
NEVER GIVE UP

Rescuing the Renaissance Republic (This is not the Conservatism or Liberalism of your parents.)

By
Jay B Gaskill

SOME GOOD NEWS

**ADDRESSED TO ANYONE WHO WAS EVEN VAGUELY DISAPPOINTED
BY THE OUTCOME OF THE LAST ELECTION**

The good news is that we still have the power to make our own good news.

- Worried about election fraud?
We can fix most of it and overcome the rest.
- Worried about the damaged GOP brand effect?
With a reasonable, but focused effort, we can move the needle just 2 points and in 2016 the chattering classes will be talking about the damaged Democrat brand effect.
- Worried about the stagnant economy and the runaway entitlement train that threatens to pull down the whole edifice of governance?
The good news is that the democrats and their progressive string-pullers now own the issue, the problem and the results, lock stock and barrel. The even better news is that, with minimal organizing effort, a center-right coalition of republicans, libertarians and blue dog democrats will easily take over policy in the next election cycle.
- Worried that this next time the GOP and its centrist allies will be another one-shot wonder, the fire truck brigade that is retired after the latest left-wing-started fires are quenched?
The good news is that we have just enough time, just enough smart people and just enough motivation to generate and adopt a positive agenda that will replace progressive liberalism for the foreseeable future.

OUR biggest deficit right now is a temporary one. It is in articulating powerful, effective ideas for a better American future and summoning the persuasive, realistic optimism to make it happen.

The biggest bankruptcy is that of the progressive left: Their core programs are in catastrophic failure mode; their core ideas are completely out of touch with the aspirations of most Americans; and their core supporters are fickle, insecure and increasingly edgy. The progressives are on a life

support system constructed from an unstable scaffolding of deception, beginning with self-deception and ending in an emperor-without-clothes moment.

We are the new coalition that MUST always fight effectively and intelligently for family, public safety, national security, freedom of religion and expression, the right to keep one's legitimate earnings (these are among the things that we must conserve), and upward mobility, entrepreneurial success, a healthy and prosperous business sector, advances in life-saving and life-enhancing technologies, and productive, life-affirming creative communities of all kinds (these are the progressive things we must serve).

As a famous immigrant once said to West Point graduates:

You have chosen to risk your lives for the defense of this country. I will not insult you by saying that you are dedicated to selfless service — it is not a virtue in my morality. In my morality, the defense of one's country means that a man is personally unwilling to live as the conquered slave of any enemy, foreign or domestic. This is an enormous virtue. Some of you may not be consciously aware of it. I want to help you to realize it.

Her address was one of the great essays of all time. To read the entire speech given to West Point Graduates by author / philosopher Ayn Rand in 1974, go to –

<http://fare.tunes.org/liberty/library/pwni.html>

PART ONE

THE COMING POLITICAL STRUGGLE OVER CORE VALUES

This may be the single most important post-defeat analysis that conservatives, independents and disgruntled, recovering progressives could read in 2012:

Heed these three points above the rest:

(1) Conservatives and centrist Republicans have mistakenly bought into Marxism. I refer to the Marxist doctrine of economic determinism. This explains Governor Romney's ill phrased but heartfelt 47% statement and even his post-election comments about Obama's win and the various economic "gifts" that paved the way to the Democrat victory. Here is the fallacy: If economic determinism were a law of nature, then the Islamist jihad would have collapsed long ago. People are not inexorably motivated by economic advantage. They actually are driven by values, a process that is occasionally distorted by temporary economic considerations. That is why corruption and bribes work. But our values explain why so many of us are unwilling to sell off our children.

(2) Time honored values define a healthy society. No viable political or reform movement can flout them, marginalize them or attempt to redefine them away without a severe penalty.

(3) The conservatives of both parties still own the values issues. For example, family values, public safety, and the right to earn and to retain the fruits of one's earnings, all are strongly associated with the conservative brand, as in the older slogan, G-d, guns, family and country. These were the core values shared by Reagan Republicans and Reagan Democrats.

Even when all the integrity-failures by GOP politicians over the last 40 years are taken into account, one overriding political and cultural reality remains – and it is a thorn in the side of the progressive juggernaut: The core traditions that contain our most cherished and durable values have been better tended to by the conservatives than by all of the modern and postmodern progressive liberals put together.

I've located two pull quotes that will help us understand the next major political conflict in our country. They remind us that, while conservatives and their liberty-friendly allies need to adapt, they must only do so without surrendering their standing as the keepers of our most cherished values.

Pull Quote One: From Values Voters Prevail Again by Christopher Caldwell
{http://www.weeklystandard.com/articles/values-voters-prevail-again_662229.html }:

This year Democrats' arguments on values were heard. This was a "values" election as strident as the ones from culture wars past in which Christians marched against subsidies for Mapplethorpe, creationists vied for seats on Kansas school boards, and William Bennett demanded to know where the outrage was. What was different about this year's culture war is that Republicans lost it. They ran a campaign without any of the abrasive stuff Frank disapproved of. Their presidential candidate lost himself in theories about what motivates "job creators." Certain senatorial candidates did try to raise cultural issues. Those in Missouri and Indiana showed themselves out of practice.

The values were different, but structurally the outcome was the same one that we have seen decade after decade. Where two candidates argue over values, the public may prefer one to the other. But where only one candidate has values, he wins, whatever those values happen to be.

Pull Quote Two: From The Real Debate by Yuval Levin
{http://www.weeklystandard.com/print/articles/real-debate_653224.html?page=2 }

Simply put, to see our fundamental political divisions as a tug of war between the government and the individual is to accept the progressive premise that individuals and the state are all there is to society. The premise of conservatism has always been, on the contrary, that what matters most about society happens in the space between those two, and that creating, sustaining, and protecting that space is a prime purpose of government. The real debate forced upon us by the Obama years—the underlying disagreement to which the two parties are drawn despite themselves—is in fact about the nature of that intermediate space, and of the mediating institutions that occupy it: the family, civil society, and the private economy.

Progressives in America have always viewed those institutions with suspicion, seeing them as instruments of division, prejudice, and selfishness and seeking to empower the government to rationalize the life of our society by clearing away those vestiges of backwardness and putting in their place public programs and policies motivated by a single, cohesive understanding of the public interest.

Progressive social policy has sought to make the family less essential by providing for basic material needs, particularly for lower-income women with children. It has sought to make civil society less essential by assigning to the state many of the roles formerly played by religious congregations, civic associations, fraternal groups, and charities, especially in providing help to the poor. And progressive economic policy has sought to turn the private economy into an arm of government policy, consolidating key sectors and protecting from competition large corporations that are willing to act as public utilities or to advance policymakers' priorities.

PROVISIONAL VALUES vs. CORE VALUES

GESTURES vs. ACTIONS

None of this analysis will amount much of anything without the intelligence to see distinctions, to separate the truly fundamental from the non-essential, and the wit to explain things without sounding like a soapbox preacher or a door-to-door solicitor.

Allow me to focus on just one category for renewed conservative thinking. Among the core values that conservatives have traditionally defended and honored, is the family.

What, we may ask, might constitute a provisional family value? Consider the formerly rigid prohibitions against divorce. Families are damaged by divorce, to be sure, but a no-divorce firewall is not only unworkable, it is often unjust and inhumane. Marriages can die, but families live on. Focus on divorce is provisional. Family is the bigger deal.

