

March 19, 2026

Free Speech for Me But Not for Thee

(1)

Last week, the chair of the Federal Communications Commission threatened to rescind the broadcast licenses of media entities that do not relate events in Iran or Ukraine as the Trump administration would like them to be related. He also attacked The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times for the same reasons. This followed by one day a verbal attack on CNN by the Secretary of Defense who made known his bitter unhappiness with CNN's coverage of the Iran war.

Yet, CNN is not regulated by the FCC, which only regulates broadcast media — not cable or streaming; and newspapers, thanks be to God, are totally unregulated.

So, what's going on here?

What's going on is chilling. Chilling is government behavior toward speech that is intended to give the speaker pause or fear such that the speaker has second thoughts about speaking. Chilling is prohibited by the First Amendment and has been repudiated by the Supreme Court.

Here is the backstory.

The freedoms of speech and of the press are expressly protected by the First Amendment and have enjoyed wide reinforcement by the courts since the mid-1960s. The original Constitution lacked an express protection for public speech and for the printed word. Yet, the Federalists who were the prime political movers in the ratification of the Constitution by the states feared that some of the states would leave the union if a bill of restraints were not imposed on the new federal government by way of amendments.

The critical historical figure here is James Madison, who was initially a Federalist at the creation of the republic but became an anti-Federalist soon thereafter. Madison became repulsed at the federal government taking control of the banking system with a wholly owned bank, for which he argued fiercely there is no authority in the Constitution.

As chair of the House of Representatives committee to draft a bill of restraints, Madison embraced language from the Anti-Federalist Papers, which were a series of pamphlets arguing against ratification of the Constitution. Madison — who wrote the Constitution and authored about a third of the Federalist Papers that argued in favor of ratification — saw the grasping hand of government growth, and it was enough for him to embrace in part the arguments made against his Constitution.

Part of Madison's genius was to call the bill of restraints a Bill of Rights and to ground much of it in natural law. Natural law teaches that all human adults with unimpaired mental faculties are able to discern right from wrong, good from evil, and truth from falsity using human reason, free from government interference.

Stated differently, the Bill of Rights does not create rights; it presumes their preexistence, and it prevents the government from interfering with them. Thus, the First Amendment does not say that Congress shall grant the freedom of speech or of the

MARCH 23, 2026

JCRMC Packer

press; it says that Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech or of the press.

Madison insisted that the word "the" precede the word "freedom" in order to emphasize its existence before the government came into being. Where did the freedoms of speech and press originate? They originated in our humanity.

Thus, every person may think as he wishes and say what he thinks and publish what he says, not because of the First Amendment but because these rights — thought, speech, press — are integral to our humanity. Of course, they are also integral to liberal democracy in the form of our republic, as well.

When the federal government began regulating the airwaves in the heyday of radio, and before television came along, it imposed an equal time rule. This rule was particularly acute during the growth of television in the 1960s and 1970s. Then along came a more libertarian attitude in the Reagan administration, and the equal time rule was formally repealed in 1987.

This was a rule promulgated by the FCC. It was not a statute enacted by Congress. That's the point of the FCC chair's chilling. He knows and the broadcast networks and their local television stations know that a simple vote of three FCC commissioners can reinstate the equal time rule, thereby putting the heavy hand of government back into the business of evaluating the content of speech. Of course, this would only apply to new licenses, not to those already in existence, most of which expire in 2028.

But the damage is done. The government is threatening to change the rules and even put broadcast giants out of business because they may paint the war in Iran in an unflattering light.

Now back to the First Amendment. The whole purpose of the First Amendment is to keep the government out of the business of speech. The chair of the FCC has the same natural free speech rights as the rest of us, but the government — which is an artificial entity based on a monopoly of force over a defined geographic location — has no free speech rights.

The government has no basis to prefer some speech over others. If that were not so, then we'd not have a liberal democracy that thrives on the unfettered ability of all persons to speak their minds on matters of public interest without fear of incurring the wrath of the government. An argument should rise or fall in the marketplace of ideas based on its appeal to an audience, not government coercion or censorship, which are antithetical to the essence of liberal democracy.

This is a profound constitutional issue, not a political one. If the government could frame the debate about itself, it wouldn't be a debate. And if a Donald Trump-dominated FCC can punish broadcasters for headlines critical of the war, couldn't a Gavin Newsom-dominated FCC punish broadcasters for headlines favorable to gun rights?

By Andrew P. Napolitano

Why does the government hate and fear the speech of its critics?

Washington's Latest Big Lie: Iran's 47-Years War on America

by David Stockman | Mar 11, 2026 | 9 Comments

Part 1.

3

At the center of the White House justification for launching still another Forever War stands the most hideous neocon lie yet. And it's one that blatantly betrays every campaign promise the Donald ever made on the subject.

The latest Big Lie, of course, is that rather than *starting* another Forever War, the Donald is *ending* once and for all Iran's purported 47-Year War on America. And while the latter may sound vaguely plausible to regular consumers of MSM spin, the actual facts that materialized from 1953 to 2026 suggest that this "47-Years War" narrative is something quite different: Namely, a mindless and fraudulent concoction from the White House coms department that has apparently been focus group-tested exclusively on elementary school children or MAGA Kool-aid drinkers, as the case may be.

In fact, from the CIA engineered *coup d etat* against Iran's democratically elected Prime Minister in 1953, to Washington's aid to Saddam Hussein during Iraq's 1980s invasion of Iran, to the crushing economic sanctions which have been battering Iran's economy for years since the 1990s, to the Donald's bombing raid on Iran's nonexistent nuclear weapons program last June, there's been a war alright.

But it is one that has originated far more in Washington than in Tehran – a truth that becomes starkly evident when you grasp just one cardinal fact: Namely, that Iran has never, ever mattered to America's "Homeland Security".

Not during the Cold War, when Washington imposed the Shah's tyrannical and larcenous regime on the Iranian people in order to block the alleged advances of the Soviet Union; and also not since 1979, either, when Iranians fell prey to the benighted rule of the mullahs that the geniuses on the Potomac helped bring to power after the Shah was literally driven from the Peacock Throne by a mass uprising of the Iranian people.

Needless to say, it is predictably certain that Washington military interventions unrelated to true homeland security are perforce based on lies, pretexts, false flags and fabricated narratives. Without these ritualized justifications, even run-of-the-mill democratic politicians are not easily conscripted into the ranks of war-mongers.

As it happened, however, the successive war banners of anti-communism back then and anti-terrorism now falsely provided the cover story for Empire. But in both cases their attachment to mainly illusory Iranian threats rested on thin gruel, at best.

Thus, during the Cold War it didn't matter which camp Iran was in. That's because America had an invincible nuclear deterrent, as Khrushchev conceded during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis; and it was one which required neither bases abroad nor alliances across the length and breadth of the planet, and most certainly not in the Persian Gulf.

Likewise, regardless of whether Iran aligned with the free world or the Soviet bloc, it didn't make any difference to the liberty and safety of the American people domiciled at home from sea-to-shinning-sea. There simply wasn't the chance of a snowball in the hot place that the Red Army and Navy had either the intention or capability to launch a

conventional military invasion of the US homeland during the Cold War—safely nestled as it was inside the the Great Atlantic and Pacific Moats.

Accordingly, all of the endless US political and military maneuvering aboard and especially in the middle east from 1953 through 1979 – via Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Iran etc. – amounted to little more than pointless exercises in Washington chest-beating that added not an iota to America's Homeland security. Indeed, for a fleeting moment in 1956 President Eisenhower even got it right when he told Israel – backed by France and England – to stay the hell in its own lane during the so-called Suez crisis. And Ike's writ, in fact, should have been the end of the maneuvering in the region.

But it wasn't. The incipient Warfare State on the banks of the Potomac was always on the prowl for meddling, engagement and military intervention if need be. In part, that's because the military-industrial complex needed an excuse for extensive weapons procurements as well as periodic live fire testing grounds (i.e. Forever Wars), while the apparatchiks of the Warfare State needed foes, crises, strategies, negotiations, threats and allies to stay busy, engaged, self-important and funded.

With respect to the middle east these imperatives became especially cogent after the so-called Arab embargo in October 1973. Even then, however, there was no need for middle eastern allies or the Fifth Fleet or today's extensive array of bases in the Persian Gulf and surrounding regions. That's because assuring adequate oil supplies and sustainable, economically-based petroleum prices was, is and always has been the job of Mr. Market, not missiles, bombs, tanks and torpedoes.

Unfortunately, however, the false Kissingerian idea of the 1970s that America's economy and oil supply depended upon the Fifth Fleet patrolling the Persian Gulf and its access routes caused Washington to stay engaged in the internecine rivalries and historic conflicts of the region even during the fading years of the Soviet Empire from 1979 to 1991.

