

Therapeutic Totalitarianism

by H.A. Scott Trask

Multiculturalism and the Politics of Guilt: Toward a Secular Theocracy

by Paul Edward Gottfried
Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press; 158 pp., \$29.95



Paul Gottfried has spent a useful career shining his lantern of truth into the dark corners of America's political consciousness. In *After Liberalism: Mass Democracy in the Managerial State* (1999), he examined the rise and consolidation of centralized managerial regimes across the Western world. Gottfried documented what should have been obvious to every educated man: Modern mass democracy was characterized not by popular participation or informed consent but by mass socialization, public apathy, and rule by public administrators.

In *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Guilt*, Gottfried examines "the turning of the administrative state . . . away from purely material programs, such as expanded entitlements, toward behavior control." This turning, he emphasizes, has *not* been preceded by any abandonment or shrinking of the welfare state. The triumphant managerial regime simply assumed an additional mission: the revolutionary transformation of society. There was no turn to freedom, much less to the right, after the Cold War. "What actually occurred was that the Left turned in a multicultural direction, toward the 'Marxist vulgate' of political correctness" — in other words, cultural Marxism.

Gottfried is one of the few scholars to notice that the social democratic left won the Cold War. Neoconservatives have been strutting about for a decade, pronouncing the "death of socialism," the triumph of democratic capitalism, the ascendancy of conservatism, and the dawn of universal freedom. Gottfried makes it clear, in painstaking detail, that all this is fantasy. While Soviet-style communism has failed and has been repudiated by everyone except Castro and Kim Jong Il, the Western form of democratic socialism — the mixed economy, the welfare state, redistributive taxation, government

regulation of business — stands unchallenged. While the left has accepted private property, capital investment, entrepreneurialism, economic inequality, and market-generated pricing, it has not relinquished regulatory control over the private economy, nor has it reduced the proportion of taxes it extorts from private enterprise. Meanwhile, it has grown obsessed with *other* kinds of equality.

The left has exchanged the dream of a universal society without classes for the dream of a collectivity without cultural or ethnic differences. Leftists have learned that, by allowing for a semiprivate economy, they can command more financial resources for their revolution than they could by outright confiscation, nationalization, and centralized planning. They have also learned that corporations can be enlisted as enthusiastic allies. The result has been a kind of revolutionary left-wing corporatism. Gottfried describes it as an alliance between "the managerial state and the forces of capital accumulation." Here is the essence of Clinton's New Democracy, Tony Blair's New Labour, and George W. Bush's "compassionate conservatism" — the latter phrase signifying the GOP commitment to the welfare state, multiculturalism, and the therapeutic regime.

The therapeutic state is now firmly entrenched, and the multicultural left controls all of our cultural institutions. How did this happen? Gottfried is at his best in answering this question. He sees two causes of the disaster. The first is the power of the state in forcing social and demographic change. Western elites have initiated, promoted, and subsidized Third World immigration as a method of social control and as an instrument of cultural revolution. They have employed antidiscrimination law and affirmative action to break communities and regions. They have wielded the coercive powers of the state to intimidate the majority population, and they have garnered the support of "aggrieved individuals," "unconventional lifestyle groupings," and "Third World minorities." The managerial class seems to have an instinctive grasp of *divide et impera*. Gottfried observes that

Selective recognition of collective identities serves the same political end as maximizing individual autonomy. Both weaken the established loyalties of nonvictim groups, particularly those that flow

from kinship patterns and vigorous majority culture, and thereby enhance the state's social control.

The second cause is the regime's successful appeal to "the politics of guilt" and a "theology of victimization" as a means to demoralize and enervate Western majority populations. Gottfried believes that the foundations of the therapeutic state are to be found in Protestant Christianity, specifically Calvinism. He is not arguing that p.c. doctrines are somehow Christian — far from it. Rather, they are the products of a "deformed Protestant culture." Gottfried makes a compelling case that political correctness has become a substitute for Christianity, "a misplaced quest for religious redemption that takes the form of worshiping at the multicultural shrine." He believes that long-standing and widespread biblical illiteracy, theological confusion, and historical ignorance turned the "the past into a tabula rasa" and thus prepared the ground for the inculcation of politically correct doctrine as a new morality. So powerful is this anti-Western religion that its doctrines have penetrated even seemingly orthodox Christian churches, both Protestant and Catholic. (Gottfried cites numerous p.c. statements by prominent leaders of the American "Christian Right" to support his case.)

Sin is no longer a violation of God's law but merely insensitivity toward designated "minorities." Redemption is to be found in confessing that you belong to a wicked race (the Europeans) and paying penance to non-Western peoples. Penance takes many forms — foreign aid, reparations, liberal immigration laws, generous asylum policies, affirmative action, quotas, self-debasement, and general confessions of sinfulness. As a result, Europeans now believe that the path to righteousness and acceptance before God requires repudiating their people and civilization. An "act of rejection by the non-victim group directed against their civilization, gender [*sic*], race, or ancestors indicates sanctified living in a world or society held to be reprobate." There is even a "secular version of the end times": Francis Fukuyama has declared that the triumph of the American model of democratic capitalism and racial diversity signifies the "end of history" and the "final form" of human society.

Gottfried believes that the new faith assuages the pervasive social guilt that lingers as a vestige from the Christian era.

