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PHILOSOPHY AND POWER IN NORTH AMERICA: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Someone once claimed that every person is a citizen of two countries: of their own, and of the United States of America. This is obvious hyperbole, perhaps written when Europeans were even more fascinated by America's political experiment, economic expansion, and population growth than by its popular culture. Peoples the world over do not automatically identify with the United States; in fact, many define themselves in opposition to it. This article first will examine some primary political powers in American politics. It will then trace certain distinct philosophies as responsible for affecting perspectives on centralized government, socioeconomic affairs, foreign policy, and socio-cultural issues.

America's Ruling Class

Regarding the American ruling class, it currently is (always was) fragmented to some degree. This often is viewed as a "failure" by the media, as well as by the general population.¹

Sociologists have acknowledged the existence of a "northeastern establishment" in American politics going back to the country's founding, albeit the key influential families have changed. This establishment today is considered to embody a "Washington consensus" domestically and in foreign policy. At home, the consensus always has favored immigration as a means of both growing population in a manageable way, and of stabilizing wage inflation.² After basic national security, the U.S. foreign policy consensus centers on access to

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¹ Still, such American founding fathers as James Madison might view this situation with satisfaction; i.e., because this situation seems to be at least partially by their design, as further footnotes will hopefully clarify.

² The latter is achieved by keeping middle class salaries relatively static, as immigrants accept lower wages. A social "safety net" funded by the federal government became popular seven decades ago, now reaches huge proportions, and is a staple of elite strategy for preserving social comity. More recently, the introduction of a majority of American women into fulltime work outside the home doubled the labor force. This fact: 1) depressed middle class wages; 2) lowered U.S. population; 3) "empowered" women occupationally. From an elite perspective, three birds are thus killed with one stone.

the importation of energy resources, and to foreign markets for export of goods and services. Without energy, the U.S. economy and U.S. military are paralyzed. Without access to world markets, the domestic economy fails to enlarge, hindering social mobility, siphoning off an interurban underclass into antisocial activities. Hence the need for a perpetual consumption cycle fueled by world trade.

Another staple of establishment policy going back at least 40 years is population reduction.³ Given that America's post World War II "baby boom" was a Catholic phenomenon,⁴ elite efforts to promote contraception among ur-

³ This dates back at least to National Security Memorandum 200: Implications of Worldwide Population Growth For U.S. Security and Overseas Interests (or "NSM 200"). This document, crafted in 1974 and enacted in 1974-5 sought to lower world population growth to two children per family by the year 2000. It is also known as "The Kissinger Report." The memorandum was addressed by then U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to the U.S. Secretary of Defense; the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture; Director of Central Intelligence; the Deputy Secretary of State; and the Administrator for the Agency for International Development (USAID), http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PCAAB500.pdf, accessed July 25, 2012. NSM 200 was declassified in 1989. In paragraphs 29-30 it reads: "[O]ur aim should be for the world to achieve a replacement level of fertility, (a two-child family on the average), by about the year 2000... this goal would result in 500 million fewer people in 2000 and about 3 billion fewer in 2050....The World Population Plan of Action is not self-enforcing and will require vigorous efforts by interested countries, U.N. agencies and other international bodies to make it effective. U.S. leadership is essential. The strategy must include the following elements and actions: (a) *Concentration on key countries*. Assistance for population moderation should give primary emphasis to the largest and fastest growing developing countries where there is special U.S. political and strategic interest. Those countries are: India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nigeria, Mexico, Indonesia, Brazil, the Philippines, Thailand, Egypt, Turkey, Ethiopia and Colombia. Together, they account for 47 percent of the world's current population increase...the U.S. will look to the multilateral agencies -- especially the U.N. Fund for Population Activities... to increase population assistance on a broader basis...This is desirable in terms of U.S. interests... (b) *Integration of population factors and population programs into country development planning*...developing countries and those aiding them should specifically take population factors into account in national planning and include population programs in such plans. (c) *Increased assistance for family planning services, information and technology*. This is a vital aspect... 1) Family planning information and materials based on present technology should be made fully available as rapidly as possible... 2) Fundamental and developmental research should be expanded, aimed at simple, low-cost, effective, safe, long-lasting and acceptable methods of fertility control. Support by all federal agencies for biomedical research in this field should be increased by \$60 million annually. (d) *Creating conditions conducive to fertility decline*." Etc.

⁴ "The Family Factors: Lessons from History About the Future of Marriage & Family in the United States," by Dr. Allan Carlson, President of the Howard Institute, in *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*, <http://touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=19-01-023-f>, accessed July 25, 2012.

ban Catholics, as well as African Americans, which were initiated in the 1960's and 1970's, have become a focus of attention more recently.⁵

In geographic terms, its name notwithstanding, the northeastern establishment now has deep roots on both American coastlines. This is likewise true of the nation's universities (which it helps fund directly, via government, and via not-for-profit foundations). The establishment predominates in larger metropolitan areas generally. Financially, the network's members derive funding from the banking and energy sectors. Three decades ago, researcher Thomas R. Dye claimed this network centered on 6,000 families at that time.⁶ Dye once judged David Rockefeller, a resident of Westchester, New York (representing the so called "establishment" or "Rockefeller" wing of the Republican Party) to stand as close to the establishment's epicenter as anyone. Dye marshaled empirical evidence in support of his view. Rockefeller arguably helped coordinate efforts among the nation's largest not-for-profit foundations for decades. Foundation initiatives included both population reduction – inspired by the alliance of his father, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., with eugenicist Margaret Sanger,⁷ as well

⁵ E. Michael Jones, *The Slaughter of Cities: Urban Renewal as Ethnic Cleansing*, South Bend: St. Augustine Press, 2004. Violence against African Americans during the Civil Rights era spawned Black militant vigilante movements, funded by the Soviet Union and, later, Libya. Elite institutions such as the Ford Foundation also supposedly funded the Black Panthers – presumably to monitor them and reign them in. The northeastern establishment utilized a crusading Catholic network as a bulwark against Soviet Russia, with Catholics helping found the CIA, DIA, as well as swelling the ranks of the FBI, U.S. Marine Corps and military academies. However, anxieties over Catholics becoming an American majority date back to at least the 1840's. By mid-twentieth century, there was widespread fear a Catholic majority might legally ban contraception. In the late 1960's, 67% of Catholics claimed to refrain from artificial contraception.

⁶ Over the past three decades, this number presumably has changed. Dye described the network as being linked by intermarriage; choice of private secondary schools; institutions of higher learning such as England's "Oxbridge" and U.S. Ivy League schools; and exclusive men's clubs. See his *Who's Running America?: The Carter Years*, Second Edition, Engelwood Cliffs: Prentice Hall International, 1979 (as well as updated editions since).