What would then constitute an attack on the family as a core value? Just think of all the experiments in social engineering, whether well-intentioned or otherwise, and the welfare programs that have had malign social consequences.

Any forthright discussion of the prime example has been censored by political correctness for two decades. Well-intentioned liberals almost destroyed the inner city black family with welfare rules that turned the subset unemployed fathers into detrimental surplus baggage in the family unit, because their presence disqualified the entire family for welfare. As a result these fathers were forced by welfare mothers to drift away. Several studies have described the lasting social damage to inner city black family integrity. Sadly, most Republicans were asleep, or were cowed into a politically correct silence, during this period.

No excuses. That kind of opportunity lost should never be repeated by conservatives.

Recall Yuri Levin's earlier point about progressives. "Progressive social policy has sought to make the family less essential by providing for basic material needs, particularly for lower-income women with children. It has sought to make civil society less essential by assigning to the state many of the roles formerly played by religious congregations, civic associations, fraternal groups, and charities, especially in providing help to the poor."

This is the progressive Achilles heel, or – if conservatives drop the ball – it is the beginning of catastrophic damage to family and community formation in the USA. The bottom line: Values matter. Families matter.

Now, consider as a thought experiment, the reexamination of the gay marriage issue through a different lens – by thinking of it as a family formation issue.

A family can be defined as the traditional marriage/common parent-based human grouping, in which everyone is genetically and/or legally related. The common thread-that-binds is the classic family's mutual obligations of loyalty, caring and support that typically survive the dissolution of common living arrangements. Breach of these obligations is condemned particularly as they adversely affect dependents, especially children.

The existence of dysfunctional, fractured families is not an alternative life style, but a failure in human relationships. As family ties break down, the social order is disturbed.

The core issue is the preservation and health of the family unit. Some provisional issues concern the personal arrangements can make a sufficient claim to family stature and under what circumstances. Conservatives and old fashioned liberals can reasonably be expected to adapt to less conventional family arrangements but the bedrock features or loyalty and support need to be a constant.

Much of the tension over the gay marriage issue is fueled by the stereotypical images of rampant sexual infidelity among the gay male subgroup, and the accompanying health issues. As “model gay marriages” are portrayed in the entertainment media, monogamous, caring couples raising adopted children, for example, popular acceptance of gay relationships has warmed.

In the values discussion, conservatives can and should insist on honoring the two-parent, mutual loyalty and support model, with obligations particularly to children that legally survive breakup. In this context modern conservatives can readily accept the legitimacy of same gender households with adopted children.

But the marriage question will necessarily be treated separately from the legal household-status issues, and conservatives and old fashioned liberals should be prepared to cheerfully agree-to-disagree. Formal marriage is a sacramental matter for each religious institution to define, recognize or not, and each political jurisdiction to define in alignment with the popular will, honestly discerned.

My personal view is that same gender couples with adopted children need and therefore should have functionally the same legal benefits afforded to heterosexual married parents. But the additional question - whether and under what circumstances the government should decree that the sanctified title, married, must be applied to all same-gender couples who want it – is so delicate that only local solutions will work.

The man-woman marriage model is a very long standing tradition. The whole matter is too freighted with long-standing social and religious tradition for a mere government branch, agency or judicial officer to redefine marriage without the support of a clear popular consensus. That consensus may or may not emerge everywhere or in any particular decade. Conservatives and old fashioned liberals should apply a humane, but principled approach to this problem. Same-gender centered families are entitled to all the legal protection afforded other families, leaving the formal marriage question to cultural evolution and local governments, acting in accordance with the popular consensus, not allowing unelected officials to force the issue.

A PARTING THOUGHT

Much recent post-defeat discussion among the GOP has centered on the so called “demographic problem”. No one seems to have considered this question: Among the various ethnic subgroups that populate large areas of the USA, which two have the strongest family traditions?

If you answered the Asians and the Hispanics, you’ve been paying attention. That their votes have been temporarily captured by progressive liberals is more a result of conservative / GOP default than any natural “progressive” inclination within these subcultures. Conservatives and old fashioned liberals have more to offer these groups than welfare. Three key phrases come to mind, family values, upward mobility, and individual human dignity. All are well embedded ingredients of the shared conservative tradition; and all three are threatened by the progressive bureaucracies and the shackles of political correctness.

A final observation: Values aren’t just about opinions; they are about real world connections and behaviors. I invite you – as I did recently – to stop by the places where and when newly minted US citizens first emerge from their swearing-in ceremonies. Pay close attention. Who is there to greet them? Which groups continue to nurture connections and support relationships between political campaigns? Then rethink how you think conservative energies should be redirected over the coming years. Your country’s future depends on it.

PART TWO

THE DOUBLE LEFTIST HIJACK

Sometime in the late 19th and early 20th century, leftists hijacked the term liberal, a term that first applied to those who endorsed free enterprise and open markets. These ideas were a great advance over feudalism, and over royalist mercantilism. Free markets and free exchanges were powerful reformist ideas because any truly free market system is also free from the political power brokers, political favoritism, and from all of the ancient prejudices of race, gender and class. Of course, we’re still living with politically managed markets and enterprises. A truly free marketplace, free of politics and favoritism, has yet to emerge on the world stage, but its approximations, even in communist China, are wildly more successful in advancing the general prosperity than socialist bureaucracies ever were.

Next, the leftists hijacked the term progressive. This was a term that in its original sense described the triumph of scientific and technological progress over superstition and entrenched privilege. Because science and technology have moved the human population from lives that Hobbes described as “nasty, brutal and short” into the well fed, civilized lifestyles we now enjoy in the developed West, the term progressive was aptly applied.

But in the hands of the progressive liberals (another term for the post-communist leftists) the original senses of the terms liberal and progressive were corrupted. Actually, the term, leftist comes to us from the British parliament, a comparatively late development, but its deep agenda has a more

ancient provenance. The leftists, by whatever name, have always been about the leveling project. In practice, far more leveling down has been achieved than leveling up.

The wary Australians have an aphorism that captures that process nicely: Try not to be the tall poppy in the field - they are the first flowers to be cut down.

The leveling goal has remained a constant, in spite of its changing disguises. Because the impulse to level our fellow humans arises from the natural human tendency to jealousy (condemned, by the way, in the Decalogue – look it up), utopian leveling programs will always be with us.

Here is a working definition of the modern left:

Leftism represents the entire cluster of beliefs and opinions that share two elements: (1) The premise (taken as axiomatic) that human inequalities (whether in talent, achievement, position or circumstance – take your pick) are immoral, and represent the legacy of oppression; (2) the commitment to a comprehensive program to level out these differences, currently being sold as a series of harmless incremental measures. But all the measures designed by the left to ameliorate or eliminate human inequalities employ the various coercive powers of governments (taxation and regulation) to change human behavior, even to alter human nature itself. Thus we were presented in the late 19th century with Marx's vision of a "new Marxist man", and in the postmodern leftist era, we are faced with attempts to reengineer human nature. Political correctness is social Marxism.

The end product of the left's agenda, whether pursued gradually or in a coup, is some form of authoritarian socialism. Socialism never ends well because its necessary control over human economic activities inevitably leads to an ever greater measure of control of all other human endeavors. This is especially damaging because socialist bureaucracies tend to smother the creative, innovative and entrepreneurial spirits among us, upon whose freedom and risk-taking so much of human progress has depended. This is why the authoritarian socialist models degrade over time into stagnation and widely shared poverty. The innate tendency of socialism to gather increasing control of all aspects of life was eloquently and compellingly exposed by the Austrian economist, Friedrich August von Hayek, in his classic work, "The Road to Serfdom". His was a cautionary study that he addressed in an introductory letter to "my fellow socialists".

