



Dr. Fred Schwarz

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John Dewey: Philosopher of Relativism

by Tiffany Jones Miller

The “progressive” label is back in vogue; politicians of the Left routinely use it to describe themselves, hoping to avoid the radical connotations associated with being “liberal” in the post-Reagan era. The irony in this is manifold, especially because the aim of the movement to which the name refers, the late-19th- and early-20th-century progressive movement, was anything but moderate.

If the progressive label seems less radical today, it is only because progressivism is less well known than its liberal progeny. It was initially an academic phenomenon far removed from American politics. Particularly in the post-Civil War American university, professors—many of whom had obtained their graduate training in German universities, and whose thought reflected the “intoxicating effect of the undiluted Hegelian philosophy upon the American mind,” as progressive Charles Merriam once put it—articulated a critique of America that was as deep as it was wide. It began with a conscious rejection of the natural-rights principles of the American founding and the promotion of a new understanding of freedom, history, and the state in their stead. From this foundation, the progressives then criticized virtually every aspect of our traditional way of life, recommending reforms or “social reorganization” on a sweeping scale, the primary engine of which was to be a new, “positive” role for the state. As the progressives’ influence in the academy increased, and growing numbers of their students sallied forth into all aspects of endeavor, this intellectual transformation gradually began to reshape the broader American mind, and, in time, American political practice. “A new regime in thought,” as Eldon Eisenach writes, “began to become a new regime in power.”

While many progressive academics helped effect this philosophical transformation, few, if any, were as influential as Dewey. Through an immense and wide-ranging body of work, vigorous activism, and his many students, Dewey’s mark was deep and enduring. Part of the reason for this was that he enjoyed an unusually long and prolific academic career. In 1884, Dewey received his doctorate from Johns Hopkins University, that seedbed of progressive academia where Richard T. Ely taught economics and helped cultivate future reformers like Woodrow Wilson, John R. Commons, and Frederic Howe. Over the course of his subsequent half-century career, Dewey taught mainly at the University of Chicago and Columbia University, where he held appointments in both philosophy and education, and published over 40 books and several hundred articles. In 1914, moreover, Dewey became a regular contributor to Herbert Croly’s *New Republic*, the flagship journal of progressivism; he also played a more or less important role in the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the American Federation of Teachers. During the New Deal, Dewey and his students helped shape the character of various programs, including the fine-arts program of the Works Progress Administration and the flagrantly socialist community-building program undertaken by the Division of Subsistence Homesteads. Dewey’s social theory continued to influence major political events even after his death in 1952. President Johnson not only delivered many speeches (including his signature Great Society address) that read, as James Ceaser has aptly noted, like “a grammar school version of some of John Dewey’s writings,” but professed his admiration for “Dr. Johnny.”

Founded in 1953, the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade, under the leadership of Dr. Fred C. Schwarz (1913-2009), has been publishing a monthly newsletter since 1960. *The Schwarz Report* is edited by Dr. David A. Noebel and Dr. Michael Bauman. The Crusade’s address is PO Box 129, Manitou Springs, CO 80829. Our telephone number is (719) 685-9043. All correspondence and tax-deductible gifts (the Crusade is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization) may be sent to this address. Permission to reproduce materials from this *Report* is granted provided our name and address are given.

Finally, Dewey arguably did more than any other reformer to repackage progressive social theory in a way that obscured just how radically its principles departed from those of the American founding. Like Ely and many of his fellow progressive academics, Dewey initially embraced the term “socialism” to describe his social theory. Only after realizing how damaging the name was to the socialist cause did he, like other progressives, begin to avoid it. In the early 1930s, accordingly, Dewey begged the Socialist party, of which he was a longtime member, to change its name. “The greatest handicap from which special measures favored by the Socialists suffer,” Dewey declared, “is that they are advanced by the Socialist party as Socialism. The prejudice against the name may be a regrettable prejudice but its influence is so powerful that it is much more reasonable to imagine all but the most dogmatic Socialists joining a new party than to imagine any considerable part of the American people going over to them.”

