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The Schwarz Report



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Inside

America's Red Army

by Jennifer Verner, Page 5

Jennifer Verner "dissects the affiliations and leadership of one of the most influential anti-Bush 'peace' groups to emerge since 9/11."



Castro's Gulag and American Librarians

by Nat Hentoff, Page 7

Mr. Hentoff speaks out against the imprisonment of librarians in Castro's Cuba.



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Western Civilization and Christianity

by James Kurth

Fifty years ago, Western civilization was a central idea, and ideal, in American political and intellectual discourse. American political leaders frequently said that the United States was the heir to Western civilization and that it had a duty to defend the West against its enemies, most obviously the Communist bloc led by the Soviet Union. American academic leaders regarded the Western tradition with respect, and courses on Western civilization were often required in American universities. The 1950s were an era when the leading institutions of America (and with their support and guidance, the leading institutions of Europe) were confident and articulate in identifying with and promoting the Western tradition.

Today, Western civilization is almost never mentioned, much less promoted, in political and intellectual discourse. When it is mentioned amongst Western elites, its traditions are almost always an object of criticism and contempt. Real discussion of Western civilization is usually by the political, intellectual, and religious leaders of nonwestern societies, most obviously Muslim societies. Indeed, the idea of the West seems to be most charged with vital energy in the excited mind of its principle contemporary enemy, radical Islam. The most lively consciousness about the West actually seems to be found within the East. Within the West itself, the Western civilization of 50 years ago has become the lost civilization of today.

What explains this great transformation? Which of the traditions remain a living reality today? And what might be the fate of these traditions in the future?

Among scholarly interpreters of the West, it has been widely understood that Western civilization was formed from three distinct traditions: (1) the classical culture of Greece and Rome; (2) the Christian religion; and (3) the Enlightenment of the modern era. Many have seen Western civilization as a synthesis of all three traditions; others have emphasized the conflicts among them, the struggle between the Christian religion and the Enlightenment being especially consequential.

The first of the Western traditions was classical culture. In the realm of politics, for example, Greece contributed the idea of a republic, while Rome contributed that of an empire. Greece contributed the idea of liberty and Rome that of law. Combined, these gave rise to the important concept of liberty under law.

Christian theology established the sanctity of the individual believer and called for obedience to an authority (Christ) higher than any secular ruler (Caesar), ideas that further refined and supported the concept of liberty under law. Christian institutions, particularly the papacy of the Roman Catholic Church and its ongoing struggle with the Holy Roman Emperor and local monarchs, bequeathed to the West the idea of a separation of powers.

The modern Enlightenment provided the ideas of liberal democracy, the free market, and the belief in reason and science as the means for making sense of the world. More particularly, the British Revolution of 1688 emphasized liberty and constitutional-

And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead expose them. Ephesians 5:11

"Dwell on the past and you'll lose an eye; forget the past and you'll lose both eyes." Old Russian Proverb

ism, while the French Revolution of 1789 emphasized democracy and rationalism. The differences between the Enlightenment in Britain and on the Continent would give rise to important divisions within the West during much of the 19th and 20th centuries. This was the case with the Industrial Revolution and the different responses to it; both state guidance of the economy and Marxist ideology played a much greater role on the Continent than in Britain or the United States.

The very term “Western civilization” is something of an anomaly. It was invented only a century ago, and it is not really comparable to the terms commonly used for other civilizations. Most other civilizations (e.g., Islamic, Hindu, Orthodox) have retained a religious identification, and, indeed, before the Enlightenment the term that people in the West commonly used for their civilization was “Christendom.” The story of how “Christendom” became “Western civilization” is significant for understanding the changing nature of our civilization and perhaps its fate.

The Enlightenment brought about the secularization of most of the intellectual elite of Christendom. This elite ensured that the civilization was no longer called that, even though much of its ordinary population remained Christian. The French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution spread Enlightenment ideas to important parts of that population, but the Christian churches continued to be a vital force. Since the Enlightenment, however, it has not been possible to refer to the civilization as Christendom.