By now, we've accumulated an impressive number of test cases – Russian and Chinese communism and the German Nazism variant, among them. All are chilling, revealing experiments about true nature of the leveling endgame. It turns out that the pursuit of equality *uber alles* has not worked out well in practice for the common people: Dissidents tend to be forcibly equalized or liquidated; party bosses replace the old elites; and life at the bottom begins to include more and more of the population.

So the leftists, starting with the British Fabian socialists, adopted a different strategy. The socialist dream was to be implemented very gradually, piecemeal, so as not to set off premature opposition, and naively, to avoid the endgame. But the leftist agenda inexorably leads to outcomes that are neither liberal nor progressive. Those labels were appropriated by the left because corrupting language is a very useful tool, helpful in neutralizing opposition, particularly among the category of well-meaning intellectuals (Lenin described them as "useful idiots") until it is too late. Comprehensive political power, once sufficiently consolidated, proves very hard to dislodge.

Here's the dirty little secret of the modern era: In practice, the left no longer believes that equality is possible, but its leaders do understand that the notion of equal human dignity (a conservative or fashioned liberal notion) is actually dangerous to the power brokers because it means ordinary people fully share in decision-making power. I suspect that Marx realized this when he called for a dictatorship of the proletariat (i.e. of the less than equal) while failing to disclose that the proletariat would be subject to the dictatorship by the party bosses. The wealthy liberal elites in the USA are softer versions of the hardnosed, prosperous party bosses in Russia and China, but they manifest the same levels of self-deception, hubris and hypocrisy.

In this context, modern conservatism, especially as enhanced by the Renaissance perspective I'm introducing in this series of essays, is the standard bearer of the older progressive and liberal legacy and the true wave of the future.

PART THREE

THE MISSING LINK

Marx was wrong. History is on our side.

Citizens of the USA are inheritors of a sovereign legacy like no other. Our country is a beacon...still.

We are the world's foremost Renaissance Republic.¹

We are under attack from 12th century tribalists using modern weapons, and by 21st century Neo-Marxists using modern advertising technology². We cannot afford to lose. We must reset the defense strategy, rethinking our fundamentals, reassessing our priorities and shedding the tired catch phrases ("The party of Small government") that the jaded modern audience ignores. So far, we are better at the negative barb than the uplifting one. "The party of Nanny Government" is sharp, but we need an even sharper agenda.

There are five sharp elements to the USA Recovery project:

- **The Broadband freedom Agenda;**
- **The upward Mobility Agenda;**
- **The Tough security Agenda;**
- **The Moral Agenda**
- **The Broadband Creative Agenda** (which is the principal theme of this piece);

¹ The author's earlier development of this idea is still posted on-line in two articles: <http://jaygaskill.com/CreativityAndSurvival.pdf> & <http://jaygaskill.com/ACS2011.htm> .

² See the Progressive Endgame: <http://jaygaskill.com/ModernProgressiveLiberalismEndgame.pdf>

Why a Renaissance Republic? A liberty-centered republic is a better guarantor of the precious gifts of freedom because absolute democracies are absolutely dangerous whenever authoritarian mobs exploit them to seize permanent power in a single election (as Hitler's election demonstrated and the Middle East's springtime for jihadists recapitulates). A constitutional republic is an even better safe haven for liberty, but as history has demonstrated, no system is perfect. Renaissance describes a creative safe haven, supported by a morally centered social order in a fruitful relationship with its flowering creative communities.

Creativity and creative communities are the linchpins of our long term recovery from the spell of suffocating progressive government-sponsored "human improvement". Creativity is the missing link in the freedom agenda and a supporting moral system is the missing anchor.

All of us who haven't been swept up in the "vast left wing conspiracy" need to ask ourselves - Why and how has the liberal-left-progressive mindset so thoroughly penetrated the US academy, the commentariat and the dominant media?

Here is the answer. Humanism, in its largest most generous sense, has a huge appeal to all of us, because it speaks to our innate idealism, the longing for a better, more humane world. The conservatives of the 19th century set a tone that modern conservatives are still trying to shed. The 19th century "right wingers" were so committed to the existing social order, with all its flaws, that they were easily type cast as enemies of all social progress.

Ameliorative social change became the defining ethos of the left, becoming a specifically political issue when social scientists convinced the reigning intelligentsia that the powers of the state should be enlisted to propel - and then to compel - social progress across a range of human behaviors. Conservative arguments against the abuse of state power were portrayed as arguments against ameliorative social change, as against worker safety, in favor of child labor and so on.

State sponsored economic change was the early and enduring agenda of the left, especially during the early 19th century awakening. Please note that free market capitalism did not then exist. Instead of free markets among free people there was a regime-money alliance, driven and controlled by entrenched, mostly hereditary elites - the very sort of third world arrangement that modern conservatives stoutly oppose.

When Karl Marx railed against the capitalists (a term he invented), the real goal was to substitute one ruling class for another. He got away with the argument, because the conservatives of the day were incapable of making a case for free markets...few if any of them had actually seen one in action. In fact, the real free market does not respect class, race and gender differences, and its self-organizing principles and the special optimal conditions for free markets to thrive are exactly the same conditions as those needed for creative communities to flourish. Support for the free market was 19th century liberalism; it is still a liberal idea.

Marxism and its humanist progeny have flourished among the post-religious intelligentsia because utopian egalitarianism was sold as a moral construct. And conservatism, when disconnected from its religious underpinnings, seemed to be a convenient rationale for predatory greed. This is why a moral agenda remains essential to the survival of free societies.

The three pillars of moral understanding that hold up the freedom agenda are: [1] the idea that creativity is essential to human survival; [2] that a free society is essential to the survival of creative communities; [3] and that human creative activities (because of their power to generate destabilizing and dangerous technologies) need to operate in the context of a morally centered society.

The Marxist agenda is nearly dead and the post-Marxist progressive agenda is beginning to crack under its internal contradictions. The time is right for a new progressive agenda, one centered in creative freedom, the celebration of the creative process and of creative accomplishment.

This is a brilliantly youthful agenda, a sophisticated cultural agenda and a practical entrepreneur's agenda all in one. And it is a populist agenda that is fully coherent with core conservative values.

Creative technological innovations, from the mass production of refrigerators and washing machines to affordable smart devices (almost all of which were first developed in the USA) have done more to advance the actual day-to-day wellbeing of the so called common people than all the Marxist ideological gurus and government programs of the left combined.

Conservatives, it is time to wake up to the creative agenda; you have nothing to lose but losing itself.