Dewey’s influential 1935 tract, *Liberalism and Social Action*, should be read in light of this conclusion. In this essay, Dewey purportedly recounts the “history of liberalism.” “Liberalism,” he suggests, is a social theory defined by a commitment to certain “enduring,” fundamental principles, such as liberty and individualism. After defining these principles in the progressives’ terms—e.g. liberty means the “claim of every individual to the full development of his capacities”—Dewey claims that the American founders, no less than the progressives, were committed to them. By seemingly establishing the agreement of the two groups, Dewey is able to dismiss their disagreement over the proper scope of government as a mere disagreement over the best “means” of securing their common “ends.” That is, although limited government may once have been the best means of securing individual liberty, its perpetuation in the changed social and economic circumstances of the 20th century would simply ensure liberty’s denial. If contemporary defenders of limited government only realized this, he concludes, they would drop their commitment to limited government and enthusiastically join their fellow “liberals” in expanding the power of the state. Dewey’s argument has enjoyed a potent legacy in subsequent scholarship, blinding many to what he and his fellow progressives plainly understood: however superficially similar, the founders’ conception of freedom, and the way of living to which it gave rise, differs markedly from the progressive conception of freedom and the more wholly “social” way of living that follows from it.

Commentators tend to underplay Dewey’s connection to the philosophical taproot of the wider progressive

movement. Much attention is given to his role, along with William James, in founding pragmatism, a philosophical school frequently described as uniquely American. Dewey’s turn to pragmatism is admittedly important, as it helped induce the development of the increasingly relativistic outlook so characteristic of contemporary liberalism. Nevertheless, such an account of his thought is both incomplete and overstated. Indeed, when he was a graduate student at Hopkins and in the early years of his career, Dewey’s thought, like that of his fellow progressives generally, was decidedly Hegelian. Even after turning away from Hegelian metaphysics, Dewey retained a significant Hegelian residual. In 1945, less than a decade before his death, he declared: “I jumped through Hegel, I should say, not just out of him. I took some of the hoop . . . with me, and also carried away considerable of the paper the hoop was filled with.” Dewey’s break with Hegel was thus only partial, and did not essentially alter the content of the social theory he had developed while under Hegel’s spell.

The cornerstone of this theory—the principle from which “Dr. Johnny’s” diagnosis of America’s shortcomings, and his prescription for its reform, proceeds—is a new, “positive” conception of human freedom. Like Hegel, Dewey distinguishes between the “material” and “spiritual” aspects of human nature, and ranks the latter higher than the former. “The appetites and instincts may be ‘natural,’ in the sense that they are the beginning,” he explains in a 1908 text co-authored with James Tufts, but “the mental and spiritual life is ‘natural,’ as Aristotle puts it, in the sense that man’s full nature is developed only in such a life.” Although man’s instincts are natural in the sense of being spontaneous, man’s “mental and spiritual life is ‘natural’” in a different and higher sense—a teleological one. Like his instincts, man’s spiritual faculties exist in him from the beginning; unlike his instincts, however, they exist only in potential, in an inactive or undeveloped way. Man thus “cannot be all that he may be,” cannot realize his “full nature” and thereby achieve his “best life,” until he is able to develop his higher faculties properly and subordinate his lower nature to their rule—to the resulting “world of ideal interests.” A man so developed, the early Dewey declares, would be “perfect.” In short, for Dewey, as for Hegel, because individuals can become free only to the extent that they actualize their spiritual potential, true freedom is “something to be achieved.”