For about a century, the preferred term for the civilization was “Europe.” But this was also the time that saw the rise of European settlements in the New World to the status of independent nations. This made the term “European civilization” unsuitable, and in the early 20th century, a few Europeans conceived of a new and more appropriate term, “Western civilization.” Almost as soon as it was invented, the term began to be used in the pessimistic context of civilizational decline, as in Oswald Spengler’s *The Decline of the West* (1918). Had the term been left to Europeans alone it would probably have had a short and unhappy life, particularly given the devastating moral, as well as material, consequences of the First World War.

It was the New World that was called in to redress the pessimism of the Old. Americans breathed a new meaning into the concept of Western civilization, first as they dealt with the great surge of European immigrants and then as they dealt with the European nations in the course of the two World Wars. For Americans in the first decades of the 20th century, Western civilization was principally the ideas of liberty and individualism, institutionalized in liberal democracy, free markets, constitutionalism, and the rule of law. Americans referred to this ensemble of ideas as “the American creed,” which they promoted as a principal means to Americanize new immigrants. These ideas were, of course, direct descendents of the British Enlightenment, but they were also indirect descendents of some of the elements in the classical and the Chris-

tian traditions.

American intervention in the First World War and again in the Second World War brought about a redefinition of Western civilization. The new conception has been described as “the Allied scheme of history,” but its central pillar was the American sense of historical mission. The new content of Western civilization became the American creed. Conversely, the new context for the American creed became Western civilization. The combination of American energy and European legacy gave the idea of Western civilization both power and legitimacy in both America and Europe. The power helped the United States win the First World War against the German Empire, the Second World War against Nazi Germany, and the Cold War against the Soviet Union. The legitimacy helped to order the long peace within Western Europe that was very much intertwined with the Cold War. With its appropriation by America, therefore, the idea of Western civilization experienced its heroic age.

The Cold War crystallized the political and intellectual division between the West and the East. The “Allied scheme of history,” the product of the two World Wars, was institutionalized into NATO. Almost all of the members of the North Atlantic alliance appeared to be heirs of each of the three great Western traditions, and they seemed to be comfortable and confident in this identity. (NATO did include a couple of cultural anomalies—Greece and Turkey—which were obviously outside elements of the three traditions, and the U.S. did have another, immensely important, ally—Japan—which was obviously outside all three traditions, as well as outside any plausible geographical definition of the West. But these anomalies became acceptable with the argument that each of these countries was now engaged in the grand project of “Westernization.”)

During the first decade of the Cold War, the struggle between the West and the East took the form of a struggle between “the Free World” and “the Socialist World,” as the two antagonists referred to themselves. With the decolonization of the European empires, a new region, the South, emerged and the struggle was said to be between the First and Second Worlds over the future of the Third. Both the West and the East offered the South a particular version of the Enlightenment project, a secular doctrine of progress. The West promoted liberalism, which was largely a product of the British Enlightenment, while the East promoted Marxism, which was largely a product of the French Enlightenment. It is significant, however, that the West decided that it could not promote the other Western traditions, the classical culture and the Christian religion.

The 1950s, the high Cold War, were the golden age of the conception of Western civilization. With the 1960s, it came under sustained assault, and the Western traditions have been on the defensive ever since, though defensive may be too strong a term, since today very few defenders of Western civilization can be found.

What were the causes of this great rejection of the great traditions? We will begin with the rejection of the classical one, which even in the seeming golden age was the most vulnerable.

The classical tradition was still taught to some extent in American and European universities in the 1950s. But deep within this classical education was a problematic assumption: that this tradition was relevant for a particular part of society. This was the elite who became the governors, administrators, and judges. The classical tradition valued aristocracy and hierarchy, honor and duty. (The ideal career for the student of the classical tradition during the modern age was to become a colonial administrator, such as the legendary young men who went out from Oxford and Cambridge to become district officers of the British Empire in India.)

Antithetical to the classical spirit are both the democratic spirit and the commercial spirit, which were greatly strengthened by the Enlightenment. They were, or course, especially prevalent in the United States. Whatever might be made of “classical republican” ideas at the time of the American founding, by the 1830s much of America was thoroughly democratic and commercial in its spirit, as Tocqueville famously demonstrated in his masterpiece *Democracy in America*. Although the America of the 1950s was the leader of the West during the golden age of self-consciousness about Western civilization, the classical tradition was by that time almost wholly invisible in American life. This meant that there would be no substantial interest in defending that tradition if it were ever assaulted by some substantial force.