In fact, however, the whole Kissingerian apparatus of Empire in the Persian Gulf was unnecessary because any and all countries which hosted oil production or processing facilities, whether big, little or middle-sized, have been willing – and mostly even eager – to sell oil on the world market. The reason was not statesmanship or affinity for America, but simply that these regimes – good, bad and indifferent – everywhere and always have needed the oil revenue to support their operations, domestic welfare and military capacities.

In this context, the first untoward event of the so-called 45 Years War set the tone. The students who seized the US embassy were no threat to America whatsoever, and they ransacked the embassy in November 1979 for a self-evident reason. To wit, the Shah had fled in February and there had arisen a broad coalition government of anti-Shah dissidents from a wide spectrum of factions inside newly liberated Iran.

As it happened, the new government was installed in February 1979 and was known as the Provisional Revolutionary Government. The latter was formally established after Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini returned from exile on February 1 and appointed Mehdi Bazargan as prime minister on February 5, 1979.

The provisional government was intended as a transitional body to oversee the shift from monarchy to an Islamic Republic, with responsibilities including drafting a new constitution and holding elections. Bazargan, a veteran opposition figure from the religious-nationalist Freedom Movement of Iran, led a cabinet that emphasized Islamic principles while aiming for stability and reforms.

Initially, the new government was broad-based rather than fully dominated by Khomeini and Islamic hardliners. Bazargan's cabinet included a mix of moderates, nationalists, secular intellectuals, and moderate Islamists, reflecting the diverse coalition that had driven the Revolution – including leftists, liberals, and bazaar merchants – to reassure the middle class and international observers.

5

But in short order what amounted in Iran to a “February Revolution” counterpart to the fall of the Czar in February 1917 and the subsequent rise of a broadly based Kerensky-led social democrat government in Russia, succumbed to the latter's equivalent next phase. That is, an Islamic-flavored Bolshevik takeover in November 1979 – aided and abetted by the foolish Empire Builders on the Potomac.

To wit, Washington should have been smart enough to recognize its 26-year long tool of Empire – the Shah – had brought untold misery and harm to the Iranian people and therefore returned him to Tehran to face the justice he deserved. But instead, Deep Stater David Rockefeller persuaded the well meaning but inept Jimmy Carter to allow the Shah to take refuge in the United States, allegedly for cancer treatment.

Alas, that was the spark that turned the peaceful Iranian Revolution in a more disruptive direction. Accordingly, on November 4, 1979 between 300-500 students in Tehran, known as the Muslim Student Followers of the Imam's Line, swarmed the US Embassy and took 66 American diplomats and embassy employees hostage.

As it happened, the demands of the students who took over the embassy and ransacked it for evidence of US collaborators in the Shah's government were actually not unreasonable and included essentially three items:

- Extradition of the Shah to face justice in Iran.
- An apology from the US for the 1953 CIA-led coup.
- The return of about \$20 billion of Iranian assets that the Shah had pilfered and which had been seized by the US at the time of the February Revolution.

In the context of a peaceful Republic that did not go abroad in search of monsters to destroy, these should have been easy gives. If they had been granted, there never would have been the 444 days of the captivity drama on live TV. Nor would the aborted Desert One rescue attempt in April 1980 have inflamed public opinion about American weakness during the 1980 campaign.

But the policy machinery in the Carter Administration was firmly in the hands of Cold Warriors and Empire Firsters, led by the detestable National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski. The latter insisted that maintenance of Empire required –

- protecting a fallen Washington ally.
- refusing to give in to the alleged “blackmail” via bargaining for return of the hostages.
- treating the essentially idealistic and religious minded students as “terrorists” who should be given no quarter.

The rest is history, as they say. The prolonged hostage standoff and Washington's intransigence on returning the Shah – which the Iranian students interpreted as evidence that Washington ended to crush the Revolution and return the monarchy at the earliest possible time – generated deep fissures inside the interim government

Tensions arose quickly between Bazargan's pragmatic approach – favoring gradual reforms, diplomacy, and limiting clerical overreach – and the hardliners' push for rapid Islamization, purges of former regime officials, and revolutionary justice. At length, the

prolonged standoff with Washington enabled Islamic hardliners to consolidate control and purge even leftist secularists.

Accordingly, early on during the hostage standoff the provisional government resigned on November 6, 1979, thereby empowering the hardliners. Consequently, the Revolutionary Council of Islamic theocrats assumed direct governance until the Islamic Republic's subsequent institutionalization.

In the hindsight of history, the damage to the security and economic health of the American Republic owing to the framework of Empire is plain as day. At that point in time, as well as any time since 1953 and before, Iran did not matter a whit to the Homeland Security of America.

By Thanksgiving 1979, the US government could have returned the Shah, given back the stolen money and apologized for 1953, and the hostages would have surely been returned forthwith. Moreover, the odds are strong, indeed, that a more broad-based secular-oriented government would remained in power rather than the takeover of the Revolution by the hardliner theocracy that Washington's Empire First stance had enabled.

Yet that was only the beginning of the mayhem in Iran that resulted from Washington's Empire First policy during the Cold War and its final phases. By staying in the region for no good reason of Homeland Security, there quickly followed during 1980s the disaster at the Marine Barracks in Lebanon in 1983, the US intervention in favor of Saddam Hussein in his invasion of Iran during the first half of the decade and the US military's shootdown of the Iranian airliner with 290 civilians aboard in 1988.

None of these formative events amount to elements of the White House's putative "47 Years War on America" narrative. Actually, they are more nearly the opposite, as we will amplify further in Part 2.

David Stockman was a two-term Congressman from Michigan. He was also the Director of the Office of Management and Budget under President Ronald Reagan. After leaving the White House, Stockman had a 20-year career on Wall Street. He's the author of three books, The Triumph of Politics: Why the Reagan Revolution Failed, The Great Deformation: The Corruption of Capitalism in America, TRUMPED! A Nation on the Brink of Ruin... And How to Bring It Back, and the recently released Great Money Bubble: Protect Yourself From The Coming Inflation Storm. He also is founder of David Stockman's Contra Corner and David Stockman's Bubble Finance Trader.

CHILDRENS GRAVE SITE
MIWAB IRAN



The Two Different Glimpses Of Hell

G

By DR. DONALD DeMARCO

Who am I? Am I a child of God, endowed with a unique destiny and the mandate to love others? Or am I merely what other people think of me? The former is an important teaching of the Christian tradition. The latter is a dominant concern for the existentialist philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre.

We all know how important it is to make a good impression, to have others think well of us. The existential problem here is that in seeking the esteem of others, we risk losing a sense of who we really are. As we abandon our God-given personality in courting the approval of others, we become subject to their various views of us, some of which can be very critical. Without a strong personality to defend against negative opinions, we are unable to bear what people may think of us. T. S. Eliot calls attention to this problem in his poem, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*. The hapless Prufrock desperately seeks the approval of others, but forfeits his personality in the process: "And I have known the eyes already, known them all — The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase." He is the victim of a stereotype, and in the end of the poem, drowns.

Perhaps the most celebrated and dramatic portrayal of the futility of trying to live in the gaze of others appears in Jean-Paul Sartre's play, *No Exit*. Three characters find themselves eternally imprisoned in a room that has no exit. There are no mirrors available. Consequently, each of the three is reliant on the viewpoints of the other two. They cannot see their own faces. In the play, the three get on each other's nerves. An intolerable situation builds to a crescendo. Garcin, one of the characters, enunciates the essential meaning of the play: "So this is hell. I'd never have believed it. You remember all we were told about the torture-chambers, the fire and brimstone, the 'burning marl.' Old wives' tales! There's no need for red-hot poker. HELL IS — OTHER PEOPLE!"

Sartre, being an atheist, is not referring to hell in the traditional sense. The three who are trapped in a room without any possibility of escape experience a condition that is "hell-like," more than it is Hell. He is alluding to a hell on earth. This is why his view is shocking. Can there really be hell on earth? Yes, says Sartre, because people who surround me look at me as an object they can manipulate at will. To employ Sartre's word, they "cannibalise" me.

Sartre is on good ground in arguing for personal authenticity. But this project becomes extremely difficult, perhaps even unlikely, in a world in which people see each other as objects. "Life begins," as Sartre declares, "On the far side of despair." There is no need for the hell of the theologians. Life

on earth is a living hell.

Sartre's philosophy glorifies the importance of the free individual while neglecting his responsibilities to others. It is a one-sided view of the human being. His view has been compared with the words Thornton Wilder places in the mouth of his Julius Caesar: "How terrifying and glorious the role of man if, indeed, without guidance and without consolation he must create from his own vitals the meaning for his existence and write the rules whereby he lives."

By contrast, personalist philosophers such as Jacques Maritain, Etienne Gilson, Nikolai Berdyaev, Emmanuel Mounier, and others, have a more comprehensive understanding of the human being. They see him as a "person" who possesses unique talents and directs his talents through love to other people. They belong to a tradition that views hell as a place where people suffer as a result of rejecting God's love. In this supernatural hell, Sartre's notion of hell, being other people, can be applied. The distinguished theologian Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, in his book, *Life Everlasting*, states matter-of-factly, "Hatred of God involves hatred of neighbor. As the blessed love one another, the damned hate one another. In hell there is no love, only envy and isolation. Condemned souls wish their own condemnation to be universal." This view is also held by St. Thomas Aquinas: "Even as in the blessed in heaven there will be most perfect charity, so in the damned there will be the most perfect hate" (*Summa Theologiae*, *Supplementum*, q. 98, a. 4).