In the early years of his career, accordingly, Dewey’s socialism was grounded on a conception of human freedom synonymous with the realization or fulfillment of

spiritual potential. (Even after his turn to pragmatism, interestingly, he continued to use this teleological nomenclature, however vigorously he denied the metaphysics from which it was derived.) Man's spiritual potential, while encompassing a host of faculties or talents that vary among individuals, also, and more essentially, consists in "capacities" common to all men, especially his social, intellectual, and aesthetic ones. Of these, man's social capacity is particularly significant. For Dewey, its development involves a process through which the individual's will becomes decreasingly determined by his particular interests and increasingly concerned with the "interests of others." Not only are these interests defined ultimately in terms of comprehensive good (or spiritual welfare), but these "others" ultimately include all human beings. As the individual grows more social, he will increasingly choose to promote the "fullest life" for every other human being in every sphere of life, e.g. in business and government (domestically and internationally) no less than in family and church.

In the founders' view, by contrast, the natural rights of the individual correspond to a series of natural duties, the scope of which vary with the social relationship in question. Thus, while parents are obliged to promote the comprehensive good or welfare of their children, and to sacrifice their personal concerns accordingly, the obligations they owe unrelated adults are far more minimal—e.g. to refrain from interfering with their freedom, to honor contracts with them, and, at the outside, to promote their (mere) preservation. Beyond these duties, individuals are entitled to pursue their own concerns, a right that government, in turn, is obliged to respect. While individuals are free to assume a more robust obligation to unrelated others, as through a church, government itself is not the agent for advancing it.

From Dewey's (and the progressives') standpoint, so minimal an understanding of obligation allows men to pursue a degree of selfishness that is developmentally primitive and hence morally disgusting. The progressives' view on this matter is particularly obvious in the scorn they heap upon the free market, an economic system animated by the selfish, and hence base, profit motive, but they viewed virtually every aspect of life in America—e.g. the prevailing interpretation of Christian Scripture and worship of God, the aim and methods of education, the physical layout and architecture of our cities and towns, the pattern of rural settlement and the character of life within it, the use of our natural resources, etc.—in the same light. The way of living inherited from the American

founding was, in short, a cesspool of selfishness.

When freedom is redefined in terms of spiritual fulfillment, the "problem of achieving freedom" radically changes. Freedom is no longer secured by constraining government interference with "the liberty of individuals in matters of conscience and economic action," as Dewey notes, but rather by "establishing an entire social order, possessed of a spiritual authority that would nurture and direct the inner as well as the outer life of individuals." The problem with limited government—with a government dedicated to securing the natural rights of man—is that it does not perform the more positive role of "nurtur[ing] and direct[ing]" the spiritual lives of the governed. Rather, it secures mere "negative freedom." "Negative freedom," Dewey clarifies, is "freedom *from* subjection to the will and control of others . . . capacity to act without being exposed to direct obstructions or interferences from others." In practice, freedom understood as natural rights is "negative" because government puts individuals in the enjoyment of their rights (e.g. the right to acquire and use one's property, to speak, to worship God according to the dictates of one's conscience, etc.), primarily by restraining others—and, importantly, itself—from interfering with the individual's right to make such decisions. While interference with individual decision-making is certainly not altogether illegitimate in a limited government, freedom is the normal case and restraint the exception.

At best, Dewey argues, such a government secures to every individual the mere legal right to realize his spiritual potential, a right that for many is essentially worthless. "The freedom of an agent who is merely released from direct external obstructions is formal and empty," for unless he possesses every resource needed to take advantage of this broad legal opening, he will remain unable to exercise his freedom and thereby actualize his spiritual potential. While the law would "exempt [him] from interference in travel, in reading, in hearing music, in pursuing scientific research[,] . . . if he has neither material means nor mental cultivation to enjoy these legal possibilities, mere exemption means little or nothing." In view of this situation, the perpetuation of limited government would consign many, perhaps most, Americans to a condition of spiritual retardation.