The classical culture of Greece and Rome, so integral to both Western civilization and to the civilization shaped by Eastern Orthodoxy, formed no part of the history of most other cultures. It meant almost nothing to the people s of Asia or Africa, or even to the Indian and Mestizo peoples of Latin America. But the United States had living within its borders many descendants of these non-Western peoples, and it would come to have vastly more as a result of the Immigration Act of 1965. Their political and intellectual leaders saw classical culture as a device by which the traditional elite excluded them from equal participation and respect within what should be a democratic society. In regard to the classical culture, therefore, the civil-rights movement became an uncivil wrecking operation. At the same time, the anti-colonial movement performed a similar operation in regard to Europe.

The political and economic elites of America and also those of Europe (who were now following American leadership in many ways)—imbued as they were with the democratic and the commercial spirit—had already ceased to believe in the classical tradition, since it was so remote from the actuality of their lives. Now, in order to maintain their political and economic positions in the face of the civil-rights and anti-colonial movements, they were quick to appease these anti-Western forces by abandoning the last remnants of the classical tradition.

The Christian tradition also came under assault in the 1960s,

and the Enlightenment was again at the intellectual and ideological center of the attack. The Enlightenment had always believed in reason and science as the means of making sense of the world. Many of its adherents were possessed by an animus (actually, the original sin of pride) to overthrow all traditional authority, both secular and religious, and to appropriate all authority for themselves. This drove them to use reason and science in a biased way to deny any Biblical and spiritual basis for truth and to therefore denigrate the Christian religion.

This animus had existed in the Enlightenment tradition since its origin. However, in the 1960s there was a massive expansion in the number of students in secular universities and also a massive expansion of popular (actually pagan) culture promulgated by secular media. The Enlightenment mentality had penetrated much of the elite at the beginning of the industrial age. Now, at the beginning of the information age, it expanded its dominion over much of the young. These intellectual and cultural developments were reinforced by development in technology (the sudden availability of new contraceptive methods) and in the economy (the sudden entry of large numbers of women into the new full-time jobs produced by the information economy). They in turn resulted in a momentous political development: the rise of a powerful feminist movement and, when contraceptive technologies proved insufficient, its promotion of abortion as its central project.

Each of these developments, which surged in the 1960s and which continue today, contradicted the practice of the Christian religion, though Western elites have justified them as the progressive fulfillment of Enlightenment ideas of liberty and equality. Seen from a Biblical perspective, however, they are really just new manifestations of the ancient forces of pride and rebellion.

The assault on the Christian religion has been institutionalized by changes in the ethnic structure of both America and Europe. In the United States, a series of Supreme Court decisions erected a massive (and radically new) wall between church and state, in effect driving Christianity from the public square. This development was related to the collapse of the Protestant (WASP) ascendancy in the American intellectual and legal elites and to the ascendancy of Jews into those elites. In Europe, large-scale immigration from Muslim countries began in the 1960s and Muslims now comprise 5-10 percent of the population of many European countries.

Although the forces assaulting the Christian tradition have operated throughout the West, the effects have been different in Europe and America. In Europe, the Christian churches had been bound up with the traditional political and social authorities. As these authorities declined with the spread of liberal democracy and free markets—the working out of the democratic and the commercial spirits—the Christian churches declined along with them. By contrast, in America the large number of different denominations (a distinctively American term), which were independent of the state and each other, meant that almost from the origins of the U.S. there was a

kind of religious democracy and market. If a particular church seemed to be bound up with a discredited and declining political or social authority, Christians in America could easily move to a new church, while keeping the essentials of the Christian religion. This helps to explain why today Christianity is much more vital in America than it is in Europe. The American elites have rejected it, but the Christian religion is meaningful and central to large sections of the population.

