populist aspects of his campaign in an attempt to discredit his conservative credentials. This is the “institute for advanced conservative studies” not “populism,” Rush Limbaugh reminded listeners.

Where Buchanan’s populism clashes with Paul’s libertarianism, however, is significant for those who today see themselves as the political descendents of the Old Right. While Buchanan and Paul both oppose NAFTA, CAFTA, and similar managed trade deals, Buchanan supports protectionist measures for U.S. industry and Paul does not. More the traditional conservative, Buchanan stresses social issues and the libertarian Paul does not. But in fighting corporatocracy on trade, both Buchanan and Paul champion the people against elites, albeit in different ways. Buchanan sees the collusion between big government and big capital as the “great

betrayal” of the American worker. Paul recognizes the same collusion and opposes market-interventionist, inflationary policy and the subsequent Wall Street bailouts that cover up the corruption of financial markets because these actions devalue the dollar and “hurt the poor.” Buchanan may see a “culture war” in which issues like abortion and gay rights are at the forefront, but the pro-life and Christian Paul essentially agrees with Buchanan that the states’ rights 9th and 10th amendments to the Constitution offer the best guidelines for addressing such cultural questions.

In the grand scheme of things, for libertarians to dismiss Buchanan because of his social-issues conservatism would be as silly as for traditional conservatives to dismiss Paul because he does not stress those same issues. One of the most prominent and outspoken war critics on the Right today, Justin Raimondo of Antiwar.com, is an openly gay man who supported Paul’s candidacy for president in 2008 with the same enthusiasm he did Buchanan’s campaigns in 1996 and 2000. Buchanan even wrote the foreword to Raimondo’s book *Reclaiming the Right: The Lost Legacy of the Conservative Movement*, and Raimondo gave the nominating speech for Buchanan at the 2000 Reform Party convention. When battling for the republic and against the empire, sane Americans realize that disagreements over social and cultural issues mean little next to making alliances with those who want to salvage the U.S. Constitution that protects us all. That Buchanan and Paul see the leftist Nader as an ally, despite huge differences on economics and other issues, makes sense. That admirers of either Buchanan or Paul, both men of the Right whose differences are much smaller, would dismiss either of them as natural allies doesn’t make any sense at all.

One man who always “got it” and whose staunch libertarian principles led to alliances with both the Right and Left over the decades was Murray Rothbard, who said in 1992, “with Pat Buchanan as our leader, we shall break the clock of social democracy.” The brilliant economist constantly championed Buchanan as the new leader of the Old Right. Rothbard later had his disagreements with Buchanan, as did many Rothbardians, but on the most popular libertarian website in the world, LewRockwell.com, you can still find Buchanan frequently—and for the same reasons Rothbard once trumpeted him. Said Buchanan shortly after Rothbard’s death in 1995, “As a libertarian figure he’s one of the giants of the postwar era.” *National Review*’s William F. Buckley Jr. was not as kind, and wrote a scathing, dismissive obituary of the great economist. Even in death, Rothbard had his enemies, most of whom were so-called conservatives who had long ago made peace with the state. Not coincidentally, many of them were the same enemies for whom there can be no peace with Buchanan so long as he remains on this earth.

Fortunately, Buchanan remains with us, and his ongoing legacy could prove invaluable to the Ron Paul Revolution in years to come. In 2002, Buchanan joined journalists Taki Theodoracopoulos and Scott McConnell in founding *The American Conservative*, an unabashedly Old Right conservative and libertarian publication designed to do battle at the newsstands with neocon rags like the *Weekly Standard* and the GOP establishment vanguard *National Review*. For longtime followers of the divide on the Right between Buchanan and the neocons, it was no surprise when the *Weekly Standard* and *National Review* spent the past election either ignoring

or insulting Paul and his supporters. It was also no surprise when *The American Conservative* endorsed Paul for president.

After a Republican primary debate in which Paul said, “It’s time to take care of America first,” I had an opportunity to ask Buchanan during a radio interview about Paul’s use of that phrase, long associated with the television pundit. As if he were smiling, Buchanan let out a chuckle and replied, “I heard him say exactly that. I’ve heard him use phrases and words before, and I’d say, ‘I think that’s in my books!’”

And what are those books? *A Republic, Not an Empire, Where the Right Went Wrong, Day of Reckoning*—Buchanan’s books are not only outlines of the same anti-empire, pro-republic ideas that continue to fuel Paul’s supporters, but the titles alone, as Buchanan suggested, sound like they could have come right out of the Texas congressman’s mouth.

Today, I see the ongoing Ron Paul Revolution as an extension of, and in some ways a vindication of, the Buchanan Brigades to which I once signed up. In the principled activists of Young Americans for Liberty, I see myself over a decade ago, enthusiastic, enlightened, and energized at the prospects for a more promising politics than I could have ever dreamed of.

In 2008, Paul happily made a nuisance of himself by reminding the conservative movement and the Republican Party that they ignore genuine conservatism at their own peril. Gleeefully, Buchanan has been doing the same for 20 years. Buchanan’s Old Right baton is not something that is being passed on to Ron Paul, as the libertarian warrior is undoubtedly his own man. But in traditional conservative Pat Buchanan, Paul’s supporters might find the tools to make their own swords stronger, sharper, and better prepared to fight common enemies already on the horizon.

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National or Federal?

The trouble with James Madison

Kevin R.C. Gutzman

The U.S. Constitution, as ratified in 1788 and with the addition of the Bill of Rights, marked the fruition of the great American invention of written constitutions. It sealed the success of the American Revolution.

Throughout the Imperial Crisis of the 1760s and '70s, the North American colonists insisted that not the British Parliament but their own colonial legislatures had the right to tax them. As John Dickinson's resolutions for the Stamp Act Congress of 1766 put it, "It is inseparably essential to the freedom of a people, and the undoubted right of Englishmen, that no taxes be imposed on them, but with their own consent, given personally, or by their representatives." Due to the distance between Britain and the colonies, "no taxes ever have been, or can be constitutionally imposed on them, but by their respective legislatures."

By 1774, when Thomas Jefferson wrote "A Summary View of the Rights of British America," the colonists had come to insist on a federal model of the British imperial constitution. Jefferson's pamphlet instructed George III that the king was the sole governmental link among the parts of his empire, each of which had its own local assembly. Jefferson's conclusion was that George III must intervene with the Parliament to prevent the British legislature from trying to force its policies on the colonists. Of course, George did not comply, and the result was the War for American Independence.

Jefferson's Virginia kicked off the process of writing constitutions and having a people's representatives put them into effect. Its 1776 constitution, the first written constitution adopted by the people's representatives in the history of the world, essentially instantiated the Old Dominion's colonial constitution, with an elected governor in place of the king's appointee, oaths to the Commonwealth in place of oaths to the king, and election of judges by the General Assembly to the new state-level courts.

The decade between the Virginia Convention's drafting of a constitution and the Philadelphia Convention of 1787 saw ten other states draft republican constitutions. The Federal Convention can be understood, then, as the capstone of the constitution-writing experience of the Revolutionary generation.

Yet the U.S. Constitution is the second federal constitution.



James Madison had a dark side. Photo by M. Holdridge.

The first, the Articles of Confederation, was ratified in 1781. It essentially formalized the status quo, in which members of Congress were chosen by state legislators, served as the states' ambassadors, and could not do much more than recommend policy to the state governments. The Confederation Congress had to ask the states for money because it could not tax; it had to ask the states for men because it could not enlist; it had to submit treaties to the states because it could not ratify.

The U.S. Constitution changed this situation, primarily by giving members of Congress power to act without referring to the state governments for their approval. However, the states remained the primary loci of power in the federal system even after implementation of the new Constitution in 1789. Even more important in securing the Constitution's ratification than the famous principle of the separation of powers between the branches of the Federal government was the division of powers between the Federal government and the states. In

light of the developments in American political thought since the Stamp Act, this should be unsurprising.