⁷ These foundations included the Rockefeller Foundation, Ford Foundation, Catherine MacArthur Foundation, and Pew Charitable Foundation. At least some of these foundations funded "Catholics for a Free Choice" to promote abortion in Catholic nations to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars. Rockefeller himself pressured/persuaded the Chinese government into reducing the Chinese population. In recent decades these efforts have also included the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; e.g., see "Melinda Gates pledges \$560 million for contraception," by Chris Wickham, Reuters, July 11, 2012, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/07/11/us-contraception-gates-melinda-idUSBRE86A1DU20120711>, accessed July 26, 2012: "The funding commitment was unveiled... at the London Summit on Family Planning alongside pledges totaling \$4.3 billion from the British government and leaders from African nations... The summit launched a program to extend family planning services to 120 million women out of an estimated 220 million around the world who want... contraception by 2020. Supporters of the campaign estimate that this year will see 80 million unintended pregnancies in developing countries... Gates, a Catholic herself, has been criticized by some Catholic groups in the United States... delegates steered clear of

as forestalling the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Rockefeller family's international connections are as deep as they are broad.⁸ Whereas the Rockefeller Family is widely distrusted on both the Left and Right, George Soros, a funder of the Democratic Party (also a resident of Westchester, New York) seems distrusted only on the Right. Soros is accused of manipulating currencies such as the British pound. He funds the Tides Foundation. Tides in turn funds "far" Left causes, such as the "Apollo Project."⁹ In 2008 most of Wall Street followed Soros in backing Barak Obama for president.¹⁰

Though not altogether beholden to forces indigenous to Washington, the sociological profile of the nation's capitol, with its older families and stable bureaucracies, has been called that of a small town (particularly as regards the influential Georgetown section). This factor influences newcomers to the ruling class, and forever constitutes an element of elite dynamic.

The Conservative Movement

In contrast to establishment thinking within both political parties, there stands a "conservative" movement.¹¹ The movement's political victories began

discussing Vatican opposition to contraception until one asked British Prime Minister David Cameron how the sponsors of the campaign could influence the Catholic Church... *The answer lies in the force of our arguments*, he said... [The] U.S. government's Agency for International Development, the largest single donor in this area, has committed to \$640 million for family planning in the next year alone – up 40 percent under President Barack Obama compared to his predecessor George W. Bush... sustaining the current use of contraceptives by 260 million women in the 69 poorest countries over the next eight years will cost about \$10 billion."

⁸ Some of what is found here about David Rockefeller is inspired by Stephen S. Gill's *American Hegemony and the Trilateral Commission*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991. Gill is Distinguished Research Professor at York University, and has served as Vice President of the International Studies Association. I disagree with Gill philosophically, but his writings can be illuminating.

⁹ There is irony to this, in that Soros, like Rockefeller, played a role in bringing down the old Soviet Union. Rockefeller arguably helped steer capital investment toward Russia's *nomenklatura* in the final days of the Soviet Union. Soros, a Hungarian émigré to the U.S. who embraces Karl Popper's philosophy of an "Open Society," once funded dissident groups behind the Iron Curtain. Yet both his contacts in Western European socialism, and his irritation with the Second Gulf War, helped turn Soros against the administration of President George W. Bush. Just as the establishment's Republican wing has long known how to utilize cultural conservatives at election time, Soros learned from European socialists how to deploy the radical Left for restoring American government to his own sense of "balance" electorally.

¹⁰ Though Wall Street popularly is assumed to promote the Republican Party, this is an urban myth. Since the nineteenth century, whole industries have backed both political parties for fear of incurring the enmity of either, as well as to gain access and contracts; a fact which has long angered "Progressives," i.e., neo-Marxists or cultural Marxists, who nevertheless always support the Democrat Party come election time. It remains true that media and telecommunications firms "tilt" Democrat, and that America's energy sector "tilts" Republican.

¹¹ Geographically, the movement has primary bases in the American South and in much of the American West; in rural areas generally; and in much of suburbia. Much of its elite funding de-

with the election of President Ronald Reagan in 1981, and, most recently, included key elections to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2010.¹² In terms of constituencies, this conservative coalition currently is comprised of: a) Evangelical Christians, b) most practicing Catholics, c) Mormons, d) pro-Israel networks, e) “Libertarians,” f) “deficit hawks,” g) proponents of tax reform, h) opponents of illegal immigration, i) antiestablishment “Independents,” j) “national security” conservatives, k) small-business owners, l) “constitutional conservatives.”

Attempts to rigidly distinguish socio-cultural conservatives (a-c), pro-economic growth “deficit hawks” (d), and “pro-national defense” conservatives (j), have largely failed.¹³ Each group sub-identifies, however, in terms of its priorities. What the movement shares is a distrust of Washington politics, be it Republican or Democrat, believing that “progressive” forces inhabit both parties. As to constituencies, the Democrat Party currently seeks to rely on: a) college-age students, b) single women, c) reproductive rights advocates, d) environmental organizations, e) labor unions, f) educators, g) members of the news media, h) ethnic minorities (including a majority of non-practicing Catholics), i) national celebrities, j) federal entitlement recipients.

Such is the “lay of the land” at present, which allows us to raise the question as to what the anthropological and ethical underpinnings of these individuals and groups may be.

rives from the energy sector. It has gained influence since the 1950’s, parallel to what it views as a “radicalization” of its rival, the Democrat Party.

¹² “High profile” agents for the movement include: Australian émigré to the U.S., Rupert Murdoch, the owner of the Fox News Network; Libertarians Charles and David Koch (rated the fourth and fifth wealthiest Americans by *Forbes* magazine); “talk radio” hosts Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, Mark Levin, Glen Beck, etc.; and the leadership of the “Tea Party” tax reform movement.

¹³ To some extent they are the “same people.” Yet these fault lines are recognized within a larger movement due to their respective priorities. Such priorities became clear with the trifurcation of the Republican Party’s options for presidential candidate in 2008. At that time, the party was fractured between a socio-cultural conservative (Governor Mike Huckabee); a businessman (Governor Mitt Romney); and a former military man (Senator John McCain). Though the Republican wing of the Washington establishment might have preferred Romney, he remained unpopular, notwithstanding tens of millions of dollars in funding for his 2008 campaign. The establishment refused to fund a socio-cultural conservative (Huckabee), allowing McCain to become an unpopular candidate for the Republican Party’s wing of the establishment. As of this writing, much of that party’s “base” remains angry with the establishment, not only for this 2008 decision, but for Republican elite funding of Romney in 2012 to the near exclusion of his more conservative rivals. (The Republican base failed to turn out for Romney).

