

Way Stations on Marxism's 'long march through America's institutions' in the 20th century.

By Barbara Kay

Some months ago, joining an online discussion initiated by a gay Facebook friend on the AIDS crisis of the 1980s, I countered a bitter remark about Ronald Reagan's "homophobia" and his primary role in causing so many deaths by (as tactfully as possible) observing that gay activists had to bear their share of the blame for the epidemic in having obstructed public health measures to curtail its spread.

The hostile blowback to this remark startled me in its denialist fury, but the salient point here is the sneering tone in which more than one critic on the thread accused me of merely reiterating talking points raised by conservative polemicist David Horowitz. I was taken aback by the rapidity of the redirect to Horowitz in particular, as though nobody else at that time had raised the question of gay-liberationist complicity in maintaining a cone of silence over the elevated HIV risks inherent in unprotected, promiscuous anal intercourse. (Others did, but nobody else with the persistence, straight-talking candor and politically incorrect judgmentalism of Horowitz).

I conceded that my information about the role played by the gay liberation movement in the AIDS crisis was indeed based in Horowitz's many public criticisms; but since, like all his writings, his accusations were evidence-based, what difference did it make, so long as his information was accurate? This question elicited anger of an even greater ferocity, and my original Facebook friend finally intervened to end the debate.

That was the last time I ever posted a remark on my friend's page about anything (he didn't "unfriend me," a testimony to our real friendship, even though he expressed private sorrow about my reference to Horowitz), but it remains a sobering reminder of the tenacity of ideology over fact on the Left, and the demonization that is the truth-teller's lot when attempting to set the record straight on identity-politics myths. When stakeholders in one of our culture's official victim categories have invested themselves in a self-serving narrative, the last thing they want to think about are facts and statistics that threaten the comforting duvet of the rewritten past in which they have chosen to wrap themselves.

Such historical amnesia, arguably the single greatest besetting sin of the Left and the reason leftist illusions are so difficult to dislodge, is only held in check by the dogged, often thankless determination of objective witnesses to history who record unpalatable truths, and then patiently insert them at regular intervals into the slow-grinding mills of the historical archive until a Day of Reckoning forces respectful attention on them.

That day has not yet arrived. The illiberal liberalism known as progressivism remains ascendant in the West, winning battle after battle in the Culture Wars. Every day, more precious freedom to express one's opinions is lost, as convenient ideological narratives are privileged on university campuses and in the media, while inconvenient truths are fed into the oubliette of Political Incorrectness.

As the little Facebook fracas I unwittingly set off demonstrates in microcosm, there has been no more determined witness to America's ideological history in the last half century than David Horowitz, a superior intellect and skilled investigative journalist, whose most formidable weapon is his own history as a hard-left political insider turned apostate, and forensic specialist in the pathogens of his own childhood disease.

Or, for another metaphor, Horowitz might be compared to a political archaeologist for whom no potsherd, no coin, no amulet is too imperfect or humble to warrant respectful assessment as a clue in reconstruction of a culture. Horowitz has excavated his life and times with a patience and thoroughness that gives new depth of meaning to the words "second thoughts" in exposing the irrationality, hypocrisy and self-righteousness that characterize the intolerant and punitive mindset that dominates our culture.

Now aging, but with his passion for exposing the Left's sins undimmed, this happy heretic has for the past few years

been re-issuing his essays, speeches and newspaper columns in a series of 10 books under the general title of *The Black Book of the American Left: the Collected Conservative Writings of David Horowitz*.

With the comprehensive Index that will fill the last book, the series will endure as the definitive prosecution of the Left's subversion of American freedoms, ideals and willingness to lead in spreading the blessings of democracy that have been the greatest, and sometimes the only, hope for a world struggling to emerge from a variety of totalitarian regimes, from godless Communism to God-drenched Islamism.

Volume Five, *Culture Wars*, amasses Horowitz's writings from the 1990s and very early 2000s that explore the Left's transmogrification of American culture in the second half of the 20th century by means of "the long march through the institutions." This phrase, coined by Italian Communist Antonio Gramsci, references a dramatic change in Marxist tactics that was conceived in the 1930s, but only took root with a vengeance in the 1970s and '80s.

Before then, Marxism had concentrated on the working class – the proletariat – as the great hope for revolution ordained by historical necessity. When that hope failed to materialize, Gramsci and other radical-left intellectuals looked for a new strategy. They decided that the key to power resided not in the means of material production, but in the means of "mental production" – the dissemination of Communist ideology through the educational system, mass media and the arts – but above all through attacks on the bourgeois family, where traditional marriage encouraged personal loyalty, sexual fidelity, and the intergenerational passage of prevailing values and moral absolutes, all anathema to an envisaged cultural utopia in which the state dispensed the only valid truths, the only desirable ends and the only acceptable means for fulfilling them.