The only Western tradition accepted by the political, intellectual, and economic elites of the West is the Enlightenment. For American political and economic elites, this largely means the British (or Anglo-American) Enlightenment, with its emphasis on the liberty of individuals, institutionalized in liberal democracy and free markets. For European political, intellectual, and economic elites (and for the American intellectual elite located in academia and the media), this largely means the French (or Continental) Enlightenment, with its emphasis on the rationalism of elites, institutionalized in bureaucratic authority and the credentialed society. Together, these elites promote the contemporary version of the Enlightenment project. They are intent upon imposing it around the world—and upon eliminating any vestige of the other Western traditions—the classical and the Christian.

The rejection of the Christian faith by Western elites does not mean that they have rejected all faiths. Despite the claims and conceits of rationalists and scientists, every human being believes in some things that cannot be proven (and therefore cannot be established by reason) or that cannot be seen (and therefore cannot be established by science) and that therefore have to be taken on faith. Ever since the coming of the Enlightenment, Western elites have adhered to a variety of secularist and universalist faiths, which in effect have been religions without God. Kenneth Minogue has identified these as (1) the idea of progress, (2) Marxism, and (3) “Olympianism,” which is the contemporary belief that an enlightened intellectual elite can and should bring about “human betterment . . . on a global scale by forcing the peoples of the world into a single community based on the universal enjoyment of appropriate human rights.” As Minogue demonstrates, each of these secular religions has identified Christianity as its enemy. Indeed, the Olympianism that dominates in our time sees the very idea of Western civilization itself to be an obstacle to its grand global and universalist project.

The universalist ideology of Olympian elites is largely consistent with, and perhaps reflective of, the expanding interests of global corporations. During the first half of the Cold War, American corporations found their most attractive business opportunities to be in Europe or other Western coun-

tries. During the second half of the Cold War, however, American multinational corporations expanded into non-Western regions. Finally, with the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the preferred arena for American multinational corporations became the entire world. For multinational, now global, corporations, it became important to be identified with ideals that appeared to be progressive and global, even inevitable and universal, and not to be identified with ideas and ideals that were Western and traditional.

The result of these developments has been the redefinition of the ideal economic arena from Western to global, of the ideal society from Western to multicultural, and the ideal political system from Western to transnational. There would be a universal empire—except that it will be called global governance, and a universal religion—except that it will be called human rights.

Historians usually date the beginning of the modern era at the end of the 15th century; the Italian Renaissance and the European explorations of the non-European world were major movements that inaugurated and shaped the new era. They were soon followed by others, such as the Reformation and the scientific exploration of the natural world. The postmodern era seems to have begun at the end of the 20th century, making the modern era just about half a millennium in length.

The modern era can be seen as the Western era: the defining movements originated in Europe, and Europeans spread, even imposed, them over the rest of the world. Similarly, the postmodern era can also be seen as the post-Western era, with most of the Western traditions not only rejected by non-Western societies, but also abandoned by the elites of Western societies. All of the elements of the postmodern movement originated in Europe (particularly in France), where they could be seen as logical deductions from the French Enlightenment, and postmodern ideologues have engaged in a compulsive anti-Western project in both Europe and America. They have been joined by their post-colonial counterparts in the non-Western world. Together, they form a grand alliance against Western civilization.

The principal enemy is the contemporary version of the Enlightenment, especially the French Enlightenment. Because of its universalist pretensions and illusions, its adherents have made the people of the West indiscriminating about other cultures and unconfident about their own. They have therefore made the West disoriented and vulnerable to assault from the East and especially from Islam. This assault may come from attacks by networks of Islamic terrorists or it may come from members of the larger and alienated Muslim communities now in the West. But for Western civilization, Islam is merely a

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disease of the skin; the Enlightenment has mutated into a disease of the heart.

Who stands to defend Western civilization in its authenticity and fullness? Certainly not liberals. Those in the intellectual sector are largely multiculturalists; those in the business sector are largely globalists; and those in the political sector largely represent these business and intellectual views. All adhere to the universalist ideology, and liberals have never liked tradition anyway. They only accept their own tradition, that of the Enlightenment, if they re-conceive of it as being not “tradition” but “progress.”