If mere negative freedom is to be transformed into what Dewey calls "effective" freedom, accordingly, negative government must give way to positive government. That is, the legislative power of government must expand in whatever ways are needed—and hence however far proves necessary—to effect a wider and deeper distribu-

tion of the resources essential to the actualization of every American's spiritual potential. As Dewey presents it, and as subsequent political practice confirmed, this process is basically synonymous with the implementation of the positive conception of individual rights. In this new order, individuals are entitled to whatever resources they need to attain spiritual fulfillment. Because Dewey, like the progressives generally, regarded poverty as among the greatest constraints on spiritual development, a host of the new rights purported to enhance the material security of poorer Americans—e.g. the right to a job, a minimum wage, a maximum work day and week, a decent home (public housing), and insurance against accident (workers' compensation), illness (public health care), and old age (Social Security). Most of these rights were enshrined in federal law during the New Deal. Because access to education at all levels and to fine art are no less essential to spiritual fulfillment, Dewey also advocated generous public provision of these resources—and indeed the provision of both was a hallmark of LBJ's Great Society. Because all such resources are secured for those who lack them through the creation of new redistributive programs (which increase the burden on those who pay taxes) and the imposition of new regulations such as the minimum wage (which foreclose choices previously reserved to the individual), a politics of rights-as-resources inevitably erodes freedom in the founders' sense.

In sum, the core of Dewey's progressivism, socialism, or what subsequently became known (thanks in no small part to his efforts) as liberalism, is freedom understood as spiritual fulfillment. Because the embrace of this ideal necessitated a thoroughgoing reconstruction of the American way of living, primarily by means of the positive state, it revolutionized not only the founders' theory of limited government, but also their constitutionalism: for, as Dewey and Tufts candidly note, progressive judges have "smuggled in" many valuable reforms by devising "'legal fictions' and by interpretations which have stretched the original text to uses undreamed of." Dewey was hardly alone in encouraging this transformation, but few would deny the preeminent role he played in it.

—*National Review*, December 31, 2009, 37f.



The Lies of Fabian Socialist Barack Obama

by John Ellis

When politicians are caught out in lies, their supporters often resort to the old cliché: all politicians lie. But that is itself a lie: most don't. Even among those who do, there are enormous differences in the importance and frequency of the lies. And it is surely now clear that this nation has a far from routine problem in the scale and regularity of President Obama's lying.

When politicians lie they are usually trying to avoid political damage, or to make themselves look good. Bill Clinton lied (and got himself impeached) to save himself from embarrassment about his relationship with Monica Lewinsky. Hillary Clinton lied about being under fire in Bosnia to enhance her non-existent foreign affairs profile. Richard Nixon was forced from office because he lied to cover up his involvement in a political dirty trick. John Kerry lied about his Vietnam combat experience to blunt his anti-military reputation. But Barack Obama's lies are far more corrosive and destructive, because they go to the heart of legislation and governance, and so seriously undermine trust in government. His lies generally take a specific form: they attempt to persuade people to vote for him or his policies by categorically assuring them that they need not have the anxieties that they have been expressing. The lies say, essentially: trust me, support what I want, and I promise that what you fear will never happen. But in every case it soon becomes clear either that he knew perfectly well that what the public feared would in fact happen, or that he was giving a firm assurance that he was in no position to give, or that he had no intention of following through on, his promise.

The accumulated weight of Obama's deceit is overwhelming:

* During his campaign for the presidency and since, Obama repeatedly assured us that he would protect Medicare against cuts; but he now presses for passage of bills that include savage cuts in Medicare.

* To obtain passage of his first stimulus bill, Obama assured us that 90% of the jobs created would be in the private sector; but as he well knew, most of them were to be in the public sector.

* Early in the health care debate, Obama assured us that he had not said that he favored a single payer system; but he was on record as having said exactly that.

* Obama gave primary voters a firm assurance that if he became the nominee of the Democratic party he would (unlike Hillary Clinton) abide by the campaign finance limits of public funding; but as soon as he became the party's nominee, he reneged on that pledge.

* During the presidential campaign, Obama criticized the presence of former lobbyists in the Bush administration and solemnly assured us that he would appoint no lobbyists to his administration; but once elected he proceeded to appoint even more lobbyists than his predecessors.