Sartre's image of hate on earth has much in common with the traditional notion of hell. He has the inmates hating each other for eternity in a place from which there is no escape. His view, on the other hand, sidesteps love and avoids God. He sees hell as a purely human creation. In this regard, he is being pessimistic. "Man," he declares, "is a useless passion."

Here are two different glimpses of hell from radically different lines of thinking. In the traditional sense it is the self that enters hell because he freely rejected God. In the Sartrean sense, a person experiences a hell-like situation because of the effect that others have on him. Sartre blames others for constructing hell; traditional theologians place the guilt squarely on the unrepentant individual.

Nonetheless, Jean-Paul Sartre has bequeathed to us an important message. We should be true to ourselves and be very careful about how much we want to cultivate a flattering image in the eyes of others. Cultivating an image can be a dangerous endeavor.



This Is What It Looks Like When You Give Zionists Everything They Want

CAITLIN JOHNSTONE • MARCH 17, 2026 •

This is what it looks like when you give Zionists everything they want. This is Zionism put into practice.

The wars.

The massacres.

The bombed-out schools and hospitals.

The millions of displaced individuals.

The invasion of Lebanon

The explosions carpeting Tehran.

The hollowed-out moonscape of Gaza.

The horrific pogroms in the West Bank.

The child amputees.

The smell of rotting corpses.

The assassinated doctors and journalists.

The blackened sky and the poisoned water.

The nonstop deluge of brain-melting propaganda.

The aggressive promotion of Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism.

The erosion of free speech rights throughout the western world.

The corrupt warmongering politicians.

The legions of online hasbara trolls.

The soaring fuel prices.

Money which could pay for social services buying bombs for Israel instead.

All the death, destruction, instability and suffering that's being visited upon countless civilians throughout west Asia.

This is Zionism. This is what it looks like when you apply the political ideology of forcibly imposing the existence of a Jewish ethnonationalist apartheid state on historic Palestine. This is it. You're looking at it.

There is no alternate-reality version of Zionism where all these nightmares are not happening. There is no other kind of Zionism out there waiting in the wings. The liberal Zionist fantasy of a peaceful, egalitarian Israel is just that: a fantasy. It has never existed in real life.

In real life Israel cannot exist without nonstop violence and abuse. It's like a house that will fall down if it's not in a constant state of construction. At some point you realize the house should never have been built where it was built, and that steps need to be taken to rectify this error.

Zionism is a failed experiment. How do we know? Look around you.

Time to pull the plug.

The Unz Review • An Alternative Media Selection
A Collection of Interesting, Important, and Controversial Perspectives Largely Excluded from the American Mainstream Media

Another war we're not supposed to see

By Patrick LAWRENCE

March 12, 2026 | EDITOR'S CHOICE

You have to figure, if those waging war — and covering it — dedicate themselves this assiduously to keeping things hidden, there are surely things to hide.

6

I know for a fact that *The New York Times* has a multitude of correspondents on the ground in West Asia — the Gulf states, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Egypt, Turkey, etc. It goes without saying the *Times* is thick on the ground in Israel: Between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem I count more than a dozen correspondents and reporters who have been hired locally.

This is a lot of expensive people to field. What in hell are they all doing now that a world-altering war rages around them? My short answer: assiduously not covering it.

And the *Times* is emblematic, as it so often is, of the rest of mainstream media: You see the same mix everywhere of propaganda favoring U.S.–Israeli aggression and multiple sins of omission.

You always have to look good in this profession — good meaning serious, of discerning eye and piercing insight, “without fear or favor” and all that. You have to look like you are “on the story.” *Times* people are practiced in these ways. It may be said this is what they do for a living.

But looking like you are on the story is not the same as being on the story. And *Times* correspondents are not very good at this latter pursuit.

There is Ismaeel Naar, for instance. Ismaeel Naar works out of the Dubai bureau and covers the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain. Sound authorities publishing and appearing in independent media report that many, most or all U.S. military bases in these nations have been either destroyed or have been rendered inoperable since the U.S.–Israeli war against Iran began on Feb. 28.

Military personnel on these bases have been moved to hotels and the Iranians have attacked these hotels, you can read in independent press reports.

Here are the headlines atop a few of Ismaeel Naar’s recent stories: “Israel Begins Assault in Southern Lebanon, raising fears of Wider Incursion (March 5), “Desperate Travelers Wait as Dubai Resumes a Few Flights” (March 3) and, published March 2, “Qatar Says Its Air Force Shot Down Two Iranian Bomber Jets.”

Put the headlines against what appears to be the state of things: Ismaeel Naar is not “on the story” but, the important thing, he looks like he is on the story.

Ismaeel Naar might have taken an interest, to finish this point, in determining whether the Qataris actually brought down two Iranian warplanes or if they are simply saying they did. But this kind omission is so common all over the Western press it is a little Quixotic even to note it.

A Post–It note to Ismaeel: The story is not what the Qataris said. It is what happened or did not.

I don’t even want to mention the *Times*’ Israel coverage, but I just have and, so, will proceed briefly.

There is a lot of video around, on social media and elsewhere, now showing Tel Aviv in what look like a state of siege. The *Times of India* published [10 minutes of this footage](#) Monday under the headline, “Tel Aviv ‘On Fire’ As Iran Drops Cluster Bombs; Israel Fails To Block Blitz | 15+ Blasts Reported.”

David Halbfinger, *The New York Times*’ Jerusalem bureau chief and captain of its Israel coverage, had a serviceable piece in the paper’s Sunday editions under the headline, “Israeli Settlers Kill 3 Palestinians in a Weekend of West Bank Violence.” However often this story is reported it is not often enough.

Among Halbfinger’s other recent bylines: “Israel Pounds Southern Beirut, a Hezbollah Stronghold” (March 5), “Israel Pushes Further Into Lebanon, and Readies for More” (also March 5) and “Israel and U.S. Trumpet Their Collaboration in War Against Iran” (March 4).

10

Of war developments in Tel Aviv, nothing. Jerusalem, nothing. Of other places in Israel under Iranian attack, reports of successfully intercepted rockets and drones and not much more. Of the Zionist regime's resumption of its blockade of Gaza, and, so, its starvation campaign: No, nothing at all.

Just as correspondents have to look like they are on the story even when they are obscuring it, they cannot look as if they are participating in a news blackout even when this is precisely what they are doing.

Censorship and Self-Censorship

March to end the war on Iran, end U.S. imperialism in Philadelphia on Tuesday. The march ended at Philadelphia City Hall with a speaker who criticized mainstream media for spreading imperialist propaganda. (Joe Piette, Flickr, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

A few months after the U.S.-cultivated coup in Ukraine, as the Kiev regime began its eight-year campaign to shell its own citizens in the eastern provinces, the late John Pilger remarked, "The suppression of the truth about Ukraine is one of the most complete news blackouts I can remember."

I counted this an acute observation at the time (and still do, indeed), but I reckon John, were he still with us, would find the wall of suppression that has gone up around the U.S.-Israeli war — or, more precisely, the apparent success of Iran's counterattacks — a comparable case.

I find Western media to be especially insidious as they pretend to cover this disastrous conflict while doing their best to keep it from view. But self-censorship has been around a long time, after all. (And is one reason I gave up writing for these media long years ago. You can have a paycheck or your principles, but you can't have both: This was my conclusion.)

It gets yet worse when the self-censoring correspondent meekly accepts the overt censorship imposed by those he or she purports to cover. It is well known — if only in the profession, not outside of it — that nothing of importance gets reported out of Israel without first passing through the state censors. Bringing this point squarely home is the case of two CNN correspondents reporting from Tel Aviv during the war's first week.

A missile, alight with those reddish-yellow flames they exude, descended behind them against the night sky and hit its target with a great flash somewhere in the city. Microphone in hand, one correspondent looked sheepishly at the other and said, "We can't tell you where that came from because the Israelis don't want us to do that."

A Post-It note to these two CNN correspondents: This makes two stories you are blowing. You should be reporting the hell out of the Zionists' rigorous censorship regime.

The Israeli Military Censor enforces strict control under the 1945 Defense (Emergency) Regulations of the British mandate that were adopted by Israel in 1948 and were tightened in last June's war with Iran. Unauthorized filming or reporting of damage in Israel could lead to fines and imprisonment of from five to 15 years.

CNN or any media, including social media, could wind up in jail for reporting on the impact of Iranian drones and missiles in Israel. There have been several arrests already, including CNN Türk correspondent Emrah Çakmak and his cameraman Halil Kahraman. This regime of suppression should be reported.