One would expect conservatives to like and support tradition. But among purported conservatives, it is important to make a distinction between traditional and neoconservatives. From their origins (be it as followers of Leon Trotsky or of Leo Strauss), neoconservatives have seen the Christian tradition as an alien, even a threatening, one. As for the classical tradition, their view of it has been formed by the decidedly untraditional interpretation of classical philosophy given by Strauss. The only Western tradition that neoconservatives want to defend is the Enlightenment. In recent years, they have wanted to advance it in the rest of the world with the establishment of a kind of American empire. This is not a conservative project but a radical and revolutionary one.

The true defenders of the Western traditions will be the

traditional conservatives. They are able to recognize that the central and crucial tradition of Western civilization is the Christian tradition, which has carried on the best elements of the classical tradition, while subordinating them to a higher Biblical truth. Christianity, in other words, kept the other Western traditions in balance. Perhaps in our time it is the calling of those few traditional conservatives found within the educated elite to reach out to the large numbers of Christians within their wider population, to help deepen their understanding of the major issues before us, and to give voice to their Christian—and Western—convictions.

The protagonists of the contemporary version of the Enlightenment may think that they will create a universal civilization, both abroad and at home, but the evidence is accumulating that they have instead opened the doors to the barbarians, both without (e.g., Islamic terrorists) and within (e.g., pagan disregard for human life).

The best defense against the new barbarians will be found in the Christian religion, for with it, Western civilization became the most creative, indeed the highest, civilization in human history. With a revival of the Christian tradition, Western civilization would not only prevail over the new barbarians, but it would become more truly civilized.

—*The American Conservative*, September 13, 2004, p. 22ff

America's Red Army

by Jennifer Verner

As radicals from across the country descend upon New York City this week in their malicious attempt to violently disrupt the Republican National Convention, it appears the perfect time to dissect the affiliations and leadership of one of the most influential anti-Bush “peace” groups to emerge since 9/11: Win Without War.

Comprised of 42 environmental, feminist, religious and human rights groups that claim to be united in promoting peaceful solutions for international problems, Win Without War first burst onto the political scene in December 2002, at an international press conference featuring leftist actor Mike Farrell. Although the organization was initiated with a letter signed by over 100 celebrities calling for an end to America's “imperialist” wars, with the help of David Fenton, the founder of the public relations firm Fenton Communications, and the rabidly anti-Bush internet outfit, Moveon.org, the campaign was presented as a non-partisan patchwork of American life. But while Fenton may want Americans to see Win Without War as being “middle of the road,” the sum of its parts paints a vastly different picture.

Fenton Communications is a “socially responsible” PR firm with a penchant for backing Marxist regimes, and Win

Without War boasts a number of “progressive” operatives, like the coalition's director, Tom Andrews, and Clinton employee Maggie Williams, who use non-profits to front the Democratic Party line.

In addition, elements of the fringe Left like Veterans for Peace, which held a solidarity convention in Havana with Cuban veterans of Angola in 1992, are also members of the Win Without War team. And, to top it off, funds are channeled through billionaire George Soros' Open Society Institute and the ultra-leftist Tides Foundation into many of the coalition members' bank accounts. Indeed, Win Without War isn't even close to the mainstream—it's the Left Bank.

The radical Left owes a great debt of gratitude to David Fenton. He has mixed neo-Marxist ideology with junk science, trial lawyers, labor, progressive millionaires, politicians, and radical policy wonks to construct a complex, moneymaking left-wing advocacy empire. Fenton Communications reported billing \$6 million in 2002, and will likely make much more this year with high profile clients like The Heinz Family Foundation, the aforementioned Open Society Institute, and Moveon.org.

Fenton has never forgotten his radical 60s roots, and

surrounds himself with like-minded comrades. His client list has included the Cuban-backed Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and Grenada's Maurice Bishop, who welcomed hundreds of Cuban and Soviet "advisors" to his small island before radical Marxist members of his own cabinet murdered him in October 1983 (Ten days later, the US invaded Grenada, and ended all Cuban military construction projects). Fenton Communications also had no trouble taking money from El Salvador's revolutionary Marxist guerrillas, the Farabundo Marti Liberation Front (FMLN), a group responsible for thousands of innocent deaths in that country's thirty-year civil war. Fenton's organization has also served as the mouthpiece for Nicaragua's Sandinistas.