THE BROADBAND CREATIVE AGENDA

In a recent Op Ed that ran in the San Francisco Chronicle, writer Hank Plante analyzed why Governor Romney, post-defeat, ... "will likely move into their home in La Jolla, the San Diego suburb ... where the local Democratic councilwoman was just re-elected, giving the San Diego City Council a 5-4 Democratic majority...and where there are six gay households within a three-block radius of the Romneys' \$12 million home." Why, Plante asks, would a conservative move to "part of the bluest of blue states, California, where Republican registration just fell below 30 percent...So what gives? If you are the Romneys, then why not settle in a red state where people love you? What's wrong with Alabama, Mississippi or even Utah? Simply put, when it comes down to it, Mitt and Ann Romney seem to want the same things that so many others seek in California living: a tolerant, open, environmentally beautiful place to live that we're not afraid to pay for." Plante adds that the "Romneys fall right in line with the work that has been done by sociologists such as Richard Florida, who has developed a cottage industry by studying what he calls "the creative class." ...[S]uccessful, bright creative professionals - perhaps 30 percent of the American workforce - are the ones driving America's new economy. At the top of Florida's list of "creativity rankings" is, of course, San Francisco. That's followed by Austin, Texas, and then San Diego (including La Jolla). ... "Citizens there probably would love to experience the kind of boom that Silicon Valley techies have brought to the Bay Area. But it took a creative, open environment for Silicon Valley to grow - the same kind of open environment - full of eccentricities and inventiveness..."

<http://www.sfgate.com/default/article/Mitt-Romney-turns-blue-4051525.php>

This is a point I've been making for some time now. Conservatives are natural allies of these creative communities, going all the way back to the Florentine Renaissance in Medieval Italy, because creative communities thrive in a setting of protected liberty. The USA itself became just such a haven, a circumstance that explains our brilliant technological success over the last 150

years. This is why I am calling the USA the one surviving Renaissance Republic. There is a rich conservative tradition that supports creative freedom and the right to creative intellectual property. Two of Ayn Rand's books, *The Fountainhead*, and the collection of essays about the arts, *The Romantic Manifesto*, are paeans to creative freedom and the glories of the creative process.

Most of the working inhabitants of Silicon Valley are apolitical, but libertarian in philosophy. The liberal democrats have courted them like Hollywood celebrities and the conservatives are nowhere to be found. What an inexcusable failure. What a blind spot.

Without the right to creative property, creativity dies. The special conditions that our allow freedoms to flourish are essential to our society's creative capacity.

The founders of the American Experiment understood and participated in the creative awakening of the era. Jefferson and Franklin were inventors. The US constitution, even before the Bill of Rights was added, was a completely unique founding document, particularly in that it explicitly provided for the protection of intellectual property. The founders also understood that creative activities included science, invention, the arts and music. At the time, the foremost creative communities in the world flourished in Paris. Within two decades of the American founding, the creative center of the world (seen as a broadband renaissance across several disciplines) had crossed the Atlantic.

The former British colonies in America had become the Renaissance Republic.

Tyrannies and smothering bureaucracies are toxic to creative communities. Our creative accomplishments, in the arts, sciences and technology are intrinsic values; they are part of the human thirst for achievement and happiness. Like freedom itself, they are indivisible.

But keeping our creative capacities and communities alive and well is essential to our ability to adapt, survive and thrive against all challenges and threats, known and unknown, anticipated, and unanticipated. Supporting the creative-productive makers and doers against the manipulative and parasitical forces of envy, downward leveling, and political exploitation is an essential part of the creative agenda.

Modern conservatives must always take creativity's side against bureaucracies and its other enemies.

Creativity requires special conditions that include creative freedom, safety from predators, and the right to have property, especially intellectual property. As advocates for the Renaissance Republic, we need to pay attention to the creative communities that are close to us, from the art colonies of Brooklyn and Berkeley to the cyber nurseries of Silicon Valley and Silicon Alley... because these are freedom's natural constituencies. The casual and cynical exploitation of such (comparatively) innocent creative communities by the left is one of the tragic frauds of the current era.

Note to my creative friends who still think that conservatives are "the enemy": Hard tyrannies begin with soft tyrannies, but the pattern for both is the same. First seduce the creative communities, then selectively intimidate, imprison and – if needed - kill the dissidents among them.

The tyrants already know that which many conservatives and freedom-loving liberals have yet to grasp. Those who win over the creative communities will eventually win the game. Never ever doubt that the creative communities are a natural liberty-constituency. Whenever a modern regime slips into totalitarian excess, its creative communities seek refuge - usually in the USA. Friendship and affinity can be theoretically claimed, but that only works when demonstrated in the real world using real people in real situations. That is the task of the modern conservatives within the embattled Renaissance Republic.

Why do the worker bees of the media tend to be progressive liberals? Because the academy has been captured by the left, and history has been re-narrated. Modern journalists and their handlers are linked to the well-tamed creative communitarians, who in turn have been exploited by the left. This is not a new development. Hitler's film director-propagandist, Leni Riefenstahl, was the archetypical fallen creative artist who became a Nazi tool.

But even then, for every two creative types who were coopted and enlisted by tyrants, there were eight who refused to play along. The jazz artists of the era were the Nazi's creative nemeses. The American music scene of the 30's, 40's, 50's and 60's was greatly enriched by European escapees from Nazi Germany and later from Soviet Russia.

The best creative minds of every generation were and are anti-authoritarians.

PART FOUR

HOW WE WILL WIN

By Jay B Gaskill

THE RENAISSANCE REPUBLIC PROJECT

This is us. This is not the conservatism or liberalism of our parents

We are the world's foremost Renaissance Republic. Marx was wrong. History is on our side. Citizens of the USA are inheritors of a sovereign legacy like no other. Our country is a beacon...still. We are the world's foremost Renaissance Republic.

We are under attack from 12th century tribalists using modern weapons, and by 21st century Neo-Marxists using modern advertising technology. We must reset the defense strategy, rethinking our fundamentals, reassessing our priorities and shedding the tired catch phrases ("The party of Small government") that the jaded modern audience ignores. So far, we are better at the negative barb than the uplifting one. But the enemy is dying before our very eyes.

THE RISE AND FAILURE OF MODERN PROGRESSIVE LIBERALISM

We are witnessing the collapse of modern, progressive liberalism. The Greek riots and that country's likely separation from the EU, coupled with the collapse of Greece's vast system of

subsidies, early pensions and other entitlements is just one vivid example of the trend. Other examples are queued up to follow.

This is not the end of the world. It is the end of an era.

Modern, progressive liberalism is the form of liberalism that feeds on attachment to an unattainable agenda, to wit: the erasure of human differences on idealistic egalitarian grounds. It is the Grand Agenda of modernity, pushing “equality” whether in accomplishment, material well-being, social standing or cultural distinctiveness. In its 20th and 21st century settings, this Grand Agenda was to be gradually accomplished by revolution, or over time, in either case by enlisting the power and resources of the nation state. Never mind that the ultimate goal is inherently unobtainable, or that no state can ever assemble and utilize sufficient resources and power to make equality actually happen; and never mind that most people, most of the time do not support the ultimate goal.

The European welfare state model is reaching its resource limits, as any democratic or quasi-democratic system in the throes of the progressive ameliorative equalization of the human condition inevitably does. The tax revenues needed for subsidies and other remedial measures for the less-than-equal among us are finite. But the perceived need for equalization is infinite. The equality goal is a vast black hole of unmet needs and wants with a truly unlimited capacity to absorb human energy and resources – it will never, ever be satisfied.

The progressive agenda will fail.

We can identify several distinct stages in the failure/collapse process. In the fiscal-crisis stage, democratic and quasi-democratic populations become opposed, naturally dividing into the high-achieving productive set being bled and others into the highly-dependent, non-productive set being fed. Eventually the former group declines to pay for the latter, and this conflict ultimately precipitates a governance crisis.