The Information Gap

I thought I understood the extent to which this war is being covered up until an Iranian-American friend sent me a piece Thomas Neuburger published Sunday in God's Spies, his Substack newsletter, under the headline, "War on Iran: The information gap." Neuburger, an essayist and commentator, wrote a good subhead for himself: "The world is blind to damage done to Israel and the U.S."

"No independent analyst I've read thinks Iran won't stay the course, and do so no matter the cost," Neuburger begins, usefully. "Iran was at war with Iraq for eight long years, and declared again and again its intention to see the war through. In addition, the regime today shows no signs of folding."

Neuburger then takes up the case of Planet Labs, a California company that operates several hundred satellites by way of which it supplies global imaging to all sorts of entities — news media, energy companies, think tanks and, prominent among these, the U.S. military and the intelligence apparatus. Planet Labs, it turns out, has been key to information flows since the U.S.–Israeli operation began.

“As to evidence of damage, there is satellite imagery of Iran, thanks to companies like Planet Labs,” Neuburger writes. “Unfortunately, Planet Labs has decided to delay publishing images of Israel and the Gulf states, including U.S. military bases. Images of Iran, however, will be made immediately available.”

Neuburger then quotes a statement Planet Labs just issued to *Ars Technica*, a technology news website:

“In response to the conflict in the Middle East, Planet is implementing temporary restrictions on data access within specific areas of the affected region. Effective immediately, all new imagery collected over the Gulf States, Iraq, Kuwait, and adjacent conflict zones will be subject to a mandatory 96-hour delay before it is made available in our archive. Imagery over Iran will remain available as soon as it is acquired. This change applies to all users except authorized government users who maintain immediate access for mission-critical operations.” (Planet Labs have now extended the delay from 96 hours to 10 days.)

You have to figure, if those waging war dedicate themselves this assiduously, this systematically, to keeping things hidden, there are surely things to hide.

“The first casualty of war is truth.” All sorts of people are credited with this famous *mot.* Hiram Johnson, a Progressive Party pol from California who served five terms in the U.S. Senate, 1917 to 1945, generally gets the attribution. But you can go back all the way to Aeschylus (“In war, truth is the first casualty”) by way of Samuel Johnson (“Among the calamities of war may be numbered the diminution of the love of truth”) and find the thought.

So there is a long story here, a thread running through history. But this is our passage in the story, and it is ours to come to terms with it.

Remember when the practice of “embedding” correspondents first came into vogue? This was during the First Gulf War, when the military and the policy cliques were determined to control the press after its coverage of the Vietnam war.

All correspondents have since been embedded one way or another, in my view. This goes for everyone from day-to-day reporters in Washington to those covering the war now at hand. The only independent media among the Western powers now are ... independent media. The whole of the mainstream is effectively embedded.

On the other side of things, there are the Thomas Neuburgers and John Elmers among us. The latter produces *The Resistance Report*, which is carried on Ali Abunimah’s *Electronic Intifada*. Last Thursday, the sixth day of the U.S.–Israeli invasion, Elmer gave 47 minutes to an analysis of maps and all other available sources of information.

“Iran strikes back after Israel, US launch war” is Elmer’s headline. This, the effectiveness of Iranian counterattacks, seems to be the true center of gravity in this otherwise blotted-out story, however few among us are free to report it.

Original article: consortiumnews.com

When Governed by a Criminal Class What Do You Expect?

March 14, 2026

By George F. Smith

(12)

By 1935 the United States was six years into the Great Depression and three years into Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal revolution. Washington had begun reorganizing the American economy through a bewildering array of alphabet agencies. The Agricultural Adjustment Administration plowed crops under while people went hungry. The National Recovery Administration attempted to cartelize entire industries. Relief and public-works programs placed millions on federal payrolls. Americans were assured only vigorous government action could rescue the economy.

The results were far less impressive than the rhetoric. Unemployment stayed above 20 percent in 1935 and private investment remained weak. Roosevelt, in preparing for re-election, was drawing millions of workers, intellectuals, and relief recipients into the grip of federal power. Father Coughlin, a radio superstar with ten million listeners, "argued that capitalism should now be 'constitutionally voted out of existence.'" Too bad for Coughlin no one knew what capitalism was.

The State was the god that could rescue mankind, if only mere mortals in the Roosevelt Administration could kickstart it into action. Into this frenzy for bigger government arrived an outsider, Albert Jay Nock, and his book Our Enemy, the State. Nock said the State was the source of our problems, not the solution. States thrive on emergencies that they frequently create and expand their power with attempts to fix them. "Taking the State wherever found," he wrote, "striking into its history at any point, one sees no way to differentiate the activities of its founders, administrators and beneficiaries from those of a professional-criminal class."

He draws on Franz Oppenheimer and aligns with Murray Rothbard in writing:

"There are two methods, or means, and only two, whereby man's needs and desires can be satisfied. One is the production and exchange of wealth; this is the economic means. The other is the uncompensated appropriation of wealth produced by others; this is the political means."

The State is the organization of the political means.

Monica Perez, an open-source journalist and podcaster, asked me to join her recently in discussing Nock's relevance to today's world. I hope you find it interesting and informative.

How the ADL Invented the ‘Hate Crime,’ 13 Leading to the Conviction of Innocent Men

A reexamination of the 2020 Ahmaud Arbery case.

by Mary Grabar

March 2026

Chronicles

IN DECEMBER, MY COVER FEATURE in *Chronicles*, “The Anti-Defamation League: Thuggery Under Cover of Fighting Anti-Semitism,” showed how the ADL’s claim that it fights anti-Semitism has been a cover for its larger political agenda of smearing and demonizing conservatives.

That political agenda, and the various tactics the ADL used to achieve it, stretches back through the organization’s 113-year history. In this follow-up article, I want to focus on the ADL’s role in inventing a relatively new tool, the “hate crime,” and its use in one particular case: the Ahmaud Arbery case in Georgia.

That the ADL’s real focus is anti-conservatism, rather than anti-Semitism, was further confirmed just a day after my December *Chronicles* feature, when the news site *Legal Insurrection* published an article by Mark Javitch, a San Francisco-area attorney who has provided *pro bono* representation to victims of anti-Semitism. The headline, “ADL’s ‘Legal Action Network’ Is Hindering Real Legal Action Against Growing Antisemitism,” says it all.

“From its lack of public litigation record, it appears that the ADL counsels people away from legal action, preventing legitimate claims from reaching lawyers capable of litigating,” Javitch wrote.

As I noted in December, the ADL’s recent refocus to its stated mission of combating anti-Semitism was a strategic shift following Charlie Kirk’s Sept. 10 assassination, in reaction to condemnation from the FBI and conservative media. This latest switch came after conservatives called attention to the fact that the ADL had included Kirk’s organization, Turning Point USA, in its “Glossary of Extremism and Hate,” propaganda of the sort that the FBI alleges influenced the alleged assassination of Kirk by Tyler Robinson.

That smear against Kirk and Turning Point is just standard operating procedure for the ADL. Indeed, as I pointed out, even though it was founded in 1913 on a mission to stop anti-Semitism, from its inception it has focused on attacking American conservatives and right-wingers, anti-Semitic or not. The ADL ramped up this agenda before and during World War II, aiding President Franklin Roosevelt’s efforts to smear anti-interventionists as “Fifth Columnists” and secret Nazis in or-

der to get the U.S. involved in the war in Europe. The ADL’s efforts to tie standard conservative views to anti-Semitism continued after the war, and they included illegal spying operations.

In the 1980s, according to the organization’s own history posted online, the ADL championed a “model hate crimes statute,” which led 46 states and the District of Columbia to adopt laws drafted by ADL staff. The U.S. Supreme Court unanimously upheld “the penalty-enhancement approach” for so-called hate crimes in which the perpetrator’s motives were hatred based on race, sex, or other identifiable group characteristics. The standard was set by “the ADL’s model statute in *Wisconsin v. Mitchell*, a landmark 1993 decision” by the Supreme Court, according to the ADL’s website.

This invention of the concept of the “hate crime” may be the most devastating legacy of the ADL. In practice, the “hate crime” laws the ADL championed go after its longtime target group: white conservatives who support the Constitution—especially the Second Amendment—and who believe in defending their homes and neighborhoods. These people are outside the left’s officially designated racial and sexual victim groups, and so their motivations for using firearms for self-defense face extra scrutiny in courts of law. Their social media posts and public or even private statements are fair game, no matter how tenuously connected to the crimes of which they are accused. The thought crimes they end up being accused of—especially during periods of ginned-up hysteria such as around the time of George Floyd’s death—could come from a novel by Franz Kafka.

Meanwhile, black criminals who explicitly target their victims on the basis of race soon disappear from the public view—if their motivations are ever revealed. But if you are a white male who killed a black person in self-defense—as Travis McMichael did to Ahmaud Arbery on Feb. 23, 2020—then any of your past statements, even if they are presented falsely, will be brought into the courtroom to convict you of the crime of “hate.” This “penalty-enhancement” will earn you life imprisonment without the possibility of parole.