The bedroom, rather than the factory floor, became the locus of revolution. Sexual liberation, divorced from procreation, would (did) corrode the family as the stabilizing pillar of society. Over time and under the relentless intellectual assault by Marxist ideologues on the allegedly oppressive institution of marriage, both marriage and two-parent families receded as social norms. That the corrosive promiscuity, banalization of porn, rampant sexually transmitted disease and fatherlessness which followed as night the day came with high physical and social costs became a truth that dared not speak its name.

Horowitz has dared to speak that name and many others in his writings: on sexual politics like AIDS activism vs public health; public media that launder past evils of the Left; gender politics under the iron fist of radical feminism leading to policies that devalue men, discourage love and undermine military unity; and most consequentially, in his writings on the entrenchment of moral and cultural relativism in the universities by the "tenured radicals" with whom Horowitz had militated in his leftist youth.

Relativism was most perniciously applied to the philosophy of multiculturalism, which remarkably spread throughout the entire university network in less than two decades, its trajectory well described in "Up from multiculturalism" (1998). Here Horowitz explains how the liberal arts divisions of the academy were transformed "into crude indoctrination platforms and recruiting centers for the crypto-Marxist left," through pseudo-academic conduits like Black Studies (which became "African-American" Studies), Women's Studies and Queer Studies.

These identity-politics hubs had their origins in "area studies," but the original area studies, like the Russian Institute at Columbia and the Asian Studies Center at Berkeley, had been conceived by the CIA as greenhouses for producing specialists qualified for military intelligence, i.e. graduates whose careers would help America to win the Cold War. The multicultural variants of area studies were bent on subverting the idea of a multi-ethnic, but culturally unitary nation joined by a common adherence to the principle of individualism and equal rights, and protected by the constitution and a color/gender blind legal system.

The goal of those in identity studies was to deconstruct the melting pot into racial, gender and ethnic components and make "out of one, many." In these pseudo-disciplines we find the cultural determinism, the rejection of individualism, the centrality of ethnicity or race, and the reduction of all social relationships to negotiations for power that echo themes from 1930s fascism. In the course of its transition, Horowitz says, the left "has degenerated from a Stalinist universalism

to a neo-fascist tribalism, which is what multiculturalism and ‘identity politics’ are really about.”

Horowitz wrote this almost 20 years ago. What he describes, accurately, as a gathering force then, has only metastasized in the intervening years, as recent show-trial reminiscent campus events at the University of Missouri and Yale have demonstrated. At Harvard this past Christmas, holiday placemats were given out to students returning home for Christmas, detailing correct conversational talking points to use in response to politically incorrect remarks by relatives (example: if a family members expresses fear that terrorists may be present in the ranks of incoming Syrian refugees, the student is instructed to reply, “Racial justice includes welcoming Syrian refugees.”) Welcome to Mao’s Cultural Revolution, Gramsci-style.

A common lament of progressives is that promoters of the conservative perspective have an advantage over liberal writers, because media conservatives are supported by a vast right-wing complex of wealthy supporters like the Koch brothers. In “Intellectual Class War” (2000), Horowitz puts that canard to rest by comparing sources of partisan financial support. The big three conservative foundations are Olin, Bradley and Scaife. Foundations such as Ford, Rockefeller, Mellon, Carnegie, and Pew, as well as MacArthur, Markle and Schumann all lean left. The MacArthur Foundation alone, Horowitz, notes is three times the size of all three conservative foundations combined.

The fact is that with few exceptions the media is solidly liberal, and it is worth reading “The Leftist Media” (2003) for proof, as well as “Harvard Lies” (2003) to understand the extent to which the liberal political class is materially supported by liberal universities. Most newspapers lean left. Even the Wall Street Journal has only four conservatively skewed pages, its opinion section, but, as I was surprised to learn, in terms of traffic on the worldwide web, the WSJ was rated 3,583 (in 2003) while Slate – progressive in spirit – was ranked second (it helps that it is a Microsoft product). Universities subsidize liberal media in many different ways. Academics write for magazines like The Nation, which according to Horowitz has a university-subsidized editorial board and staff, a perk no conservative magazine can boast.

One of the unique features – and the most difficult to “review” – of Horowitz’s writings are the personal case histories he chronicles to illustrate his themes. They’re hard to review because the fascination lies in the gradual emergence of the point – through the “he said, I responded, he protested, I rebutted” of the affairs – that is impossible to effectively condense. A good example of the type is “Wasserman’s Revenge,” in which Horowitz proves that, as editor of the L.A. Times Review, former radical colleague Steve Wasserman pursued a demonstrably biased policy of marginalizing conservative writers, even those of Horowitz’s stature, and his virtual blacklist was supported by his superiors.