To stave off crisis, progressives often use stealth. The attempt to promote equalization-through-regulation has been popular in the USA for several decades because the imposed monetary costs on the high-achieving productive set are not immediately obvious. In 21st century America the progressives are attempting to stave of the reckoning by blending of three strategies, equalization through regulation (the effects of which we can detect in the culture of “political correctness”), by hiding the appropriation costs (avoiding taxation via borrowing or offloading the costs via inflation); and by promoting divisions among the productive set (pitting labor against entrepreneurs, for example and exploiting divisive social issues). These are temporary fixes.

The early stages of the Grand Agenda include a period of early, painless implementation, followed by a time when popular pushback ensues. Eventually a genuine or immanent fiscal collapse looms. This is an inflection point that can precipitate a full-on governance crisis. The resolution of governance crises can be violent or non-violent, gradual or swift. The outcomes can be long, stagnant, dreary periods of authoritarian rule or a renaissance of freedom. We will prevail in the long term. In the short term, there are no guarantees.

THE REST OF THE RENAISSANCE AGENDA

We’ve already described the Broadband Creative Agenda in Part Three.

{Without the right to creative property, creativity dies. The special conditions that our allow freedoms to flourish are essential to our society's creative capacity.}

Keeping our creative capacities and communities alive and well is essential to our ability to adapt, survive and thrive against all challenges and threats, known and unknown, anticipated, and unanticipated. Supporting the creative-productive makers and doers against the manipulative and parasitical forces of envy, downward leveling, and political exploitation is an essential part of the creative agenda. We will always take creativity's side against bureaucracies.

The Broadband Freedom Agenda

{Freedom is a broadband zone. Economic freedom cannot be separated from the rest of our freedoms.}

The left has so far gotten away with the lie that economic freedom is a secondary good, something subordinate to the collective need economic equality, paying lip service to the other core freedoms like freedom of religion (now in disfavor among the secular left) and freedom of speech (now in disfavor when it offends victims).

Freedoms is individual, it belongs to you and me, not some collective. Freedom is indivisible. Without the right to have property, there are no rights. Our core freedoms (life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness) are forfeited only by criminal acts that deny those freedoms to others. All individual freedoms are based on self-defense and self-realization. They include freedoms of belief (religious and non-religious), freedoms of expression (creative-artistic and creative-innovative), freedoms of action (to risk and fail or succeed, to innovate, to achieve economic success, to trade), and the rights to retain the earned fruits of our achievements, of the exercise of our economic freedoms. All these are secured by a constitution, laws and impartial justice. In any truly legitimate social order, governments exist to protect these freedoms, and to provide conditions of security from predation (including the state-sanctioned political predators). The link between economic and creative freedom is a fundamental, but politically neglected feature of the human condition.

The Upward Mobility Agenda

{The USA is an immigration magnet because, vis-a-vis the rest of the world, it is an upwardly mobile society. The goal of immigration policy is to preserve the essence of American exceptionalism.}

Immigration is a practical necessity for any society trapped in an aging, less productive demographic. In any rationally run republic, an achievable path to citizenship is always open, but only for those who authentically want to become loyal citizens. Of course, immigration is also something more - at least to the degree that our generosity is non-suicidal. There is a moral imperative to provide refuge for freedom-loving victims of tyranny and genocide, but never at a level or quality that threatens to destabilize or degrade the refuge civilization itself. In other words, like every other ideal in life, there are real, practical limits. Loyalty to the new sovereign is the first requirement of immigration; in our case this especially means loyalty to America's core founding principles. But that kind of loyalty effectively demands a higher facility with the English language than is currently required of prospective US citizens; and a deeper understanding of the underlying principles that are integral to the American idea (as opposed to rote memorization) than is presently the case. Of course, upward mobility should be available to every American, newly minted or not, provided he or she strives for it. But in the real world this requires access to a real

education (as opposed to forced exposure to an “educational experience” that is suffused with moral and cultural relativism and therapeutic exercises). The politically correct teaching agenda has crowded out history, science, mathematics, civics and all those professional and business-relevant skills (not just computer-tech) that keep a free civilization going. Upward mobility also demands that governments at all levels loose the obstacles and burdens on success; allow a realistic capacity for families to retain wealth for the benefit of their next generation; and maintain open, achievement-and-merit-driven upward paths, free from the “close-the-door-after-us” meddling of the political and hereditary cliques.

The Tough Security Agenda

{Tough-minded public safety policies include proportional punishment, realistic rehabilitation and the right to use the technologies of self-defense (firearms+), and strong national security policies supported by a powerful military capability in freedom’s defense.}

Peace through strength is not just a slogan. Just as freedom is a broadband agenda, so is the agenda of freedom’s enemies. Isolationism is suicide by another name. Wimpy weakness is an engraved invitation to the world’s (and your local variety of) predators to come calling at your undefended doorstep. Maintaining reliable mutual support alliances with the other free societies that share our values is both a moral imperative and an insurance policy. The abandonment of Israel by both the left and the isolationist right is just as immoral and suicidal today as the abandonment of England to the Nazis would have been in the last century. The functional abandonment of entire communities in parts of the USA to criminals is nothing short of the suicide of our civilization by stages. How “liberals” could ever abandon the defense of the weak innocent ones, and still dare to call themselves “liberal” is a sign of how deeply the postmodern, post-moral culture has infected American life. This means, another other things, that the Freedom Agenda will almost certainly fail unless it is linked to and part of a more comprehensive Moral Agenda.

The Moral Agenda

{Freedom without a fundamental moral defense is just another commodity to bargain away.}

The urgent problem for both conservatives and old fashioned freedom-loving liberals is how to tease out the essence of the Moral Agenda that unites us. Freedom does not automatically flourish in the real world. It requires special conditions, some of which conditions are traditional-cultural; some are institutional-legal (as in a constitution that protects property, life, liberty and the rest) and some of which are resident in the moral underpinnings of the culture. Many traditional moral systems value the preservation of human life and human dignity and some of these moral systems support a civilization that is nominally tasked to protect life and human dignity. But not all moral systems explicitly support the necessary conditions in which life, creativity and a respect for human dignity will flourish, conditions like free expression, the right to earn and retain property, including intellectual property.

The best supporting traditions are a sufficient bulwark for freedom’s defense, provided they don’t consume themselves over other issues. A dramatic example of a real fracture point between competing moral systems was the slavery issue of 1860. Slavery so violates human dignity, that no moral compromise with the slave states was possible. Are any of the currently divisive “social” issues in the slavery category? Is not that our pivotal question?

BRIDGING THE WEDGE ISSUES

No major agenda is ever implemented without unity of purpose and coordination of action. This means that the new renaissance conservatives, and their freedom loving allies, need to overcome the so called 'wedge issues.' By paying attention of the core agenda and fundamental principles that support a renaissance republic, we can achieve the unity needed to govern. This requires that we learn how to overcome the wedge issues that the left uses to divide the center and the right.

Here's a tough experiment. Assume that a certain close friend of yours is passionately convinced that any free society that refuses to permit two males (or two females) to live together with the same legal status of a married man and woman is morally damaged; assume that in this friend's eyes the struggle over gay marriage is almost worth a civil war. In effect we have a hostage issue situation. If the gay marriage issue is really that that important to your friend, he or she will hold every other issue and candidacy hostage to agreement on one issue. Such a friend might have joined with all those others whose votes delivered the country into the tender mercies of a self-centered Marxist amateur armed with all of the tools of a modern superpower. Substitute any of the other divisive social issues. Substitute any other candidate. Our inability or ability to work together for a common purpose will ultimately determine whether we and others can join together to rescue the USA from the Progressive Utopians and progressive party hacks who are currently trying to run things. So you are invited to carefully think through the implications of the thought experiment. Just how much does your core vision of the USA as the prime exemplar and greatest beacon of ordered liberty in the world depend on the resolution of any wedge issue? Do we ever surrender a wedge issue to gain ground on the freedom agenda, the creative agenda or the tough security agenda? How much ground. Surrender what?