* Obama criticized the size of George Bush's deficit and promised to stop deficit spending if elected; but he has already quadrupled the size of the deficit he objected to and recklessly continues new federal spending in the trillions.

* When campaigning, Obama criticized bills before the congress that were too long for anyone to be able to read and promised to stop that; but the bills he has been backing throughout his first year are much longer (2000+ pages) than the ones he criticized.

* Candidate Obama promised an end to the corruption of earmarks and pork, but in the bills he has supported this year there have been more and bigger earmarks than ever before.

* Candidate Obama promised us that CIA personnel involved in the interrogation of terrorists would not be prosecuted; but his administration is now doing exactly that.

* Obama assured a joint session of Congress that the health bill he supported (pre-Stupak) would not provide public funding for abortions; but bitter resistance on the part of House Democrats to inclusion of language to that effect soon proved that it did.

* Candidate Obama promised that he would make sure that there was always enough time for the public to read legislation before it was enacted; but he has done exactly the opposite, repeatedly pressing for even faster passage of even longer bills.

* Candidate Obama met fears that he would be a tax and spend liberal by promising, emphatically and repeatedly, that those earning under \$200,000 would see no increase in their taxes of any kind; but he now urges passage of a healthcare bill that breaks that pledge in many different ways, and his unrestrained increase in federal spending makes more tax increases inevitable.

* Candidate Obama promised bipartisanship and an end to partisan bickering; but in a display of especially ruthless partisanship his allies have shut Republicans out of all key meetings on his health care initiative, with the unprecedented result that domestic legislation of historic

importance garnered not a single Republican vote in the Senate.

* Candidate Obama criticized his opponent's plan to tax employer paid healthcare benefits, and promised he would not tax them; but the bill he now backs will do just that.

* Obama had promised that he would not sign a health-care bill that would add one dime to the federal deficit; but the bill he now backs adds trillions in new federal spending, offset only by new sources of revenue that are both uncertain and more properly seen as offsetting the already existing deficit.

* Obama coerced Congress into passing his stimulus bill by promising that if it were passed unemployment could go no higher than 8%; but unemployment is now at 10%, and he could not possibly have had good reason to exclude that possibility.

* Obama promised that his cap and trade legislation will create jobs; but its massive tax increases will certainly hobble the economy and destroy jobs, while green jobs in significant numbers can at best be hoped for, but never promised.

* Obama has repeatedly assured the American people that if they like their current health plan they can keep it; but the House bill which he supported created huge incentives for employers to drop their coverage and shift their members to a public option.

* Obama has just as often assured the public that under his health plan everyone will be able to keep their current doctor; but many are certain to lose their doctors when ObamaCare's large cuts in Medicare funding induce more doctors to withdraw from Medicare coverage, as they also would were employers to transfer patients to a public option to save money.

* Obama assured a joint session of Congress that his health plan would not fund illegal aliens; but his allies had been busy voting down amendments to that effect. (This was the point of Joe Wilson's outburst.)

* Obama claimed that Caterpillar's CEO had told him that Caterpillar would begin hiring again as a result of the stimulus bill; but that individual immediately announced that he had said no such thing, and that Caterpillar would in fact be laying off more workers.

* Candidate Obama promised that Guantanamo would be closed by January 1, 2010; but it is still open.

* Candidate Obama promised that his administration (unlike his predecessor's) would be so transparent that TV cameras (C-Span) would be there for key deliberations; but an unprecedented level of secrecy prevails as the final stages of Obamacare are negotiated behind closed doors

and kept so secret that even the Senate majority whip admitted that he had no idea what was going on. Requests for Obama to honor the promise of C-Span cameras are being ignored.

* To gain traction for his attempt to return a would-be socialist dictator in Honduras to power, Obama claimed that he had been overthrown in an illegal coup; but the congressional research service pointed out correctly that ex-President Zelaya had been removed for constitutionally sufficient cause by legal and constitutional means.

