

"Establishing" Religion

Christians have, for decades, suffered an organized assault that has driven expressions of Christianity out of the public school, the public square, and almost out of public life altogether. The rationale has been an absurd twisting and overinflation of the First Amendment prohibition on establishing a religion. Establishing a religion has a specific meaning: paying for ministers and churches out of taxpayer funds. To ban even voluntary prayer from the public schools, or to ban the teaching of religion, is a pettifogging willful misconstruction of the text and of the intent of the framers, in order to replace our former Christian culture with a left-secular one. The banning of creches in front of local town halls demonstrates how far the secularists will go—indeed shows how totalitarian they are in their drive to ban religion from public institutions.

Hence, in the competition of world-views, Christians have had to function with both hands tied behind their back. Since the competition, left-secularist world-view is not called a "religion," the ouster of the Christian world-view from the schools has left the path clear for left-secularism to conquer the field of ideas unchallenged.

Obviously, no libertarian can favor a genuine establishment of a church. Yet, it must be pointed out that the First Amendment was only supposed to apply to Congress, and not to the several states, and that some states continued to have an established church well past the establishment of

the American Republic. Connecticut, for example, continued the establishment of the Presbyterian Church past 1789, and yet we hear no stories of Connecticut groaning under intolerable despotism. So that if even an established church in one or two states need not be met with hysteria, what are we to think of all the fuss and feathers about a creche, or voluntary prayer or "In God We Trust" on American coins?

Restoring prayer, however, will scarcely at this date solve the grievous public school problem. Public schools are expensive and massive centers for cultural and ideological brainwashing, at which they are unfortunately far more effective than in teaching the 3R's or in keeping simple order within the schools. Any plan to begin dismantling the public school monstrosity is met with effective opposition by the teachers' and educators' unions. Truly radical change is needed to shift education from public to unregulated private schooling, religious and secular, as well as home schooling by parents.

Agenda for the Christian Right

These are just some of the issues that invite an alliance between paleolibertarians and the Christian Right. While the Christian Right contains many wonderful people, it too needs to get its own act together. It must take on two vital and necessary intra-Christian tasks, for which it needs a lot more spirit of confrontation and a lot less "compassion." In the first place, it must level hammer

blows against the pietist and pervasive Christian Left, the treacly, egalitarian, socialistic "We Shall Overcome" Left. Secondly, it must enter the real world by inveighing against the dispensationalists and their predictions and yearnings for an imminent Armageddon. Not only do their repeated predictions of Armageddon subject them to justifiable ridicule, but concentration on Armageddon fatally weakens their will to participate in political action and confrontation. In addition, their interpretation of the *Book of Revelation* makes the dispensationalists even more fanatical Zionists than Yitzhak Shamir and the *Likudniks*.

In sum, the task of paleolibertarians is to break out of the sectarian libertarian hole, and to forge alliances with cultural and social, as well as politico-economic, "reactionaries." The end of the Cold War, as well as the rise of "political correctness," has made totally obsolete the standard libertarian view that libertarians are either half-way between, or "above," both Right and Left. Once again, as before the late 1950's, libertarians should consider themselves people of the Right. ■

Ethnic Fury In The Caucasus: Sorting It Out

by M.N.R.

The Caucasus, as usual, is aflame, and we are in danger of

forgetting about this little mountainous region in our absorption with Bosnia and Somalia. I dare say that there are more ethnic nationalities per square inch there than any other place in the world, and, having learned about each other and rubbed elbows for many centuries, they are all out to cut each other's throats. World peace through understanding? Hah!

We all know about the fierce Armenian-Azeri struggle, with the Armenian stronghold of Nagorno (Mountain)-Karabakh locked as an enclave within Azerbaijan. So let us skip over that one.

Let us start by focussing on the Western Establishment's favorite Man-in-the-Caucasus, the incredibly beloved (in the U.S., that is) Georgian, Eduard Shevardnadze.

Shevardnadze, once Gorby's right-hand man as Foreign Minister, charmed his way into the hearts of the U.S. media and diplomatic corps, his greatest asset being the fact that he had converted from Communism to Social Democracy. How much better could he be? After Gorby was booted out, "Shevy" went back to take control of Georgia, by engineering the ouster of Georgian strongman Zviad Gamsakhurdia.

Gamsakhurdia's sin was to be elected as head of Georgia as a nationalist, and then to establish a dictatorship of himself and his family ("Gamsakhurdian socialism") over the county. Shevy then led a "democratic" coup d'état that ousted Zviad, who retreated to his homeland and stronghold in the west of Georgia to carry on resistance and guerrilla warfare against the Shevy regime.

Enter the heroic and much-persecuted Abkhazians. Abkhazia is an autonomous republic *within* the northwest of the republic of Georgia. The Abkhazians are particularly exercised

by the fact that they, the Abkhazians, are not masters even in their own sub-republic, where they constitute only 18% of the sub-country of Abkhazia, the rest being such foreigners as the Georgians and other ethnic groups in the region.

The Abkhazians took advantage of the turmoil, and rose up against Georgian tyranny, capturing

the main Abkhazian city. Shevardnadze typically forgot about his own professed devotion to ethnic national freedom, and sent an army to put down the Abkhazians, under the flimsy pretext that these were only pseudo-Abkhazians fronting for the dread Gamsakhurdia,

whose region is only a few miles southward on the west coast of Georgia.

In the meanwhile, the Georgians were also suppressing another sub-nationality on their north-central border, the South Ossetians. The South Ossetians are spending their lives yearning to break away from their Georgian oppressors, and to join their brethren across the border in North Ossetia. The two halves of the Ossetian territory were arbitrarily separated by Stalin and dumped into different republics, in a typical Stalinist ploy to split and wreck peoples who were insufficiently Stalinist.

Meanwhile, on the northern border, the North Ossetians are cheek-by-jowl with another autonomous sub-republic within the Russian Federated Republic, Chechen-Ingushia. In my ignorance I had thought that this had always been the name of the region, but it turns out that Stalin—again!—had punished both the unruly Chechens and the Ingush by forcing them to merge into one sub-republic.

Now it turns out that the Ingush, in the western half of Chechen-Ingushia, had been forced to hand a chunk of their land to North Ossetia, and the Ossetians are showing no signs of giving it up. In the meanwhile, the Chechens complain that *they* had been shoved under the tyranny of the Ingush by Stalin's actions.

So: to sum up the goals for ethnic justice in the Caucasus:

Nagorno-Karabakh is Armenian.

Abkhazia for the Abkhazians; Georgians Out!

Enter the heroic and much-persecuted Abkhazians.