Live and let live is part of the conservative wisdom. But that, too, has its limits. No morally aware person could abide slavery in the 19th century, much less in this one. Do any of the wedge issues rise to that level? If not, how do we articulate them a way that preserves our moral position? Much depends on how we answer that question.

A personal disclosure: I am fervently pro-life and pro-family. Many who might disagree with me on a wedge issue, say, late term abortion, might agree on national security. Do I soft pedal the life issue? I love Israel. And I love my Jewish friends (even when they are weak friends of Israel). Do I even talk about this issue with them? I am comfortable in the midst of almost any creative community, even if most of these types most of the time are unreflective, knee jerk "progressives". I might conclude that (a) they are natural allies, but (b) they are easily duped by the left. Do I write them off?

All of us who haven't been swept up in the "vast left wing conspiracy" need to ask ourselves - Why and how has the liberal-left-progressive mindset so thoroughly penetrated the US academy, the commentariat and the dominant media? Here is the answer. Humanism, in its largest most generous sense, has a huge appeal to all of us, because it speaks to our innate idealism, the longing for a better, more humane world. The conservatives of the 19th century set a tone that modern conservatives are still trying to shed. The 19th century "right wingers" were so committed to the existing social order, with all its flaws, that they were easily type cast as enemies of all social progress.

Ameliorative social change became the defining ethos of the left, becoming a specifically political issue when social scientists convinced the reigning intelligentsia that the powers of the state

should be enlisted to propel – and then to compel – social progress across a range of human behaviors. Conservative arguments against the abuse of state power were portrayed as arguments against ameliorative social change, as against worker safety, in favor of child labor and so on.

State sponsored economic change was the early and enduring agenda of the left, especially during the early 19th century awakening. Please note that free market capitalism did not then exist. Instead of free markets among free people there was a regime-money alliance, driven and controlled by entrenched, mostly hereditary elites - the very sort of 3rd world arrangement that modern conservatives stoutly oppose. When Karl Marx railed against the capitalists (a term he invented), the real goal was to substitute one ruling class for another. He got away with the argument, because the conservatives of the day were incapable of making a case for free markets...few if any of them had actually seen one in action. In fact, the real free market does not respect class, race and gender differences, and its self-organizing principles and the special optimal conditions for free markets to thrive are exactly the same conditions as those needed for creative communities to flourish. Support for the free market was 19th century liberalism; it is still a liberal idea.

LIFE & MARRIAGE

Among all the so called “social issues” that divide Americans, few are as vexing as the ones that concern sex and reproduction. I personally believe that the execution of a proto-baby, one who manifests a beating heart, a nascent but operating nervous system, one who is dimly aware (as I believe is the case at 8 weeks) of the biologically transmitted love of the mother, constitutes a dreadful, revolting wrong...except when it is strictly necessary to avert a grave threat to the life and health of the mother-to-be. But I do understand that even decent, maternal women, having a full awareness of the wrenching nature of the scenario I’ve just sketched, nevertheless remain fiercely protective of other women’s choices in these close-call situations. Roe vs. Wade represented a fragile social consensus, finessing one of the most deeply contentious issues of the current era. Many of the most ardently pro-life Roman Catholic priests are now saying that progress in the pro-life direction requires a gradual evolution in hearts and minds.

I find the gay marriage issue to be complicated. Former Vice President Dick Cheney advocates that it be treated as a state issue. But that doesn’t remove the problem for political leaders who start their careers at the local level. My own view is that same gender couples with adopted children need and therefore should have substantially the same legal benefits afforded to heterosexual married parents. But there remains a huge additional question: whether and under what circumstances the government should decree that the sanctified title, married, must be applied to all same-gender couples who want it. The whole matter is too freighted with long-standing social and religious tradition for a mere government branch, agency or judicial officer to redefine marriage without the support of a clear popular consensus. That consensus may or may not emerge everywhere or in any particular decade.

THE LIMITS OF “LIVE AND LET LIVE”

Traditional conservatism and old fashioned liberalism have taken certain basic limits for granted, among them:

- the definition of marriage as excluding same gender relationships;

- the acceptance of human nature as a given, something that governments and mad scientists should not tamper with (a barrier crossed by the new Marxist human project, the Nazi eugenics experiments; this is a vision now reincarnated in the progressive, politically correct human consciousness improvement project);
- the sharp legal and moral distinctions between adults' use of traditional alcohol beverages and of the so called "recreational" drugs;
- ...and the clear distinctions of legal status between citizens and non-citizens and between lawful immigrants and unlawful migrants.

We must never abandon our core values or shrink from advocating them. For conservatives and everyone else who cares about the general health of the culture, there is always a larger question, one that transcends the usual debates about specific "boundary issues". It is the cultivation and preservation of core institutions on which any viable, freedom-respecting civilization is founded. Here are three elements: family formation and stability, a moral consensus about good and evil, life affirmation and the respect for human dignity; and an informed population capable of rational self-government. These elements are interconnected and have implications for the social issues and value debates that our opponents seek to use to divide us. We need to take family, morality and capable self-governance very seriously. Here are a few illustrations of the proposed approach.

FAMILY VALUES

Even as an evolving culture recognizes and legitimizes variations from the so-called nuclear family model, there are strong defining elements of any family grouping. A family is still the traditional marriage/common parent-based human grouping, in which everyone is genetically and/or legally related. The key norm is the family's mutual obligations of loyalty, caring and support that typically survive the dissolution of common living arrangements. Breach of these obligations is condemned particularly as they adversely affect dependents, especially children.

The existence of dysfunctional, fractured families is not an alternative life style, but a failure in human relationships. As family ties break down, the social order is disturbed.

Conservatives and old fashioned liberals can reasonably be expected to adapt to less conventional family arrangements but the bedrock features of loyalty and support need to be a constant. Much of the tension over the gay marriage issue, for example, was fueled by the stereotypical images of rampant sexual infidelity among the gay male subgroup, and the accompanying health issues. As "model gay marriages" are portrayed in the entertainment media, monogamous, caring couples raising adopted children for example, popular acceptance of gay relationships has improved.

In the values discussion, conservatives can and should insist on honoring the two-parent, mutual loyalty and support model, with obligations, particularly to children, that legally survive breakup. In this context they/we can readily accept the legitimacy of same gender households. But the marriage question can and should be treated separately from the legal household-status issues, and we should be prepared to cheerfully agree-to-disagree among ourselves. Formal marriage is a sacramental matter for each religious institution to define, recognize or not. But the general acceptance of civil marriage of same gender couples is a matter for each legal jurisdiction to determine based on a local, actual social consensus. There should be no imposition of marriage status laws against a contrary popular consensus, whether by federal law, or judicial/administrative fiat, nor should there be the imposition of a ban against a favorable popular consensus.

