



Dr. Fred Schwarz

The Schwarz Report



Dr. David Noebel

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Alger Hiss—Again

by Ronald Radosh

Since the publication in 1978 of Allen Weinstein's definitive *Perjury: The Hiss-Chambers Case*, only partisans of the far left have continued to insist that Alger Hiss was innocent. They see him as a framed-up New Dealer who was painted by Republicans as a patsy through which they could indict liberals as soft on communism. I never had illusions that Alger Hiss was anything but a man of the old pro-Soviet left, and probably a Communist.

In the late 1970s, when he was at the pinnacle of a sudden popularity, and making appearances at campuses throughout the country, I was given the opportunity to attend an afternoon talk and reception for him in New York. The event took place at the apartment of the lyricist E. Y. ("Yip") Harburg. Those present were all either pro-Soviet fellow travelers or actual Communist party members, and the meeting was put together by editors of a Communist journal. If Alger Hiss was (as his supporters argued) an innocent New Dealer smeared as a Red by McCarthyites, what was he doing proudly accepting the invitation of a group of actual hardcore Communists and their followers?

There is certainly no need for another study exploring whether or not Alger Hiss was innocent, as he claimed, or guilty, as many have come to believe. Yet the books keep coming, and their authors have turned to the more interesting questions of what made Hiss a Soviet agent and, later, a man who denied what was obvious. The other question they address is the meaning of the case for the time in which the two Hiss trials took place—the early Cold War of the late 1940s and 1950s—and Alger Hiss's place in our recent past.

That first question was successfully addressed by G. Edward White, professor of law at the University of Virginia, in Alger Hiss's *Looking Glass Wars: The Covert Life of a Soviet Spy* (2004). White painted a careful portrait of a man who lived for deceit, who had one path that was constant: "Loyalty to the ideals of Soviet Communism and to the secret work in which he had participated. Loyalty to those who had . . . helped him at the height of his legal troubles," a world which "had become a way of demonstrating his loyalty to all of those who inhabited it." A consummate spy, Hiss easily carried on the myth of innocence, a task in which those who believed in the Soviet myth gladly joined him. Hiss succeeded in deceiving so many about what he did and who he really was: from Secretary of State Dean Acheson in the early 1950s to (in our own day) the former *Nation* editor and publisher Victor Navasky, who almost alone seeks to carry on the fight to vindicate Hiss. That there are still influential people in the publishing and political worlds who continue to believe in Alger Hiss's innocence, despite the mass of accumulated evidence, clearly infuriates someone such as Christina Shelton, the latest writer to attempt to bring something new to the table about the case.

In *Alger Hiss: Why He Chose Treason*, Shelton is only partly successful. A retired analyst at the Defense Intelligence Agency and other intelligence outfits, Shelton suffers from not being a historian, although her goal is to put the Hiss case in the context of the history of our times. For those familiar with the Hiss story, the bulk of her book is all too familiar: She gives readers a tour through his early years in Baltimore, at Harvard Law School, and as a clerk to Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. Then Shelton turns to his years in the Roosevelt administration (where he joined a major Communist cell led by Harold Ware), on through Hiss's advisory status at the Yalta Conference. From there she moves on to the arrest of Hiss, his trial and years in prison, and finally his campaign for vindication—which is still going on. Her final section details what we have learned from the Soviet decrypts called the Venona files and from the ex-KGB officer Alexander Vassiliev's "Notebooks" as first revealed in *Spies* by Vassiliev, John Earl Haynes, and Harvey Klehr, now available online. For anyone who has read any of the earlier books, it all seems rather redundant. Shelton also commits some amazing errors. She quotes Hiss writing in a memoir that, by January 1946, "the Cold War was already gathering momentum and the hoped-for unity of the Great

Powers had substantially faded.” Shelton comments, “This was a truly remarkable statement, coming from Hiss no less, admitting that the Cold War had started and was ‘gathering momentum’ and allied unity was gone—several years *before* Senator [Joseph]McCarthy, the alleged creator of the Cold War, was on anyone’s radar screen.”