James Madison and Edmund Randolph led the Virginia delegation in Philadelphia in presenting the Virginia Plan, a blueprint for a national government. As Governor Randolph explained it, the United States needed a "national" government with a "national" executive, a "national" legislative, and a "national" judicial branch.

Here we encounter the distinction, lost in 2009 English, between the "national" and "federal" models. In the national model, all power comes from the center, and local government exists for the convenience of the center, to which localities are subordinate. That is the model of government established by the French Revolution. The French Revolutionaries declared themselves to be the representatives of the entire nation, erased the traditional regional limits, and redrew France's internal boundaries so that the local administrative units were of more or less equal size. Those administrative units from that time forth would exist for the convenience of the central government. France has had numerous governments since then, but whether republican, monarchical, or imperial, they have all been national.

The alternative model, the federal, is the model of government

in which the local parts precede the center, delegate some powers to it, and retain the rest for themselves. Federal government is the traditional model in Switzerland, the Netherlands, Australia, Germany, Canada, and the United States.

The national legislative branch Randolph envisioned would have had a general legislative power, a veto over state laws, and complete independence of the state governments arising from the elimination of state legislatures' role in selecting members of the federal legislature. Where the Revolutionary Congresses had been subordinate to the state legislatures, that relationship would have been inverted by Randolph.

Historians now treat the Virginia Plan as a kind of rough draft of the Constitution, but on all of these points the Virginia Plan was rejected. The Constitution that was written in Philadelphia and submitted to the states for ratification gave Congress only a few enumerated powers, did not provide Congress a veto over state laws, and established a U.S. Senate whose members were elected by state legislators.

The Virginia Plan included nationalist proposals for the executive and judicial branches as well, and those too were defeated. For example, in place of a general jurisdiction for federal courts to decide any case that might elicit friction among the states, the Constitution included only a few specific types of jurisdiction for federal courts, and even those were nearly all subject to Congress's discretion in creating inferior federal courts or not. One eminent historian of the Revolution, Forrest McDonald, ascertained that James Madison lost on the majority of votes he cast in the Philadelphia Convention. The reason is that despite his insistence, the Convention did not produce a national constitution but a federal one.

Of course, the story did not end there. Once the Constitution went into effect, Congress—at Madison's behest—sent the states 12 amendments for their ratification. That Madison should have taken the lead in writing those 12 proposed amendments says a lot about the people's attitude concerning the new Constitution in 1789. After losing on several important questions at the Philadelphia Convention, Madison wrote a letter to his friend Thomas Jefferson bemoaning the omission from the Constitution of the congressional veto on state laws. Madison considered that provision entirely necessary, but he had not gotten it. He told Jefferson that the new Constitution was better than the Articles but strongly implied that the new plan of government was bound to fail without the veto.

Yet in securing Virginia's ratification of the Constitution in 1788, Madison and Governor Randolph sold the new charter as a federal, not a national one. Randolph even told the ratification convention that Congress would have only the powers it was "expressly delegated." Virginia's instrument of ratification reserved the Old Dominion's right to reclaim the powers it was granting in case the Federal government abused them. Although contrary

to Madison's fondest wishes, this was perfectly consistent with the meaning of the American Revolution. Americans insisted, in 1788 as in 1776, that their state legislatures were their primary institutions of government and that federal relations with the other states thereafter were a secondary consideration.

The Virginian opponents of ratification, led by Patrick Henry, knew what Madison had attempted to do behind closed doors in Philadelphia, and Madison's own Baptist constituents feared that the absence of a religious liberty provision from the Constitution meant that Congress could persecute people like them. Madison's friends George Mason, Thomas Jefferson, and Edmund Randolph also lamented the absence of a bill of rights.



James Madison's grave. Photo by M. Holdridge.

Madison, then, for reasons of personal political interest as well as to placate his elite acquaintances, pushed amendments he had insisted were not necessary. Those amendments all imposed further limitations on the power of the central government. (Madison tried to sneak in an amendment empowering federal judges to supervise state governments in some regards, but Congress rejected his proposal.) Pride of place among the proposed amendments went to the Tenth, which says, "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." Despite the Federalists' promise that this principle underlay the Constitution, several states' ratification conventions had demanded an amendment making it explicit, and Madison succumbed.

Today the federal government does not respect this principle in the slightest. There is virtually no issue on which Congress does not feel entitled to legislate, despite the Tenth Amendment's reservation of powers

to the states. Thus, local self-government through legislative elections—the Revolution's legacy—has yielded to largely unaccountable, distant government by federal (increasingly national) judges and bureaucrats. What one political scientist called America's great contribution to political science, the idea of federalism, seemingly has been lost.

Still, the American Revolution's faith in the old way of doing things has never been exploded. Americans still realize that less government is best, that accountability is better than the alternative, that community is more palpable at the local level, and that local elections are the chief mechanism for vindicating these truths politically. It is up to us to resuscitate these principles that made the American Revolution, and the U.S. Constitution, an example for the nations.

Kevin Gutzman is associate professor at Western Connecticut State University and is the author of four books, including Virginia's American Revolution: From Dominion to Republic, 1776-1840 and (with Thomas E. Woods Jr.) Who Killed the Constitution?: The Fate of American Liberty from World War I to George W. Bush.

Profiles in Liberty

Walter Block

Trent Hill

Walter Block, the Harold E. Wirth Eminent Scholar Chair of Economics at Loyola University in New Orleans, is a titan of the freedom movement. He is a senior fellow at the Ludwig von Mises Institute, columnist for LewRockwell.com, and the author of *Defending the Undefendable* and *Economics and the Environment: A Reconciliation*. He is an anarcho-capitalist and an adherent of the Austrian School of economics.

Block attended Brooklyn College for his undergraduate degree and was, by his own admission, “a dumb pinko.” His life changed in 1963, when Ayn Rand came to lecture at his college, and the self-described socialist Block decided to attend in order to boo, hiss, and discredit the abominably capitalist novelist. At a luncheon after the speech, Block challenged Rand’s chief disciple, Nathaniel Branden, to a debate. Before entering into the discussion, Branden insisted on two conditions. First, the argument would not end when the luncheon was over, but would continue until one side had converted the other. Second, Block had to read two books, Henry Hazlitt’s *Economics in One Lesson* and Rand’s *Atlas Shrugged*. After a few rounds of exploratory discussions, Block came around to the limited-government libertarian perspective held by Objectivists, though he claims this was “largely through reading the two books they recommended.”

In 1966, while he was still in graduate school, Block’s path crossed that of libertarian theorist Murray Rothbard. “After I met Murray, it took him probably all of 15 minutes to convert me to the same anarcho-capitalist position I have held ever since,” he says. “In retrospect, before I had met Murray, I was nine-tenths of the way toward embracing laissez-faire capitalist anarchism. All I needed was a little push in the same direction I had already been going for some time.”

Block would go on to receive his Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1972, writing his thesis on the economics of rent control. Over the next 36 years, Block became a fixture in the libertarian movement. His contributions to academic libertarianism and to Austrian economics have been prodigious. He has published over 200 articles in refereed journals, been associated with four separate research institutions, and has served as the editor of several journals, including the *Quarterly Journal of Austrian Economics*, the



Professor Walter Block, veteran of the liberty movement.

Review of Austrian Economics, the *Journal of Libertarian Studies*, *Cultural Dynamics*, and the *Journal of Labor Economics*.

I interviewed Dr. Block in January, asking him whether his attainment of an endowed chair at Loyola University meant that pro-liberty views were more acceptable in academia. Displaying the positive thinking for which he is well known, he responded, “When I first got into the Austrian-libertarian movement, in 1962, this philosophy was very dormant. Hayek and Mises had both feared that these ideas would die with their passing. Now, there are hundreds of such professors all over the world.” Indeed, the Ludwig von Mises Institute alone has 275 faculty associates, and there are thousands of other libertarian professors all over the country and around the world. But Block is well aware of troubling developments in university life. “Early in my career, the forces of political correctness and cultural Marxism were nonexistent. Today, they are very powerful on every campus. In that sense, the pro-liberty views I espouse are considerably less acceptable in the present

academic atmosphere.”