* Obama claims that he wants a public option only to increase choice and competition; but the House bill would clearly reduce choice both by squeezing unsubsidized private health plans out of the market, and by setting rigid conditions on acceptable plans that would narrow available options.

* Candidate Obama claimed that violent radical Bill Ayers was just another guy in his neighborhood; but the record shows that the two had worked closely together.

* Obama assured us that his stimulus bill would create or save a million jobs; but he was claiming as fact what could never have been more than a wild (and highly improbable) guess, and his more recent attempts to justify that guess have been fraudulent.

* Obama assured us that his health plan would never ration care, or “pull the plug” on grandma; but the legislation he backs sets up panels to make crucial decisions on when to withhold care, and it makes such deep cuts in Medicare that rationing is inevitable.

* Obama now assures us that health insurance premiums will not go up if ObamaCare becomes law, insisting indignantly that people who say this have not read the bill; but the legislation forces insurers to cover preexisting conditions, which will compel them to raise premiums substantially.

This is an extraordinary record of serial mendacity. One or two instances might charitably be regarded as rash promises later regretted, or as the wishful thinking of someone who had not thought through the implications of what he was saying. But when it happens again and again—and my 30 instances are by no means exhaustive—only one judgment seems possible: this is the record of a habitual, shameless liar, a man who will say anything to get what he wants. Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me, goes the old saying. But scores of times? How shameful is that for our society when this disgraceful record is never the subject of a reproachful editorial in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, or CBS news? Richard Nixon was removed from office, and Bill Clinton impeached for a single lie. Who could look

at Obama’s record without concluding that his lying is in a completely different league from theirs?

President Obama evidently believes that he can solve any problem with a speech. But he really does not care whether what he says is true or not, nor does he feel any responsibility to honor the assurances and promises he makes. As a result, this nation is now in a position where it cannot believe a word that he says, and that amounts to an unprecedented crisis of confidence in the Presidency. Democratic government will atrophy if we allow lying on this scale to count as the business as usual of politics. When will the press and the Congress hold him accountable?

—*FrontPageMagazine.com*, January 21, 2010

The Left and Global Warming

by Mark D. Tooley

The Religious Left understandably relishes its memories, real and imagined, of heroic support for the Civil Rights movement during the early 1960s. It was maybe their last great and fully admirable moral cause that history still rightly salutes. So Religious Leftists frequently attempt to equate their political causes du jour with fighting Jim Crow 50 years ago.

Now, the chief of the United Church of Canada (UCC) is comparing the struggle against climate change with the Civil Rights protests of yesteryear. UCC Moderator Mardi Tindal even dramatically penned a letter that she self-importantly likened to Martin Luther King’s historic missive from a Birmingham Jail. Apparently she composed her letter through tears over the failure of the Copenhagen Climate Summit to agree to the massive shut-down of global capitalism for which the Religious Left has long prayed.

“The day after I returned home from the climate change talks, I needed a place to go where I could safely cry tears of lament,” Tindal bewailed to Ecumenical News International (ENI). “I needed somewhere where I would be supported as I wrestled with the bitter disappointment I felt with the result of the Copenhagen talks.” Lest anyone still fail to understand her Civil Rights analogy, she read her letter from the pulpit of her home church congregation on January 17 to coincide with King’s birthday.

As ENI helpfully explained, her Ontario church is where “she sought comfort immediately following her return” from the devastating disappointment of Copenhagen. Unlike King, Tindal has not been jailed, or faced growling police dogs, or tear gas, or death threats, for her ostensibly heroic struggle against carbon dioxide. But she still identifies with King as a crusader for justice. After all, Global Warming, like Civil Rights, is “one of the most urgent moral challenges in human history.”

“What if, instead of racial segregation, King had spoken about high greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere?” Tindal preeningly asked from the pulpit. “Would his words hold? It seems clear to me that they would ring loud and true.” The church lady’s rhetorical overreach is not untypical for her ultra-politically correct UCC. Although still Canada’s largest Protestant denomination, over 40 years it has lost about half its membership thanks partly to such obtuse political posturing. Naturally, emptying pews and Canada’s secularization did not inhibit the UCC Moderator from crusading in Copenhagen.