Even those with only secondary involvement in a hate-crime case, as were Travis’s father, Greg, and his neighbor, “Roddie” Bryan, will be scrutinized in a

similar manner and face similar draconian punishments.

The Ahmaud Arbery incident took place in the Satilla Shores neighborhood of Brunswick, Georgia. Both McMichaels are retired military men with law enforcement training. Greg served in the Navy, and his son served in the Coast Guard; Greg is a retired chief investigator for the Glynn County district attorney’s office, and Travis received extensive law enforcement training in the Coast Guard’s Basic Boarding Officer Course. These two men, both highly qualified in law enforcement, attempted first to monitor, and then to make a citizen’s arrest, of a suspected perpetrator of a string of crimes in their neighborhood. They followed 25-year-old Ahmaud Arbery, a multiple felon on probation, as he ran from a neighbor’s house under construction, where he previously had been captured four times at night by surveillance footage.

From the summer of 2019 to Feb. 23, 2020, the neighborhood had been on high

32 alert due to recent burglaries in the neighborhood. Security systems were installed, a neighborhood-watch Facebook page was created, and a witness later testified that children were afraid to play outdoors after Arbery was spotted in the neighborhood. On that February afternoon, Greg saw Arbery running past his house and recognized him as the burglarly suspect from the earlier surveillance footage. He called out to Travis, and they both armed themselves and pursued Arbery in Travis’s truck.

Neighbor Roddie Bryan, who was a stranger to the McMichaels, followed them while recording on his phone. The McMichaels stopped their truck in front of Arbery twice and yelled at him to stop running. Instead of fleeing into an open yard or down a wide and shallow ditch, Arbery charged at Travis McMichael, who was standing in front of his pickup truck holding his shotgun in a diagonal “port arms” position against his chest, as he had been trained to do to de-escalate a situation.

The moment Arbery went after Travis and tried to grab his shotgun, a life-and-death struggle ensued, much like the one George Zimmerman faced when he was attacked by Trayvon Martin.

But the McMichaels were not as lucky as Zimmerman, who was acquitted and then exonerated by a Department of Justice review. The American justice system had become more woke in the intervening eight years.

In November 2021, Travis and Greg McMichael were convicted of felony mur-

der (Travis was convicted of an additional charge of malice murder), aggravated assault, false imprisonment, criminal intent to commit a felony, and violating federal hate crime laws. Since then, the McMichaels have sat in isolation cells in two different Georgia prisons. In November, their federal hate crime convictions were upheld by the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit in Georgia, which dwelt on the few occasions that Travis and Bryan had used the “n” word on social media or text messages, without regard to context, and otherwise interpreted their non-racial statements about crime into coded racial animus against blacks.

In practice, the “hate crime” laws the ADL championed go after its longtime target group: white conservatives who support the Constitution—especially the Second Amendment—and who believe in defending their homes and neighborhoods.

In general, the mainstream media accounts of the incident portrayed it as three racist white Southerners who, in the words of the *Associated Press*, “killed the running Black man with a shotgun” because of “pent-up racial anger.” This narrative obscures Arbery’s criminal record, the criminal activity in the neighborhood, and the reasonable actions the men took to prevent criminal activity and to exercise their right of self-defense.

These facts are true, regardless of what the men said on social media or in text messages. None of the three men had been accused of having physically harmed or denied blacks their civil rights. The government’s case against the McMichaels rested on Facebook posts, comments, memes, and the false memory of witnesses who barely knew the men. Statements were scrutinized out-of-context. Many of the indicting statements had nothing to do with race, but with “vigilantism” and animus towards criminals.

The “background” section of the appellate court’s decision gave the common media narrative of Ahmaud Arbery as an avid “jogger” going for a run in the McMichaels’ neighborhood. The McMichaels’ defense attempted to introduce evidence from police sources of Arbery’s many confron-

tations with police, prowling, theft, and burglary. The defense team interviewed convenience store witnesses who said that Arbery was known as the “jogger” for his habit of “running up in front of convenience stores, going through stretching motions,” entering the store to seize items, and then fleeing with the merchandise. But records about Arbery’s past were not allowed at the trial, as the judge ruled that they were irrelevant and unfairly prejudicial.

Arbery was on probation at the time of the incident. He was allowed to violate probation by smoking marijuana instead of taking prescribed medication for his schizoaffective disorder. While violating such terms of probation, Arbery also had numerous police reports from both black and white residents regarding his snooping, trespassing, shoplifting, suspected gang recruitment of minors, fighting, and threats against police officers. Jurors heard none of this.

While Arbery’s criminal past was kept from jurors, the McMichaels’ passing comments had the glare of an inquisitor’s spotlight cast on them.

The first falsehood comes in a footnote in the appellate court ruling regarding Travis and Greg’s statement about recognizing “Arbery as the same person they had seen on camera at the construction site” (the construction site was at the home of Larry English, who lived out of town and who had been advised by a police officer to call on Greg McMichael because of his police background). Others, like neighbor Diego Perez, had also recognized Arbery from footage taken by his home security camera. Amidst Arbery’s four nighttime prowlings, a white couple was seen once looking around in the daytime. They seemed to be taking the kind of “looky-look” that prosecutor Linda Danikowski said Arbery was taking (at night). In another footnote, the appellate judges claim that “none of Arbery’s visits were criminal trespass because he had never been (a) told to leave the property or (b) given notice that access to the property was forbidden.

What is left out there is that Arbery ran away when he noticed someone spotting him, so there was no chance to *tell* him to “leave the property.” The fact that he ran, rather than engaging in friendly conversation about, say, the architecture (as one would expect from someone taking an innocent “looky-look”), indicates that he likely knew he was trespassing.

The judges continued:

Further, the government put on evidence—Travis and Gregory’s own willingness to trespass—that undermined their claim that preventing Arbery from trespassing is what fueled their pursuit. Tra-

vis posted a video on Facebook showing himself smacking down a no-trespassing sign so that he could hunt on private property. He also posted a video of him and Gregory talking about hunting on private property.

But Travis never had a chance to explain to the jury that the video was one of his spoofs on hunting and fishing shows. I spoke with Travis’s mother, Leigh McMichael, and she explained to me that Travis was on land he had rented for hunting. He had put up the “No Trespassing” sign as a prop for a humorous video. Leigh McMichael showed me one of Travis’s spoof hunting videos. No one seeing it could have taken anything said or done in it seriously.

Section B of the decision, “Criminal and suspicious activity in Satilla Shores before February 23, 2020,” indicts Travis and Greg for stating that “they recognized Arbery as the same person they had seen on camera at the construction site.” It notes that Travis had the audacity to comment on a July 1, 2019, post on the neighborhood Facebook page about the burglarizing of several cars, writing “Arm up.” There was, of course, nothing illegal or racist about that statement. But the judges implied that there *was* something nefarious about Travis advocating that the neighbors take precautions to defend themselves against criminal activity. One suspects they would have viewed with suspicion any statement Travis could have made, other than advocating sitting passively sitting by while the neighborhood experienced a crime wave.

Indeed, an observation that should have demonstrated the nonracial motives of Travis and Greg was instead loaded on as further evidence against them. This was about a “‘hobo camp’ under the Fancy Creek bridge near the neighborhood.” As a footnote explains, “Gregory also called the non-emergency police line to alert the police that he saw someone who appeared to be homeless under the Fancy Creek bridge and that the man may be responsible for recent automobile break-ins in the area. The officer who investigated the report testified that the man “appeared to be Caucasian.”

So here was evidence that the McMichaels confronted potential criminals without regard to race. The audio recording of the call was played for the jury. But what was left out is the fact that Travis and Greg had confronted the white hobo in the same way as they attempted to do to Arbery. They went to the hobo camp with Travis armed with a concealed weapon, and *asked* him about the break-ins!

However, the difference was that the man, who was fishing, did not run away or charge at the men with a wild look, or

attempt to wrest Travis's gun away, as Arbery had done. Instead, according to Travis's testimony in the court transcript, the man was friendly and let the McMichaels look around the camp to confirm that he had not stolen anything. When they found nothing, they left him alone.

After surveillance videos showed a white man and woman walking around the English property on Nov. 17 and Arbery walking around on Nov. 18, Travis, according to the appellate judges, made the statements, "They find him?" and "They are starting to play with fire!" These nonracial statements were interpreted with others as evidence of racial malice and cited in support of denying the McMichaels' appeal.

The judges' decision states that another post from the neighborhood group on Dec. 8 indicated that several guns had been stolen from a truck. Surveillance video captured a white male suspect. On Jan. 1, 2020, Travis made a police report about a gun being stolen from his truck.

Of course, there was no evidence technically linking Arbery to the crimes—just that he had visited the construction site at night four times without "disturbing" anything (not that a compulsive thief would ever case a house for a future theft!). The judges' claim that he was not "linked to any of the other criminal activity in the neighborhood" is misleading. His long rap sheet of crimes in adjacent areas had been left out, and many of the crimes in Satilla Shores have remained unsolved.

