

about social and moral issues.

Two presidential campaigns later, however, the Buchanan movement appeared to have spent itself, dissolving in the dismal results of the Reform Party campaign of 2000. With no Buchanan disciples now holding office or party posts, it seems fair to ask: Is the movement really exhausted, and, if so, should we assess Buchanan's political impact?

Scotchie, maintaining some distance, provides a cordial and accurate recounting of Buchanan's political life. Although he does not shy away from discussing arguments sparked by some of Buchanan's political decisions—such as his controversial selection of Ezola Foster as his running mate in 2000—Scotchie, perhaps wisely, avoids any assessment of them. After all, Buchanan is still rocking the cosmopolitans' boat, most recently through his magazine, the *American Conservative*. And we do not yet know whether some young member of the Buchanan Brigades will one day appear in Congress or in some other leadership position on the American right.

We can, however, evaluate the impact of some conservative figures—William F. Buckley, Jr., for example—and seek comparisons. Buckley's magazine, *National Review*, and books (*God and Man at Yale*, *Up From Liberalism*, etc.) helped

launch modern American conservatism as well as the 1964 Goldwater campaign that produced a generation of conservative activists. Could the repercussions of the Buchanan movement be analogous to the events that followed in Buckley's wake? If so, that might provide grounds for optimism.

Given the temper of today's political warfare between paleoconservatives and neoconservatives and the nature of the threat to the American people—which changed from communism abroad to cultural Marxism at home—Buckley-Goldwater conservatism may well be dead, having rendered itself harmless to an increasingly multiculturalist cosmopolitan establishment by merging with the now-globalist Republican Party.

Yet Buchanan's candidacies and the wide reception of his books reveal that the spirit of resistance that characterized some of early Buckley-Goldwater conservatism still lives, even though no Buckley-Goldwater conservative could have written *The Death of the West*. Thus, a new postconservative right may be emerging—thanks, in no small measure, to Patrick Buchanan.

Like Buckley before him, Buchanan's political trajectory includes writing politically charged (though more serious and significant) books, especially the best-sell-

ing *Death of the West*, and founding a magazine. *The Great Betrayal* and *A Republic, Not an Empire* (also a best-seller) are substantive historical investigations that provide the philosophical context and factual base for Buchanan's—and, perhaps, a postconservative—challenge to the global-capitalist establishment. Also like Buckley, who helped found Young Americans for Freedom to propagate his conservatism, Buchanan founded the American Cause, which sponsors conferences on themes important in the post-conservative era. (The most recent meeting examined mass immigration, which GOP conservatives have joined the far left in defending.)

Whether his impact will be seen as lasting or ephemeral, Buchanan undertook political tasks that no one else was willing to do at the time, tasks that had to be accomplished in some fashion if the American right was to survive assaults by globalists and immigrationists parading as standard-bearers of American culture and values. Today, Buchanan remains the right's liveliest and most quotable writer and is certainly among the most courageous. Even after the ignominious results of his 2000 presidential run, Buchanan published a runaway best-selling book, founded a magazine, and is still fighting—all testimony to his remarkable resilience. It is arguable that Pat Buchanan has done more for the American right than any other figure, but with far less popular acknowledgment. Ultimately, however, how he is seen in the future will depend less on the content of those rather solid accomplishments than on the objective political and cultural conditions that follow.

An assessment now would simply be too early. In the interim, Scotchie's biography provides a politically accurate history of the events influencing Buchanan and the events Buchanan hoped to influence. Joseph Scotchie has the journalist's flair for capturing the essential details without including the extraneous ones, while bringing forgotten controversies back to life. Students of contemporary politics will need this book if they intend to understand the controversies and conflicts of the 90's and perhaps glimpse the origins of an as-yet-unseen postconservatism.

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## Cooper Tightening Staves on a Barrel

—ca. 1848-52—

after the painting by J.-F. Millet (1814-75)

by David Middleton

His mallet raised again to strike a wedge  
Forcing stretched vine-hoops down to brace the staves  
And make oak barrels watertight for wine,  
The cooper finds the rhythm of his craft.

The barrel rises higher than his eyes  
That stare through his own cast shadow at the task  
As though he nailed a silhouette on wood:  
His artisan's blue tunic black with blood.