After all, the whole planet is at stake. “Our moment of opportunity came and then went, and here we are now, the fate of civilization and of millions of the planet’s life forms hanging by the frayed thread of inaction,” a “heartbroken” Tindal intoned. “We have no plan to reduce deadly emissions of carbon dioxide. Emissions that are a symptom of our broken relationship with the web of life. Emissions that are rising faster than at any time in human history.”

Terrifying! Perhaps Tindal’s listening congregation reacted as New England Puritans did when Jonathan Edwards read his famous 18th century sermon “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” amid shrieks and howls and pleas for divine mercy. Edward’s hell-fire revivalistic appeal helped ignite America’s first Great Awakening. Surely the terrors of a warming planet are no less motivating than the threat of eternal damnation. Edwards warned his unsaved listeners that they were hanging over the nether regions like a spider dangling from his slender web over a fire. Even more powerfully, Tindal pleaded that not just individual sinners, but the whole planet is “hanging by the frayed thread of inaction” over Global Warming. No wonder the church Moderator is weeping.

Edwards, in his famous sermon, admonished the impenitent that they could face divine judgment that very evening. Similarly, Tindal told her church, after Copenhagen’s failure, “I too believe the time for waiting has run out.” Thankfully, she, as did Edwards, believes there is still some time for repentance. But unlike Edwards, who pointed towards God, she urged self-help. “I believe the answer . . . is that hope is in you. It is in me and in all of us who choose to reject

despair and embrace hope. Together, we will replace the Copenhagen failure with success. It is up to us.”

It’s a heavy burden to believe that the whole planet’s salvation depends on self-initiated political action. But Tindal cited King for inspiration. “Watching the tens of thousands of citizens who gathered at the talks to exhort our world’s political leaders to act reminded me of the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., who said it would be ‘fatal . . . to overlook the urgency of the moment.’” She liked King’s Birmingham Jail letter for describing an “inescapable network of mutuality.”

King was talking about struggles for voting rights and equality before the law. But of course Tindal applied the sentiment to planet activism. “Biologically, we live within an inescapable network of mutuality,” she explained. “As the carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere rise, the planet will fail to provide for us. Life as we know it will die. Millions of human lives are on the line, rich and poor, old emitters and new, vulnerable and strong. There is no inoculation against this except all of us changing our behavior all at once.”

In the wake of Copenhagen’s “fearful self-interest,” Tindal urged her Canadian parishioners to take immediate action towards planetary salvation. So much is at stake! She concluded with an almost imprecatory litany, fiercely declaring: “When our actions threaten the lives of millions of people and other creatures, that is wrong; When our lack of action endangers communities in every region of the world, that is wrong; When our economic systems jeopardize the well-being of future generations, that is wrong; When the lifestyles of the wealthy undermine the survival of the poor, that is wrong; If we fail to act, we are helping to doom millions of our species to abject suffering and death. That is wrong.”

King’s Civil Rights movement focused on tangible goals to alleviate specific injustices against a suffering people. In contrast, Tindal and other Religious Leftists apocalyptically warn of an impending cosmic calamity that continued enjoyment of modern conveniences ostensibly will ignite. King’s achieved his concrete goals because he aimed towards moral and social uplift. Religious and other leftists failed at Copenhagen, and will fail elsewhere, because they aim to impoverish humanity to evade an unproven threat against the ethereal goal of climate equanimity.

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Latin America Going Further Left

by Jaime Daremblum

While riding in a taxi in my native Costa Rica recently, I saw the country's magnificent new national soccer stadium rising—it is scheduled to open later this year. The Chinese government bankrolled the \$83 million stadium project after Costa Rica ended its diplomatic recognition of Taiwan and launched official relations with Beijing. Journalists have referred to the stadium as a “gift” from China to Costa Rica. And, as my cab driver told me, the rulers in Beijing sent hundreds of Chinese workers to do the construction work.