Then comes the part that might make one feel like the cockroach in Kafka's *Metamorphosis*: "Defendants' previous comments," which "tend[ed] to show that each of the defendants held longstanding prejudice toward black people and supported vigilante justice." As a footnote explained, the magistrate judge had denied the McMichaels' motion to exclude this evidence because it was "plainly relevant [under Federal Rule of Evidence 404(b)] to determine whether Defendants acted with racial animus during the events forming the basis of the charges against them." We can thank the ADL for this!

The first example of "previous comments" is a response that Travis made to a video sent on Facebook of "a black man playing a joke on a white man, to which Travis responded, 'I'd kill that fucking n[*****]'" Actually, the "joke" was not funny to the white man, who was sitting at a dining counter and had a plate of food

dumped on his head by the black man.

Travis also replied "F[***] Yes." to a Facebook message showing "a white man dressed up as Trayvon Martin—painted in black face, holding Skittles and a Snapple, with a red splotch in the middle of his hoodie—with a comment that this man was "The winner of Halloween 2016." There were four other examples of Travis's use of the "n" word in social media replies and text messages.

But did Travis use that word with Arbery? Roddie Bryan, probably hoping to avoid punishment, claimed that Travis, as he looked down at the dying Arbery, said, "[*****] n*****." But this was never entered into evidence, because, as Jack Cashill explained in his 2025 piece in *The American Spectator* ("Woke Justice at Its Most Horrifying—the Ahmaud Arbery Case"), the recording with the 911 dispatcher when the slur was allegedly made proved that he did not say it.

Travis also called black people "savages." As the judges admit, one occasion was in response to "a video of a black woman stealing a purse from an elderly white woman's shopping cart." Another was in reference to a video "of two black people assaulting two white people." Presumably, the assailants should have been treated with more respect. Travis also used the word in response to videos of black gang members beating up a white kid and a black married couple attacking the owner of a restaurant and fifteen-year-old daughter in a dispute about refund for food served too cold. The mother suffered a broken nose and two black eyes; her daughter had a concussion and a black eye.

Travis's comment that if the "savages attacked my family, I would beat those monkeys to death" and that he "would have the same remorse putting them down as [he] would a rabid coon" is considered out of bounds. Angry, racist language against white people by black people is good but white men are guilty of hate if they are angered at the sight of white women and children being beaten up by black men.

Indeed, the court even interpreted the desire to protect family and home as "vigilantism." Travis's response to a Facebook post about a home invasion, that he kept his "home shotgun loaded with high brass #5's" and that thieves were "vermin," was interpreted by the judges as further evidence of his racism.

The evidence of "racial animus" against Travis's father, Greg, was even more tenuous. The judges claim that he had said in response to news about the death of a civil rights leader, "I wish that guy had been in the ground years ago" and that "[a]ll these blacks are nothing but trouble: I wish they would all die" before proceeding to "rant against black people." This anecdote, howev-

er, came from a woman who had met Greg briefly in 2015, when, as part of his work as an investigator, he had given her a ride to the airport. The witness, according to a local news station, volunteered her testimony after learning about the case in the news.

Similarly, a "former neighbor" who "testified that, during a conversation, Gregory referred to one of his former tenants as a 'walrus' because she was 'big and black'" and that he would cut off her air conditioning when she was late for her rent, was based on a confused memory. It turns out that the race of the tenant in question was wrong—as was the animal. Greg was discussing a fat white tenant, and he was not talking about walruses, but about his rental property as a "habitat for huge manatees." Attempted corrections to such falsehoods, however, were not admitted by the court. Further evidence of Greg's racism was a "meme on Facebook" he shared about descendants of white Irish slaves who did not "[bitch] about how the world owes them a living" even though their forebears "were treated worse than any race in the US."

Evidence of "Gregory's support for vigilantism" included two memes on his Facebook page. One was of a woman holding a baby and a shotgun with a caption stating, "A gun in the hand is worth more than the entire police force on the phone." Another one showed a white man pointing a handgun with a caption about felons needing to fear potential victims. Greg also commented on a post about a stolen surfboard, about catching "the sorry SOB" (most likely to be a white surfer) because in Georgia, "We still hang horse and board thieves."

As for Bryan, there were a few similar instances presented as evidence of his racist intent—keep in mind, he was convicted of murder and other charges for following and filming Arbery's shooting—but the rest of the decision dealt with the issue of whether the streets of Satilla were public or private. They were determined to be public, hence the charges against the men of depriving Arbery of his civil rights in a public area.

Yet, in the midst of the strained accounts of name-calling, the appellate judges admitted, "After Arbery ran around the passenger side of [Travis's] truck, Arbery ran at Travis to grab the shotgun." Even if all the statements about the McMichaels' name-calling and racism were true, this admission should have rendered the name-calling moot. The judges, however, acted as if Travis, given his racist thoughts demonstrated in his Facebook posts and private text messages, should have allowed Arbery to kill him.

Furthermore, exculpatory evidence that showed Travis and Greg lacked racist motivation was not allowed. This included

the commendations Travis received from the Coast Guard, at least one of which—his Sept. 18, 2013, performance evaluation—praised him because he

has never judged an individual, on or off duty, by their race, sex, ethnic background, religion, political views, marital status, weight, food choices, or taste of music and has never tolerated someone who has.

Nor did the court take into account Travis's record of saving a number of black people from drowning, beginning when he was 17 years old. Among those not called to testify (or perhaps afraid to, given the threatening atmosphere created during the trial, when armed protesters demonstrated out-

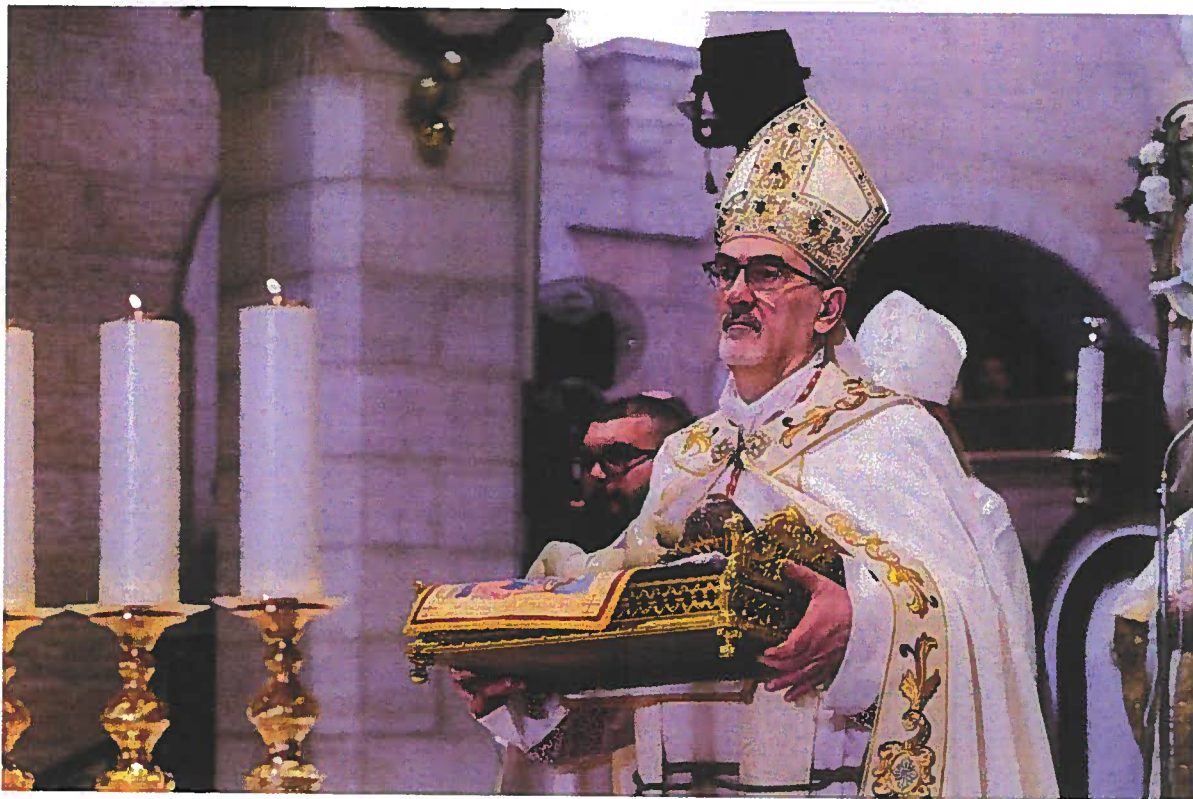
side the courthouse) were the black men with whom Travis associated in the Coast Guard (including a black roommate and a close friend for whom Travis's mother baked pecan tarts), black state and federal employees who knew Travis and Greg, and Travis's black friends from high school, who had been welcomed into the McMichael home.