Block was alluding to his recent run-in with those forces at Loyola College in Maryland, where on Nov. 6 he gave a talk at the invitation of fellow Mises Institute scholar Thomas DiLorenzo. This lecture was sponsored by the school’s Adam Smith Society, and over 100 faculty and students attended. Block’s speech, on the topic of “social justice,” provoked outrage from the multicultural Left. When asked what advocates of freedom could learn from the controversy, Block was his typically humorous self:

“It is fun to tweak noses, particularly grandiose noses. I have never had so much fun in my life replying to these people. You know, when I first got into this business in a professional way, I gave several speeches on the topic of my Ph.D. dissertation, on rent control. Boy, was I ready to deal with objections. However, the criticisms, objections, I faced from our friends on the Left had nothing to do with the merits or demerits of rent control. Instead, they were virtually all ad hominem: am I a landlord? Am I in the pay of landlords? Do I like landlords? Do I know any landlords?”

“Nothing much has changed. In Baltimore, I gave a straightforward, noncontroversial (within economics, that is) answer to the question of why is it that there is a wage gap between males

and females, whites and blacks. Is it due to innate sexism and racism of the free enterprise system? I answered in the negative. But instead of coming to grips with the statistics and logic I employed to make this case, my critics again lowered themselves to ad hominem. Only this time it had nothing to do with landlords. Instead it consisted of name calling. Block is a racist. Block is a sexist. Block is a moron.

“I think the thing to learn is to keep your cool. The other side resorts to such tactics because they have nothing of substance to say. Keep cool, be polite. Ronald Reagan’s favorite saying was *non carborundum illegitimi*—‘Don’t let the bastards grind you down.’”

Through his years of libertarian activism and scholarly work, Block has crossed paths often with luminaries like Ron Paul, F.A. Hayek, Leonardiggio, and Roy Childs. He attended Ludwig von Mises’s last lecture at New York University. Block had a cordial relationship with Ayn Rand, something very few libertarians were able to do, and he remembers her being “very gentle and sweet with newcomers like me” but “very bitter and hostile if you were a long-term member of her group and crossed her—criticized her, asked her tough, challenging questions.” He recalls, “what I remember most about her is her sparkling eyes. Boy, did she sparkle. She would make a great entrance—wearing a cape, smoking a cigarette with a long cigarette holder.” Block is also a longtime friend of Congressman Ron Paul, having met him in the 1970s when both of them were “members of the hard-money—gold—libertarian movement.”

Block has long been involved with student organizations within the pro-liberty movement. In 1969, he was present and active—helping Karl Hess and Murray Rothbard stir things up—at the national Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) convention in St. Louis, where libertarians and conservatives first split in earnest.

He was later involved with the Radical Libertarian Alliance and the Society for Individual Liberty, student groups full of libertarians, voluntarists, and individualists. I asked Block if he thought pro-liberty groups like Young Americans for Liberty (YAL) are important today:

“Yes, yes, yes. Did I mention yes? Groups of this sort are extremely helpful to our cause. They raise a banner around which students who favor free enterprise, private property rights and limited government can rally around. It is very lonely being a student on campus, surrounded by hordes of socialists, including fellow classmates and professors. It is good to realize that there are other students on campus of like mind. That is a great function that YAL and other such groups, provide. If they only did that, that would be enough. But they typically do so much more: set up meetings, Invite outside speakers who can articulate the freedom philosophy, raise money, and do legwork for candidates.”

At the end of our interview I asked Block if he believes universities are more receptive to the ideas of liberty now than when he was a student. “Yes and no. Yes, there are many, many more people espousing these ideas nowadays. No, the campus student radicals of the 1960s are now the professors and administrators. For them, diversity means having a faculty with a female Marxist, a black Marxist, a homosexual Marxist, a transgendered Marxist.” His response was not a compliment to modern academia, but it gives pro-liberty students all the more reason to fight on. Perhaps someday we will take the commanding heights of the public universities—right before we privatize them.

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Revolution Comes to Campus

On Inauguration Day, Young Americans for Liberty unmasked the real Obama.

Bonnie Kristian

January 20 was hailed as an historic date across the country with the inauguration of Barack Obama as president, but it also marked Young Americans for Liberty's first national event, entitled "Real Change Requires R3volution." Hosted on 41 college campuses nationwide, the event received school, local, and even national media coverage.

The goal of the Real Change event was to unmask the new administration's supposed plans for change as a continuation of the status quo. Obama's victory was significant, the event's website explained, but "it was not by chance. A well orchestrated plan executed

by top marketers, Internet strategists, and campaign consultants put him in the White House. Americans demanded change, and [Obama] supplied an answer." But despite his campaign's impressive commandeering of the word and concept of "change," Obama's voting record and issue positions strongly suggest that he will continue the reckless disregard for the Constitution, diplomacy, and the laws of economics that has marked White House policy for decades.

To raise campus awareness of the serious shortcomings of the Obama administration, participating YAL chapters received free boxes of materials including fliers, stickers, and pocket-sized copies of the Constitution from YAL headquarters in Arlington, VA. The Real Change event website also made available downloads that detailed Obama's voting record and stated his support for such less-than-new policies as the Patriot Act, the financial bailout, and the continuing war in Afghanistan. YAL members set up tables in high-traffic areas at their colleges and spent the day handing out information and discussing the necessity of true change in government.

As might be expected, reactions to "Real Change Requires R3volution" were mixed. Austin Brenneman, president of Warsaw Community High School's YAL chapter in Warsaw, Indiana, experience the most hostile reception. "Today, I had planned to pass out fliers exposing Obama as more of the same, in accordance with the Real Change Requires R3volution event," explained Brenneman, but in his fifth-period class, he was "extracted by an administrator and escorted to his office." A journalist from an area paper was coming to the campus, and school officials suspected that the YAL demonstration would only cause problems.



Students used handouts, banners, and table displays to call attention to their message.

Brenneman's materials were confiscated, though most were later returned on the condition that they not be distributed at the school.

Fortunately, this classic example of the inverse relationship between a citizen's degree of freedom and his proximity to government property gained the attention of the reporter who had originally come to cover the event. In a fairly lengthy article, the newspaper story explained the purpose of YAL, the aims of the Real Change event, and the quashing of Warsaw Community High's demonstration. Ironically, the school administration's inter-

ference probably increased press interest in this YAL chapter.

On the national level, too, "Real Change Requires R3volution" caught the media's eye. "OK, so not all college students are gaga over Obama," began *USA Today's* higher education blog's coverage of the event. Posted on January 19, the brief article mentioned Ron Paul's endorsement of YAL and linked to the event site. As is typical of almost anything mentioning Dr. Paul on the Internet, the post received significantly more comments than most other material on the site, many of them supportive of YAL.

Also making the news were the efforts of the Rutgers University chapter. Although Zaid Abuhouran and Roy Antoun were the only two manning their table, the Rutgers group nonetheless distributed several hundred fliers, slipping a few under doors in the Political Science department. Both students were interviewed by a local newspaper, and they were able to explain that "Obama is more of the same [and] no different than George Bush," and that they would have distributed YAL information even if John McCain had won the presidency. Abuhouran particularly noted Obama's record of support for Bush policies infringing on civil liberties and his retention of Bush's defense secretary, Robert Gates.

Despite having to work outside in the frigid New Jersey winter, the Rutgers activists successfully signed up interested students, handed out pocket Constitutions, and debated Obama supporters. Similarly impressive were the achievements of the University of California at Irvine chapter, which signed up some 30 students to its email list. Organizer Tony Burke commented that at the beginning of his YAL involvement he was "the only libertarian" he knew of at UCI, but the campus now has an active YAL chapter taking

shape. “[Obama] is not the change we wanted to see,” he explained in the *Orange County Register*’s article on the UCI Real Change event. On the contrary, Burke continued, the “new president and his cabinet have talked about moving troops to Afghanistan, reviving some sort of civilian draft and exhausting \$800 billion on an economic stimulus plan.” Burke and other volunteers distributed hundreds of handouts and backed up their verbal messages with sidewalk chalk as well.