If this is Shelton’s understanding of Cold War history, she gets an F. The Cold War was, indeed, already underway in 1946, and to acknowledge that is hardly startling. But more important, no one has ever argued that Joseph McCarthy was any kind of creator of the Cold War. Indeed, the pro-Communist left of that era complained that it was Harry Truman who had departed from Franklin Roosevelt’s willingness to work with Stalin, and that it was Truman who had created a Red Scare precisely to foment support for an aggressive anti-Soviet policy. Only years later did McCarthy come upon the scene and gain political support from Americans frustrated that we hadn’t won the battle with the Soviets, positing the existence of a “conspiracy so immense” that it stood in the way of victory.

When Shelton analyzes Hiss’s role at Yalta, she takes on the claim of Hiss’s defenders that he was an advisor on protocol only and had nothing to do with issues of policy. Although she can offer no firm proof of anything else Hiss may have done to help the Soviets behind the scenes, she speculates that he may have had papers in his possession that went far beyond his particular assignment, the new United Nations, including material on the Soviet view of German reparations, and the American position on Poland’s postwar status, as well as material on recommendations for Kuomintang-Communist unity in China in the war against Japan. As an advisor to Secretary of State Edward Stettinius, and as an active Soviet asset, Hiss was, in fact, “an integral part of all the non-military, substantive issues discussed at Yalta.” Shelton speculates that his “likely Soviet contact was a military intelligence (GRU) officer and Red Army general named Mikhail Milshtein, who might have earlier been one of Hiss’s “controls” in New York in the 1930s. Noting that Milshtein was deputy chief of the GRU’s first directorate while at Yalta, and a secret adviser to the Soviet delegation, Hiss might have passed on whatever he knew to Milshtein.

Indeed, anything is possible. But we need to remember that this is all speculation and, at present, no GRU papers are available that would prove or disprove Shelton’s suppositions (as she reluctantly acknowledges). Hiss wrote about Yalta in exactly the manner any supporter of a pro-Soviet foreign policy would have done. He argued for years after his imprisonment that the United States

and the Soviet Union could have had a warm postwar relationship, but it was undone by the confrontationist policies of Harry Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower. It was not until the presidency of John F. Kennedy, Hiss argued, and the administration of Richard Nixon, that younger postwar leaders were able to move America into an era of peaceful coexistence and *détente* with Russia. Shelton concludes that “Hiss has become emblematic of the ideological divide that continues to this day in the United States, and has become the touchstone for many progressive individuals.” That is why, despite the overwhelming evidence of his guilt, “there are still those today who cannot bring themselves to assimilate that evidence and acknowledge that Alger Hiss was a Soviet asset and guilty of espionage.”

That is, of course, true, and precisely what Susan Jacoby seeks to address in *Alger Hiss and the Battle for History*. If Shelton fails by giving her reader too much summary of other works, and makes unproven arguments about the extent of Hiss’s espionage, Jacoby fails in her desire to depict a moral equivalence between those who believe Hiss is innocent and those who believe he is guilty, and who rightly feel vindicated that the new research proves they are correct. Jacoby’s problem is that, while she too acknowledges the preponderance of evidence proves that Hiss had been a Soviet agent, she wants those who believed him innocent to be judged correct when they argue that Hiss’s guilt in no way impugns the reputation of the administration in which he served.

Jacoby is fairly sure that Alger Hiss was a Communist party member, as well as a spy. When David Remnick told Hiss, during an interview in 1986, that the “democratic socialist” Irving Howe believed Hiss had lied, Hiss replied: “Howe? Howe? I don’t consider him to be on the left.” He also told Remnick that he admired Stalin as “very impressive . . . decisive, soft-spoken, very clear-headed.” As Jacoby notes, this was (in 1986) a “bizarre observation for anyone to make” about Joseph Stalin. She then asserts that Hiss’s views were “most indicative of a Communist background” since Communists always hated opponents on the left who offered an alternative to Bolshevism, his “mask slipped when Remnick mentioned Howe,” and he made the mistake of “displaying genuine anger instead of maintaining a superior posture of tolerance.”