After the McMichaels and Bryan were railroaded by the courts during the George Floyd-induced racial panic of 2020 and 2021, the ADL "welcomed" the draconian punishment they received and thanked Biden administration Attorney General Merrick Garland and the Biden FBI for their work on the case. Any who opposed the sentencing, the ADL said, were just "White Supremacists." And while the ADL made much over the name-calling the Mc-

Michaels were said to have done, they did not concern themselves with the threatening mail and intimidating visits from Black Lives Matter protesters that Leigh McMichael has received, while her husband and son wile away the years in prison.

What happened to the McMichaels could happen to anybody. It could even happen to ADL-supporting Jews who attempt to defend themselves, sometimes with arms. They, too, would have the ADL to thank.

Mary Grabar is the author of Debunking Howard Zinn: Exposing the Fake History That Turned a Generation against America, Debunking The 1619 Project: Exposing the Plan to Divide America, and most recently, Debunking FDR: The Man and the Myths.



The Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem Pierbattista Pizzaballa leads a Christmas midnight mass at Saint Catherine's Church, in the Church of the Nativity, in Bethlehem, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, on December 25, 2025. REUTERS/Mussa Qawasma/Pool



The Compleat Monarchist by Charles Coulombe is an erudite, engaging, and comprehensive defense of a Christian monarchy from an American perspective.

While at first it might seem unusual for an American to be writing in praise of monarchy, in fact, a scholarly American writer may, ironically, be in a better position than many others to praise this most ancient of institutions.

So it is with Charles Coulombe, author of the recently-published book, *The Compleat Monarchist*; a partly French-Canadian American; and possibly the foremost American writer on the subject of monarchy.

His connection with the British monarchy—through his French-Canadian ancestry—together with his American nationality, allow him to view the world's various monarchies with a degree of objectivity that the denizens of those monarchies might lack.

Not that he is nonpartisan. He is a firmly convinced monarchist, and for very sound and rational reasons; but, being an American citizen, he is not tempted to favor one dynasty over another out of mere national prejudice.

Instead, he takes the entirely rational view that if one is to have a monarchy—and that monarchy is to be hereditary, rather than elective—then it ought to be the legitimate line.

He views all the current monarchies, the various contenders to reestablish a monarchy, and the current occupants or would-be occupants, with an entirely objective eye save that, being himself Roman Catholic, his personal preference, again for good reasons, is for Catholic monarchy.

However, he maintains an entirely open and objective view of all other monarchies, whether Protestant, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, or whatever. His Canadian background gives him a particular affection for, and loyalty to, the British monarchy, which is Anglican, not Catholic.

He then proceeds to discuss, analyze, recount, retell, and muse over a whole range of ideas and subjects relating to monarchy, interlaced with learned literary and historical allusions, tales and stories, anecdotes, illustrations, poetical interludes, and social and political theorizing so as to produce an immensely readable book, a *vade mecum* for all comers, whether they be monarchists or not.

The book is also favored with a laudatory foreword by English Dominican scholar Rev. Fr. Aidan Nicholls, O.P.

Weaving in his lifelong interest in Oxford's Inklings set of renowned scholars—J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and others—the author treats us to an insight into their varied views on monarchy, linking the same to some of their more famous works, such as Tolkien's famous trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*, Lewis' masterpiece *That Hideous Strength*, and Williams' 1938 poem *Taliessin through Logres*.

Not that he restricts himself to the Anglophone world—far from it. He ranges across the whole of European history and culture, back to its origins, and across to the Middle Eastern, Asian, and Far Eastern world to consider monarchies in Bhutan, Japan, Tibet, China, and beyond.

Inevitably, because it has unquestionably been the most influential of monarchies, he focuses on European Christendom, whose central sheet anchor was—from the Edict of Thessalonica of February 27, 380, of Roman Emperor Theodosius I—the newly baptized Roman Empire. He reminds us that baptism into Christianity was made coterminous with becoming a full subject of that same Empire.

We are several times reminded of what were the chief characteristics of that Christian Empire: the altar, the throne, the principle of subsidiarity or devolving of power, solidarity among all the estates and classes in society, and, last but not least, the idea of Christendom or the *res publica Christiana*.

18
The author then explains the nature of that same Christendom, which has given the world most of what we now recognize as the benefits of civilization in art, architecture, law, medicine, science, education, universities, schools, government and constitution, defense, engineering, scholarship, and, of course, religion.

By 800, that Christian Roman Empire had become what would be later called the Holy Roman Empire, beginning with the crowning of Charlemagne, the "father" of Europe, on Christmas Day of that year by Pope St. Leo III. He had been elected the new Western Emperor by the people, nobility, and clergy of the city of Rome.

Ever after, the imperial office was an elective office, like that of the pope, the Roman electors of both offices later delegating their voting power to electoral colleges (an idea later copied by the American Constitution).

Indeed, one of the author's many themes is the extent to which so many elements of that ancient Roman Christendom have endured to this day, not only in modern Europe but also in America because of its European origins.

In a chapter headed *Sacrum Imperium*, he reminds us that the Church universally prayed for the Christian Roman emperors, from the earliest times, on Good Friday and Easter Saturday until as late as 1954.

The emperor-elect was crowned and anointed by the pope or his delegate, made a sub-deacon, and sang the Gospel at his coronation Mass. A description is provided from *The Liturgical Year* by the Rt. Rev. Dom Prosper Gueranger, Abbot of Solesmes, who refounded Western monasticism after the disaster of the French Revolution.

The author rightly reminds us that all other Christian kingdoms, not least the British Empire, copied much from the old Holy Roman Empire—including its coronation rite, recently seen in the coronation of King Charles III, Britain's current monarch.

Likewise, too, did the Greeks and Russians, albeit Eastern Orthodox, copy closely ceremonies of the Western Empire—Tsarist Russia, indeed, claiming to be the successor thereof.

The author quotes a homily given on May 7, 2005, by the late Pope Benedict XVI when he, the pontiff, reminded us that "all Catholics are in some way Roman." He quotes much from the English legal scholar and professor Viscount James Bryce, whose work *The Holy Roman Empire* is a primary work on the subject.

The author also quotes the great Russian writer, sometimes called the Russian Newman, Vladimir Soloviev, another sincere monarchist.

The author then compares the remarkable strength and unity of Christendom as it once was with the remnants that now remain in modern Europe and the West, a West now gravely threatened with collapse and conquest, and shows how the descent into the secular totalitarianism of the 20th century, following two hugely destructive world wars, has all but reduced us to a shadow of our former selves.

The author then turns to the many attempts to provide a basis for reviving the glories of the past.

For instance, he cites the great aristocratic French Catholic writer and former cavalry officer Charles-Humbert-René de La Tour du Pin Chambly de La Charce, descendant of an old noble Dauphinoise family who had given him a strong Catholic and Royalist identity, his father also instilling in him a strong spirit of *noblesse oblige* and chivalry toward the poor, the dispossessed, and the weak.

This leads on to a description and discussion of the developing Catholic social doctrines that were advanced by Catholic monarchists who lamented the exploitation of the ordinary people by the new, secularist, bourgeois Capitalist elites. They likewise eschewed and warned against the growing Socialist movement that wanted to put more and more power into the hands of bloated governments.

The author then explains the nature of that same Christendom, which has given the world most of what we now recognize as the benefits of civilization in art, architecture, law, medicine, science, education, universities, schools, government and constitution, defense, engineering, scholarship, and, of course, religion. (19)

By 800, that Christian Roman Empire had become what would be later called the Holy Roman Empire, beginning with the crowning of Charlemagne, the “father” of Europe, on Christmas Day of that year by Pope St. Leo III. He had been elected the new Western Emperor by the people, nobility, and clergy of the city of Rome.

Ever after, the imperial office was an elective office, like that of the pope, the Roman electors of both offices later delegating their voting power to electoral colleges (an idea later copied by the American Constitution).

Indeed, one of the author’s many themes is the extent to which so many elements of that ancient Roman Christendom have endured to this day, not only in modern Europe but also in America because of its European origins.

In a chapter headed *Sacrum Imperium*, he reminds us that the Church universally prayed for the Christian Roman emperors, from the earliest times, on Good Friday and Easter Saturday until as late as 1954.

The emperor-elect was crowned and anointed by the pope or his delegate, made a sub-deacon, and sang the Gospel at his coronation Mass. A description is provided from *The Liturgical Year* by the Rt. Rev. Dom Prosper Gueranger, Abbot of Solesmes, who refounded Western monasticism after the disaster of the French Revolution.

The author rightly reminds us that all other Christian kingdoms, not least the British Empire, copied much from the old Holy Roman Empire—including its coronation rite, recently seen in the coronation of King Charles III, Britain’s current monarch.

Likewise, too, did the Greeks and Russians, albeit Eastern Orthodox, copy closely ceremonies of the Western Empire—Tsarist Russia, indeed, claiming to be the successor thereof.