Philosophy and the Founders

For America's founders, the primary political writings of the Baron Charles de Montesquieu (openly) and David Hume (covertly) influenced the creation of the 1787 U.S. Federal Constitution.¹⁴

It took time for America's framers to understand the 'naturalness' of political parties as Edmund Burke described these. Yet one goal of the framers in crafting the world's oldest written constitution was that no social class, or special interest group, gain primacy over the others.¹⁵ In both the original Articles of Confederation, and later in the Constitution, however, the staggered "process" or "how" of legislation was deemed central to civil liberties.¹⁶ Conservative commentators and intellectuals regularly invoke the vision of the founders collectively, a kind of *consensus partum* of 'American patristics,' and avidly quote them. However this appeal often obscures the abyss which yawns between divergent first principles held by key founders (at least in their relative youth).¹⁷

The division of powers into executive, legislative and judicial stems from John Locke's *Second Treatise on Civil Government* and Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des lois*, the latter being the text most cited during the founding debates. Locke was not so much invoked as "presupposed" by colonials after the 1688

¹⁴ The founders themselves were a mixture of disparate influences, ranging from Jean Jacques Rousseau (particularly for early "Democratic Republicans") to Edmund Burke (for the "Federalist" party). Both sides appealed to such sources as Thomas Hobbes and Adam Smith on the one hand, and to such classical sources as Aristotle, Cicero, and Plutarch on the other. As they matured politically, such founders as Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, John Adams, and Alexander Hamilton were viewed as notable theorists in their own right.

¹⁵ Cf. Kathleen Bawn, Martin Cohen, David Karol, Seth Masket, Hans Noel, and John Zaller, "A Theory of Political Parties: Groups, Policy Demands and Nominations in American Politics," *Perspectives on Politics* 10 (No. 3, 2012): p. 578: "Edmund Burke's definition of a political party as 'a body of men united... upon some particular principle' is the foil of nearly every scholar who cites it," and p. 579: "James Madison argued famously in *Federalist* No. 10 that political parties would be unlikely to form in an 'extended republic' like the United States because factional leaders would be too scattered to discover their own strength, and to act in unison with each other. The framers considered *energy in the executive* branch of government central to military and foreign affairs – points which were judged underrepresented in the American colonies' original *Articles of Confederation*. Inadequacies in these areas during the war of independence helped prompt the drafting of the 1787 Constitution."

¹⁶ Stressing the preservation of political liberty as resulting from 'slow' legislative processes is eloquently depicted in John Henry Newman's 1845 essay "Who is To Blame?" Though Newman never references American sources such as *The Federalist Papers* (due to his Toryism and possible ambivalence about America as a "progressive" entity), his essay forms part of the Anglophone conservative canon. E.g., see www.newmanreader.org.

¹⁷ The founders disagreed violently with each other over the scope of federal authority, state sovereignty, federal taxation, centralized banking, war and peace, the nature of foreign alliances, etc. Still, an "appeal" to the founders on key issues may retain validity. This, insofar as U.S. federal jurisdiction by the 1920's (with the U.S. Supreme Court) and 1930's (with the U.S. Congress) assumed proportions it is not clear any principal founder might recognize.

revolution Locke helped usher in, and which he justified after the fact. It has been claimed all colonials – “Patriot” or “Tory” prior to American independence – were Lockean in emphasizing civil liberty, and when carving out a sacred role for private property in preserving that liberty. While seen as continuous with key concepts of Anglo Saxon law, Locke’s view of human freedom is also heir to the nominalism of fellow Oxonians William of Ockham and Thomas Hobbes, and are thus voluntarist. It is hard to overstate what this did to the modern mind, both politically and in other ways. It remains true *a fortiori* of the American mind.

Americans did not, however, adopt Locke’s “legislative supremacy.” This, because many were accustomed to monarchy; and because they wished their branches of government to be equally balanced. The experienced, restrained executive they wished for in a president they believed to be modeled by George Washington, who first “presided” over the constitutional proceedings.

While the American mind presupposes an individualism of Lockean origin, this manifests itself differently. For Libertarians and most “conservatives”, individualism manifests itself as socioeconomic and cultural independence *from* centralized government. This is sought via the promotion of low marginal tax rates, and the deregulation of both business activity and primary education. On the Left, the transformation of Locke’s voluntarism into an “expressivist” individualism in modernity has more to do with independence from the vagaries of the *market*, procured precisely via *intervention* by a strong central government. In this sense the Left is not Lockean, but Rousseauan. Means for this latter government policy include direct federal financial assistance to individuals; progressive taxation to support this; and the regulation of business practices judged prejudicial to workers. For the most influential wing of the Democrat coalition, when “deregulation” has, in fact, been sought in recent decades it is usually deregulation of anything conditioning sexual expression and psychotropic substances.

Optimism and “Progress” as Elements of American Ideology¹⁸

The U.S. always has seen itself as a “progressive” project, albeit one rooted in “tradition.”¹⁹

Many British thought themselves God’s chosen people for spearheading Protestant reform. By the late 1700’s, no one (save Maryland’s Catholics) took this more seriously than the colonials in British America. This “Evangelical” optimism followed America’s “Great Awakening” movement, led by George Whitefield and the Wesley brothers. Though Evangelicalism as a movement has never fully dissipated, by the end of the eighteenth century American optimism

¹⁸ When Kant in 1784 judged history to be “progressive,” he drew on a legacy of terrestrial optimism dating back to the confluence of the pan-European Renaissance and the Age of Discovery

sometimes transmuted into something else. This “something else” was never more eloquently described than by Thomas Jefferson, whose disquisitions mesmerize American imaginations to the present day. Jefferson depicted an ever growing “empire of liberty” through the peaceful incorporation of new territories, in which international free trade, technological growth along Baconian lines,²⁰ and growing domestic consumerism would engender universal peace.²¹ He was a hater of monarchy and aristocracy (remarkable considering the Jefferson family livery his slaves wore...). He also hated clerical governance, proposing to burn down London’s St. Paul’s Cathedral in wartime. Jefferson early on became a voice for radical egalitarianism, and, in time, for an at-least-half-agnostic conception of Christianity.²²

in the fifteenth century. Francis Bacon would programmatically extend this cultural and geographic optimism to the techno-sphere, magnifying a scientific revolution already well under way since the fourteenth century (see *Medieval Technology and Social Change*, by Lynn White, Jr., 1966). By the 1600’s Descartes’ disciple Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia wrote to him suggesting life on other planets. Leibniz believed we lived in the best of all possible worlds (hardly a medieval perspective). Politician and poet John Milton thought that man would go to the stars (David F. Noble: *The Religion of Technology: The Divinity of Man and the Spirit of Invention*, New York: Penguin Books, 1999, p. 56).