Given that her observation about Hiss is correct, it is ironic that Jacoby herself has the same response as Hiss’s defenders to arguments about his guilt. She agrees with them that “undermining the legacy of the New Deal was a major goal of the anticommunist crusaders” and it

“remains a persistent goal of the political right today.” Jacoby’s implication is that, since “Hiss’s guilt remains so important to the right,” she can understand why many continue to argue he was innocent lest they be seen as right-wing themselves. But does this not indicate the reluctance of many liberals to acknowledge their own blindness about accepting the fact that, indeed, the New Deal might have been successfully infiltrated by Communists?

Jacoby’s problem is a failure to explore why so many intelligent folks, such as Dean Acheson, vouched for Hiss, or seemed incapable of believing that there were dangerous Communists in government service and that many Soviet agents fooled their superiors. An anti-Communist liberal like Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. never had any problem proclaiming that Alger Hiss was guilty. Yet when Comintern files found by Klehr and Haynes reinforced the ex-Soviet agent Elizabeth Bentley’s charge that Laurence Duggan, a onetime New Deal official, had been a Soviet asset, Schlesinger responded that he knew Duggan and did not believe he could have been a spy. When Duggan’s role as a KGB agent was confirmed by the Venona files, Schlesinger privately conceded that the documents were “pretty damning” but never publicly changed his position.

Jacoby ends up in the same corner as Schlesinger. Commenting on the evidence assembled by Klehr and Haynes in their various studies, she writes, “I find it difficult to place total faith in the information that one intelligence agent passes on to another.” But what Klehr and Haynes have uncovered is not simply uncorroborated files from agents but information that is corroborated with other files that point incontrovertibly to the fact that the man named “Ales” by the KGB was no one but Alger Hiss. Jacoby, however, prefers to stand above the fray, concluding that “what each side truly hates is the other’s version of history.” True enough. But only one version of this particular history can be correct, and Susan Jacoby cannot decide which one. She seems more concerned that she might be confused with “right-wing ideologists” associated with George W. Bush if she sees Alger Hiss as simply guilty. Opposition to the New Deal, she argues, keeps “the Hiss fires burning” since Hiss himself argued that he was accused only “because he was a loyal New Dealer—not because anyone really thought he was a Communist Party member.”

Jacoby, then, wants Hiss to be guilty but his defenders to be correct in their belief that the Communists did no damage to America at home and that the real threat to American interests came from the “anticommunist campaign” of the Cold War era, with its intrusions on civil liberties. She ends with a diatribe about Guantanamo,

wiretapping by the Bush administration, and the views of conservatives about the legacy of the New Left. None of these, of course, has much of anything to do with the Hiss case: they reflect only on her own concern that accepting Hiss’s guilt (as she does) might place her in the company of those she cannot tolerate.

—*The Weekly Standard*, Apr 9/Apr 16, 2012, p. 38f.

Obama’s “New Party” Connection

by Stanley Kurtz

In 1996, during his first run for public office, Barack Obama formally joined a leftist third party called the New Party. Its Chicago chapter served as the de facto political arm of the now-defunct group ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now). Ideologically, the New Party sharply differentiated itself from what it took to be the business-dominated Democratic party of Bill Clinton, identifying instead with the social-democratic movements of Europe.

The claim that Obama had been a member of the New Party gained attention from conservatives during the final two weeks of the 2008 campaign, but—even though it rested on considerable evidence—it was never widely reported or discussed in the mainstream press. When I asserted on *National Review Online* in late October 2008 that Obama had indeed been a member of the New Party, the Obama campaign called my charge a “crackpot smear.” Through its Fight the Smears website, it insisted that its candidate had never been a member, and had “never solicited” the New Party’s endorsement.

Documentary evidence—obtained from ACORN files recently donated to the Wisconsin Historical Society—now contradicts this claim, and establishes beyond any reasonable doubt that Barack Obama did solicit the endorsement, and become a member, of the New Party. Like other candidates who received its endorsement, Obama signed a “contract” in which he promised not only to join the group, but also to publicly support and associate himself with it while in office.