The author quotes a homily given on May 7, 2005, by the late Pope Benedict XVI when he, the pontiff, reminded us that “all Catholics are in some way Roman.” He quotes much from the English legal scholar and professor Viscount James Bryce, whose work *The Holy Roman Empire* is a primary work on the subject.

The author also quotes the great Russian writer, sometimes called the Russian Newman, Vladimir Soloviev, another sincere monarchist.

The author then compares the remarkable strength and unity of Christendom as it once was with the remnants that now remain in modern Europe and the West, a West now gravely threatened with collapse and conquest, and shows how the descent into the secular totalitarianism of the 20th century, following two hugely destructive world wars, has all but reduced us to a shadow of our former selves.

The author then turns to the many attempts to provide a basis for reviving the glories of the past.

For instance, he cites the great aristocratic French Catholic writer and former cavalry officer Charles-Humbert-René de La Tour du Pin Chambly de La Charce, descendant of an old noble Dauphinoise family who had given him a strong Catholic and Royalist identity, his father also instilling in him a strong spirit of *noblesse oblige* and chivalry toward the poor, the dispossessed, and the weak.

This leads on to a description and discussion of the developing Catholic social doctrines that were advanced by Catholic monarchists who lamented the exploitation of the ordinary people by the new, secularist, bourgeois Capitalist elites. They likewise eschewed and warned against the growing Socialist movement that wanted to put more and more power into the hands of bloated governments.

Catholic monarchists wanted to restore the spirit of solidarity between the estates and classes that had existed in medieval Christendom, where the nobility were obliged to provide for the common good out of the estates they had been given by the crown.

20 Similarly, the towns and cities formed guilds and livery companies to provide for the members of each profession and trade, for their training, employment, old age, and indigence, such was the spirit of solidarity and private, not government, charity.

The author also analyzes some of the corporatist ideas of the 1930s that, in opposition to the ideas of Socialism, sought to recapture that old cooperation between the estates, professions, and trades. He shows how they were endorsed by political figures who were usually also monarchist.

However, corporatism was never given a chance and then had its name blackened by the claims of Hitler and Mussolini to be adopting corporatist ideas when, in fact, they were not doing so.

In fact, as certain libertarian thinkers of our time have partially understood, in order to revive the cooperative spirit of medieval Christendom, what is needed is a return to private ownership and organization so as to escape the massive stranglehold that modern government now has over the lives of most people.

Once, it was the role of the gentry and nobility to provide a local (and thus subsidiarized) administration, judiciary, and militia; and if any of them declined to do so, they would forfeit their estates back to the crown.

Under the system obtaining in medieval Christendom, land was not owned by the government but held privately under feudal obligations; and all was run privately for the common good—not centrally by corrupt, complacent, and bloated governments.

In addition, there were the monasteries, all private—not government—institutions, who provided sustenance and education for the indigent and impoverished.

However, at and after the Reformation, this system was corrupted by allowing the landed gentry to breach their obligations and yet retain their estates.

In due course, aping their seniors, the professions and commercial magnates took over and created the bourgeois Capitalist state that ground the face of the poor. That, in turn, led to Socialism, Fascism, Nazism, and Marxism all of which conspired to break up and destroy Western society.

The Romantic Revival, which swept across Europe after, first, the crass materialism of the Enlightenment which then generated, secondly, the disastrous bloodbath of the French Revolution, was notable, says the author, for its deliberate attempt to hearken back to the past glories of medieval Christendom which now seemed like a lost paradise by comparison with the sordid, new, post-French Revolutionary world.

The author provides a most interesting insight into his own personal development as an American monarchist, beginning with his upbringing by well-educated Catholic parents, to his own discoveries, through reading, travel, and personal encounter, of the glories of that long-lost world of Christendom.

In so doing, he studied the likes of de Maistre, de Chateaubriand, von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, Molnar, Maurras, Donoso Cortes, Figgis, Stahl, Belloc, Chesterton, the Cavaliers and Jacobites, the French Legitimists, the Spanish Carlists, the Portuguese Miguelists, and much more besides.

The author quotes Sir Winston Churchill, who said in his *The Second World War: Triumph and Tragedy*:

[T]his war would never have come unless, under American and modernising pressure, we had driven the Habsburgs out of Austria and Hungary and the Hohenzollerns out of Germany. By making these vacuums we gave the opening for the Hitlerite monster to crawl out of its sewer onto the vacant thrones.

(21) But the Allies did not back the restoration of monarchy, as clearly Churchill would have liked. Instead, they backed the even more monstrous Joseph Stalin and his gang of torturers and assassins.

Such, then, has been the upshot of the West abandoning Christendom and Christian monarchy in experimental pursuit of a society without God: death, destruction, and ruin.

But Western leaders do not seem willing to learn.

Thus, U.S. President George H.W. Bush vetoed royal restorations in Romania and Bulgaria in 1992, and, when it was pointed out to U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright that the monarchists were the largest opposition to the Milosevic government, she airily replied, "we don't do kings" and proceeded to bomb and destroy left and right in order to impose her will on the Serbian people.

The author adds that the knee-jerk hatred of monarchy, so characterized by U.S. foreign policy, has cost untold amounts of blood and treasure, both foreign and American.

While to some monarchy remains anathema, the author reminds us that most of the resistance to both Nazism and Communism came from monarchists of one kind or another and that it was Socialists, like Karl Renner of Austria, who collaborated with the Nazis (the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 between Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany is another example).

The author then explores various ideas for the return of monarchy, revisiting Tolkien by calling it the "Aragorn option," Aragorn being the returned king in *The Lord of the Rings*.

He ends with a lament for today's lack of good leadership and the benefits of a rational nostalgia for times past that might usefully be harnessed again today.

In short, this is a book that every thinking person who also likes a good read should not hesitate to buy, enjoy, and treasure.

Author

James Bogle

James Bogle is a writer, historian and barrister (trial attorney) of the Middle Temple, London, in private practice, and a former British hussar cavalry officer. He is a convert from the Scottish Episcopalianism of his ancestors. He co-authored a biography of the last Habsburg Emperor of Austria, Blessed Emperor Charles I, and writes regularly for various journals, Catholic and otherwise. He is a former Chairman of the Catholic Union of Great Britain, former President of the Una Voce International Federation, a faculty member of the Roman Forum (founded by Dietrich von Hildebrand), a Knight of Malta and a Constantinian Knight of St George. He has appeared in a number of high-profile cases, including pro-life cases, in the superior courts in London. He is also Chairman of the Centre for Economic and Social Research (CESR). He lives in London.

TAGGED AS:

BOOK REVIEW

MONARCHY

There are no comments yet.



22

‘The Gravest Sin’: Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem Responds to Hegseth Invoking God at War Briefings

by Dave DeCamp | March 17, 2026 at 3:14 pm ET | Iran, Israel, Palestine

Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, has commented on US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth invoking God and reading scripture during his press briefings on the US and Israeli war against Iran.

During one briefing last week, Hegseth read from Psalm 144. “Blessed be the Lord, my rock, who trains my hands for war and my fingers for battle,” he said. The US war chief, author of a book titled “American Crusade,” also said in an interview with CBS News that the “providence of our almighty God” was protecting US troops engaged in the war.

Pizzaballa was asked about Hegseth’s behavior during a virtual event hosted by the International Oasis Foundation on the war raging across the Middle East. “The abuse and manipulation of God’s name to justify this and any other war is the gravest sin we can commit at this time,” Pizzaballa said at the webinar, according to *Vatican News*.

“War is first and foremost political and has very material interests, like most wars. We must do everything we can to leave no room for this pseudo-religious language, which speaks not of God, but of ourselves,” he added.

Pizzaballa said that “as believers ... we need to say that no, there are no new crusades. If God is present in this war, He is among those who are dying, who are suffering, who are in pain, who are oppressed in various ways, throughout the Middle East.”

The Catholic leader added that he was “not saying that on one side or the other this conflict has religious connotations, but there are manipulations: those who wish to bring religion into it exploit the name of God.”

Pope Leo XIV and Catholic leaders in the US have been outspoken in their opposition to the war and continue to call for peace in the region.

At the webinar, Pizzaballa also lamented the fact that the war in Iran has taken attention away from the situation in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza, which he has visited several times since the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack on southern Israel and the start of Israel’s genocidal war.

“There is no longer a problem of hunger, but there are still 2 million displaced people, deprived of everything; 80% of the Strip is still destroyed, and no reconstruction has begun; 36 hospitals are partially operational, but medicines are lacking, even basic antibiotics,” he said, referring to the situation in Gaza.

“People are literally living in the sewers; the images cannot convey the smells. It is impossible to understand how and when this dramatic situation will be resolved: the Board of Peace has not yet understood what it should do. And in any case, it is a sort of vicious circle: if Hamas does not hand over its weapons, Israel will not withdraw; Hamas will not hand over its weapons unless Israel withdraws. Everything remains at a standstill,” he added.

**If you liked this article, please support Antiwar.com.
We are 100% reader-supported.**