¹⁹ The latter point is important to remember. Though more an Enlightenment progressivist than any other founder, save Thomas Paine, Jefferson also felt himself heir to a millennium of Anglo Saxon law and experience that limited executive power. This included colonial experiences in the century previous to his own. E.g., see Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia*, pages 182ff. of the 1787 edition.

²⁰ Whereas some Renaissance Europeans might have kept a devotional or decorative triptych of Aquinas, Bonaventure and Scotus, Jefferson kept one at Monticello of John Locke, Lord Francis Bacon, and Sir Isaac Newton. This reflected much about America’s future trajectory. Though famously agrarian in his Virginia sympathies, and an opponent of industrialism as an ideology and way of life, Jefferson is also known as an inventor. (E.g., he won a prize for inventing a modest agricultural implement while in France.) It should be noted that the “technologies” Bacon himself had in mind appear to have involved agriculture, husbandry, and medicine. Bacon did not necessarily envision the kind of “industrial” society Jefferson loathed. If he had, Jefferson would not have revered Bacon. Jefferson did, however, praise experimenters such as Benjamin Franklin for his research into electrical technology, and those of his sometime correspondent Joseph Priestly regarding gases.

²¹ The vision of course, is that of Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*, published the same year as Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence. Jefferson praised Smith’s work. Jefferson himself was a hopeless consumerist, describing his own life as tedious without luxuries, and he was in debt to the end of his life for this reason.

²² The latter ideology took root in southern New England during the nineteenth century, particularly at Harvard University (later called the “Unitarian Vatican.”) But it was the full scale secularization of academia in the 1930’s which provided fertile soil in which the Jeffersonian legacy of agnostic rationalism wedded to radical egalitarianism bore fruit in the twentieth century. On Jefferson’s religiosity, the reader may see David Barton’s “The Religion of Thomas Jefferson,” <http://college.edu/about-us/veritas-aeterna/383-religion-of-jefferson>, accessed July 24, 2012. Barton, a Fundamentalist, however, conveniently omits Jefferson’s expressions of private disgust

Jefferson sought to help create empires of liberty *abroad* as well, defending the French Revolution whose birth pangs he witnessed while America's minister to France.²³ Jefferson proposed an "internationalist" vision of confederated republics akin to Kant's in *The Idea of a Universal History with Cosmopolitan Intent*. Jefferson's was a vision predicated not only on free trade, but also on the "social sympathy" ethics of Hutcheson and Adam Smith, in which universal "benevolence" among mankind would somehow ensue. Jefferson's primary philosophical opponent, Alexander Hamilton, considered Jefferson to be a Jacobin extremist, capable of leading the United States into civil war, dangerous foreign adventures, or both. There is irony in this, in that Hamilton privately proposed creating his own version of an empire of liberty by 'liberating' Latin America, and joining it to the United States. (Whereas Jefferson's mentor in international politics was Adam Smith, Hamilton's was Thomas Hobbes.)²⁴ Hamilton thus agreed with Jefferson's position that trade might not be the only instrument of liberation: the sword could be as well.²⁵

Just as primordial, however, is a position which, while exhorting other nations to liberty, rejects using the sword abroad for liberating ends. Such was the position of Washington and the Adamses. Washington, Hamilton, John Adams, and the latter's son John Quincy Adams (both Adamses served their government in foreign courts), emulated the European social order as the inheritance of an ancient and civilized society.²⁶ Though often depicted as a quasi-

at what he considers the "Platonism" of Christian scripture; his contemptuous denigration of New Testament writers generally; and his refusal to embrace Christian norms of sexual propriety as a youth, apparently later in France, and almost certainly in retirement. See also Kurt W. Jefferson, *Christianity's Impact on World Politics: Not by Might, Nor by Power*, New York, Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles, Frankfurt/M., Oxford, Wien: Peter Lang, 2002, p. 8: "the American Revolution blended spirituality and secular enlightenment thinking (the latter mainly due to Thomas Jefferson's agnostic/deist preconceptions), and the roots of American democracy were sown."

²³ Though Napoleon Bonaparte later gave Jefferson pause, Jefferson endorsed the Revolution's ideals till his death.

²⁴ In his early *Reply to the Farmer*, Hamilton criticized Hobbes for rejecting natural law, arguing for its self-evident character as Locke had. Over time, however, what Hamilton became most known for was a perhaps more Calvinist view of human nature, as well as a political realism in foreign affairs. He seems to have died a devout Christian. At least one commentator has claimed that while the U.S. retained Jefferson's *retoric* on foreign affairs, what America actually has enacted is Hamilton's foreign policy philosophy.

²⁵ See Ron Chernow's *Alexander Hamilton*, New York: Penguin, 2005, p. 566-567. A major difference between them was that while Jefferson entertained an Enlightenment internationalist optimism, Hamilton proposed a liberationist nationalism. America's messianic liberationism – via trade or the sword, whether in a nationalist key or an internationalist one – is thus as old as the republic itself.

²⁶ Though both acknowledging and endorsing the "democratical" genius of the New England region for America's future, this did not prevent Washington from keeping a painting of King Louis XVI on his wall. (A painting beneath which he received a new ambassador representing the

deist like Madison and Jefferson, the testimonials of Hamilton and others about Washington's morning devotionals show him an Anglican – if an extremely Latitudinarian one.²⁷ Though republican and occasionally utopian in Enlightenment style (e.g., once suggesting mankind could someday abolish war), Washington was ambivalent about revolution and popular revolt. This became increasingly the case with the onset of the French Revolution.²⁸ Washington's "progressivism" shared with Kant's – himself a fan of the American experiment – a more Augustinian view of human nature and politics.²⁹

In 1836, the Boston Transcendentalist philosopher and social reformer Orestes Brownson founded the "Christian Union for Social Progress."³⁰ Post-

first French Republic.) King Louis XVI, who had come to the colonies' aid against Great Britain, was the "patron" of the "Cincinatti," Washington's circle of war veterans.

²⁷ Washington defended the political establishment of Virginia's Anglican communion against disestablishment, while simultaneously defending religious liberty for all. Not only was his step-daughter-in-law Nelly Calvert from a Catholic family, but according to Ron Chernow, when in Philadelphia Washington was sufficiently "Latitudinarian" to consider Catholic Mass as satisfying his Sunday obligation.