The minutes of the public meeting of Chicago’s New Party on January 11, 1996, read as follows: “Barack Obama, candidate for State Senate in the 13th Legislative District, gave a statement to the membership and answered questions. He signed the New Party ‘Candidate Contract’ and requested an endorsement from the New Party. He also joined the New Party.” Consistent with these minutes, a

roster of the Chicago chapter of the New Party from early 1997 lists Obama as a member, giving January 11, 1996, as the date he joined. All evidence now points to an attempt by Obama in 2008 to deceive the American public about this important political affiliation in his past.

Obama's New Party problem must be seen as part and parcel of his attempts to distance himself from ACORN. During his third debate with John McCain, Obama claimed that the "only" involvement he'd had with ACORN was to represent the group in a lawsuit compelling Illinois to implement the motor-voter law. The ACORN archives clearly contradict him, and provide evidence that he had dealings with ACORN well beyond representing it in a single lawsuit.

Why did Obama falsely deny his ties to ACORN? His support for its voter-registration efforts in Chicago and his participation in its training seminars doubtless would have been embarrassing, given its thuggish tactics, its fraudulent voter registrations, and its role in abetting the subprime-loan fiasco at the root of the 2008 financial crisis. But they would not likely have been seriously damaging for him to confess, especially in 2008, when the press was treating him with kid gloves. Admitting to having joined a leftist third party controlled by ACORN, on the other hand, could have been damaging indeed.

The records of ACORN's national office, as well as those of several local affiliates, including Illinois ACORN and the ACORN-controlled Chicago Local 880 of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), can be found in the archives of the Wisconsin Historical Society. Until recently, these records did not include material more recent than about 1994. My political biography of President Obama, *Radical-in-Chief: Barack Obama and the Untold Story of American Socialism*, made use of these records to sketch a detailed picture of ACORN's operations in Chicago and beyond, and of Obama's ties to the group. Then, apparently sometime around 2010, the records of Illinois ACORN were updated, with especially strong coverage of the mid to late 1990s, and some records extending well into the 2000s. In what follows, I will concentrate on information in the updated Illinois ACORN records about Obama's ties to the New Party, drawing on older archival material when necessary to fill out the picture.

The Chicago New Party was founded in 1992. Not much later, in February 1993, a New Party memo identified Obama as someone worth recruiting, and made special note of his desire to run for office. The early New Party was run jointly by Madeline Talbott, the leader of Illinois ACORN, and Keith Kelleher, the head of SEIU Local 880. In July 1993, Kelleher met with Obama to interest him in working with the New Party, and with a New Party-controlled front group called Progressive Chicago. Since many Chicago leftists were reluctant to alienate the Democrats by joining a third party, working with Progressive Chicago gave them a way to help the New Party indirectly. Progressive Chicago also served as a base for eventual recruitment to the New Party itself.

Obama told Kelleher that he was "more than happy to be involved" in New Party and Progressive Chicago affairs, while also saying that he would be cautious about anything that might offend regular Democrats. Since the New Party intended to make frequent use of the tactic of "fusion" (endorsement of select progressive candidates running on the Democratic-party line), it was perfectly content to allow its members to be Democrats as well. Yet many Democrats looked on the New Party with suspicion, and it took real courage—and commitment to hard leftism—to have dealings with the group.

True to his word, Obama became a regular signatory on letters Progressive Chicago sent out reporting on its meetings. The central task of Progressive Chicago was to identify local races that could be won by candidates standing to the left of the mainstream Democratic party, and to suggest such candidates.

The Obama campaign's claim in 2008 that Obama "never solicited" the New Party's endorsement is doubly false. Not only did he publicly request New Party endorsement on the day he joined, he also worked for nearly four straight years with the leaders of the New Party (who were also the leaders of ACORN and Progressive Chicago) in an unmistakable effort to garner support for an eventual political run. We know that members of ACORN served as Obama's on-the-ground volunteers in all his early runs for office. Cultivating the New Party and Progressive Chicago was a way of ensuring that support.