Fenton presently makes a name for himself as a champion of environmental junk-science scare campaigns—the type favored by trial lawyers and "earth-friendly" companies like Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream. In a 2002 report titled, "Fear Profiteers: Do 'Socially Responsible' Businesses Sow Health Scares to Reap Monetary Rewards?" a highly respected panel of research scientists found "a tangled web of non-profit advocacy groups with a public relations 'ring leader' playing spider." The web spinner was none other than David Fenton.

But while he currently poses as a fervent environmentalist, Fenton has a militant political past and has cut his radical teeth in the 60s as a photographer for the pro-Vietcong Liberation News. He was a longtime friend of radical left icon Abbie Hoffman, and was also a leading advocate and promoter of the Nuclear Disarmament movement, a stronghold for Marxists after the end of the Vietnam War.

According to *Frontpage Magazine's* Thomas Ryan: "[Fenton] began his 'journalism' career as a photographer and media specialist for the Liberation News Service, which was named in admiration of and loyalty to the National Liberation of South Vietnam. The anti-American, Communist movement Fenton and his colleagues emulated called for the 'overthrow [of] the camouflaged colonial regime of the American imperialists and the dictatorial power of Ngo Dinh Diem, servant of the Americans, and [to] institute a government of national democratic union [in Vietnam].'"

Fenton was also a member of the White Panther Party (a Caucasian-led offshoot of the Black Panthers), and even did photography work for the Weathermen, the Communist/anarchist group which bombed the U.S. Capitol building, along with other prominent U.S. institutions in Washington, DC and New York.

At Win Without War, Fenton has gathered together many of his oldest friends and clients. The assembled cast of characters has a long history of pushing the far left's political agenda through Democratic Party activism backed by millions of dollars from wealthy philanthropic clients.

Tom Andrews is Fenton's assistant spin-doctor at WWW. Andrews served two terms in Congress beginning in 1990 and was called the House of Representatives' "most progressive member" in 1994. Andrews was defeated by Olympia Snowe (R-Maine) in a bid for the Senate, and subsequently started a decade-long career as a rabble-rouser for progressive Democratic Party causes in the murky world of left-wing non-profit organizations like Citizen Action, where he was a national programs director.

Fenton's firm worked for Citizen Action and paired the non-profit group with the Sierra Club (also Fenton's client) to target Republicans in 15 key Congressional races in the 1996 election cycle. In 1997, Citizen Action collapsed under an avalanche of scandal and corruption generated by its role in the 1996 Teamster's money laundering scandal. This happened just as Tom Andrews was leading a campaign to "clean up" the Republican Congress.

Andrews then joined forces with Fenton to form New Economy Communications, a non-profit media company supported by the far left Tides Foundation. In keeping with David Fenton's philosophy, New Economy Communications is known for smearing companies like Nike in anti-sweatshop campaigns and bringing media attention to obscure, Marxist-leaning anti-globalization groups.

The backbone of Win Without War is coalition member Moveon.org. Thousands of foot soldiers for the Democratic Internet sensation provide the bulk of Win Without War's membership. Moveon.org is currently partnering with Win Without War in a media campaign attacking the Bush administration's continued "ownership" of Iraq after the handover of sovereignty. The blatantly partisan ads also solicit donations for Moveon.org's 527 Political Action Committees.

Like Moveon.org, most Win Without War coalition members are closely linked to Fenton Communications. The NAACP, Medea Benjamin's Global Exchange and ice cream mogul Ben Cohen, founder of coalition member True Majority, all do business with Fenton. Other WWW members, like NOW, WAND, Peace Action and Fourth Freedom Forum have close ties with Fenton's rich clients or employees.

Three coalition members—the Sierra Club, Families USA, and Center for International Policy—are typical of the nexus between the Democratic Party, Fenton Communications and Win Without War. The Sierra Club, David Fenton's client since the earliest days of his company, is now a proud member of the peace coalition. The Sierra Club's "unaffiliated" political committee has already contributed thousand of dollars to Democratic candidates this election cycle. And that's not counting the soft money the PAC will dole out to Sierra-friendly Democrats when the campaign season heats up.