The Costa Rican soccer stadium is a symbol of Beijing's growing interest in Latin America and its quasi-colonial attitude toward the developing world at large. Over the past decade, China has flooded Latin America, Africa, and Asia with investment. While it has not brought the same technological benefits as U.S. or European investment, it has brought an influx of low-wage Chinese workers. The arrival of these workers has complicated the economic impact of Chinese-funded development projects; it has also fostered social tensions in the recipient countries. “In some countries,” the *New York Times* reported in December, “local residents accuse the Chinese of stealing jobs, staying on illegally, and isolating themselves by building bubble worlds that replicate life in China.”

At a basic level, China's overseas investment binge has been driven by its domestic demand for raw materials. In a March 2008 cover story titled “The New Colonialists,” *The Economist* observed that China uses more than one-fourth of the world's aluminum, a third of the world's steel, and half the cement. Rapid economic growth has given China a voracious appetite for such commodities.

While the U.S. Congress is dithering and refusing to support free trade deals with Colombia and Panama, Beijing is aggressively expanding its trade relations across the Western Hemisphere. According to the *Latin Business Chronicle*, China's overall trade with Latin America grew by 40 percent between 2007 and 2008; it was more than three times higher in 2008 than in 2004. Between 2007 and 2008, Latin American exports to China increased by 41 percent. They “grew by more than four times compared with exports to the United States last year and more than three times compared with exports to the European Union.”

China signed a free trade agreement with Chile in 2005, and last year it signed one with Peru. These are Beijing's first trade agreements with countries outside its home region. The Chinese are currently negotiating a trade agreement with

Costa Rica. Last March, Uruguayan president Tabaré Vázquez traveled to China and solidified an expansion of trade and investment cooperation. In May, the Brazilian trade minister announced that China had become Brazil's biggest trading partner (passing the United States), shortly before Brazilian president Lula da Silva visited Beijing and completed several bilateral agreements. Prior to leaving for Asia, Lula told reporters that his China trip represented “one of the most important I am going on to defend a new economic order and a new commercial policy in the world,” according to Agence France-Presse. By boosting trade with these countries, China has improved its access to abundant supplies of copper (from Chile), zinc (from Peru), meat (from Uruguay), iron ore (from Brazil), and other commodities.

Beijing has also increased economic cooperation with the leftist countries that belong to Hugo Chávez's Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas, particularly Bolivia and Ecuador. Those two countries may seem strategically inconsequential up here, but the Chinese government is eager to benefit from Bolivia's lithium and Ecuador's oil. Beijing has agreed to develop Bolivia's first communications satellite, which will reportedly cost around \$300 million, and a Chinese firm (Sinohydro Corporation) has been contracted to build a \$2 billion hydroelectric plant in Ecuador.

China has already constructed a \$400 million communications satellite for Venezuela. (It launched in October 2008, and the Chávez regime assumed control of it in January 2009.) Beijing and Caracas enjoy an increasingly close economic relationship, with China a massive consumer of Venezuelan oil. Last year, the Chinese and Venezuelan governments agreed to increase the size of their joint investment fund from \$6 billion to \$12 billion.

The Chinese keep increasing their economic activities in the region. Despite its apparent “diplomatic truce” with Taiwan, one of China's long-term strategic goals in Latin America is to encourage countries that still have formal relations with Taipei (such as El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and Paraguay) to end those relations and “transfer” official recognition to Beijing. China refuses to have official relations with countries that recognize Taiwan.

The Chinese push into the Americas is no cause for panic—after all, Latin American trade with China has raised living standards and promoted GDP growth around the region—but it should compel U.S. policymakers to reinvigorate Washington's commitment to hemispheric trade liberalization. It is quite discouraging to think that China's Communist rulers are more enthusiastic than the U.S. Congress about trading with Latin America.

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