200908 OBITER DICTA: THANKSGIVING 2009

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/steven_samson/74/
I wish I had the wherewithal to buy more commodities right now. I believe this is where we are headed.

Harsh but to the point. This may be too inflammatory but it is written by a psychotherapist. His pseudonym's allusion to Robin Hood is intriguing.

Here is another example of Congress's unwillingness to subject itself to the laws it imposes on the rest of us. James Madison knew exactly what that means. The passage from Federalist 57 below remains a standing rebuke against the country we have become:

“I will add, as a fifth circumstance in the situation of the House of Representatives, restraining them from oppressive measures, that they can make no law which will not have its full operation on themselves and their friends, as well as on the great mass of the society.

“This has always been deemed one of the strongest bonds by which human policy can connect the rulers and the people together. It creates between them that communion of interests and sympathy of sentiments, of which few governments have furnished examples; but without which every government degenerates into tyranny. If it be asked, what is to restrain the House of Representatives from making legal discriminations in favor of themselves and a particular class of the society? I answer: the genius of the whole system; the nature of just and constitutional laws; and above all, the vigilant and manly spirit which actuates the people of America, a spirit which nourishes freedom, and in return is nourished by it. If this spirit shall ever be so far debased as to tolerate a law not obligatory on the legislature, as well as on the people, the people will be prepared to tolerate any thing but liberty.” -- James Madison, The Federalist, no. 57

Here is one of Jack Neusner's pieces. I first met him in Michigan and kept in touch with him, often having lunch with him, during my four years in Florida (1191-95). This tribute is on one of the ISI websites.
The first column is from the dean of Washington Post journalists on the budget-busting health care packages. My concern is less with the appalling budgetary implications than with the even more appalling social engineering that will grow out of any national health care scheme. The people who will be running health care are the kith and kin of the people Mike Adams describes as running our campuses today. I am also passing along an interview with Adams from Marvin Olasky's *World Magazine*, to which I subscribe. Adams has a regular column at Townhall. It should be evident from his interview why I do not believe I could get a teaching job anywhere in the "Vanity Fair" of academe today, especially if I were just starting out. Marvin and I have a mutual friend, J. Budziszewski, who, like Adams, got his teaching job at the University of Texas when he was in his Nietzschean nihilist/atheist phase. Jay tells his story in his on-line piece entitled "Escape from Nihilism."

The Teflon is melting away (witness last night's SNL skit) and the scandals keep flowing. Rhee was also recently attacked for firing 300 teachers.

The thought police at a Minnesota teaching program.

Saddam's links with al-Qaeda.

*Monday 23*

Communication from someone supposed to be in a persistent vegetative state.

Good summary of the prosecution’s case. We the people must realize that we are the jury. I first Piven and Cloward’s *Regulating the Poor* in the late 70s.

In Britain today, the former Chancellor of the Exchequeur has launched a new foundation in response to last week’s revelations about chicanery within the global warming crowd. The Left’s juggernaut is stumbling and veering off course. Its agenda is unraveling at a furious pace. What is needed now is a groundswell of resistance, culminating in a collective outcry by the people: "Just say No!"
Thanksgiving has arrived early this year. We plan to enjoy the feast this evening. But here are a few more anticipatory scraps from our table. Bon appetit!

This piece is by a Canadian poet whose analysis is as deft a description of our plight as any I have seen. Several of the pieces I have forwarded are being added to the reading list for my students next term. I had already determined that the Comparative Economic and Political Ideas course this time around would revolve around liberty and western civilization.

This includes an item on an SIEU complaint in Baraboo. An astonishing amount of good material has hit the blogs just today alone. They include a piece on our Cloward-Piven-driven Administration and a Canadian poet on the sunset of western civilization (for reasons that amplify the Cloward-Piven piece, etc.). I already have several short readings for GOVT 430 ready to go.

"Spengler" (David Goldman) is back in form, drawing inspiration from Goethe and analyzing Russia's double or triple game in the Middle East. The discussion about Ergenekon is a bit muddled and contradictory. But the main point is the reference to Mephistopheles: the man who is not there. Rather than making a desert and calling it peace, a la Tacitus, this Administration is creating a vacuum and calling it "restoring respect" for America.

I expect the price of gold to continue going up. I just wish I had bought more gold earlier. I bought some, I believe, in the late 90s. I am considering whether to sell off some stocks and purchase more gold (in some form or other).

Russia is sending signals again.