In 1996, Obama ran as state senator Alice Palmer's

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handpicked successor. She had abandoned her seat in hopes of winning a special election to Congress; while she had promised to support Obama even if she lost her bid, once defeated for the Democratic congressional nomination she turned around and challenged Obama for her old state-senate seat. Obama eventually had Palmer knocked off the ballot for having too few valid signatures to reenter the race, but on January 11, 1996—the day Obama joined the New Party, requested its endorsement, and signed its Candidate Contract—Palmer’s ballot disqualification had not yet been officially confirmed. The New Party had strongly backed Palmer (a true hard leftist) in her congressional campaign. At the January 11 meeting, New Party leader Madeline Talbott spoke to the assembled members about her disappointment that the party had not been able to push Palmer over the top. Because of the party’s ties to Palmer, the question of whether to endorse Obama was not predetermined by a decision of the leadership, but was thrown open to the membership for a vote, without recommendation.

Obama won, and beat back an attempt by Palmer’s supporters to make the New Party’s endorsement of him contingent on Palmer’s official disqualification from the state-senate race. (There was even a vote on whether to send a letter to Palmer explaining the decision; Obama won on that, too, and no letter was sent.) Obama’s victory over the far more established Palmer can be attributed to his long and close working relationship with ACORN, whose supporters made up by far the largest contingent within the New Party. Talbott wrote in her 1996 year-end report: “We endorsed Barack before the decision was final on whether he would have opposition in his campaign for State Senate. As it happened, he had none, but he remembers and appreciates our role.” The foundation of a strong relationship had been laid. Another New Party document, seemingly from around 1997, describes State Senator Obama as a “good ally.”

At just about this time, however, the fate of the New Party was sealed. The 1997 US Supreme Court decision in *Timmons v. Twin Cities Area New Party*, which upheld the permissibility of states’ banning cross-party “fusion” endorsements, weakened the New Party’s prospects of influencing elections, and thus resulted in its rapid decline. An undated “Transition Plan” in a folder containing items from 1999 classifies Obama as a politician friendly to the party and recommends sounding him out for membership on the steering committee of a revamped leadership. Yet it was not to be. The Chicago chapter of the New Party dwindled.

What was the New Party’s ideology? National co-founders Daniel Cantor and Joel Rogers saw the group as a “social democratic” party, roughly modeled on the Swedish

labor movement. A party standing on the left side of even Sweden’s political spectrum would clearly be radical by American standards. While Cantor and Rogers initially hoped to make the New Party’s social-democratic stance explicit, other party leaders saw such openness as too risky. An early New Party document, however, makes the party’s social-democratic stance very clear. This manifesto, “The New Party: ‘Building the New Majority,’” is dated April 1992, the very beginning of the party’s existence, just before formal membership sign-up began. It calls New Party members “not just liberal” democrats but “social democrats.” It dismisses the current American political system as “a sewer of privilege and exclusion,” and condemns the Democratic party as “dominated by business, or business-backed candidates, or upper middle class liberal elites searching for a candidate acceptable to business.”

The manifesto rejects the theory that the Democratic party was weakened when a Sixties-inflected McGovernite wing took control of it. Instead, it argues, the failure of the Democratic party to root itself in community organizing is the true source of its weakness. It repeatedly compares America’s Democratic party unfavorably with Europe’s social-democratic parties. Yes, there are “good Democrats” who deserve endorsement, the manifesto concedes—but they are really social democrats, and merit New Party support for precisely that reason. The document ends by describing the New Party platform as an attempt to enact authentic social democracy to the extent possible given “the constraints on such an order imposed by capitalism.” The unmistakable implication is that the founders of the New Party would prefer to throw off the shackles of capitalism entirely.

Acorn’s records show that prior to joining the New Party, Obama was invited to confer personally with party founder Joel Rogers, who would have either authored or approved that early manifesto. Candidates for New Party endorsement in Chicago were also regularly asked whether they agreed with the party’s “Statement of Principles,” which had been approved by the national Interim Executive Council headed by Rogers. The Statement of Principles contains concrete proposals that bring the New Party’s “social democratic” stance to life. There are, for example, proposals to hand substantial control of the banking and financial systems over to community groups (such as ACORN). The Statement of Principles also demands a guaranteed minimum income for all adults, and a universal “social wage,” defined as cradle-to-grave state provision of health care, child care, education, and the like.