“Change: It’s What’s Left Over After Taxes,” declared the signs held by YAL members at Indiana University, where the weather had students “freezing for freedom.” Chapter president Andrew Sharp was interviewed by an area radio station, where he explained that YAL is the descendent of Students for Ron Paul. “This event ... is basically just to get the word out that Obama [is] really supporting the status quo and the traditional trajectory that we’ve been following for the last twenty years,” Sharp said. The IU chapter plans to get involved in battles in the Indiana legislature, particularly focusing on a sound-money bill introduced in 2008.

Further reports came in—and can be found at www.YALiberty.org/change—from R3volution events at the University of Wisconsin, the University of Washington, the University of Texas at San Antonio, Southeastern Louisiana University, and the University of Texas at Austin. The YAL chapter to receive the most media attention was the one at St. Cloud State University near

“This event ... is basically just to get the word out that Obama [is] really supporting the status quo and the traditional trajectory that we’ve been following for the last twenty years.” *Andrew Sharp*

Minneapolis. Covered in advance both near (by the *St. Cloud Times*) and far (by the *Houston Chronicle*) the event also got attention after the fact from the university paper and the *St. Cloud Times*. Obama “claims to be for change. We want people to not trust the media and decide for

themselves how much he is for change,” the St. Cloud students explained.

Finally, at Idaho State University the YAL group signed up new members and found the pocket Constitutions popular, but also noted significant despondency even among believers in Obama’s message. “People are becoming increasingly hopeless, and that was why Obama won—he used the message of hope,” the ISU chapter explained, adding that YAL should take care to avoid “extinguishing that flame, and instead re-direct it.” It is this need to provide not only an insightful criticism of the political system but also a real alternative to reorient the American citizenry that was at the heart of the Real Change Requires R3volution event. More than simply distributing information, this event and future YAL efforts are designed to lay the foundations of a grassroots network extensive and committed enough to bring true transformation to Washington—to start, in other words, a Real Change.

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The President’s New Clothes

If young people knew what Obama really stood for, they wouldn’t support him.

Justin Page Wood

The liberty movement has a mission over the next four years: not merely to remove Barack Obama from office, but to destroy the ideologies that the president represents. The first step to accomplishing that is to show Obama’s young supporters exactly what the president represents.

Both his past record and his new policies do not stand for the kind of change people are expecting. He voted for the Patriot Act and for the Foreign Intelligence and Surveillance Act (FISA). He voted for funding the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars and has no plan to withdraw American troops from the 700 bases across 130 different countries.

Even his cabinet choices reflect continuity with the foreign policy of George W. Bush. Obama has kept Robert Gates—appointed by Bush in 2006—as his secretary of defense. And Obama makes it clear that he intends a stronger U.S. military presence in Afghanistan, asking for 30,000 more troops and more funding for military bases.

If we can prove to young Obama supporters that his stance on

war and peace—a political issue that is key to the younger generation—is weak, we may be able to open up a discussion of the philosophy of both personal and economic liberty.

For instance, many young Obama supporters like the idea of required government service. National service, goes the argument, would help citizens care about their country and create an experience that all young people could share, which would strengthen the national community.

But the 13th Amendment states: “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime ... shall exist within the United States.”

Even a military draft, which has been imposed several times in our nation’s history, is an affront to that principle. Mandatory government service either in fighting a war or filing paperwork at an office is involuntary servitude.

Yet here is what Obama proposed on his Change.gov website: “Require 100 Hours of Service in College. Establish a new American Opportunity Tax Credit worth \$4,000 a year in exchange for

100 hours of public service a year.” At least we would be compensated. But then, so are military conscripts.

Another area where there is great opportunity to educate Obama’s followers is the subject of our massive national debt, which is now some \$11 trillion, more than 40 percent of it owned by foreign creditors. We simply don’t have enough money to pay for wars and social programs, let alone the debt. Yet Obama and the Congress have promised massive amounts of new spending.

Our Gross Domestic Product is estimated to be about \$14 trillion. If the entire nation were to devote its productive capacity for a full year to paying off the national debt, there would be almost no money left to spend for ourselves. And that isn’t counting tens of trillions of additional dollars of debt in the form of unfunded liabilities in Social Security, Medicare, and pensions.

The fundamental problem of endless government spending is key. Although the liberty movement understands this well, many Americans do not realize how bankrupt the country is, nor that any new spending comes from borrowing, shifting wealth, and—especially—printing more money.

The concept of fiscal responsibility exists neither in Barack Obama’s mind nor in those of the younger generation that supports him. Teaching those followers how broke we really are and that we cannot afford to bail out companies, subsidize health care and alternative energy, and promise the creation of new jobs is a

vital part of our mission. We cannot expect to change the president’s ways, but those of his supporters may be another matter.

The level of support for Obama in colleges across America is daunting. There is still a strong wave of those who believe Hope is alive and that Change is coming. That will remain the case until we can infect the entire culture and political system with the philosophies of liberty. And we can only transmit our message to the future through the younger generation. In just a few years, students who are now of high school and college age will be at the center of political and economic power.

The task before us is not simply to stop Obama on particular issues but to prove that his ideas are insolvent—that big government creates more problems and that the American dream shouldn’t be seen as the government taking care of us. No one should want to live with his parents forever in the hope that they will always provide for him. We need to take responsibility for ourselves.

Real change involves more than just replacing the occupant of the Oval Office. It requires revolutionizing the entire political system—to end the welfare-warfare state and return to the Constitution. Educating the masses, especially the adamant Obama supporters among them, on the perils of big government is the logical place to begin.

Justin Page Wood is a senior at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

Improving Your Pitch

Tips for liberty-oriented campus activists

Jim Lark

As one who has been involved in promoting the libertarian perspective on college campuses for nearly 25 years, allow me to share some tips that you may find helpful.

- The messenger is frequently more important than the message, at least at first. Your behavior may be a factor for some people in determining whether to listen to you. Many people believe that libertarians don’t give a damn about others. Please don’t reinforce that belief. Maintain a pleasant demeanor even if you are dealing with incredibly hostile people. Do not give your enemies the pleasure of knowing that they can upset you.

- Emphasize that in a free society, the default value is liberty. Thus the burden of proof in a discussion about the use of government should always be upon those who argue in favor of state action.

- Where appropriate, set (or change) the terms of the debate. For example, instead of using the phrase “drug legalization,” try the phrase, “ending drug Prohibition.” The latter term may remind people that alcohol Prohibition is generally viewed as a very costly social-engineering failure.

- Ask people to “compare apples to apples, not apples to oranges” when they consider the antistatist perspective. Many people evaluate the likely consequences of a free society by comparison to a perfect society that doesn’t exist. A fair evaluation

should compare the likely consequences of a libertarian society to what consequences will obtain under conceivable alternative institutions.

- Many of the discussions you will find yourself having will not be about basic moral principles of liberty but will center upon disputes over what happened to the poor during the Great Depression in America or the Industrial Revolution in England. Study history and know your facts.

- Some of the most telling points you can make in your criticisms of big government, particularly in the area of economics, will have nothing specifically to do with the philosophy of liberty. For example, the argument that minimum-wage laws harm the very people they are ostensibly designed to help is an economics argument and has nothing to do with libertarianism per se. The argument that agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration may do vastly more harm than good is largely an empirical matter. One need not agree with libertarian principles to conclude that the FDA should not have police powers to regulate what you use for your health, safety, or comfort.