From Pavel Stroilov:

**GERARD BATTEN MEP**
**UK INDEPENDENCE PARTY**
**60 SECOND SPEECH TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**
**NEIL KINNOCK & THE SOVIET UNION**
**23RD November 2009**
Russian exile Pavel Stroilov recently published revelations about the collaboration between the British Labour Party and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Soviet archival documents state that in the 1980s Neil Kinnock, as leader of the opposition, approached Mikhail Gorbachev through secret envoys to see how the Kremlin would respond if a Labour Government stopped the implementation of the Trident nuclear missile programme.

If the report given to Mr Gorbachev is true, it means that Lord Kinnock approached one of Britain's enemies in order to seek approval regarding his party's defence policy, and had he been elected, Britain's defence policy.

If this report is true then Lord Kinnock would be guilty of treason.

The documents now available must be investigated at the highest possible level by the British authorities and Lord Kinnock given the opportunity to answer the Soviet evidence.

END

Pavel Stroilov, a colleague of Vladimir Bukovsky, sent me this brief speech given before the European Parliament earlier today. I agree that it is time to hold traitors accountable, here as well as elsewhere.

Tea Party protests are a start but James Simpson's piece on American Thinker today raises the issue of whether we are willing ever to call treason or anything else by its name. This is becoming an existential question: To be, or not to be.

As Remi Brague noted in an article posted on The Spectator site, God brought a covenant lawsuit against Israel, as dramatized in Isa. 5:1-4. Unless we want continue suffering a long train of abuses, we the people must summon the courage to issue a writ of mandamus to exfoliate the layers of paint that have covered over the original colors and smeared the clean lines of the original. The Framers talked about binding the government with the chains of the Constitution. So who does the binding today? Are we to meekly submit to bondage by brigands?

In America, treason is a betrayal of the Constitution. The United States were called into existence by one founding document, the Declaration of Independence. Afterwards our polity was defined and delimited under a second document, the Constitution. Before all else, we the people existed first on paper and then in the hearts of the people. But having become functionally illiterate in recent years, we need to restore our original covenant so that we can read our story afresh. So it is time to bring our own covenant lawsuit.


Tuesday 24

Andrew Breitbart has obtained a dumpster-load of ACORN documents. I'm looking forward to having this story kept before the public eye in coming months. I am hoping that "the gang that couldn't shot straight" remains just as inept in coming months. I also hope that, in the process, we don't end up in the dumpster, too. For historical context, I was reading up on Neil Kinnock, the
former Labour leader, whom Pavel Stroilov revealed to have tried to cut a deal with Gorby back in the late 80s. The Wikipedia article I was reading had a reproduction of the famous election day cover from The Sun, a London tabloid, that read: "If Kinnock wins today will the last person to leave Britain please turn out the lights." I believe that history should be repeated. I wish the New York Sun will pull its own Joe Biden-style Neil Kinnock impersonation and feature the same caption on its cover with the dynamic duo of Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi in place of Kinnock.

PS Stroilov also sent me overnight a video of yesterday's one-minute speech about Neil Kinnock before the European Parliament.


Andy sent me this piece on a Libyan jidahi group.


Awful photos of an awful reality. Veils and burqas can easily conceal such abuses from public view and public accountability. I hope the French, who remember the Battle of Algiers, continue their opposition to the veil.

This kind of acid-throwing is a classic expression of the cardinal sin of envy: "If I can't have you, nobody else will, either." It is also a direct assault on the image of God. Defacement has become the prototypical expression of man's inhumanity to (wo)man.

Wednesday 25


Eye-popping chart on the effects of lowering the capital gains tax.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8y2VrhjWj9E

Here is another mailing from Pavel Stroilov, who works with Vladimir Bukovsky. The verbal fireworks are wonderful entertainment. I wish we had people in congressional politics who could hold a candle to the various MEPs from the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) that I have had the privilege of hearing recently. Daniel Hannan, a Tory MEP, is no slouch, either. I loved his evisceration of Gordon Brown last January or so. That speech went viral.


To an old friend:

Here is sample of what I have been gleaning from the web lately. I wish your father were around to see how much attention is being drawn to the global warming issue. On Monday a British Lord set up a foundation to examine the controversy.
I've been compiling a blog of so many of the recent revelations about various political shenanigans: not just "climategate" but also the Copenhagen meeting (coming in less than two weeks), the continuing influence of the Cloward-Piven strategy, ACORN (including the discovery of a pile of documents in a dumpster), the Treaty of Lisbon and the accusations lodged yesterday in the European Parliament (I listened to some of the speeches), Cold War maneuverings, et al. One of my correspondents, Pavel Stroilov, has been disclosing and helping publicize innumerable Soviet-era documents he obtained from the Gorbachev Foundation. His colleague Vladimir Bukovsky similarly spirited away thousands of pages of documents directly from Soviet archives back in the 1990s.