If there is a difference between the New Party’s Statement of Principles and the program of the Democratic So-

cialists of America, many of whose members also joined the New Party, I cannot find it. But while the question of whether the New Party was socialist can be argued, the party's support for a version of social democracy far to the left of the American Democratic party cannot. And Obama would almost certainly have had to express some level of support for the Statement of Principles before receiving the New Party's endorsement and joining up.

So in 1996, while Mitt Romney was running Bain Capital, Barack Obama threw in his lot with a leftist third party hostile to both American capitalism and the mainstream Democratic party. Surely if Bain sheds light on Romney's views, Obama's New Party membership ought to be a topic of discussion as well, as should Obama's efforts to disguise this episode of his life. Does Obama's "Julia" ad betray a cradle-to-grave welfare-state mentality? That would certainly be consistent with his New Party membership. Romney's allegation that the president's true goal is to move America by degrees toward being a European-style welfare state also grows more convincing in light of Obama's New Party days. These matters are newsworthy—far more so than the youthful love letters of Obama and the childhood pranks of Romney, each of which has drawn buckets of real and virtual media ink. If only the press agreed.

—*National Review*, June 25, 2012, p. 25f.

Christiane Amanpour's Lovefest with Castro's Daughter

by Humberto Fontova

Given the media's neurotic hyper-sensitivity to the most microscopic hint of white on black racism, here's a question:

When would a black human-rights activist who was jailed and tortured by a lily-white regime for the crime of quoting Martin Luther King be totally ignored by this same media while he testified to a Senate Committee?

And when would the white daughter of his white torturer (almost concurrently) get fawning media coverage including a forum by CNN for this white woman to insult the black torture victim as a "liar" a "crook" and a "mercenary"—without the slightest rebuttal from her host?

Answer: When the black gentleman was jailed and tortured by the Castro regime and when the white woman is Raul Castro's daughter, Fidel Castro's niece, and Che

Guevara's god-daughter. Oops! A caveat: I realize that The Godfather remains the top educational source on Cuba for many Americans. But unlike Connie and Michael Corleone, Cuba's Stalinist Mafiosi aren't big into religious arcana like assigning godparents. So I admit to imprecision on the identity of Mariela Castro's godfather. Raul Castro did serve as best man at Che Guevara's first wedding however. And Che Guevara later stood in Raul's. So I'm close.

Mariela Castro's family regime, by the way, has jailed and tortured the longest suffering black political prisoners in modern history, several of them suffering longer in her father and uncle's dungeons than Nelson Mandela suffered in South Africa's apartheid.

Mariela's "godfather" Che famously denounced blacks as, "indolent and fanciful, spending their money on frivolity and drink." Not that you would know any of this from CNN, upon whom Mariela's uncle bestowed with the first news bureau granted to a US network.

"Fidel Castro is one helluva guy!" Ted Turner gushed to a capacity crowd at Harvard Law School during a speech in 1997. "You people would like him! Most people in Cuba like him!" Two weeks later CNN was granted its coveted Havana Bureau.

And if the above crack about The Godfather as "top educational source on Cuba" sounds flippant, here's Jon Stewart (often touted as the top news source for young Americans) from July 23rd 2008: "All I know about pre-Castro Cuba, I learned from the Godfather II!"

Here's Chris Matthews from Oct. 23rd 2011: "I mean everybody who saw Godfather II knows what it was like when Castro took over!"

When Ann Coulter was asked on ABC's "The View" if she had ever seen two women having sex, she replied: "Not since Katie Couric interviewed Hillary Clinton." Christiane Amanpour's interview of Mariela Castro last week comes close to such a spectacle. While giving the Stalinist apparatchik a forum to denounce American lawmakers (of Cuban heritage and mostly Republican) as "Mafiosi" and Cuban dissidents as "liars, crooks, and mercenaries" Amanpour showed cutesy family pics of the Castro family.