- Don’t oversell the product. A free society will not be paradise; it will likely be wealthier and more just than a statist society, but not perfect. Libertarians are usually quick to criticize statists for their faith in the godlike powers of government; we should not

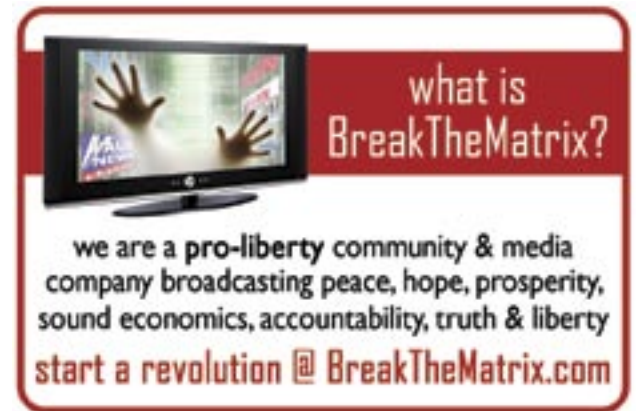
make the same mistake in touting the market. In general, maintain the highest standards of intellectual integrity. Examine your own arguments as carefully as you ask others to examine theirs.

- Don't be disappointed if people are not immediately convinced by your words of wisdom. Your arguments may be unfamiliar and seem strange to your listeners. Many current libertarians spent years pondering these matters before adopting their philosophy.

When I was an undergraduate at Virginia Tech many years ago, I was not a libertarian. I was sympathetic but thought some of the ideas were problematic. It took years for me to become a hardcore antistatist. Because of this, I realize that the young student who now seems incredibly ignorant (or disgustingly statist) about these matters may eventually come around to the cause of liberty.

- Never underestimate the effect you can have upon someone. Seeds you plant today may bear tremendous fruit tomorrow. Be aware that some of your greatest victories may take place not in finding and nurturing the next great libertarian advocate, but rather in keeping someone from becoming the next Karl Marx or Michael Harrington.

Jim Lark, a professor in the School of Engineering and Applied Science at the University of Virginia, serves as the national student organization coordinator for the Libertarian Party.



Recruiting New Leaders

How to plan for transition in your youth organization

Adam Guillette

Attention of leadership is the biggest problem facing youth organizations. Most groups are so focused on present goals that they are simply unable to take the time to prepare for the future.

But recruiting new leaders is essential to the long-term success of any organization, particularly your Young Americans for Liberty chapter. How can you prepare for this? Where can you find new leaders with the same determination that you and the current leaders possess?

Typically, we try to find people who look like leaders. We seek out individuals who are good-looking, intelligent, popular, or wealthy. But these aren't essential leadership characteristics. Many of the best leaders don't have any of these traits. After all, life is often easier for the "beautiful people," which means that they may not be prepared for the challenges that the leaders of your chapter must face.

There are two distinct characteristics that you should look for in any potential leader: sustained enthusiasm and the ability to work with others.

These are qualities that you would want in a potential employee. Sustained enthusiasm means that the person will not grow bored with the project and move on to other things within a few months. You wouldn't want to hire an individual who had held five jobs in the past 12 months.

The ability to work with others means just that—getting along well with people and the ability to be a good ambassador for your YAL chapter and recruit new members. A leader must have good relationships with the current membership as well. (We have enough enemies outside of Young Americans for Liberty—don't ever let your group be bogged down with infighting.)

Your chapter might already have some prospective leaders that you are unaware of. Look for people who step up to the plate in informal situations. Perhaps three of your members are in charge of bringing pizza and soda to each meeting. Two of the members take the funds and spend them at the bar, but the third uses his own money to buy pizza and drinks for the meeting. As inconsequential as this may sound, the third member has demonstrated sustained enthusiasm, a key leadership characteristic.

Perhaps you have a member who hasn't missed a meeting in three years. She never says much, but she shows up to every event—on time. This woman has demonstrated sustained enthusiasm. We can work with her to make sure that she becomes more outspoken, but she already demonstrated an essential element of leadership.

Douglas Hyde, author of the classic *Dedication and Leadership*, had an interesting method for identifying leaders before they joined a group. Hyde had been a Communist organizer in England, but

he eventually abandoned communism to become a Christian. He remained impressed, however, by the Communists' ability to grow organizations. Here's one tip that worked for them: When recruiting at your membership table, you'll occasionally be approached by incredibly enthusiastic prospects. After signing one up, ask him to spend a little time helping you work the table. He may be surprised that you're asking him to volunteer for a club he just joined, but ask anyway. If he says yes, work the table with him for 15-20 minutes. At that point, explain that you have a brief errand to run, but you'll be right back. Ask your recruit if he wouldn't mind working the table until you return. Not everyone will say yes, but some will.

At this point you should leave and go somewhere that the recruit cannot see you—but you can see him. Wait and watch. Is he continuing to sign up members? Is he silently sitting behind the table? Is he stealing the money from the membership dues box?

(If so, he'll make a great Communist!)

The new member who continues to recruit all by himself is obviously exhibiting the ability to work with others. And by continuing to work the table in your absence, he is also showing sustained enthusiasm. Anyone who will work hard to recruit for an organization that he just joined shows great potential for leadership.

Remember that titles are free. If one of your members shows leadership potential, give him a title. This will automatically confer an increased sense of responsibility and should result in more activism on his part. If your club has four officer positions but has six people interested in leadership, simply create two new positions.

Adam Guillette is Florida state director of Americans for Prosperity and a lecturer at The Leadership Institute's Youth Leadership School. For more information on this and other lessons, visit www.leadershipinstitute.org.

America's First Dr. No

Forgotten Founder, Drunken Prophet: The Life of Luther Martin,
Bill Kauffman, ISI Books, \$25, 225 pages

Dylan Hales

My first encounter with the work of Bill Kauffman took place in a small public library in suburban New Jersey. While poring over a back catalogue of “current events” titles that were neither current nor eventful, I stumbled upon a book entitled *America First!* Drawn to the volume by its defiantly Buchananite title and the promise of an interesting forward (Gore Vidal rarely disappoints), by book's end I had been transformed from a fire-breathing leftist into a decentralist “Americanist.” I had my taste of the forbidden fruit, and I was hooked.

For a political junkie, the collected works of Bill Kauffman are the gateway drug to all things off limits. Emphasizing the “character” in “character sketch,” the typical offering from Kauffman is filled with witticisms and quirks of history ignored or discarded by “consensus historians.” Kauffman's books focus on a variety of causes lost to time, historical memory, or executive privilege. From the anti-internationalism of J. Bracken Lee to the eco-anarchism of Edward Abbey and every point in-between, nary an obscurity or eccentricity of our political (or cultural) landscape has been overlooked by the self-professed “placeist” Kauffman, patriot son of Batavia, New York.

In his latest work, *Forgotten Founder, Drunken Prophet*, Kauffman



Bill Kauffman addresses the Rally for the Republic. Photo by M. Holdridge.

stays true to form while tackling his biggest beast yet. Though this is ostensibly a biography of the firebrand, alcohol-fueled Anti-Federalist extraordinaire Luther Martin, the “forgotten” of the title has as much to do with the causes of states' rights and individual liberty as with the virtually unknown man whose portrait adorns the cover.

Kauffman, by way of Martin, argues the unthinkable: our Constitution is not a perfect document, drawn up by selfless representatives of the people's will. Quite the contrary, according to Kauffman: its writing and ratification were a “coup” promoted

by centralizing nationalists dedicated to the principle that what's bigger is inherently better. Or to sum it up rather neatly, the slow death march of the republic began almost a hundred years before Mr. Lincoln's War and over two hundred years before the age of Bush.

Though this argument is not unknown to longtime libertarians, it has never before been told in a fashion quite like this, and Luther Martin proves the perfect vehicle for its dissemination.

Largely ignored by historians of all stripes, Martin is a figure deserving of a full-length biography. Born in 1748, Martin had a distinguished and somewhat bizarre career that included being the longest-serving attorney general in Maryland history as well as

the lead defense attorney for the disgraced former vice president Aaron Burr in his trial for treason. He also dutifully represented his state in the famous *McCullough v. Maryland* Supreme Court case and was the first delegate to the Constitutional Convention to voice opposition to slavery during the proceedings. Most importantly of all, Martin was the Anti-Federalist scourge of the “West Indian Bastard” and arch-centralist Alexander Hamilton and his primary accomplice—James Madison?