Whether a formal inquiry is launched in Britain over alleged Labour Party dealings with Gorbachev back in the 1980s remains to be seen. Given all that I have been hearing this week, I can almost imagine that I am back at the amphitheater in Ephesus where voices carry from end to end so clearly.

Thursday 26


Rob Koons, who until this summer was the head of the Western Civilization program at the University of Texas (a link to Marvin Olasky's previous article is embedded in this one), has called for the Texas legislature to establish charter colleges that will offer a more traditional education. I would love to be involved in establishing or teaching within some kind of Great Books or western civilization program. In 32 years of teaching, I have lectured on government, history, geography, and humanities. I firmly believe in an integrative approach that is grounded in the classics. In fact, this is the very essence of traditional political theory.

In his book *America Alone* (2006), Mark Steyn asked: "What do Fascism, Nazism, Communism, and the European Union have in common?" For several years I have used a little book entitled *EUSSR* by Vladimir Bukovsky and Pavel Stroilov to show that there is a strong family resemblance. More recently, Jonah Goldberg's *Liberal Fascism* and Paul Rahe's *Soft Despotism, Democracy's Drift* have addressed this resemblance, as did my late friend Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn in *Leftism*.

This week I have gotten several e-mails from Stroilov that illustrate the above question. Here is a note I added to some study aids for Steyn’s book that I am in the process of writing for my students. I have put together a blog with a running commentary on some of the recently breaking stories all along a developing storm front:

The furor over the non-election by the top offices in the European Union (November 17, 2009) is one illustration; the cooperation between the old EEC, British Labour Party, and Gorbachev (as revealed in Soviet archives spirited out of Russia by Vladimir Bukovsky and Pavel Stroilov) is another. See MEP Nigel Farage’s blistering attack on the EU leadership (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8y2VrhjW9E) and MEP Gerard Batten’s call for an investigation of the former Labour leader, Lord Kinnock, for alleged dealings with the Soviets in the 1980s. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVx0E7aV3as. The closets are being flung wide open. Scandal after scandal is erupting: "Climategate," ACORN, a budget-busting national health care scheme (including $300 million in subsidies to buy Sen. Mary Landrieu’s vote), and many others.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving.
Charles Krauthammer keeps hammering away at the obvious. I plan to read his dinner speech at the Manhattan Institute entitled "Decline Is a Choice." It is available on video. I have been reading Paul Rahe's Soft Despotism, Democracy's Drift. I may try it out on my students next term.

To a publisher:

Vladimir Bukovsky and Pavel Stroilov published a 40 page pamphlet, EUSSR, several years ago. Although not available in print in this country, I obtained their permission to use it in my Politics of Europe class and have included it in the class workbook for the last three or four years. It is largely a compilation of conversations between EEC leaders, a few Americans, Gorbachev, and some European Communist leaders. Bukovsky obtained more than 7000 pages of documents while doing research on the archives for Yeltsin's legal defense.

The thesis of the booklet is easily summarized in its title. BTW, I have used your EU piece, too.

Around September 10th I noticed that Stroilov was cited by the Times of London. In fact, a series of articles followed – with the Telegraph pursuing similar stories based on Soviet-era documents that Stroilov obtained while doing research early this decade at the Gorbachev Foundation. Stroilov has been making some of the archival material he obtained available to the press.

Earlier this week Stroilov began sending videos by two UKIP MEPs denouncing, first, Lord Kinnock for offering to collaborate with Gorbachev to defeat the Trident nuclear program and, then, Lady Ashton, the new EU foreign secretary. The attached video about Lady Ashton reiterates accusations against her that were aired back in the 1980s.

It has been a rewarding week for scoops on the follies of our times. I have been passing along a treasure trove just this week alone.

Mats Persson, one of our alumni, is quoted in this article on the EU. Also, Pavel Stroilov, a protégé of Vladimir Bukovsky, has been sending me some very interesting dispatches from London this week. Stroilov expatriated about 10,000 pages of Soviet archives from the Gorbachev Foundation several years ago. The information he obtained is at the heart of a couple of controversies just this week: one over the appointment as EU foreign secretary of Lady Ashton (who has never held elective office but was treasurer of an anti-nuke outfit in the early 80s that may have had financial ties to Moscow) and the other over whether Lord Kinnock (our VP's plagiarist) collaborated with Gorbachev to stop the Trident program.