²⁸ For this reason the constitution whose crafting he presided over in 1787 contained as much provision for protecting the property holding classes from the middle and lower classes, as for protecting the middle and lower classes from those holding property. Though Marxist historians had begun to view this perspective with cynicism by the 1930's, the founders shared understandable concerns that certain demands of democratic populism (e.g., cancelling debts and inflating currency) would cause capital lending to disappear altogether, thus impoverishing all.

²⁹ Both Washington and Kant were keenly aware of "radical evil"; and it is not clear either man viewed progress as inevitable. Washington, Adams *pere*, and Adams *fil*s were each wary of foreign military adventures for extending ideals of American liberty; and some still reference them in this context today. For how American political thought relates to Augustinian political philosophy, see Colm McKeogh, *The Political Realism of Reinhold Niebuhr*, London: MacMillan Press, 1997.

³⁰ "New Views of Christianity, Society, and the Church: Orestes Brownson (1836)" in: *Encyclopedia of Transcendentalism: The Essential Guide to the Lives and Works of Transcendentalist Writers*, ed. by Tiffany K. Wayne, New York: Infobase Publishing, 2006, p. 194. As early as 1828, Brownson helped found the "progressive" Working-Men's Party. As he later wrote in his autobiography *The Convert*, New York: Edward Dunigan & Brother, 1857, pp. 135 and 244: "We hoped, by linking our cause with the ultra-democratic sentiment of the country, which had had, from the time of Jefferson and Tom Paine, something of an anti-Christian character, by professing ourselves... champions of equality, by expressing... a deep sympathy for the laborer... by denouncing all proprietors as aristocrats, and by keeping the more unpopular features of our plan as far in the background as possible, to enlist the majority of the American people under the banner of the Working-Men's Party... I saw in the American political constitution the germ of the very organization I was in pursuit of... (B)y uniting with the Democratic party... indoctrinating it with our philosophical, theological, and humanitarian views, we could make it the instrument of realizing our ideas of men and society... The first legislation wanted was such as would free the state and federal governments from the control of the banks and secure the destruction of the latter. Then all privilege and monopoly should be abolished, hereditary descent of property with the rest..." Brownson later confessed of such social movements that: "Capital and credit, in its various forms and ramifications, is too strong for them. The movement we commenced could only

Hegelian sociopolitical progressivism grew throughout the nineteenth century, assuming the form of a national political party at the dawn of the twentieth: the “Progressive Party.”³¹ Though the party dissolved, the ideology survives today. Common themes include: celebration of centralized government power; national solidarity; “pragmatic” approaches to solutions (viewed as opposed to reverence for “tradition”); and skepticism regarding founding or “first” principles. Pragmatist philosopher William James developed a mature version of the philosophy of progressivism.³² President Woodrow Wilson, philosopher John Dewey, and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, each expressed this thought in an internationalist key. A “nationalist” version of progressive philosophy – one in some ways arguably less skeptical of tradition – was embodied by President Theodore Roosevelt.³³

“Progress” sought on the Left translates into relative socioeconomic equality achieved through government *regulation* of capital. “Progress” on the Right translates into relative socioeconomic equality achieved through government *deregulation* of capital. The goal sought is nearly identical. The means sought are opposite, and speak to first principles. What both sides fear is government coercion – within the context of an exponentially expanding “surveillance” society³⁴ – supervised by whichever political party is opposed to one’s own.

excite a war of man against money; and all history and all reasoning in the case prove that in such a war money carries it over man. Money commands the supplies, and can hold out longer than they who have nothing but their manhood. It can starve them into submission” (p. 138).

³¹ German thought played a key role in its ultimate formulation. According to Wolfgang Schivelbusch, American Progressives studied at German universities and “came to appreciate the Hegelian theory of a strong state and Prussian militarism as the most efficient way of organizing modern societies that could no longer be ruled by anarchic liberal principles.” See *Three New Deals: Reflections on Roosevelt’s America, Mussolini’s Italy, and Hitler’s Germany, 1933–1939*, New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006, p. 46.

³² A remarkable consideration in light of James’s reputation as an “individualist.” His influential 1910 essay “The Moral Equivalent of War” rather stresses national order, discipline, and planning. Though a critic of Soviet repression of free speech, Dewey also tended toward socialism.

³³ More recently, some have pointed to Arizona Senator John McCain, or the Bush political dynasty, as exemplars of the latter. One result of this state of affairs is that those on the Right accuse Left-leaning progressives of leading the country toward radical socialism. (Cultural Marxists continue to call themselves “Progressives.”) Those on the far Left fear a nationalist collectivism degenerating into fascism courtesy of war veterans, local nativist militias, and the security-industrial complex.

³⁴ “France, Mexico Demand Explanation Over Latest NSA Allegations,” in Voice of America, www.voanews.com/content/france-mexico-demand-explanation-for-latest-nsa-allegations/1773593.html, accessed Oct 22, 2013; “U.S. surveillance leaks threaten police use of new technologies: official,” in Reuters, by Chris Franciscani, www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/20/us-usa-police-chiefs-idUSBRE99J07Y20131020, accessed Oct 20, 2013.

The Current American Ideological Spectrum

The American political spectrum currently includes the following philosophical tendencies:

“Progressive” Left	“Center” Left	“Center” Right	“Conservative” Right	“Radical” Right
“Cultural” Marxism (Antonio Gramsci, Herbert Marcuse, Michele Foucault)	Utilitarianism (J.S. Mill)	Utilitarianism (J.S. Mill)	Paleoconservatism (Russell Kirk)	Anarcho-Capitalism (Murray Rothbard)
Leninism (<i>Cas-trismo</i>)	Pragmatism (John Dewey)	Pragmatism (Sidney Hook)	Straussianism / Neoconservatism (Leo Strauss, James Burnham, Irving Kristol)	Objectivism (Ayn Rand)
LGBT (Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgendered)	Emotivist Relativism (Max Weber)	Emotivist Relativism (Max Weber)	Libertarianism (Albert J Nock)	Theonomy (R.J. Rushdooney)
Anarcho-primitivism / “Deep” Ecology	LGBT (Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgendered ideology)	LGBT (Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgendered ideology)		Social Nativism ³⁶
Posthumanism	Neo-Malthusianism (Margaret Sanger)	Neo-Malthusianism (Margaret Sanger)		
	Eugenicism (Walter Lippman) ³⁵			

If the two “center” positions seem nearly identical, this is not fortuitous. It is at least partially in sync with the claim by both a “progressive” left and a “conservative” right that the Washington ruling class is homogeneous on essentials; as well as manipulated by forces of “corporatism” (the influence of key U.S. industries) to the exclusion of most other considerations.