Of course, it is more; the guilt is real. It results from man's sinful rebellion against God. It is not surprising that a people that is no longer Christian is ready to grasp at a pseudofaith that offers them relief from their guilt and fear of God's deserved wrath. In other words, the grip of p.c. upon the population may be even stronger than Gottfried thinks.

The religious character of the ideology accounts for the fanaticism of its supporters, their eagerness to persecute opponents, their hysterical reactions to reasoned dissent, and the lack of resistance from Western populations to the hostile and ethnocidal policies imposed on them by their governments. Cultural and political authorities defend multiculturalism and political correctness as the essence of morality, in a manner that appeals to the lingering Christian heritage of the population. Opposition thus appears as evil, and elites resort to demonization whenever they or their policies are challenged.

Such methods work. Gottfried cites former president Bill Clinton's wildly applauded and well-received address to the student body at Georgetown University just eight weeks after September 11, 2001 (in which he declared that America was "paying the price" for African slavery, Indian genocide, and the Crusades), as an example of the new faith in action. He points out that Western politicians (Clinton, Blair, Chirac, Schröder, and Bush) who support Third World immigration and embrace multicultural platitudes have been rewarded by voters with election and reelection to office.

Gottfried ends his book on a pessimistic note, speculating that the managerial-therapeutic revolution "may be irreversible." "Where regional loyalties and powers have broken down and individual self-fulfillment remains the highest ideal" (as in the United States), "it is unlikely that much resistance can be generated to the therapeutic ends pursued by public administration." Only on the Continent, the cradle of Western culture, where relatively cohesive national cultures still exist, does there appear any serious opposition to therapeutic government. In the more "fluid cultures" that characterize the anglophone West, the "malleability" of public opinion and the servility of the majority population cause Gottfried to consider whether "a core culture exists there at all."

The events of September 11 led many to wonder whether Western elites would

realize the dangers inherent in their policies. Nothing of the kind happened. Gottfried explains that such hopes did not take into account the "fantasy aspect" of the managerial vision. He is no doubt right. However, he fails to note that the chief beneficiary of those events proved to be the managerial regime itself. Fantasy and calculation are driving the Managerial Revolution.

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A Pacified Globe

by James Moses

Aliens in America: The Strange Truth About Our Souls

by Peter Augustine Lawler
Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books;
350 pp., \$24.95



If Ted Williams bats third in the Red Sox lineup on opening day at Boston's Fenway Park in A.D. 2115, then Peter Augustine Lawler's worst nightmare will have been realized.

Lawler, a professor of government at Berry College in Georgia, has written *Aliens in America* as a jeremiad against the brave new biotech revolution that began with Prozac and cloned sheep at the end of the last century and may culminate in baseball idols and Walt Disney thawing out from their cryonic cocoons sometime in the third millennium. Humanity, or what remains of it in suburbia, can avoid this ghastly fate only if America's religious, ethical, and constitutional underpinnings are able to reverse what the author describes as the "libertarian and therapeutic drifts in American life."

The villains of the book are Carl Sagan, Richard Rorty, and Francis Fukuyama. The title is derived from Walker Percy's Christian perspective, enunciated by Scripture and elucidated by Saint Augustine, that we are truly pilgrims or aliens on this planet, as our true home lies elsewhere. Percy questioned why Sagan was preoccupied with scanning the heavens for

aliens when "beings stranger than any extraterrestrials we could imagine are right here on earth." Like public broadcasting's apostle of atheistic scientism, who somehow contrived to write a history of science without acknowledging any contribution from Pascal or other Christian thinkers, Rorty is another popularizer of noxious ideas, hell-bent on making us forget our true, limited (because mortal), and, consequently, alienated selves.

Rorty, allegedly "America's most influential professor of philosophy," would reduce his fellow Americans to automata concerned solely with comfort and pleasure. Since "cruelty is the worst thing we do," and hierarchy begets cruelty, the American project, under the tutelage of a civil religion that borrows heavily from Abraham Lincoln, must, perforce, be the ceaseless leveling of all distinctions. Where once it was thought a bad thing to end up as Nietzsche's "last man," now it is the acme of civilization. Rorty anathematizes Platonists, Christians, "rightist demagogues" such as Pat Buchanan, and even Marxists for being obsessed with the pursuit of truth.

Forgetting truth is the wisest course of action, said Fukuyama, now that we are either at, or near, the end of history. (He is somewhat less assured today that we have attained liberal-democratic, global-capitalist nirvana than he was in 1989, when he was all the post-Cold War rage.) Lawler brands Fukuyama a "teacher of evil," citing his belief that liberal democracy is "completely satisfying to human nature." By "completely," Fukuyama means that we can dispense with God. In fact, all seekers after ultimate truth are dispensable. Lawler says that Fukuyama

wonders what the careers of tormented geniuses like Blaise Pascal or Nietzsche himself would have looked like had they been born to American parents and had Ritalin and Prozac available to them at an early age.

For Fukuyama, social capital can never be lost, as it is rooted in nature, not tradition. (With all of Fukuyama's reductionism, is it not high time to quit referring to him as a "neo"—or any other type of—conservative?)

In subsequent chapters, Lawler casts about for something in the legacy of the Founding Fathers to stop this headlong rush toward oblivion. However, he is not able to perform the trick in any coherent