The worker and his work are all but one,  
Descended from Burgundian books of hours  
Through almanacs to picture magazines,  
An emblem of September's ripened vines

For him who by the strokes of his poised brush  
Raised up this mallet made of ink and oil  
While wine-drunk craftsmen, come from Gothic stone,  
Staggered across the Paris barricades.

by Samuel Francis

# The Old Right Failure

No sooner had at least a dozen or so counterattacks on David Frum's silly rant against paleoconservatives in the April 7 issue of *National Review* appeared in print or on the internet than the sole defense of the Frum article of which I am aware popped up under the name of William Rusher. Some paleos were willing to bet that the author was not the real William Rusher, onetime publisher of *National Review* and always respected as one of the magazine's stalwarts against the tendencies of some of its other editors to wobble ideologically; alas, those who made such wagers soon parted with their money. In attempting to understand why this elder statesman of the American right, now retired and living in San Francisco, had embraced (so to speak) Mr. Frum, most readers seemed to conclude that his elderliness had gotten the better of his statesmanship. Nowhere in his column did Mr. Rusher bother to notice that not everyone on the right agreed with Mr. Frum, let alone that a small library had already been written rejecting his claims.

The truth is that Mr. Rusher, however flawed his reasoning in his column, shows little sign of senility or decrepitude. The more likely explanation of why this warrior of the Old Right was so quick to clamber into bed with neoconservatives who despise and reject most of what he spent his career defending has to do with the flaws of the Old Right itself. Perhaps that political and intellectual movement was born senile, but, for all the complaints, criticisms, and conspiracy theories from paleoconservatives about how the neocons took over the conservative movement, no small part of the blame for their victory must lie at the feet of the Old Right itself.

Paleoconservatism and the Old Right are not the same thing, a point Mr. Frum in his article somewhat grasped but more than somewhat misunderstood. Paleoconservatism is a movement initiated and led by conservatives who, as individuals, generally were part of and came out of the Old Right but who, as they began to form a new identity under a new label in the late 1980's, eventually came to differ with certain themes and values of the Old Right while, at the same time, ac-

cepting others. By the dawn of the 1990's, paleoconservatism had essentially graduated from what was left of the old conservative movement of the 1950's and 60's, had mounted a powerful critique of neoconservatism, and possessed both a capable phalanx of writers and thinkers centered around this magazine and a highly articulate, nationally known political ally in Pat Buchanan. While it remained on friendly terms and even collaborated with the Old Right, paleoconservatism increasingly distinguished itself from that body of ideas.

If there is one major difference between the Old Right and paleoconservatism, it probably lies in the inherent radicalism of the latter, a trait that causes disquiet among some Old Right adherents, and the . . . well . . . "conservatism" of the former.

Paleoconservatism can be defined as a body of thought that identifies with and defends what paleos call the "Old Republic"—not just the kind of government but the kind of society, economy, and culture that flourished (or is said to have flourished; whether it was an historical reality rather than a convenient myth is not, at the moment, important) before the American Civil War and, in a wounded condition, managed to endure until overthrown in the wake of the two world wars, the Depression, and the emergence of a mammoth federal government fused with equally mammoth corporations, unions, universities, media, and other mass social, political, and cultural organizations—in short, the managerial revolution that Old Right theorist James Burnham analyzed.

The premise of paleoconservatism, in other words, is that the Old Republic no longer exists and that the revolution against it, the traditional identity of the American order, has already occurred—not (as neoconservatives believe) that a gang of New Leftists or communists are planning a revolution some time in the future. In this premise, the paleos are in agreement with the anti-interventionist classical liberal Garet Garrett, who wrote in his 1938 monograph, *The Revolution Was*,

There are those who still think they



are holding the pass against a revolution that may be coming up the road. But they are gazing in the wrong direction. The revolution is behind them. It went by in the Night of Depression, singing songs to freedom.

That does not seem to have been the premise of the Old Right, which, taking Edmund Burke as one of its principal icons, emulated Burke in formulating what was essentially a defense of an existing order. To the Old Right, post-World War II America was analogous to the old regime that Burke defended against the French Revolution and Enlightenment. It was a prerevolutionary order continuous with the traditional identity of the United States and the West, and, for the most part, the Old Right envisioned itself as "holding the pass against a revolution that may be coming up the road." In theory, of course, many of the Old Right saw that this claim was untrue—Richard Weaver and the Southern Agrarians, in particular, were fairly explicit in their rejection of the modern, secularized, materialistic, and basically repressive regime that had triumphed in the United States—but most Old Rightists (even most "traditionalists," let alone the "fusionists" and libertarians) in practice were perfectly content with the Republican Party, the fake "free enterprise" of a highly regulated managerial capitalism based on mass production and consumption, and the planned and plastic "culture"—ugly, vulgar, and increasingly vicious—that came to prevail in the country by the 1950's.

As long as television served up rigged quiz shows and "family-oriented" sit-coms in which the father was the eternal butt of ridicule and rebellion from his wife, children, and neighbors, most Old Rightists were perfectly happy to claim that mod-