Domestically, both the international and American Left is concerned with the following: a) “outcome” egalitarianism, b) the ideally “public,” rather than private, nature of certain services, c) a consequent emphasis on centralized government to realize the above conditions, d) the liberation of sexual expression – and public funding to remedy its consequences, e) preserving the environment and its non-human inhabitants as ends unto themselves.

Domestically the American Right is preoccupied with the following issues: a) freedom from a tax code deemed onerous to the middle class and small businesses, b) the breakdown of American families, and elite contempt for religious expression, c) the rights of individual States and locales vis-à-vis a large

³⁵ E.g., “Government Death Panels and Mass Murder was Always an Option in 20th Century America’s War Against the Weak,” by Edwin Black, August, 24, 2009, based on the bestseller *War Against the Weak – Eugenics and America’s Campaign to Create a Master Race*, Washington, D.C.: Dialog Press, now in an expanded 2012 edition, www.thecuttingedgegenews.com/index.php?article=11536&pageid=37&pagename=Page+One, accessed July 26, 2012.

³⁶ For just one example, www.toqonline.com, accessed July 25, 2012.

central government, d) the costs of illegal immigration to government services and crime prevention, e) rights of citizens to bear arms (Switzerland being held up as a role model).³⁷

More than one factor renders dialogue difficult. The first is that so many committed conservatives and liberals view one another as benighted. This is meant literally.³⁸ This fact exacerbates a prior difficulty with analysis of public issues which has festered in America for over a century; in the past this problem mainly derived from the overwhelming of information and commentary by advertising space in the print medium, sacrificing deep analysis.³⁹ In recent decades “digital distraction,” stressful occupational lives, information overload, and an educational system severely wounded due to father-absence, add to the problem dramatically.⁴⁰

The “Far” Left and Conservative Reaction

Some twentieth century Marxists assumed that those skeptical of Marxist prescriptions resist these due to cultural conditioning. If the elite is capitalist, the culture is capitalist, and this culture equals “common sense” for the average person. Objections that Marxist *prescriptions* violate “common sense” are thus

³⁷ Someone has said the more “radical” one becomes (going to the “roots” of first principles), the more the ends of a spectrum may meet. This can be observed on the American political spectrum, even if little is done about such affinities in actual practice. Both social nativism on the Radical Right and “multiculturalism” on the Radical Left mirror one another, for example, as tribalisms. This, in spite of the fact they are *inverse* mirror images of one another. The former asserts a cultural superiority for European-descended Americans vis-à-vis others. The latter, in an anti-colonialist key, asserts the cultural *inferiority* of Euro-Americans vis-à-vis others (albeit, ironically, doing so by invoking European thinkers, from Beauvoir to Foucault). This is also the case regarding “anarchic” or anti-national tendencies. Thus, Murray Rothbard once declared the Soviet Union to be less a threat to liberty than the U.S.; and one-time presidential candidate Ron Paul has received huge support from college-age Americans sharing his goal to decriminalize illegal drug usage. Both men, though Lockean Libertarians – and thus on the “Radical Right” – have endorsed ideals held by the “Radical Left.”

³⁸ Acquiring information in a high pressure digital age renders the data achieved an impressionistic affair. Cognitive and behavioral feedback loops are fed by snatches of personal conversation with like-minded acquaintances. Added to this (assuming political interest to begin with) is the regular trolling of already familiar Internet sites. Both activities craft and reinforce individual identities, social narratives, and network identifications. Though both inevitable and critical for ego integration, when these activities are politicized, one often fails to examine rival first principles, data, or arguments in any real depth.

³⁹ Though journalist Walter Lippman is most known for this critique – which he hyperbolized – its origins are concisely summarized by sociologist Christopher in *The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy*, W. W. Norton & Company, 1996; e.g., pages 11, 164, 168, 174.

⁴⁰ E.g., American passersby who casually sign a petition to “Support an Orwellian Police State” when invited to do so. Mark Dice, www.youtube.com/watch?v=DFDmWDJtVCg, accessed Oct 22, 2013.

only to be expected by Marxists. After all, those resisting are not “scientifically” trained. They merely are socially conditioned members of the masses.

The *piece de resistance* of the contemporary Left, however, is its marriage of Michele Foucault to Antonio Gramsci and Herbert Marcuse, respectively, while deploying the tactics of Saul Alinsky. In Foucault’s mature thought everything is power. Any interlocutor deploys discourse (facts, arguments, observations etc.) merely to preserve or gain power. Thus arguments against Leftist policies *can only be* a rearguard reaction by the forces of “capital,” as represented by the think tanks, foundations, and public relations campaigns they fund.⁴¹ Any social class is expected to defend its material interests; if financially pinched, one expects it to squeal. What Gramsci adds to this analysis is his analysis of *organici intelletuali* in whose material and professional interest it is to accept ruling class patronage. Those benefiting from the current capitalist system defend its patrons. Those most disenfranchised, however, are invited to see through the rhetoric of “capitalist” culture. One may expect this Gramscian view to be at least partially true.⁴² A multimillionaire is not automatically a lover of the common good for decrying worker safety regulations, a higher minimum wage, or tax cuts for the middle class that fail to benefit himself. The danger introduced by the anthropology of Cultural Marxism, however, is that any appeal to data regarding, say, the negative consequences of family decline, nuclear proliferation among rogue states, or deficit spending, is considered suspect by the Left. Given a radicalized epistemic “perspectivism,” and the Left’s frequent suspicion of any unfamiliar data as motivated by power preservation alone, an interlocutor’s data need not be acknowledged. Often it can be safely ignored. An opposing party need not be accommodated when it may be worn down or outmaneuvered. Gramsci explicitly authorized the Marxist movement to act as Machiavellian prince in combating both capitalist hegemony and religious principles. His goal was to secure a social outcome both culturally materialistic and economically egalitarian. Ideally, institutions of culture should be

⁴¹ Toward this end the radical Left is forever pointing to the birth of the “public relations industry” created by Austrian émigré to the United States Edward Bernays, for purposes of “manufacturing consent.” (E.g., Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, New York: Pantheon, 2002.) This is an extension of Herbert Marcuse’s (more general, somewhat paranoid and monist) argument in *One Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1964. Ideology aside, it admittedly would do well for all any person to be acquainted with how public relations industries operate in politics.

