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Why has Iraq put up with the invasions of its sovereignty at all? The short answer is that it wants to sell oil, buy food, and have a chance to rebuild after the devastation of the Gulf War. Yet the U.S. will not allow that, no matter what kinds of concessions Hussein makes.

Jude Wanniski, the irascible supply-side economist, has another theory: "In a world with at least 40 years of proven oil reserves," he writes, "it is in the interest of the oil producing countries and the oil companies who try to manage scarcity to keep Iraq and its oil bottled up."

No doubt economic motivations play a part. But there's a deeper explanation to U.S. belligerence. It goes to the heart of a fateful decision Washington's foreign policy elite made earlier in this decade: that no corner of the earth could be allowed to escape the ministrations of the U.S. empire. After all, we proclaimed ourselves, in messianic terms, "the world's indispensable nation."

How must that sound to others? William Drozdiak, writing for the *Washington Post* from Berlin, provides an understated account. "Across Europe, Asia, Latin America, and Africa," the "United States finds itself increasingly accused of bullying the rest of the world." And much of the criticism comes "from friendly nations that no longer feel prevented by Cold War loyalties from expressing their disagreements with Washington."

Disagree with Washington? That is a trend at home as well. It appears that, in this instance, the American people have more in common with the rest of the world than they do with their own government. [RRR]

DISINFORMATION AND THE WAR ON THE FAMILY

Michael Levin

Martial metaphors are best for describing the struggle over the family, since the family is an institution our cultural elite is out to destroy. This way of talking is not hype concocted by the right (always called "paranoid" in the press); the left itself instigated it. Remember the old SDS vow to "smash monogamy"? Well, the battle has been joined and on the propaganda front the left is well entrenched.

It was the communist theorist Gramsci who spoke, in the same militant tone, of a "long march through the institutions." One of the coveted spoils of victory was to be in control of the flow of information; with only a Marxist version of reality available, people would naturally accept the Marxist definition of "problems" and their solutions. And of course one of the most strategic positions to be taken was the university. Here the left has succeeded in planting its flag. Departments of psychology, sociology, anthropology, social work, and philosophy have in the last thirty years become what a friend of mine calls "Stalinist loonybins."

From these outposts now flows a torrent of negativity about marriage and the family. Everyone on any campus is vaguely aware that its resident intellectuals are hostile to "bourgeois" marriage, but conclusive docu-

mentation can be found in a new study entitled *Closed Hearts, Closed Minds*, published by the Institute for American Values.

No doubt armed with plenty of Dramamine, the author of the study, Norval Glenn, did what few would have the perseverance or stomach for: he read twenty of the twenty-two textbooks about marriage and the family that have appeared since 1994 (two publishers declined to send or sell him copies of their books). Glenn himself holds distinguished chairs in both sociology and American studies at the University of Texas, so he cannot be dismissed as an outsider poking his nose where it does not belong. Glenn is methodologically sophisticated and knows whereof he speaks.

Readers of *Triple R* will not be surprised that Glenn finds the monotone message of the newest texts to be the so-called "radical" feminism of the 1960s. As he summarizes this mes-

sage, "marriage is just one of many equally acceptable and equally productive adult relationships. These various relationships include cohabiting couples, divorced non-couples, stepfamilies, and gay and lesbian families. In fact, if

The left still hates marriage.

anything, marriage as a lifelong child-rearing bond holds special dangers, particularly for women, who, if they don't find marriage physically threatening, will very likely find it psychologically stifling."

Changing Families by one Judy Root Aulette, for instance, asserts that there are societies in which marriage is not found, and unapologetically offers Friedrich Engels as an authority on the subject: "According to Engels," Miss Aulette reports, "[the family] was created for a particular purpose: to control women and children." The only criticism she can muster of this

revered figure is that "his ideas have been criticized by radical, socialist and Marxist feminists." In truth, of course, marriage is a cultural universal, and Engels is about as intellectually reputable as Daffy Duck.

The theme of marriage as a form of sex discrimination is a constant. Most of the textbooks uncritically cite sociologist/feminist Jessie Bernard's 1971 *The Future of Marriage*, which purported to show that marriage is good for men but bad for women. (Even George Gilder was gulled by this spurious study in his *Men and Marriage*.) The basis for this claim is that slightly more divorced women than divorced men report being happy, but this is so, Glenn points out, because divorced men remarry more quickly than divorced women; divorced men interviewed by sociologists thus tend more to be recently divorced, and still in a state of shock, while the average divorced woman has had longer to get used to her state. By any objective measure—health, happiness, longevity, emotional equilibrium, avoidance of risky behavior—married men and women are better off than their single counterparts.

Another deceptive claim repeated in these books is the alleged unsatisfactoriness of marital sex. One says unequivocally that "Divorced people [are] the most sexually active," and another asserts that cohabiting unmarrieds have sex as frequently as married couples. The first is true, he points out, only in the sense that, not surprisingly, divorced people have a greater number of sex partners; married people actually have sex more frequently, and report greater satisfaction. Likewise, married women

are much more likely than cohabiting women (51% to 36%) to find sex emotionally satisfying.

These deceptions about sex are particularly fraught, I believe, because one of the most effective weapons of the liberationist left has been the charge that monogamy is for the "uptight," i.e. repressed, probably impotent fuddy-duddies jealous of the young 'uns having fun. This insinuated link between conservatism and sexual dysfunction is very hard to break, since normal people don't like to discuss their sex lives in public, and anyway loudly insisting "I am so normal" just makes people think you aren't. I myself am sure this canard played a large, underappreciated role in the amazingly quick sweep of the "sexual revolution." Glenn does a real service in beginning to expose it.