PRO-LIFE VALUES

Anyone who, in the course of a study of ethics, has encountered Albert Schweitzer's Reverence for Life, or Pope John Paul's encyclical on the Culture of Life cannot trivialize or over politicize this category of "social" issues. Our pro-life values are always on the table. They should always be discussed by conservatives and other allies of the Renaissance Republic in the context of a culture that celebrates and honors human life, one that includes and embraces respect for the old and infirm and defenseless, all framed as part of our bedrock defense of human dignity. The extreme forms of late term abortion must be singled out for condemnation. While expressing deep sympathy for the plight of unwed mothers and unwanted pregnancies, we come down on the side of education, compassionate help and assistance for these women in distress. ...And for adoption in lieu of execution whenever possible. For the foreseeable future, Roe vs. Wade (I refer to the original decision, not including some of the later decision weakening its pro-life protections) is off the table, except as the governing legal framework within which we will always seek to turn hearts and minds towards a greater respect for vulnerable life.

PRIORITIES

On a scale of one to ten, the pro-life agenda, taken broadly to include a deep moral revulsion of euthanasia, organ harvesting, and so on, is an eight or nine compared with gay marriage, which is, at best, only a two, no matter which side you take.

But, for me, a kid who grew up with or went to school with Jewish friends whose surviving relatives carried Nazi stigmata (the tattooed serial numbers), the son of a father who saw Hitler's heinous crimes in Germany first-hand (Captain Gaskill accompanied by Lieutenant Cohen)... for me, the terms "never forget" and "never again" are burned into my soul. For me, the defense of Israel is a 9.8 and the closely-connected goal of preventing of another holocaust is a 9.97.

It should not escape your notice that tiny Israel is one of the most intensely creative communities in the world. As the world's foremost creative civilization, we cannot stand idly by and watch while Israel is savaged by neo-Medieval enemies armed with modern weapons and Nazi mindsets.

Ah, but the preservation of the USA as a beacon of life-affirming freedom is a ten – because without the USA, the Nazi nightmare, the communist nightmare...or both, could have won out. And without us, here and now, bruised and ambivalent as many of us are, it all goes to hell.

There are other issues, of course, each of which will be the subject of a careful discussion. But our approach should remain the same –we are the guardians of the overall health of the civilization, of the culture and the preservation of the USA as an example and the beacon of freedom to the world.

Modern conservatives need to ally with other freedom-friendly citizens, however they choose to label or describe themselves, in the larger cause – promoting and expanding the ideal of the Renaissance Republic, of which the USA has been world's primary exemplar.

Using this expanded context and a more intelligent outreach to recruits among constituencies heretofore neglected by paleo-conservatives, we and our allies will marshal the collective skills, abilities and credibility to move the navigation needle away from the abyss and towards a fruitful more life-affirming, more creative, more liberty-friendly USA. We will because we must. Necessity is the mother of determination.

THE GRAND COALITION AND THE NEW AUTHENTICITY

...Even without voter fraud, the progressive clique in the White house would probably have prevailed because there was a conservative failure of effort even in the midst of a catastrophic progressive failure in policy. The liberty coalition yet to take shape has history on its side, but it also needs smart foot soldiers on the ground.

Yes, are witnessing the final death throes of the progressive liberal experiment. It turns out that socialism's goals cannot be obtained and sustained merely by borrowing or fiat money. That leaves the same ultimate choice that American and Europe had all along - tyranny (democratic socialism under one party rule) or a free society (a capitalist, safety net society under two party rule). Yes, Americans will not knowingly choose the former. And, yes, eventually the objective factors will govern. The current course will either end in a mess that looks like a train wreck or (best case) like an ocean liner mired in a low tide swamp.

The tyrants will govern us only if all the friends of freedom are gravely weakened via disunity or cowardice or fatigue, or a combination of all three. Getting fully out of this hole will take more one or two election cycles. To prevail, we must keep clearly in mind how long and how gradually we were brought to this pass. The Fabian Socialists did the same to England (it took almost 40 years) until Thatcher finally got enough traction to alter the course. But England still founders because the persuasive power of the left's seductive ideas (imagine them operating in the deep subconscious much like the devil's sales pitch to Faust) have captured the hind-brains of the elites and so called "common" people.

FIVE THINGS will save the United States of America, provided we don't opt out, get impatient, drug out, stop thinking, or just stop trying:

[1] NOBODY BELIEVES IN "SOMETHING FOR NOTHING", whether it's dressed up in Keynesian clothing or Madoff pajamas. People just go along with it as long as they think that (a) they can get out in time or (b) Mommy will sweep in and take care of them. The liberals are killing Mommy before our very eyes.

[2] THE USA IS SINGULAR in world history, one that millions wish to emulate elsewhere, because of the strength of its cultural and institutional commitment to liberty.

[3] HUMAN NATURE WILL NOT CHANGE over the next 40 years. People still understand on a deep level that useful work is more satisfying than all the substitutes. This holds true even when they are in the throes of decadence. People still fiercely believe that they are morally entitled to keep their earnings. This is why thieves are universally despised. Even a thieving government cannot be sustained without brutality; and it almost certainly will be resisted with brutality. This is why the wealthy liberal elites are very, very nervous. They secretly know they have been living a lie.

[4] THE CURRENT ADMINISTRATION WILL BE FORCED TO EXPOSE THE TRUTH: that the consequences of the end of borrowing cannot be avoided or confined to a few rich plutocrats. The reckoning will feel like theft. Imagine a wife who has been living in the illusion

that she has married a wealthy provider, then discovers the staggering gambling debts her husband was running up in secret. When the creditors take away her car, the children's toys and most of the grocery money, she feels like the victim of a theft that was committed in plain sight. At the end of the second term, a majority of Americans will feel sharply betrayed in the same way.

[5] THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION WILL BE MORE CONSERVATIVE than the current one. We have about 3 and a half years to ensure that this rescue administration rides in on an honest critique of the mistakes of the last 35 years, and a realistic, well thought out and clearly explained plan to restart free market prosperity capitalism. The restart will be just in time. The remake will take at least four terms. This is why I urge that we don't opt out or get impatient.

SOCIAL CAPITAL

This is where the rubber meets the road. Let's start with a dose of reality. An excellent post-defeat analysis written by Wall Street Journal blogger/columnist, Kimberly Strassel, "The GOP Turnout Myth"ⁱ made several key points –

"Project ORCA [software], developed and run by the Romney campaign to refine its turnout efforts, was a dismal failure. And the GOP lagged behind the Obama campaign's sophisticated use of technology, in particular social media.

"In Florida, 238,000 more Hispanics voted than in 2008, and Mr. Obama got 60% of Hispanic voters. His total margin of victory in Florida was 78,000 votes, so that demographic alone won it for him. Or consider Ohio, where Mr. Romney won independents by 10 points. The lead mattered little, though, given that black turnout increased by 178,000 votes, and the president won 96% of the black vote. Mr. Obama's margin of victory there was 103,000.

"This is the demographic argument that is getting so much attention, and properly so. The Republican Party can hope that a future Democratic candidate won't equal Mr. Obama's magnetism for minority voters. But the GOP would do far better by fighting aggressively for a piece of the minority electorate.

"And that, for the record, was the GOP's real 2012 turnout disaster. Elections are about the candidate and the message, yes, but also about the ground game.

"The GOP doesn't campaign in those communities, doesn't register voters there, doesn't knock on doors. So while pre-election polling showed that Hispanics were worried about Obama policies, in the end the only campaign that these voters heard from—by email, at their door, on the phone—was the president's.

