

Venusian Americans assumed they'd entered an age of permanent post-Martian politics, and they resented 9/11 as an intrusion on their minimalism. When you're at an event for the "anti-war" movement, you realize it's no such thing: It's an I-don't-want-to-have-to-hear-about-this-war movement.

That's why they like to mock Bush, Cheney, Rummy & Co. as the real terrorists—the ones determined to maintain America in a state of "terror." Oddly enough, this was how the Left chose to live during the Cold War, when the no-nukes crowd expected Armageddon any minute: Fear of the phenomenon sold a gazillion posters, plays, books, films, and LPs with big scary mushroom clouds on the cover. When nuclear weapons were an elite club of five relatively sane world powers, progressive opinion was convinced the planet was about to go ka-boom and the handful of us who survived would be walking in a nuclear winter wonderland. Now anyone with a few thousand bucks and an unlisted Islamabad number in his Rolodex can get a nuke, and the Left is positively blasé.

If I had to do what the Democrats no longer seem willing to do and raise my sights from their narcissistic poseur politics to the big geopolitical picture, I'd put the bike-path Left in the context of one of the most disastrous trends in the developed world. Today most of the West has elevated what one might call the secondary impulses of society—government health care (which America is slouching toward), government paternity leave (which Britain recently introduced), government day care (which several Canadian provinces already have)—over the primary ones: national defense, population growth, faith (in a higher power than government). If you're a secondary-impulse society like Canada and most Continental countries, it seems perfectly natural that the defense ministry is now somewhere an ambitious politician passes through on his way up to a job that really matters—like health minister. America is not there yet (I doubt Don Rumsfeld would regard it as a promotion if he were moved to HHS) and I'm optimistic enough to think it never will be. Secondary-impulse states can be very agreeable—who wouldn't want the celebration of one's sexual appetites to become a key political priority?—but they're agreeable only for the generation or two that they last. And, as we're about to see in demographically barren, economically sclerotic Europe, for good or ill it's the primal impulses that count. The social-democratic agenda is a suicide cult, which is why the Continent will be well past semi-Islamified at the time of NR's hundredth birthday.

It doesn't even really work on a cute homey Vermonty scale: The Green Mountain State's signature boutique business, Ben & Jerry's, is now part of the European multinational Unilever. I'm a believer in a two-party system because in the end the integrity of the dominant party isn't served by the collapse of the only alternative, and I would love the Democratic party to get back in the game. But to do that they've got to get off the bike path and back on the unlovely central thruway of geopolitical reality. As I said at the beginning, it would be a rash man who'd bet on the contours of the political map in another fifty years. But let's be rash: Given blue-state demographics, the Democratic party faces a bleak future. If they remain mired in trivia, by 2055 even Vermont will have woken up sufficiently to have ceased electing Deans and Leahys—and, on whatever will have replaced DVDs by then, that Danny Kaye *White Christmas* joke will once again make sense.

NR

American Dilemma

Problems of race still cry to be solved

JAMES Q. WILSON

NATIONAL REVIEW, at its founding in 1955, had as its mission stating and defending a conservative view in a nation that many believed had known only a liberal tradition. It was a difficult task, not only because of liberalism's apparent supremacy, but because it was not easy to define a conservative alternative. Conservatism could mean free-market economics, the reassertion of a traditional morality, or the endorsement of a religious or classical basis for moral thought. In the spirited discussions that took place in this magazine and elsewhere, each of these views had its proponents, and—as they made quite clear—their views were often in conflict. Individualism and free-market economics could leave morality to personal and even aberrant judgments, but a revival of moral thought and a reassertion of its religious basis could easily suppress individual choice and impose regulatory restraints on the market.

The debate on the meaning of conservatism consumed many pages in NATIONAL REVIEW but apparently ended, by exhaustion if not agreement, in the fusionism of Frank Meyer, who said that conservatism was "reason operating within tradition"—a phrase he said implied that there was an objective moral order, the individual was superior to the state, state power should be limited, and Communism and the Soviet Union were deep threats that must be overcome.