⁴² As one example, preceding the Savings and Loan scandal of the 1980’s, powerful financial institutions such as CitiBank invoked anti-government rhetoric, chafing at federal oversight. See William Greider: *The Secrets of the Temple: How the Federal Reserve Runs the Country*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988, p. 433.

captured prior to the use of state coercion, if possible – though Gramsci wavered on this last point.⁴³

Those on the Right, in turn, appeal to individual accountability, individual creativity, individual initiative, individual innovation, individual responsibility, and an entrepreneurial spirit as classic American virtues. They point to the pioneer heritage of the U.S., insisting these virtues made it the most powerful nation in global history.⁴⁴ Refuting such a point altogether would be an easy job for no one. At the same time, for many in ethnic groups wherein most feel they ‘get by with a little help from their friends,’ this rhetoric can sound hollow and off-putting. It appeals to no social or communal ties of solidarity beyond those of the nation-state. It is these ethnic groups which will predominate in the U.S. by the year 2042. It seems as well that conservative commentators referring to their own personal experience in making their point often achieved that successful career on which they embarked *prior* to, rather than *after*, starting a family. The stereotype of the rootless, mobile bachelor, naked before the market as well as the State, who worked hard and “made it on his own,” fails to take raising small children into account.⁴⁵

As has occurred for the past two centuries, Leftist activism takes advantage of the void this vision leaves in the psyches of many. The Left seeks to act as a corrective not merely for the anxieties of the market, but as a salve for human alienation – especially urban and suburban – in a market-centered world. With notable exceptions, most on the American “Right” are blind to this dynamic; and, not knowing how to respond appropriately, are reduced to sputter-

⁴³ What German émigré to the U.S. Herbert Marcuse added was to apply the omnipresent Marxist binary of “oppressor-oppressed” to American ethnic groups. The diversity and growth of these groups exploded with Lyndon Baines Johnson’s signing of the Hart Seller immigration act of 1965. (Hart-Seller curtailed European immigration, while immensely boosted immigration from developing nations. For this reason it recently has been interpreted as a means the Democrat Party used to retain a “dependency class” when the effects of the Great Depression were becoming a distant memory.) Marcuse added eroticism to his equation, arguing sexual liberation was now possible, because mass production rendered the constraints of civilization, as described by Freud, obsolete. Following the several decades of media and advertising eroticism (and having never experienced the discipline of the Great Depression) America’s Baby Boom generation was ripe for this message. The “political correctness” movement was born from Marcuse’s ideology.

⁴⁴ In this they find inspiration not only in Locke, but in economist Joseph Schumpeter, Austrian School economic theorists generally, and Milton Friedman. For this reason, economic conservatives, following Schumpeter, celebrated “disruption” through “creative destruction.” Schumpeter himself, however, is far more nuanced than this.

⁴⁵ Cf. T. J. Mathews, Brady E. Hamilton, “Delayed Childbearing: More Women Are Having Their First Child Later in Life,” *NCHS Data Brief* 21 (August 2009): “From 1970 to 2006 the proportion of first births to women aged 35 years and over increased nearly eight times (1,2). In 2006, about 1 out of 12 first births were to women aged 35 years and over compared with 1 out of 100 in 1970. According to preliminary data, the proportion for 2007 was the same as in 2006.” <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db21.pdf>, accessed Aug 08, 2013.

ing. Conservative outreach strategies suffer accordingly. Though alienated from the establishment, conservatives paradoxically often are viewed as elitist themselves (e.g., among newer ethnic groups). American economic, military, and technological success is considered self-sufficient for defending a “restoration” to the status quo of, say, the 1920’s. This, regardless of issues relating to the impact of *laissez-faire* capitalism on families and local communities; the creation of false needs which undermine those disciplines capitalism rightly demands; the question of a family wage; or of the middle class’s poignant yearning for that occupational stability within which their forebears raised them. So much of life is thus experienced as “mobile” and commodified.

Within an international conservative context – one equally hostile to socialism, welfarism, and state dependency – one might inquire about the value of the conservative localism of England’s “Red Toryism” or Australia’s Democratic Labor Party; as well as that of the cooperative capitalism of Emilia-Romagna’s cooperative system; or Spain’s huge worker-owned Mondragon Corporation. Yet in the U.S. invitations to deriving perspectives from abroad are considered alien, confusing, and tangential, meeting with blank stares among many conservatives the higher up one goes on the social ladder. A majority “conservative” response in America might be that if these conservative movements are so inherently correct, America would not be the *hyperpuissance* she is. Rather, *they* would *be* America; i.e., they would be “where” America now is, externally successful and hegemonic. The counter-response to this from a more “traditional” conservative position,⁴⁶ perhaps joined by some on the Left, however, may be first to concede that sheer economic force does translate into technological prowess. That this, in turn, can lead to preeminence in national defense (which is no minor advantage). Yet then to ask the question: what – exactly – are we defending? As Alasdair MacIntyre points out, we are “all” liberals now. This goes for strict followers of Locke, as it does for the followers of William James, Max Weber or Michelle Foucault. For they all, ultimately, are the children of Ockham, for whom:

freedom meant... the power to choose between contraries, independently of all other causes except freedom, or the will itself – whence the *term freedom of indifference*. “[F]reedom is the power... to produce various effects... I can either cause an effect or not cause it...”⁴⁷

⁴⁶ What I have in mind is not the thought of Russell Kirk – apparently slow to come to grips with Martin Luther King’s “fierce urgency of *now*” in social reform. Rather it is more informed by sociologist Christopher Lasch, minus Lasch’s exclusively populist stance. Jefferson saw the dangers of exclusive elite thinking. Adams saw the dangers of exclusively popular thinking. Both were right. (The question is not one of “which one” rules, but whether ruler and ruled are *both* ruled alike by human and political virtue.)

⁴⁷ Servais Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 1995, p. 242.

[The will] itself is the basis of its own free activity, and determines itself in opposition to the intellect, which is conditioned by... the will... We are so accustomed to thinking of freedom as the power to choose between contraries that we can hardly imagine any other concept of it.⁴⁸

This Ockhamist approach is in contrast with a prior, “classical,” anthropological perspective. In this latter perspective, individual free will is ontologically posterior to an intellect which cognizes what is propitious for human maturation. Human flourishing within human and divine community is thus the ultimate goal of political freedom. The latter exists as a means only, albeit a central one. Yet today what many Americans across various grades of the political spectrum wish is merely for their preferences to be maximized. In this case, the cause of “freedom” then becomes, at best, a degraded version of J.S. Mill’s utilitarianism informed by the emotivist relativism of Max Weber; at worst, a cult of celebrity, conspicuous consumption, and orgasm.⁴⁹

Does this describe all Americans? No. There are good people in America. Is the Left as colluding in this as others? Yes. As *New York Times* columnist David Brooks points out, liberals are as prone to consumerism as anyone.⁵⁰ In fact, *New York Times* journalist Nicholas D. Kristoff points out liberals are far less likely to engage in charitable giving to boot: “The problem is this: We liberals are personally stingy.”⁵¹ Thomas Byrne Edsall noted approvingly in the

⁴⁸ Id., p. 353. Chapter 14 of this work is extremely useful for unpacking this in more detail.