Here is another Kauffman calling card, historical revision per excellence. This time the man who in *America First!* debunked the myth that 20th-century Progressives were an outgrowth of the 19th-century Populists points out that Madison, author of the Kentucky Resolution though he may have been, was at the most pivotal moment no fan of nullification. Truth be told, Madison was no fan of states’ rights at all.

In fact, Kauffman points out, Madison was the “most ardent advocate” of a “national negative,” which would in Madison’s own words have allowed the newly minted national government to “have a negative, in all cases whatsoever, on the legislative acts of the states, as the king of Great Britain heretofore had. This I conceive to be essential Let this national supremacy be extended also the judiciary department.”

King of Great Britain? National supremacy? Say it ain’t so, James, say it ain’t so!

Madison may disappoint, but not so Luther Martin. For while we have our fourth president to thank for the needless War of 1812, we have Luther Martin to thank for his stubborn defense of decentralism.

Martin’s principles were remarkably consistent by the standards of any time. Right out of the gate, Martin registered his contempt for the “foul spirit” guiding the secrecy of the Philadelphia gathering. Within days of his arrival, Martin had distinguished himself as an opponent of loyalty oaths, standing armies, and the big-state bonanza known as the Virginia Plan. As Kauffman writes:

Time and again, Luther Martin stood alone, or nearly so, in attempting to infuse the new Constitution with something of the spirit of ’76. He was a libertarian in a body of men convinced that America needed a more vigorous government; he spoke of decentralism to men with centripetal convictions. He might not be seconded; oft he was rebuffed, rebutted, reproached. But he kept on coming.

So he did. On issue after issue, this lawyer by trade, New Jerseyite by birth and Marylander of the heart, desperately warned against the impending doom that was our fate if America should become a consolidated state.

At this point the reader might be tempted to regard both Martin and his biographer as career contrarians playing the role of dissident merely because someone must. This would be a misreading of both men. For even as Martin and Kauffman oppose much, they defend more.

As Kauffman is quick to note, “The Anti-Federalists stood for decentralism, local democracy, antimilitarism, and a deep suspicion of central governments. And they stood on what they stood for. Local attachments. Local knowledge.” Not coincidentally, Kauffman himself stands for all of the above in a world much farther gone than anything Luther Martin could have envisioned.

Was Martin a paragon of virtue? No. Though memory serves him little, bartenders served him often. His dress was notoriously unkempt and his manners nonexistent. He held fierce grudges against sons-in-law and political enemies (Martin may have been the only anti-Jeffersonian Jefferson.) Worst of all, late in his life he became a peddler of the sort of anti-black legislation that he had earlier advised against in Philadelphia.

Though accounts of his rambling tirades as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention are widely exaggerated, evidence abounds that the esteemed lawyer was as addicted to the sound of his own voice as he was to the bottle. Former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Roger Taney regarded Martin as a “profound lawyer” in spite of his tendency to dwell “so long on unimportant points, that the attention was apt to be fatigued and withdrawn.” Other colleagues levied similar charges, and even the sympathetic Kauffman admits that the evidence of Martin’s “tediousness is impressive.”

But if the worst crimes attributed to Luther Martin are a penchant for long-windedness and an all-too-typical inconsistency regarding the “peculiar institution,” his sins pale in comparison to those of the Hamiltonians and their nationalist heirs. In foreseeing “a national state that, equipped for aggressive war, would wage aggressive war,” Martin accurately predicted the road down which centralized power led. Drunken or not, he was a prophet on that score.

Kauffman has given us a multidimensional treatment of a man whose previous reputation—to the extent he had one—was that of “the town drunk, the class bore, the motormouth.” Though the book is a polemic of sorts, it does not lack the academic support one would expect from a serious book covering an important, if obscure, figure in American history. Best of all, this biography is as much a testament to the lifelong passions of its author as it is a chronicle of its subject.

In the introduction, Kauffman humorously notes that much like Luther Martin he too is a “rural debtor.” This is not the only similarity between these men. For Kauffman’s fight has always been for decentralized power, community control, and individual liberty, the causes for which Luther Martin stood at the head of the Anti-Federalist vanguard. An eccentric of sorts himself, who is more likely to quote former Dead Kennedys front man Jello Biafra than he is to cite the legal opinions of Robert Bork, Kauffman is the latest in a long line of forgotten patriots, planters, farmers, and Founders represented so impressively in the person of Luther Martin.

Martin and the Anti-Federalists lost more fights than they won. But because of them we have—or had—the Bill of Rights. And in truth, Martin’s legacy extends beyond the ten amendments that are largely ignored by our aging and corrupt political class. As young Americans rally in droves to a Constitution that is certainly better than any political system we have seen in our lifetimes, men like Martin—and Kauffman—point to a revolutionary tradition well worth remembering, preserving, and fighting for.

Back to the future! Toward the states, not the state!

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Empire of Junk

The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism,

Andrew J. Bacevich, Metropolitan Books, \$24, 206 pages

Nathan P. Origer

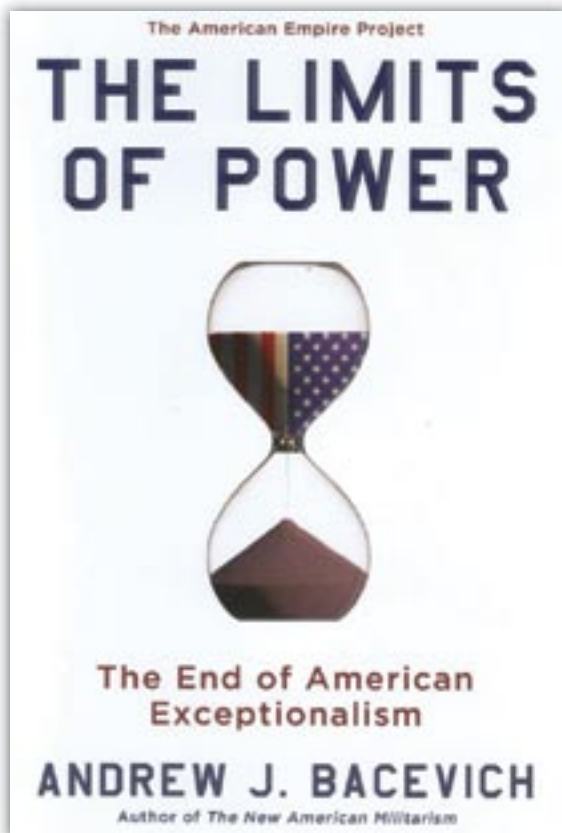
Saying “My country, right or wrong,” G.K. Chesterton remarked, is like saying “My mother, drunk or sober.” Only in the most extremely pressing of times—perhaps never—could one justify such a sentiment. Andrew J. Bacevich, like Chesterton, adheres to a sober sort of patriotism.

In *The Limits of Power*, Bacevich—professor of international relations at Boston University, self-described conservative Catholic, Vietnam veteran, and father of a son who died in Iraq—painstakingly chronicles the sources of our present cultural, economic, political, and military crises and forces us to recognize that, as easy as assigning blame to the neoconservatives is, our troubles are much more deeply rooted. Solving them will require more than a new face on Pennsylvania Avenue.

Ominously, but understandably, Bacevich titles his short but packed introduction “War Without Limits.” He follows up brief commentary on the rise of a Pax Americana after the fall of Soviet Communism with a jarring accusation: that it is out of “the accumulated detritus of freedom, the by-products of our frantic pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness” that our expansionism and self-implosion have emerged.