Today the struggle against the Soviet Union is over and conservatism, variously defined, has helped govern this nation in the Reagan and Bush administrations. A torrent of conservative books have been published, several magazines with a conservative focus have (albeit with subsidies) done reasonably well, and various think tanks (such as the American Enterprise Institute and the Hoover Institution) and public-interest law firms (such as the Center for Individual Rights and the Landmark Legal Foundation) have become important. There is still much to argue about, including government spending, the role of the state in combating illicit drugs, and the future of various entitlement programs. Many of these issues, since they involve how money is spent, will be settled by compromises and none of them, though each is important, has the galvanizing effect of the old anti-Communist crusade.

I am not convinced that any political movement needs a galvanizing cause; what liberalism, conservatism, and libertarianism need are convincing arguments. But the intellectual leaders of these movements do need such causes as a way of reaching audiences, mobilizing support, and clarifying central principles. The most important foreign-policy question is how best to use

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American diplomatic, economic, and military power abroad. That issue is being heavily debated in magazines and books, and for now I have little to add to arguments that supporters of the Bush Doctrine have already advanced. To me the largest domestic question for such leaders, whether liberal or conservative, is how to make sense of the civil-rights revolution.

It was, indeed, a revolution, one of the two or three most important ones in this country's history. In the space of just a few decades, the legalized suppression of a racial minority was ended, the public with trivial exceptions embraced an anti-racism ideology, and a large black middle class emerged. About one-third of all blacks now hold middle-class jobs, an even higher percentage think of themselves as middle class, the percentage of blacks living below the poverty line has declined, and the median income of black women is now about 90 percent that of white women.

But at the same time the percentage of single-parent black families has grown hugely, the advances that black women have made are not equaled by those of black men, and the rate of serious crime among blacks is much higher than it is for non-Hispanic whites and vastly greater than it is for Asian Americans. Everyone knows these facts but hardly anyone discusses them publicly. Instead, the veil of political correctness has descended on this topic, a veil much in evidence during the media's coverage of the effect of Hurricane Katrina on New Orleans. We have been repeatedly told that most New Orleans residents are "poor" and that it is the fault of the rest of us that they are poor. Clearly, something ought to be done.

What this argument lacks is any recognition of the extraordinary efforts that the government and private enterprise have made to help the poor: welfare payments, Medicaid, food stamps, public housing, affirmative action, and a compulsive search by firms and universities for any competent black who can be hired or educated. Moreover, the "need to help end poverty" usually lacks any attention to the extraordinary gains that many blacks have made, largely on their own.

What New Orleans should have told us is that many blacks living there have not made it on their own, or with the assistance of a long succession of black mayors and black police chiefs. In that city, 45 percent of black families with children under age 18 are headed by an unmarried mother and 96 percent of births to teenagers are to unmarried girls. Roughly 58 percent of the high-school students drop out before they graduate. The city has the highest homicide rate in the country, and—until recently—the

city's police department had many incompetent officers. In 1994 a decorated black police officer ordered the murder of a black woman who had complained of police brutality. Between 1992 and 1995 about 60 New Orleans police officers were charged with crimes. One gang of cops guarded a warehouse that stored cocaine. Under a black reform chief, things began to improve; the recent incident of police brutality captured on videotape and broadcast nationwide is an exception to the rule.

New Orleans is not simply a city of poor people—it is a city that has left its black population untaught, unguarded, and unmarried. There is much talk about rebuilding the physical structure of New Orleans, but not much about creating a civil society there. President Bush in one speech said that poverty in that city was the result of racial discrimination and lack of opportunity, but that surely is an incomplete argument. The 2000 Census showed that 35 percent of blacks in New Orleans were

"A great tactician of causes..."*

The story of a National Review publisher and his living legacy

In the mid-1950's, a young soldier returned home from Europe, teeming with optimism and ready to do battle for high causes. His first (and last) stop was the offices of *National Review*, where William F. Buckley Jr. hired him on the spot. With a genius for promotion and fundraising, James Patrick (J.P.) McFadden helped *National Review* inspire and nurture the modern conservative movement.