Families USA is an organization that claims to be “the voice of the healthcare consumer.” Yet this non-profit organization has such close ties with the Democratic Party, it was called the “de facto public relations manager of the Clinton Administration’s campaign for comprehensive health care legislation” by the *New York Times*. The organization also received over \$300,000 from George Soros’ Open Society Institute in 2002. Families USA has another connection to Fenton: Maggie Williams, who now serves as a board member for the health care group, is a former employee of Fenton communications. Williams was a president at the PR firm in between her years working at the White House for Hillary Clinton and her current job leading the staff at Bill Clinton’s Harlem office.

One of the most sophisticated of Fenton’s anti-war projects is the co-mingling of Win Without War and the Center for International Policy (CIP). Before 9/11, CIP, a Fenton Communications client, mainly acted as Fidel Castro’s greatest “think tank” ally. Much of its million-dollar budget was spent lobbying to end economic sanctions and travel restrictions against Cuba.

Now, it has another mission. Fenton has established a “war room” with CIP called The Iraq Policy Information Program (IPIP). Its main job is getting the anti-Bush foreign policy message out to the media and providing guests for talk shows. A featured speaker of the IPIP is former ambassador Joe Wilson, one of the Bush administration’s most vocal enemies. Like Moveon.org and Win Without War, the contact for the Iraq Policy Information Program is Fenton Communications. Win Without War also collects tax-deductible donations

through CIP.

In addition to progressive non-profits associated with Win Without War, Fenton Communications flaks for the politically motivated wealthy patrons who fuel their efforts. Fenton has a client list filled with America’s richest, most left-leaning philanthropic organizations. They include the David and Lucille Packard Foundation, the Ford Foundation, The Blue Moon Fund (formerly the W. Alton Jones Foundation), The Heinz Foundation and George Soros’ Open Society Institute. Fenton Communications undoubtedly crafted Win Without War with its left wing clients, like Soros and Heinz-Kerry, in mind. Through non-profit coalition members, John Kerry-supporting billionaires are free to dole out taxpayer subsidized millions to oust the Bush administration without spending limits and scrutiny from the Federal Election Commission.

Win Without War is not promoting human rights and a peaceful world. Coalition members NOW and Medea Benjamin’s “Global Exchange” aren’t concerned about whether or not the women of Afghanistan and Iraq are free from the torture and oppression of the Taliban and Saddam. Greenpeace and the Sierra Club could care less that the Bush Administration has removed the greatest environmental criminal in history. And Families USA would have been pleased to leave Iraq’s children without adequate nutrition and healthcare under Saddam Hussein and the corrupt Oil for Food program.

Win Without War is about raw power, soft money and selling a false, radical Left bill of goods in order to defeat the Bush administration in November. The sooner the American people find out the truth, the better.

—*FrontPageMagazine.com*, September 1, 2004

Castro’s Gulag and American Librarians

by Nat Hentoff

In the rising resistance against John Ashcroft’s USA Patriot Act and subsequent executive orders revising sections of the Bill of Rights, the attorney general has been particularly irritated by the attention the media are paying to the many librarians around the country who are expunging the records of borrowed books as soon as they are returned—in protest against Section 215 of the Patriot Act.

A provision of the section allows the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to bring a list of suspect books to libraries to find out who’s been reading them. The FBI gets a court order from the secret Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) court, before which only a government attorney appears.

All that the FISA court requires is a declaration from the attorney general that the search is “relevant” to an investiga-

tion of terrorism. Nothing further—no probable cause or even reasonable suspicion that any of the readers caught in this dragnet have anything to do with terrorism. And once the FBI comes, a gag order prevents librarians from telling anyone, including the press, that the visit has taken place.

The attorney general has said—attempting to quell the furor—that Section 215 has not yet been used against libraries. But he was careful not to say it would never be used, and there have been FBI visits to libraries, but the gag rule prevents details being made public.

These rebellious librarians are acting in accordance with the American Library Association’s (ALA) credo that affirms its support of Article 19 of the United Nation’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression.” Moreover, ALA Policy 58.1 (2) supports “human rights and intellectual freedom worldwide.”