Mats:
I notice that your name is coming up in the media more frequently. Congratulations. Keep up the pressure.

Pavel Stroilov has sent me half a dozen items this week, including the videos of Gerard Batten and Nigel Farage. Bracing stuff. UKIP seems to be a lively bunch. I will have much to share with the students when classes resume next week.

NOTE: So much dirty linen is coming out of so many closets – things that I have passed along with my running commentary – that I’ve been compelled to compile everything into my “Thanksgiving blog.” I am thankful that questions are being raised about health care, ACORN, “Climategate,” the Cloward-Piven strategy, and many others -- and also that the polls indicate that these challenges are breaking through the usual media freeze.

From Pavel Stroilov: Attached - and below - is Gerard Batten's letter to Barroso which has just been e-mailed to him and copied to all the MEPs. Gerard was not given the floor during today's question-time, but of course, he is still determined to do everything he can to block Baroness Ashton's appointment.

Dear Mr Barroso,

I was unable able to ask you a question today in the chamber. I would therefore like to make you acquainted with certain facts and ask you three questions.

Baroness Ashton was Treasurer for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), 1980-1982. CND was notoriously secretive about its sources of funding and did not submit its accounts to independent audit; however, after public pressure they were audited for the first time in 1982-1983 (Godfrey Lord & Co). It was found that 38% of their annual income (£176,197) could not be traced back to the original donors.

The person responsible for this part of CND fund-raising, from anonymous donors, was Will Howard, a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain.

The Russian dissident and internationally respected figure Vladimir Bukovsky, has shown from his research that the nuclear disarmament campaigns across Europe were largely funded by the Soviet bloc. Mr Bukovsky has proven with hundreds of top secret documents from Soviet archives that the worldwide disarmament campaign in the 1980s was covertly orchestrated from Moscow. The money was channelled through communist parties or other pro-Soviet organisations and individuals.

If therefore seems very likely that the unidentified income came from the Soviet bloc.

If Baroness Ashton did not know where the unidentified income came from she was incompetent. If she did not ask where it came from she was negligent. If she did know that it came from the Soviet block then she knowingly accepted money from a hostile foreign power in order to undermine Britain's and NATO's defence policies.

Anyone who was compromised by the Soviet Union in the 1980s remains compromised by the Russian Federation.

In the light of these facts, my questions are:

1) Do you still believe that she is a fit and proper person to be in charge of the EU's (and Britain's) Foreign and Security Policy?

2) Do you intend to investigate these claims further? If not, why not?
3) The answer to the second question is 'Yes' would you like me to supply you with the contact details of Mr Bukovsky, and others, who can give you more detailed information about this matter?

Yours sincerely,

Gerard Batten MEP
UK Independence Party

London

Saturday 28

http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/017/216fzrej.asp


Here is a two-fer on the liberal penchant for demagoguery and conspiracy-mongering. (No, conspiracy-mongering is not a fundamentally right-wing phenomenon). I remember vividly all the speculation in the media at the time of the first Kennedy assassination. The scenes and the comments were so deeply stamped into my mind that when I finally drove by Dealey Plaza for the first (and only) time in the late 1990s I experienced a sudden rush of déjá vu. As I recall, the assassination of Malcolm X and the second Kennedy assassination were not attributed to right-wing nut cases (or, if so, not for very long). But neither were their political and societal implications so fully explored by the press.

The second article shows that the press has learned nothing in the last 46 years. No wonder much of the media appears to be entering a financial death spiral from which it may never recover. René Girard may be correct. Perhaps we in the West have learned how to detect the signs of scapegoating and recoil from the demagogues who promote it. But unfortunately for this thesis, the coarser forms of bigotry are once again bubbling to the surface: both in the Middle East and in Europe. Such bigotry may not be respectable (yet) but scholars should take an opportunity to explore the dark alleyways of what Jonah Goldberg styles "liberal fascism." In the Progressive mindset, right-wing populism is a clear and present danger. It has long taken a licking from the likes of Richard Hofstadter, who lamented the “paranoid style” of American politics.