This family regime's policies—combining firing squads, torture, prison beatings, machine-gunning, and drowning of escapees—killed an estimated 100,000 Cubans and drove almost 20 per cent of Cuba's population into exile (from a nation formerly deluged with immigrants.) So imagine the number of Cuban families with gaping holes in their family portraits. Many of these live in the US today within a short ride of CNN studios—to no avail.

A few days after the Amanpour-Castro lovefest, a black Cuban dissident named Jorge Garcia Perez, better known as

“Antunez,” testified (via video-conference from Cuba) to the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. Antunez suffered 17 years in Castro’s dungeons and torture chambers essentially for the crime of quoting Martin Luther King and the UN Declaration on Human Rights.

So, given the media’s neurotic hyper-sensitivity to the most microscopic hint of white on black racism, here’s the question again:

When would a black human-rights activist who was jailed and tortured by a lily-white regime for the crime of quoting Martin Luther King be totally ignored by this same media while he testified to a Senate Committee?

Two years ago while Antunez suffered in Castro’s prisons, his sister (today living in the US) declared: “The Cuban government tries to fool the world with siren songs depicting racial equality in our country. But it is all a farce, as I and my family can attest, having suffered from the systematic racism directed at us by Castro’s regime. My brother suffers the scourge of racial hatred every day. The beatings are always accompanied by racial epithets. They set dogs on him. They deny him medical attention. They kept him from attending his mother’s funeral. The only thing I have to thank the Cuban revolution for,” she quoted her brother, “is for restoring the yoke of slavery that my ancestors lived under.”

Antunez’s testimony last week, broadcast from a totalitarian country and at great risk to his liberty, might have been considered newsworthy. Instead he met with a total media blackout. But when Nelson Mandela addressed Congress in June 1990, after a tumultuous ticker tape parade in New York, every US network carried his every word along with the frequent and thunderous Congressional ovations accompanying them. The ovations from members of the Congressional Black Congress, needless to add, were particularly thunderous.

But rather than hailing the black torture victim (Antunez) this same Congressional Black Caucus hails his torturer, and in a manner that can only be compared to Ann Margaret’s hailing of Conrad Birdie. If this also sounds hyperbolic, here are direct quotes from CBC members after their visit to Cuba in April 2009:

“He (Castro) looked directly into my eyes!” gasped Rep. Laura Richardson (D-Calif.) “and then he asked: how can we help President Obama? Fidel Castro really wants

President Obama to succeed.”

“It was quite a moment to behold!” hyperventilated Rep. Barbara Lee. (D-Calif.) “Fidel Castro was very engaging and very energetic.”

“He’s one of the most amazing human beings I’ve ever met!” gushed Emanuel Cleaver (D-Mo.)

“Raul Castro was a very engaging, down-to-earth and kind man,” according to “someone who I would favor as a neighbor. It was almost like visiting an old friend,” (former Black Panther Bobby Rush (D-Ill.)

During last week’s Senate hearing, Antunez denounced the Obama administration’s granting Mariela Castro a US visa as an “insult to all suffering Cubans.” Even worse (better), Antunez denounced Obama’s “policies of rapprochement with Cuba for strengthening the repressive apparatus and the impunity of the aggressors.” “Neither remittances,” he stressed, “nor travel, nor cultural exchanges will help the democratization of Cuba.”

Any questions why his testimony was blacked out?

Update: According to a report this morning from Antunez’s wife in Cuba, a squad of Castro’s police swarmed over her husband on Saturday with billy clubs after macing him. They beat him unconscious and dragged him off. As we go to press Antunez’ exact condition and whereabouts are unknown. (No word on the arrest from CNN, and we expect none.)

—Townhall.com, June 12, 2012

Public Reason, Christian Faith

by Dr. Michael Bauman

Public reason is reason offered to the public in order to persuade them that a particular policy is wisest, most efficient, and in their best interest. Biblical reason can be public reason if you frame it effectively. That is, public reason and Biblical reason might well have the same content and produce the same effect. But public reason is presented without the overtly Biblical language or the explicitly noted Biblical references for its source.

Think of it as stealth political theology: It sneaks into the enemy’s perimeter undetected in order to accomplish its

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mission even before the other side knows what's happened.