Yet, at its January midwinter meeting in San Diego, the Governing Council of ALA overwhelmingly rejected an amendment by one of its members, Karen Schneider, calling for the

immediate release of the ten librarians among the seventy-five prisoners of conscience—as designated by Amnesty International—who were imprisoned by Fidel Castro in the spring of 2003. Among the journalists, labor organizers, medical doctors, and human rights workers locked away for sentences of twenty years or more were these independent librarians.

Because Schneider's resolution focused on the librarians among the free-speech dissidents, as she accurately calls them, all the majority of the Council could bring themselves to do was to express "deep concern" for the prisoners, without even mentioning the librarians. There are members of the Council, admirers of Fidel, who charged that these dissidents are part of the Bush administration plot to bring about "regime change" in Cuba.

Amnesty International calls all of the seventy-five in the gulag prisoners of conscience. Christine Chanet, a representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, says she "has received particularly alarming information about the conditions of detention of these people." Twenty of them are suffering from hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, and other ailments. They have received little or no medical attention. (The International Red Cross has been barred from Castro's prisons since 1989.)

Because I have joined a growing number of American librarians who strongly disagree with the Governing Council's disinclination to offend the Cuban dictator, I have been targeted by Eliades Acosta, director of Cuba's National Library (Biblioteca Nacional). Expressing his pleasure at the Council's defeat of Karen Schneider's amendment, and bristling at my support of it, Acosta asked accusingly, "What does Mr. Hentoff know of the real Cuba?"

My answer to him: "I know that if I were a Cuban, I'd be in prison."

As for the pro-democracy Cubans who have set up these libraries in their homes—including such publications forbidden in the official libraries as the International Declaration of Human Rights and works by George Orwell—the importance of the home libraries was emphasized in an August 2001 report by the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) in the Hague, an organization usually lauded by the American Library Association.

Susanne Seidel, director of the IFLA's Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression Office, wrote about "Free Access to Information in Cuba," after a visit there: "There is no doubt that a wide range of information or literature ... is unavailable in the (official) libraries of Cuba. Even

monitored to the extent that ordinary people may be inhibited or even prevented from gaining access to them. It can be argued that the fast growing number of independent libraries indicates the existence of an information gap and that they help *by supplying a need that otherwise cannot be filled by [official public libraries]*. [Emphasis added.]

Castro has the power, obviously, to continually expand that information gap by jailing more independent librarians. After Castro himself was imprisoned by the previous dictator of Cuba, however, he wrote about that instructive experience: "In prison, there were no rifles for training, no stone fortresses from which to shoot. Behind those walls, our rifles were books. And through study, stone by stone we built our fortress, the only one that is invincible: the fortress of ideas.

Nonviolently, the independent librarians also have been committed to making available to Cubans the invincible fortress of ideas. One of them is the widely respected journalist and poet Raul Rivero, who is in very poor health in his cell. His wife, Blanca Reyes, who has refused to be silenced, says, "What they found on him was a tape recorder, not a grenade."

I hope that believers in the freedom to read, when they go to our libraries, will ask the librarians which side they are on—that of the governing ALA Council or of the independent librarians in cells three feet wide and six feet long.

American librarians, vigorously protesting the Patriot Act, have not yet been imprisoned by John Ashcroft. And one free spirit among them, Karen Schneider—whose defeated amendment to free the Cuban Librarians has become internationally known among human rights workers—has started a Web site: www.freadom.info. Along with other free-expression librarians and supporters, she is asking anyone who clicks on to send e-mails to Castro, Amnesty International, and Jimmy Carter (who spoke for freedom to read and speak when he was in Cuba before the crackdown.) The message is "for the immediate release of the librarians... and until their release, for an improvement in their prison conditions." Freedom.info will continue to focus on other crises or specific events related to the freedom to read.

Letters and other messages to Castro have resulted in the release of independent Cuban librarian Julio Antonio Valdes, seriously ill with advanced kidney disease. The source of that emergency appeal was another Web site, www.friendsofcubanlibraries.org. Valdes was also declared a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International—though not by ALA's Governing Council.

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