But at long last the less than lovely underpinnings of Progressivism are coming under academic scrutiny from Paul Rahe, Bradley C. S. Watson, Richard Gamble, Amity Shlaes, and others. Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn’s Leftism devoted several pages to Woodrow Wilson’s adviser, the Rev. George Davis Herron, whom he called one of the great gravediggers of the old Europe.

The dirty little secret of the Progressive Left is (and long has been) its love affair with eugenics and population control. Whether it is in the form of a national health care scheme, bureaucratic nightmares like the United Nations and the European Union, or a climate treaty designed to compass a global redistribution of wealth, the trap has been baited and the spring is being set in the Progressive globalists’ bid for control.
Yet it is increasingly evident that a counter-insurgency in the form of Tea Parties and guerrilla-style sting operations is lashing back. “Heroes of the Insurgency” is the title of a little book I inherited from my Progressive-era grandmother. But now the shoe is on the other foot. A different sort of insurgency is emerging. The Manhattan Declaration, like the earlier Portland Declaration, is a clear call to rebuild the foundations while rooting out the Progressive transplants. This represents “change I can believe.”

To everything there is a season. Our parasitic State of Insolvency, which seems to operate like a gigantic tontine, appears to be lurching toward a denouement—one that I hope proves to be something akin to a devolution.

http://www.jbs.org/index.php/jbs-news-feed/3349

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB119387567378878423.html?mod=opinion_main_commentaries


More on the global warming controversies. I used an article by John Christy (from the St. Croix Review) in one of my classes last year. The third of these articles addresses the witch hunt that has been directed at skeptics.

To conclude: Here are some notes I have just written for the last chapter of Mark Steyn’s America Alone.

How did Charles Napier deal with the Hindu custom of suttee: burning the widow on her husband’s funeral pyre? In his Manual of Political Ethics, Francis Lieber cited suttee as well as polygamy, both of which he regarded as incompatible with the morality and liberty of free people. Have Americans become the sort of “incautious people” about which Simeon Howard spoke in his election sermon to the local artillery company? What is the rule of thumb known as “obsta principiis?” Jonathan Mayhew, pastor of Boston’s West Church, similarly observed in 1766:

Power is of a grasping, encroaching nature, in all beings, except in him, to whom it emphatically ‘belongeth; and who is the only King that, in a religious or moral sense, ‘can do no wrong.’ Power aims at extending itself, and operating according to mere will, wherever it meets with no balance, check, control or opposition of any kind. For which reason it will always be necessary . . . for those who would preserve and perpetuate their liberties, to guard them with a wakeful attention; and in . . . just and prudent ways, to oppose the first encroachments on them. ‘Obsta Principiis.’ After a while it will be too late.”

The entire paragraph that straddles the end of page 196 and the beginning of page 197 is worth careful meditation in view of Obsta Principiis. How do great nations die? “Bit by bit, until one day you wake up and you don’t need to sign a formal instrument of surrender because you did it piecemeal over the last ten years.” Remember the opening of Garet Garrett’s “The Revolution Was.” This entire exercise has been a meditation on the political and cultural implications of Revelations 2:5: “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works. . . .”

The term moral inversion to which Melanie Phillips refers was coined by the philosopher Michael Polanyi to describe men “whose moral passions [are] diverted into the only moral channels which a strictly mechanistic conception of man and society left open to them.” Mark Mitchell describes it as “a combination of skeptical rationalism and moral perfectionism, which is nothing more than the ‘secularized fervor of Christianity.’” Here is a context for understanding the missionary zeal, the evangelistic and
crusading spirit, even the intolerance of political correctness. Moral inversion is what Kenneth Minogue has called political moralism. It is a perennial dissatisfaction with the whole order of things: a betrayed sense of entitlement that undergirds Roger Scruton’s culture of repudiation.

What is the real assimilation problem today? What is the effect of multiculturalism? What will decide the future in the absence of cultural confidence? What does Steyn mean by a societal Stockholm Syndrome? The concept of the Stockholm Syndrome stems from a bank robbery in 1973. It has been defined as “a psychological response sometimes seen in abducted hostages, in which the hostages show signs of loyalty to the hostage-taker, regardless of the danger or risk in which they have been placed.” The same occurred with Patricia Hearst later that decade. Steyn’s point is that the same is happening in Europe and the West generally.

Sunday 29

It is the first Sunday of Advent. This morning Pastor Emeritus Dr. Lowell Sykes preached a sermon entitled “Wake Up!” on Romans 13:8-14. Let it be a daily remember. The key word in the passage is “time” (kairon) — in the sense of something seasonable, urgent, opportune, or long awaited.