Monogamy is even more sensuous.

As for children, they are relatively invisible.

And to the extent that they do appear, of course, a disproportionate emphasis is put on the harm families do them—on average, seven pages per book discuss child abuse, while only one-eighth of a page is given to the correlation between rearing in an intact family and avoidance of juvenile delinquency. Much of the rest of the good that intact, conventional families do children is cloaked by a statistical fallacy called "screening." Thus, one book argues that family structure is irrelevant to a child's well-being, since "what children need most is a warm, concerned relationship with at least one parent." This may be so, as Glenn notes, but such a relationship is much easier to sustain within an intact family than it is when divorced parents are at each other's throat or the parents were never married at all. Insofar as children are discussed at

all, the main topic seems to be child abuse.

What these books do dwell on is the relation between husband and wife, with of course an antinomian spin. Only four out of twenty so much as mention the relation of family structure to juvenile delinquency, yet seven of them discuss "swinging" (i.e. wife-swapping) as a lifestyle. Six of the books neglect altogether to discuss the topic of stepfamilies—an important omission, given the space devoted to child abuse, since stepfathers are many times more likely to abuse their children than are biological fathers. Although Glenn does not attempt an explanation, one gets the impression that these textbooks are written with feminist blinders: the wife is assumed to be as career-oriented as the husband, so between the two of them any children are an afterthought.

At the same time that marriage and all its works are attacked, oddly enough, the rampancy of divorce is pooh-poohed. That half of all current marriages will end in divorce is persistently called a "myth"—the favorite leftist word for inconvenient facts—even though 39% of all marriages entered into in the 1970s have already ended. One book admits that divorce has risen a little, but attributes this to increases in lifespan: today's couples have longer to get sick of each other. In fact, Glenn notes, most divorces occur among young adults, and anyway the lifespan of Americans has not increased significantly since 1960, before the jump in divorce began.

Glenn does not explore this inconsistency—people supposedly hate their marriages yet continue to endure them—but I see it as a further effort to demoralize. If marriages are not being dissolved, after all, there is no reason to think that public policies—welfare, constant attacks on men in the workforce

—are weakening them, and therefore no reason to question these policies. While the barrage of anti-marriage propaganda weakens marriage, mendacity about the divorce rate leaves pro-family forces confused.

What are we to make of these incredible books? Common sense tells us, to adapt a favorite 60s slogan, that marriage must be good for children and other living things. It is the framework within which the human race produces the next generation; if human beings didn't like it, none of us would be here. And it must be equally gratifying for both sexes: saying that marriage is good for men but conflicts with the well-being of women makes as much sense as saying that meat is healthy for the male lion but bad for the lioness.

In other words, the authors of these books know they are lying. Here Glenn falls down a bit, for although duly critical of the books themselves, he is surprisingly benign about the motives of their authors and the instructors who use them in courses. He hears the ideological axes grinding, and deplors "political indoctrination," but he puts most of the blame on the market. Writing a textbook does not earn an academic points toward tenure, or much prestige. Publishers can get only journeyman instructors rather than leading scholars to review manuscripts because of the tiny stipends that attach to this onerous job. Glenn's solution is to urge promotion committees to reward textbook writing, and professional associations to impose quality control.

Those measures would be no better than letting the foxes into the chicken coop, or rather, since the foxes are already there, encouraging them to eat a higher grade of chicken. The problem isn't that the college

instructors only get the books "the market" produces; that's just a roundabout way of saying college instructors are getting the books they want. The problem—the tragedy—is what they want. Things are not going to improve until a new, more sensible generation of academics replaces the one in there now. **RRR**

RANKING PRESIDENTS

Paul Gottfried

In the September 29 *Weekly Standard*, James Pierson, executive director of the John M. Olin Foundation, compared two recent surveys ranking American presidents. One survey, organized by Arthur Schlesinger and involving 32 scholars, virtually all liberal, was published in the *New York Times Magazine*. The other, conducted by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, surveyed 32 conservative and neoconservative scholars, mostly historians.

The ISI panelists were subsequently informed by mail and in the *Weekly Standard* of the opinions expressed. As a participant, I read these results with some interest and much amazement: 29 of the 38 panelists apparently rated Lincoln, together with Washington, at the top of the list.

Pierson found it "encouraging to see that despite all the historical revisionism that has taken place since the

1960s, both of these great men have emerged with their reputations intact." Pierson is further gratified that the ISI panelists "acknowledge [Franklin D. Roosevelt's] lasting influence and historical importance" and rate him almost as high as Lincoln. Though Pierson is bothered by the negative opinion of the neocon Clinton, who "has confirmed and consolidated Ronald Reagan's contributions while moving his own party toward the center," he is generally satisfied with the ISI survey that he must have funded.

But as one of the forgotten panelists, who gave Lincoln, Wilson, and FDR all low grades, allow me to express skepticism about the reported results. It is inconceivable that the ISI panel, which includes Marshall L. DeRosa, George W. Carey, Forrest McDonald, and other published critics of Lincoln, would have honestly produced only two dissents on the greatness of Lincoln, or given overwhelming support to the similar greatness of FDR.

Though the panel has too many neocon Straussians to reflect true conservative scholarly opinion, both the paleos and the libertarians (e.g., Leonard Liggio and Burton Folsom) would have influenced the survey results more significantly than was suggested by the Pierson-ISI report. The non-neocon panelists, of whom I count 8 to 10, would not have voted to put non-activist presidents near the bottom of the list, while shoving

**Do
conservative
historians
really love
Lincoln
and
FDR?**

most of the liberal activists (save for Woodrow Wilson) toward the top.

As the organizer of the Conservative Historians Caucus and a co-founder of the conservative historical