Given the predictable, almost reactionary, animosity of secular culture towards religion and Scripture, the prudent Christian presents and supports Biblical political theology, which has the great advantage of being correct, but he or she does so in ways carefully calculated to slip through the opponents' defenses. The prudent Christian also opposes anti-Biblical political theory, which carries the fatal shortcoming that it is false, but does so in a manner well-suited to the interests of the hearers, at least as the hearers understand them. To prove the wisdom of the one policy and the foolishness of the other does not require that we quote Bible verses or supply Scriptural locations. Rather, it requires us to master the facts and the arguments drawn from life in the real world. Christianity is, so to speak, a reality game, and it works better in the real world than do the utopian delusions of the leftist Pollyannas.

You'll notice that the leftists in question have operated for decades in precisely the fashion I advocate here. (If you have not noticed it, it worked.) They find ways of making their radical ideas prevail without quoting, say, Saul Alinsky or Karl Marx, which is why 58% of Christians polled recently said that the phrase "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need" came from Jesus, probably the Sermon on the Mount.

If we hope to communicate our own views and ideas effectively in the public square, we need to present them in the most compelling way possible. We need to beat the secularists at their own game—at least they think it is their own game.

But it's not. It's His game.

Jesus is Lord of all things, including political rhetoric.

If I have to quote Him on the point in order to prove it to you, or if I have to tell you where to go to see Him doing what I say, then you're not ready yet.

The truth sets you free, not its chapter and verse location, and not its articulation in King James' English. You can produce compelling public reasons for a policy without ever using the words "thee" and "thou."

Here's an example of what I mean:

You might recall the awful option faced by the title character in "Sophie's Choice." She had to pick one child or the other. She could not have both. It's not a choice any mother wants to make. No matter what she chooses, her loss is unutterable. She loses a child.

Nor would any child want to make the same choice in reverse: "Mommy or Daddy, Sally. Pick one."

But that is the ugly position into which same-sex marriage presses children, except that the children themselves do not get to choose. Someone else chooses for them.

No matter what you might think about same-sex marriage, we know this: Any child raised under a same-sex union faces a tremendous loss—either no Mommy or no Daddy. In a union where two men or two women are involved, that's always the outcome.

When Mommy picks a woman or Daddy picks a man as a life partner, the children always lose something enormously valuable and irreplaceable: a mother or a father.

That loss often has tragic consequences for a child. If, for example, you are raised in a home with no father around, the odds that you will drop out of school, that you will take or sell drugs, that you will go to prison, that you will be very poor, and that your children will suffer the same fate you did all skyrocket. That same cycle of hopelessness and crime often follows upon the absence of a mother. Having a spare so-called "mother" or a spare so-called "father" does not cure the pathologies generated by the absence of either.

You can't get around this enormous loss by invoking the fatuous lie captured in the title of a recent, famous children's book, *Heather has Two Mommies*, simply because Heather does not. She has but one. The other lady is not her mommy; she is the lady mommy has sex with. Having sex with mommy doesn't make you a mommy any more than drinking milk makes you a calf. And if having sex with mommy makes you a mommy, then what would daddy be?

The point to be made, once we get beyond the two mothers or two fathers fiction, is this: Even if we granted that two women might turn out to be good mothers, neither of them could, at the same time, be a good father. Ditto for the two fathers being a good mother. Furthermore, children need to learn well how to relate to both sexes. They need to observe up close and over the course of many years the complex matrix of interactions between both a mother and a father. For a boy to become a man, and for a girl to become a woman, both need long term exposure to proper role models; they need, so to speak, an apprenticeship in gender-relevant maturity.

The point here is not remotely homophobic. The point here is not that mommy and her lover, or daddy and his, are to be shunned. The point here is that mothers and fathers are fundamentally important in the normal development of children, and therefore in the future of the nation, which depends upon the development and maturation of the next generation. That works best when children have both a father and a mother.

Wise governments and wise citizens do well always to remember that basic fact of life, and to avoid making laws that undermine the traditional family and traditional family roles.