Another worthwhile read along these lines is “PBS Promotes the Black Panthers” (1991), in which Horowitz takes PBS to task for a series of unbalanced documentary films on the 1960s, most misleadingly a one-hour KQED-produced documentary, “Black Power, Black Panthers.” The assiduous laundering by a willfully amnesiac Left of the murders and other criminal depredations of Black Panthers, as any reader familiar with Horowitz’s life and career well knows, ranks high on his personal list of myths in need of a reality check. The KQED “documentary” was, according to Horowitz, a hagiography of Panther veterans that completely ignored the dark side of their well-documented record. In a letter to KQED president Anthony S. Tiano, Horowitz called the film “a disgrace to KQED and a public outrage.”

The Public Broadcasting Act stipulates that current affairs programming must be “strictly fair, objective and balanced.” Yet Horowitz’s well-founded complaint that KQED had ignored this rubric in his appeal to Tiano went nowhere. Ultimately Horowitz gained the opportunity to speak to the KQED board of directors regarding the need for an ombudsman to handle complaints of bias with objectivity. His eloquent speech to the board is included in its entirety, and no review can do it justice. It must be read to fully appreciate the fecklessness of the board in failing to respond to its forensically irrefutable proofs of arrant bias, and to accept Horowitz’s reasonable request to appoint “a permanent committee to handle questions of fairness, objectivity, and balance in KQED’s programming.” Worse, its pusillanimity in failing to respond at all.

PBS has never aired a program celebrating America’s victory over the Soviet Union, even though, as Horowitz points out, it is the most significant (pre-9/11) historical event since World War Two. To this day, PBS documentaries apparently roll on in their wonted merrily left-leaning way. (I say ‘apparently’ because I rarely watch PBS documentaries.

But I asked a friend who does make a habit of it if the bias was still as strong in 2016, and he obligingly sent me a tongue-in-cheek pastiche of the kind of films he sees regularly on PBS: “The Right is evil, the Left will save the earth”; “The Conservatives/Republicans are evil and the Liberals/ Democrats will save the earth”; “Climate change is a fact and anyone who disputes this is either stupid or uninformed, possibly criminally so and must be wiped from the face of the earth which they are killing by the way”; and “Immigrants describe the horrors of adapting to the rotten, evil, discriminatory North American way of life.” Thanks, Stuart Brannan.)

And if you have ever wondered how then-comedian Al Franken was able to combine an active career in the entertainment world with the labour-intensive research needed to produce his 2003 book, *Liars and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them*, the answer is here. Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government offered Franken a “fellowship,” which provided for a “study group” studying the racism and duplicity of Republicans, to which end he would be provided with the use of fourteen graduate students for both research and ghostwriting.

No such offer would ever be extended rightward, it goes without saying. Horowitz was able to find only five Republicans out of 155 faculty members at the Kennedy School of Government, a disparity very much in line with the ratios in excess of 25-1 at Brown, Wellesley and Wesleyan universities. Between the universities’ lucrative and academic partisanship, and the government’s billion-dollar support for leftist propaganda distributed by PBS and NPR, there was motivation a-plenty for Horowitz to take media gadflyism to the next, more organized and influential level by creating the Center for the Study of Popular Culture in 1988, which later became the formidably multi-faceted David Horowitz Freedom Center conservatives know and admire today.

In “Telling It Like It Wasn’t” (2002), Horowitz returns to a theme that has never stopped haunting him: the terrible fate of Indochinese peasants, more of whom were killed in three years by the Communists to whom they were handed on a platter by the American retreat from Vietnam “than had been killed on all sides in the thirteen years of the anti-Communist war.” Here his vehicle is a critique of left-wing filmmaker Steve Talbot’s PBS documentary, “1968: The Year That Shaped a Generation,” a homage to the protesters who brought the Vietnam adventure to its ignominious end.

Horowitz demurs from Talbot’s “paean to his revolutionary youth” and its view of his 1968 comrades as a “fable of innocents,” reinforced by a cherry-picked cast of commentators that included self-righteous former activists Todd Gitlin and Tom Hayden (who called the murderous Black Panthers “America’s Viet Cong”), but excluded any dissenters, notably Horowitz himself, who would have offered balance to the film.

Such was the solipsism of Talbot’s memories that he imagined the primary objective of the “system” (‘they’) was “to kill.” But, as Horowitz points out, Presidents Nixon and Johnson were actually mainly focused on preventing a Communist takeover of South Vietnam and Cambodia, to which they had committed American power, and to preventing the bloodbath they knew was inevitable if they left. They left because the democratic system worked. They left because the Left successfully mobilized such massive opposition to the war – a war that could have and would have been won and the carnage prevented – that they acceded to the popular will.