What? At first, the reader balks: the American experiment in liberty was to be a shining city on a hill, a scintillating contrast to the excesses of European power, with a natural aristocracy refining the baser tendencies of the great masses. Avoiding foreign entanglements, the U.S. would trade peaceably with all who were willing and spare her sons the bloodshed that stained the Old World.

But Bacevich, drawing from the work of theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, notes that for Americans “freedom” is more often a cure-all incantation than a value. Just what freedom means over time changes, yet Americans persistently assert that not only may they do as they wish, but they may have as they desire, and the world must accommodate—lest we, say, deploy troops to the Middle East to ensure an abundance of oil. Perhaps to the consternation of libertarians who embrace free trade, Bacevich further indicts his countrymen for the relentless amassing of cheap plastic goods at the cost of poor working conditions in Asia. To all of this and



more he attributes the roots of our penchant for global expansionism.

Somewhat disappointingly, Bacevich cannot pinpoint why this is so. He acknowledges that even as early as Alexis de Tocqueville's trip to the New World, Americans possessed what the Frenchman dubbed a “feverish ardor” for increasing their stock of worldly possessions. Ably calling out the revered architect of American democracy and champion of small government, Bacevich reminds his reader that even Jefferson felt the need to enable this impulse, buying the Louisiana Purchase to satisfy further the American need for “fresh gratifications.” But Bacevich fails to explain this deep-seated drive. Perhaps it arises from conflating freedom with libertinism, whence emerges such passion for possessions even at the cost of war and debt.

Having traced the imperialistic conquests of Jefferson, McKinley, Polk, and the Roosevelts (Lincoln, frustratingly, endures no censure for his internal mastery), Bacevich notes the admixture of pragmatism and op-

portunism in the history of America foreign policy and charts the parallel trajectories of American military expansion and economic prosperity. After briefly discussing the zenith of American power in the 1950s and following the turmoil of the 1960s and 1970s over the course of only three pages, he quickly moves to more dangerous ground, risking excommunication from the Right. For Bacevich attempts, in part, to repair Jimmy Carter's oft-besmirched reputation, casting him as a sort of conservative who recognized that

the mistaken idea of freedom was quantitative: It centered on the never-ending quest for more while exalting narrow self-interest. His conception of authentic freedom was qualitative: It meant living in accordance with permanent values. At least by implication, it meant settling for less.

As if that was not enough to damage the professor's “conservative” street credibility, he goes on to dub Ronald Reagan a “faux-conservative,” calling him “the modern prophet of profligacy, the politician who gave moral sanction to the empire of consump-

tion.” Given the increase in deficits government incurred under Reagan, which the author compares to significantly smaller shortfalls under the scorned Carter, one sees the point.

Cataloging the continued sacrifice of fiscal prudence for the sake of what we duplicitously call defense—that is, world-policing and “spreading democracy”—Bacevich excoriates the three most recent presidents. The sad tale reaches its denouement with the strategy, most pronounced under George W. Bush, of wishing away reality.

Bacevich next moves on to the political crisis. He makes an irrefutable case that the American Imperium is not merely a creation of the neoconservatives with whom the second Bush surrounded himself. Yet while reminding the reader of President Polk’s embrace of Manifest Destiny and McKinley’s knight-errant “liberation” of Cuba, Bacevich asserts that before Franklin Roosevelt we still had a republic. But after the Depression, World War II, and Truman, the American political system came to be “defined by the concentration of power, both in Washington and, within Washington, in the executive branch.”

After FDR’s death, Bacevich argues, a key event determined the nation’s future course: Henry L. Stimson, secretary of war and member of the old Eastern Establishment—men who “evinced an admirable sense of noblesse oblige”—left Washington on Sept. 21, 1945. Though Stimson believed that strengthening America as a global player was essential, he was conservative and prudent in temperament. Not so Navy Secretary James Forrestal, whose influence rose with Stimson’s departure. Forrestal was a man tormented by neurosis and sensitive to the slightest possibility of a threat from abroad. He was an alarmist who built the national security state that would give us the Bay of Pigs fiasco, the Iran-Contra affair, our first foray into Iraq, Bill Clinton’s countless “humanitarian” military missions, and ultimately the quagmires in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In light of the history elucidated by Bacevich, to tag one specific date as the turning point that birthed the modern American Imperium may seem an oversimplification. Viewed as one final straw on the proverbial camel’s back, however, it makes sense. Lincoln’s consolidation of power, Teddy Roosevelt’s big-stick nationalism, and his cousin’s expansion of the welfare-warfare state vastly increased the scope of federal power, and all flowed naturally from the ideology of the Hamiltonian party. But the final blow to republicanism had to be made with the precision of modern missiles. Secretary Stimson’s resignation was it.

Finally, Bacevich chronicles our military crisis, which is a consequence of our cultural-economic and political crises. Bacevich enrages and inspires the reader with his bitter, sad indictment of Risk-playing armchair-generals who, contrary to their repeated claims, have been given much leeway by civilian politicians and have simply failed those whom they command. He also decries those average Americans who “support the troops” but think that military service is for someone else’s son.

In his penultimate chapter, Bacevich asserts that the United States needs a smaller, more modest foreign policy that recognizes the limitations of American military prowess and is guided by Just War theory. He contends, beautifully and indisputably, that the citizen’s essential obligation in supporting the troops is to rein in imperial presidents. The professor concludes *The Limits of Power*

with a stern warning, one all too many Americans have chosen not to hear: “The quadrennial ritual” of electing a president is not meant to bring forth change, but “to ensure continuity.” What must change are policies that go beyond any president. Bacevich calls for a separation of freedom from “consumption and self-actualization,” the elimination of nuclear weapons, and drastic reductions in pollution. He tells us to end deployment of soldiers across the world—he tells America to come home.

The venerable localist Bill Kauffman speaks often of two Americas, contrasting his real America—“a land of volunteer fire departments, of baseball ... and grain merchants and parsons and drunkards who made their places live”—with the phantasm projected by Washington, New York, and Hollywood. Professor Bacevich has emerged as a thoughtful, sincere, and spot-on enemy of “America” the bureaucratic abstraction, loathed worldwide and responsible for the quagmire in Iraq—a “culture” represented by mass-produced beer, television, and Operation Mongoose.

Although Bacevich clutches perhaps too tightly to a long-gone sense of an American community, he offers powerful, sad truths and stern admonishments that we would be ill-advised to ignore. I intend to heed his warnings by returning to the works of the Anti-Federalists—their prescience respecting what Bacevich has chronicled is more than obvious, and the sort of polity for which they called deserves reconsideration.

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Where Have All the Peaceniks Gone?

They don't make antiwar rock like they used to.

John W. Payne

The best antiwar song of the Vietnam era—and probably any era—was written by Bob Dylan in 1963, before most Americans were even aware there were American troops in a strange Southeast Asian land still better known as Indochina. In “Masters of War,” Dylan took aim at those who profited from the country’s military industrial complex that President Eisenhower had recently warned about. It is four and a half minutes of pure vitriol set to nothing but the simple yet ominous chord progression of an acoustic guitar. Comparing a person “that build[s] the death planes” to Judas, Dylan claims that “even Jesus would never forgive what you do,” before wishing for the person’s death and promising to “watch o’er your grave/ ‘til I’m sure that you’re dead.” The song was a terrifying masterpiece, but Dylan would famously abandon direct political themes a few years after its release. Nevertheless, even without its leading voice, the Vietnam generation produced a fine corpus of antiwar music in the ensuing decade.

Not so our present generation of antiwar musicians. Certainly there were a number of good antiwar songs during the era of George W. Bush, but there seem to have been far fewer, and generally of much lower quality, than one would have expected from a war that is vastly more unpopular than Vietnam. The decline in quantity can be largely explained by the fact that music is simply less political than it was in the 1960s, which is not necessarily something to bemoan—after all, do we really want another Bono? The qualitative difference, however, derives from the inability of most contemporary musicians to deal directly and seriously with an issue without becoming either maudlin or didactic. Accord-



The Vietnam war still inspires the best ant-militaristic music.

ingly, the best antiwar songs during the Iraq War have typically distanced themselves from the explicit topic by resorting to satire; vague, impressionistic lyrics; or by shifting to a different war altogether.