JAMES P. MCFADDEN

When, in 1973, the *Roe v. Wade* decision stripped protections from the innocent and voiceless unborn, J.P. responded by enlisting in the pro-life movement. He founded the *Human Life Review*, a quarterly journal devoted to defending life at all stages, giving pro-life Americans new hope that they were not alone.

J.P. knew that the war of ideas required intellectual vigor: "Good writing can win battles; great writing whole wars." And what great writing there has been: Malcolm Muggeridge, Clare Boothe Luce, Walker Percy, and William F. Buckley Jr., among others. In 1983, President Ronald Reagan chose the *Human Life Review* to publish his famous essay, *Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation*.

In recent years, contributors have included John T. Noonan, Henry Hyde, John Muggeridge, Michael M. Uhlmann, Ellen Wilson Fielding, William Murchison, Kathryn Jean Lopez, Nat Hentoff, Hadley Arkes, George McKenna, Elizabeth Fox Genovese, Richard John Neuhaus, Mary Ann Glendon, Mary Meehan, Maggie Gallagher, Robert H. Bork, Ramesh Ponnuru, William McGurn, Ann Coulter, Wesley J. Smith, and Joseph Bottum.



J.P. is now gone but the story of his fight for right causes continues in the pages of the *Human Life Review*, which provides an historical record of the struggle to defend life in America. You will find, as did Father Richard John Neuhaus, that the *Human Life Review* is "indispensable to anyone contending for the culture of life and against the culture of death." Visit www.humanlifereview.com today to receive a free issue.

There was no one J.P. admired more than his friend and mentor Bill Buckley: we congratulate him and our friends at *National Review*. May there be 50 more years and a continuing friendship with the *Human Life Review*.

* Ellen Wilson Fielding in a tribute to James McFadden

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poor, even though only 25 percent of blacks nationally are poor.

Discrimination did not produce what we see in New Orleans, where almost half the black families with children under 18 are headed by single women. They outnumber married black families with children by over 18,000. We do not know who the looters were, but among black thieves, I imagine that most came from single-parent families. As the nation's observance of civil rights has grown, the proportion of children living with unmarried mothers has also grown. There are many families with competent single moms, but they are outnumbered by the families that are harmed by the absence of a husband. From the ranks of the latter come high rates of crime and imprisonment, heavy rates of drug use, poor school performance, and a willingness to loot unguarded stores.

In this increasingly prosperous nation, these scarred youngsters are the source of our gravest social problems. To assume that these problems can be fixed by simply spending more money or creating more jobs reflects a mindless rejection of the evidence of the last half-century: We spent more and created more jobs, and the problems got worse.

The main domestic concern of policy-engaged intellectuals, liberal and conservative, ought to be to think hard about how to change these social weaknesses. Lower-class blacks are numerous and fill our prisons, and among all blacks the level of financial

assets is lower than it is for whites. Many blacks have made rapid progress, but we are not certain how.

In my opinion, the condition of the black family is the key to the persistence of a large and criminal lower class. We have learned some things about how to improve what disadvantaged children learn and how to increase the earnings of public-housing residents. (The excellent studies by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation are a fine source of information on these issues.) But we have learned next to nothing about how to develop two-parent families. We will not learn much until we talk about the matter candidly.

There are programs all over the country, many run by churches, designed to restore two-parent families and encourage education. With only a few exceptions, we do not know which of them really work. Developing and testing these programs will be much easier if black leaders endorse the effort. Many do, but these efforts are drowned out by the attention the media pay to Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton. I doubt that liberal public-policy magazines are likely to pay much attention to this problem; they seem determined to talk about giving everybody more money so that they can minimize work and indulge their fantasies. A conservative magazine, such as this one, can do better, but only if it makes the study of black culture—both its strengths and its weaknesses—a matter of deep concern.

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A Katrina scene