"Often missed in talk of the GOP's "demographics problem" is that it would take relatively modest minority-voter shifts toward Republicans to return the party to a dominating force. The GOP might see that as the enormous opportunity it is, rather than a problem. The key to winning turnout is having more people to turn out in the first place."

Did you pick up on the problem? After the Tea Party demonstrated the power of a spontaneous ground game using real, self-motivated people, the GOP relied on beta-software called ORCA?

There is something called social capital, describing the value of established person-to-person social connections. Writers like Francis Fukuyama have linked its loss in certain communities to the breakdown of law and order. Social media like Facebook and Twitter can exploit existing social capital -maybe they can even generate a weak version of it. But where voter turnout of the potential allies of the broadband freedom agenda is concerned, *nothing less than the real deal will do*.

Job opportunities are enhanced by who you know and who knows you – why should it be any different in politics? Keep this in mind in the next section when we discuss the possible grand coalition made up of existing center-right voters and new allies who, via trust relationships, are persuaded to find common cause.

ASSEMBLING THE NEW COALITION

How We Will Stand with the Middle Class; Make New Friends; & Win New Majorities

In the recent campaign, the president and the liberal democrats were paying a lot of lip service to the middle class, while GOP leaders were conflicted – on the one hand, not wanting to use “class” language, but on the other wanting to appeal to this natural constituency, taking it for granted in a way that narrowed the appeal to its most comfortable members.

In old Europe, the middle class was the new, new thing, sandwiched between the unpropertied, unwashed masses, and the landowning Royals, who were living very well indeed on inherited privilege. This middle class consisted of working adults, mostly merchants, untitled soldiers, artists, and other professionals, the clerks and physicians, the town-dwelling artisans and shopkeepers. No one kept economic statistics because the only class that mattered consisted of royal families. Yet the middle class mattered ...not so much because a “middle class society” was considered a social virtue, but because its members were valuable to the rest by virtue of their work, skills and services. The medieval middle class became indispensable to the larger social order. Because they were neither slaves nor serfs, they had to be compensated.

In modern America, the middle class has been defined in two overlapping ways: [1] by income level (somewhat arbitrarily); and [2] by theme, attitude and culture (somewhat loosely).

One problem with the first category is that the cost of living in the USA is so disparate that a new physician’s income in some communities, say Twin Falls, Idaho or Providence, Rhode Island, simply does not support the cost and upkeep of a two bedroom home in, say, Bellevue, Washington or Boulder, Colorado, let alone a full-on “middle class” lifestyle in Palo Alto, California, or New Rochelle, New York.

As to the second category, many very wealthy adults prefer “middle class” values and neighborhoods to those displayed and inhabited by their wealthy peers.

However we choose to define the US middle class, the housing/credit crash of 2008 hugely diminished its numbers economically, weakened its self-identification culturally and demoralized its members psychologically.

In fact, the housing value bubble-burst of 2008 was such a dramatic middle class disaster that it deeply frightened a plurality of Americans who might otherwise have voted for a comfortable center-right candidate in 2012. Instead they vested their bruised hopes in a slick Marxist-progressive who is poised to betray them.

This sort of thing has happened before. Eric Hoffer, the longshoreman philosopher of the 1960's was a bull of a man, a passionate friend of America's new middle class workers (the same ones who would later become the Reagan democrats) and an even more passionate enemy of the communists. When the communist government under Khrushchev began moving Russia's farmland peasants out of their homes and into the urban underclass, he railed at "the filthy apparatchiks". He knew the game. Those peasants, like the early medieval middle class, were sturdy independent, mostly landowning, workers. They had to be eliminated before communism could progress to the next stage. Hoffer saw it for the thinly disguised genocide it was. [Hoffer is just the sort of man who, if he were still alive, would be a natural recruit into the Renaissance Republic Coalition].

The destruction of the American middle class by progressive policies is to be a soft genocide, accomplished for similar purposes, designed to achieve a similar malign result – removing the last obstacle to a massive dependency state in which no serious opposition to party rule could take hold.

By analogy with the first middle class, we can be safe in loosely identifying it in the modern USA with single home ownership. If that is the test, then middle class security is the USA has just gravely been threatened. As market analysts remind us, home ownership is at its lowest point in 50 years. We've probably over-counted the number of American home-owners, still a slender majority, because we are including the underwater group, the families that real estate analysts call "renters in waiting."

The psychological ripple effect of the crash cannot be overestimated. Anxious homeowners no longer think of themselves as secure, card-carrying members of the middle class; no longer are quite so sturdily self-reliant as conservatives and sociologists think they should be'; and – as it turns out – were no longer willing to fire a sitting president who, whatever his failings, had nothing to do with the collapse of the value of their homes.

This was a serious problem in honest, effective communication by the current crop of GOP leaders. Even though liberal loan policies led to bad mortgages (remember the demonstrations against "red line" lending practices?), the complicit banking and financial institutions that participated in bundling phony mortgage assets, leveraged to the hilt, were (fairly or unfairly) considered a game of the governing conservative financial establishment. The loosened banking regulations that opened the path to a more general financial meltdown were (fairly or unfairly) seen as a GOP agenda item, even if these changes were supported by President Bill Clinton.

You might recognize this as the case for fearless honesty and uncompromising authenticity. Without it, the conservatives and their friends will fail again.

The way ahead for conservatives and their liberty-friendly allies is to greatly expand outreach to the larger middle class, not just the one defined by incomes (current and remembered) but also the larger group, self-defined by middle class values and aspirations.

This strategy trumps the “pandering-to-ethnic-minority” approach because the goal is not to target all Asians, all Hispanics and so on, as if they are prospective welfare clients, but to welcome all within these groups who are or aspire to be part of the great, growing American middle class. We will be recruiting allies against the post-Marxist, Marxist progressives whose agenda will destroy the American middle class for everyone.

The next elections will be about style and substance. No deficit in either is acceptable. Listening to the GOP old guard talk at the moment is painful, the stentorian fogball generalities, the inside the beltway assumptions, are painful to hear. Reagan had the gift of explanation in ordinary, commonsense terms. We must recruit and raise up better, sharper leaders, with a better sharper agenda. When we do, the prize is the following scenario: A self-aware, energized and expanded middle class that wrests power from the uber-left. This is supposed to happen every time the left is exposed for what it is and what it threatens. But in the real world it only happens so long as the alternative is authentic, thematically inclusive and credibly optimistic.

The GOP, the Grand Old Party is burdened with lame images, some bad baggage, some earned, some not. The Renaissance Republic and its allies are poised to replace the G-O-P brand with something more like the Creative Optimistic Party (COP).

A forward-aimed theme and substance combination like the one outlined in these four articles provides the best conservative answer to identity politics: Promote and concretely support upward mobility and ***shared value alliances***.

So much for my ideas and recommendations: I feel like the bystander at a fire, shouting, “Somebody get a ladder and a hose!”, forgetting that we are the firefighters. Among the practical tasks that urgently face us, I believe that these three are the key to a turnaround:

[1] Address middle class and upward mobility issues on a credible policy level.

[2] Acquire and employ the missing social capital that we will need to make the case and connections to our new allies well in advance of the next election cycle.

[3] Recruit and enlist the sympathetic members of America’s creative communities in this project, the restoration of the American Renaissance Republic.

Your next steps should be clear. Meet and form your own social capital. Then use those contacts to reach farther and incorporate more. Form up around what you can agree to. Organize. Focus. Get started.

JBG

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http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324352004578133120431803606.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_LEA_DTop

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