When looking for recent antiwar music, it might seem sensible to look to those established acts that played so credibly against the Vietnam War. But that would be a mistake.

Take the Rolling Stones for example. They were never a political band, but they wrote a number of classic songs with obvious political implications. In late 2005, the band released *A Bigger*

Bang, which earned much deserved praise and included the track “Sweet Neo Con.” It is not a terrible song by any means—the intermittent harmonica combined with Keith Richards’s guitar riff provides a definite menacing sound—but it lacks both the anger of “Street Fighting Man” and the sense of imminent doom found in “Gimme Shelter.” Moreover, the geriatric Mick Jagger ends up sounding like a petulant pubescent when he sings lines like, “You say you are a patriot/I think you are a crock of s--t.”

Maybe another legend from the halcyon days of political rock has fared better in the new millennium. After Bob Dylan and the Lennon/McCartney juggernaut, you could make a very good argument that Neil Young was the best songwriter of the ’60s and early ’70s. He has also demonstrated many times that he is fully competent at writing music with a political punch—most notably for our purposes, “Ohio,” his masterful and nearly immediate reaction to the Kent State shootings that warned of “soldiers cutting us down.”

Unfortunately, Young seems to have lost the golden touch. He

released an entire album of anti-Bush music in 2006, appropriately titled *Living With War*. While the song “Shock and Awe” is a noble effort to grapple with the Iraq War, it still falls short of the brutal simplicity Young had on tracks like “Ohio.” (The album’s title track is best left undiscussed.) Young’s guitar licks are effective enough, reminiscent of “Out of the Blue and Into the Black,” and the trumpet fills after each chorus are well placed, even touching. But the lyrics do not testify to Young’s best abilities. Lines like, “Thousands of children scarred for life/ Millions of tears for a soldier’s wife,” while perfectly apt, do not rise to the level of poetry. It should not come as much of a surprise that Young was reluctant to write the album. After it was released, he told the *Toronto Star* that he was “hoping some young person would come along and say this and sing some songs about it, but I didn’t see anybody, so I’m doing it myself. I waited as long as I could.”

Contra Young, there were a number of younger musicians who were making antiwar music. Perhaps he just didn’t have the heart to admit the whole truth: most of this music wasn’t very good. This is best exemplified by two bands that first made their marks in the early ’90s: Pearl Jam and Green Day.

“World Wide Suicide” is Pearl Jam’s tirade against the war in Iraq. In it, lead singer Eddie Vedder sings (or, more accurately, mumbles) about seeing in the newspaper the picture of an acquaintance who was killed in Iraq and realizing it was a “face [he’d] never see again.” The song is supposed to sound angry, but the music lacks the ferocity necessary to sustain emotion, so it only comes off as annoyed. Vedder’s lyrics do not help matters much. The phrase “tell you to pray, while the devil’s on their shoulder” is clichéd and preachy, not biting. Most unfortunate of all, Pearl Jam recorded a much better antiwar song over a decade and a half ago with “Yellow Ledbetter,” the understated and melancholy tune about a soldier killed in the first Gulf War. Sure, most of Vedder’s signing was indecipherable, but it was still an incredibly moving song, which gives it a leg up on their more recent effort.

Although originally written about the death of lead singer Billie Joe Armstrong’s father, Green Day’s “Wake Me up When September Ends” took on the status of an antiwar song after the 2005 release of its video. The seven-minute clip tells the story of a young man who enlists in the Marines, choosing to fight in Iraq over staying with his girlfriend, whom he had earlier promised not to leave. The problem is that the song that matches the video does not feel like it is describing someone facing death thousands of miles from home. The music and especially the lyrics seem like they were written by an angst-ridden 14-year-old who gets picked on at school. “Summer has come and passed/The innocent can never last” brings to mind a boy with a faux-hawk and mascara reading his poems in fourth-hour English—it is near impossible to take them seriously as any kind of political statement.

Of course, some songs are effective precisely because they do

not take serious subjects seriously. This is the basis for all decent satire, and the stoner metal band Clutch used it to wonderful effect against the Bush administration in their 2004 song “The Mob Goes Wild.” Heavy guitar riffs combined with a driving but insouciant rhythm pounded out by drummer Jean-Paul Gaster (a donor to Ron Paul’s 2008 presidential campaign, incidentally) set up singer Neil Fallon’s thundering lyrics that mock the decay of American society. Fallon warns of “twenty-one guns, a box made of pine, a letter from the government, sealed and signed” being delivered to “your mother’s doorstep” before proclaiming “Condoleezza Rice is nice, but I prefer a-Roni.” Finally, he tells listeners to flee to Canada and “smoke lots of pot.” With tongue firmly in cheek, Clutch encourages a healthy disrespect for authorities that wage wars both foreign (Iraq) and domestic (on drugs).

Satire is not for every band, however, so when Metallica—always serious as a heart attack—decided (maybe) to grapple with the Iraq War on their 2008 single “The Day that Never Comes,” they succeeded by staying lyrically aloof from the topic. In fact, according to the band, the song isn’t necessarily about the war, but it can be if that’s what listeners choose to take from it, and



Good antiwar rock is still out there, if you know where to find it.

the video centers around a soldier in Iraq. Whatever the case of the song’s origin, it excellently captures the new reality of war: days of tedium punctuated by moments of frenzied action and terror. The title could be understood to mean either returning home or some final showdown with enemy forces. Our protagonist vows to “splatter color on this gray,” a possible reference to spilling blood. After he swears that he will “suffer this no longer,” the song crescendos with a furious and lengthy Kirk Hammett guitar solo, which could be interpreted as a firefight or as the protagonist’s death.

But the band that produced the best antiwar music of the Bush era takes on the issue of war directly, even though very few of their songs are explicitly about Iraq. Just as “MASH” was a movie about Vietnam but set in Korea, many of the Black Angels’ songs are about Iraq but set in Vietnam. “Young Men Dead,” the opening track on their debut 2006 album *Passover*, tells of soldiers operating in one of Vietnam’s infamous free-fire zones. The song is based around an eerie bass line and a pounding guitar riff that fill the listener with dread. Singer Alex Maas warns that in war “[w]e can’t live if we’re too afraid to die.” The actions the protagonist takes to survive haunt him, however, leading him to wish for “thieves to steal the thoughts from our heads.” The song is one of many on *Passover* that memorialize the horrors of Vietnam and caution against similar adventures today. Thus Vietnam remains the touchstone for antiwar music nearly 35 years after the end of that war.

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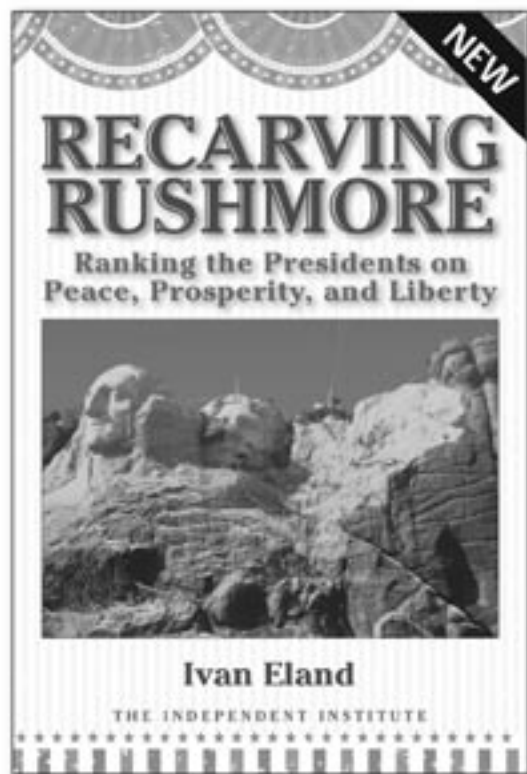
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