⁴⁹ For the impact of Weber courtesy of German émigrés to the U.S. in the 1930’s and 1940’s, see *The Closing of the American Mind*, Allan Bloom, Simon & Schuster, 1988.

⁵⁰ *Bobos In Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001.

⁵¹ “Bleeding Heart Tightwads” in *The New York Times*, December 20, 2008. I hasten to add that I have the privilege of being personally acquainted with counter-examples. Still, Kristoff does note: “Arthur Brooks, the author of a book on donors to charity, *Who Really Cares*, cites data that households headed by conservatives give 30 percent more to charity than households headed by liberals. A study by Google found an even greater disproportion: average annual contributions reported by conservatives were almost double those of liberals. Other research has reached similar conclusions. The *generosity index* from the Catalogue for Philanthropy typically finds that red states are the most likely to give to nonprofits, while Northeastern states are least likely to do so. The upshot is that Democrats, who speak passionately about the hungry and homeless, personally fork over less money to charity than Republicans – the ones who try to cut health insurance for children. *When I started doing research on charity*, Mr. Brooks wrote, *I expected to find that political liberals – who, I believed, genuinely cared more about others than conservatives did – would turn out to be the most privately charitable people. So when my early findings led me to the opposite conclusion, I assumed I had made some sort of technical error. I re-ran analyses. I got new data. Nothing worked. In the end, I had no option but to change my views.* Something similar is true internationally. European countries seem to show more compassion than America in providing safety nets for the poor, and they give far more humanitarian foreign aid per capita than the United States does. But as individuals, Europeans are far less charitable than Americans. Americans give sums to charity equivalent to 1.67 percent of G.N.P., according to... *Philanthrocapital-*

Atlantic Monthly that pornography consumption has become the “key variable” in liberal identity.⁵² This is something feminist Andrea Dworking pointed out in the 1970’s, in language that remains unmatched.⁵³ What is more, while the Left claims to fear concentrations of capital in the hands of a few, it remarkably fails to perceive the existential danger of amalgamating capital with government by subjecting the former to direct government control. The Left’s Rousseauian optimism about human nature – as long as “the right people” are at the helm of government – is something which came to alarm Sigmund Freud (initially sympathetic to Marxism himself).⁵⁴

ism, by Matthew Bishop and Michael Green. The British are second, with 0.73 percent, while the stingiest people on the list are the French, at 0.14 percent.”

⁵² “Blue Movie: The ‘morality gap’ is becoming the key variable in American politics” by Thomas Byrne Edsall. In *The Atlantic Monthly*, January/February 2003. One is disconcertingly alerted to this when accessing the Leftist website the Huffingtonpost.com. Yet it is also seen in Justice Department policies as these change with presidential administrations. In 1992, it has been claimed, legalized pornography was ‘on the ropes.’ This changed with the coming of Janet Reno’s Justice Department, when pornography exploded again in the 1990’s. At the current writing Attorney General Holder has been accused of refraining from federal prosecution of even illegal pornography.

⁵³ According to Dworkin in *Men Possessing Women*, London: The Women’s Press, 1981, p. 209: “The new pornography industry is a left-wing industry: promoted especially by the boys of the sixties... The dirty little secret of the left-wing pornography industry is not sex but commerce... Sex is claimed by the Left as a leftist phenomenon... The politics of liberation are claimed as indigenous to the Left by the Left; central to the politics of liberation is the mass-marketing... The pimps of pornography are hailed by leftists as saviors and savants. Larry Flynt has been proclaimed a savior of the counterculture, a working-class hero, and even, in a full-page advertisement in *The New York Times* signed by distinguished leftist literati, an *American Dissident* persecuted as Soviet dissidents are... On the Left, the sexually liberated woman is the woman of pornography... Leftist sensibility promotes and protects pornography because pornography is freedom... Free sexuality for the woman is in being massively consumed, denied an individual nature, denied any sexual sensibility... Capitalism is not wicked or cruel when the commodity is the whore; profit is not wicked or cruel when the alienated worker is a female... poverty is not wicked or cruel when it is the poverty of dispossessed women who have only themselves to sell; violence by the powerful against the powerless is not wicked or cruel when it is called sex; slavery is not wicked or cruel when it is sexual slavery; torture is not wicked or cruel when the tormented are women... The new pornography is left-wing; and the new pornography is a vast graveyard where the Left has gone to die.”

⁵⁴ *Civilization and Its Discontents*, chapter six, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1989, pp. 71-72: “the psychological premises on which the system is based are an untenable illusion... we have in no way altered the differences in power and influence which are misused by aggressiveness, nor have we altered anything by its nature. Aggressiveness was not created by property. It reigned almost without limit in primitive times, when property was still very scanty, and it shows itself in the nursery... If we were to remove [the family] too, by allowing complete freedom of sexual life... thus abolishing the family, the germ cell of civilization [as Engels proposed], we cannot... foresee which new paths the development of civilization may take; but one thing that we can expect is... that this indestructible feature of human nature [human aggressiveness] will follow it there.”

Conclusion

“Lights” on the horizon of mainstream American political discourse are few. Utopias are admittedly illusory. Every status quo almost inevitably may be expected to be decaying in one respect, even as other sectors may progress. Still, we can divide states of affairs into those more conducive to human flourishing, and those less so. What would rectify the extremes are not policy revisions, however. What would be needed is a spiritual revolution which begins with the “grassroots,” as always; but one which ends with the elites, if true success is to be sought.

PHILOSOPHY AND POWER IN NORTH AMERICA: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

SUMMARY

Someone once claimed that every person is a citizen of two countries: of their own, and of the United States of America. This is obvious hyperbole, perhaps written when Europeans were even more fascinated by America’s political experiment, economic expansion, and population growth than by its popular culture. Peoples the world over do not automatically identify with the United States; in fact, many define themselves in opposition to it. The article first examines some primary political powers in American politics, and then traces certain distinct philosophies as responsible for affecting perspectives on centralized government, socioeconomic affairs, foreign policy, and socio-cultural issues.

KEY WORDS: philosophy, political power, American politics, North America.