The Left wanted America to lose the war, and it did. But at a terrible price to the powerless people who paid it. That the Left has so reflexively applied their penchant for historical amnesia to their complicity in that egregious crime against humanity is a disgrace, and it is thanks mainly to David Horowitz that future generations will have the option of hearing the other side of what is generally considered a story with one side only. (If it were not for Horowitz, would anyone remember that Jane Fonda once said, “I would think that if you understood what communism was, you would hope, you would pray on your knees that we would someday become communist”?)

Perhaps the worst of PBS documentaries, aired in 1989 on WNET, was “Days of Rage,” a 90-minute account of the first Palestinian Intifada that failed to mention Palestinian terrorism even once as a cause of Israel’s tough security measures. It was so unbalanced that WNET Vice-President Robert Kotlowitz was moved to say, “I thought the intifada program was a horror. It was a horror. And I wasn’t happy with having it on the air.” Well, that’s nice. But then he added, “But I’m still happy we made the decision to go with it.” That’s because PBS sees its real mission as social justice, just like the universities, and thinks a lack of balance is the price that must occasionally be paid in order to advance what the Left

considers a righteous cause. Not so nice.

Of Horowitz's several essays on feminism, the most remarkable is "Tailhook Witch-Hunt" (written with Michael Kitchen) (1993), a long account of the series of incidents at a Las Vegas convention of naval aviators that resulted in careers and reputations destroyed in a "travesty worse than anything that had resulted from the infamous McCarthy investigations." Since what really happened was a stain on the feminist copybook, the media avoided critical coverage. A good reason to read this essay and get the actual facts of the case.

I began with the AIDS epidemic and want to end with it. For many young people, who have grown up with the image of AIDS as, thanks to drug advances, a manageable disease rather than the death sentence it invariably was in the 1980s, AIDS has lost its power to terrify. The cascade of articles Horowitz wrote when the epidemic was raging and victims were dying in numbers reminiscent of the Bubonic Plague in medieval times may seem to be merely of historic significance now that the existential danger has passed. But to me they are as important, perhaps more, than many of the articles that deal with topics that are still in active play.

I say that because nothing better illustrates the folly, the self-destructive tendencies of human beings in the grip of ideology who, when faced with certain danger and presented with a path to safety, will refuse to take that path if it means admitting their ideology was flawed.

As the epidemic gathered form and strength, and as it became dazzlingly clear that – in the West, anyway – AIDS was overwhelmingly linked to promiscuous anal sex and casual needle-sharing, with gay men far and away the victims most at risk, with risk to sexually prudent heterosexuals statistically nugatory, political correctness took precedence over lie-saving precautions.

Institutions like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention were more concerned with their compassionate and progressive attitude to homosexuality, more concerned not to be thought of as anti-gay, than they were to preventing the spread of disease by the tried and true (and the truly compassionate) methods of testing to find the carriers, separating them from those in the path of the disease and reporting findings. In its third decade, the subverted public health system still wasn't requiring reporting of individual cases or contact tracing or the closing of sex clubs. As for the media, equally keen to be gay-friendly and progressively non-judgmental, Horowitz blasts them with "AIDS is without question the worst-reported story in the history of American journalism."

And so by 2002, 800,000 Americans were infected with AIDS and roughly 500,000 had died. Those numbers could have been decimated by proper public health protocols, but political correctness overwhelmed common sense and the responsibility to protect. The AIDS epidemic was corpse-strewn proof that Antonio Gramsci's "long march through the institutions" had succeeded brilliantly.

As I write, Europe finds itself in the grip of a migratory crisis that is producing the social equivalent of AIDS. The pernicious doctrine of multiculturalism, whose Big Lie – that all cultures are equal, and equally assimilable to western societies – has blinded western leaders to the unhappy reality that is playing out in Cologne and other German cities, and in Paris and Scandinavia, as migrants from the Middle East and North Africa indulge the brutally misogynistic shibboleths of their upbringing in what truly are "rape cultures," bringing rational fears of harm to every woman who rides a subway, walks alone at night or attends a festive public event.

Yet, like Gramsci-powered zombies, the police, the politicians, much of the media and – notably – the feminists have refused to surrender their cultural-equivalent fantasies, and insist that it is racist to lay blame on any particular cultural group, as if what happened in Cologne were equivalent to a fraternity keg party gone sour, and as if it could have happened amongst any agglomeration of people anywhere.

Camille Paglia said, "Everyone who preached free love in the Sixties is responsible for AIDS." Well, everyone who preached multiculturalism in the Sixties is responsible for the rape of Europe today and possibly the U.S. tomorrow. It is often said that those who forget history are doomed to repeat it. Unfortunately, it is also true that those who remember

history, but are in thrall to an ideology that commands them to ignore history's lessons, are also doomed to repeat it. And that is why this series is so necessary and so precious. David Horowitz's writings continue to stand athwart history, give comfort to the intellectually afflicted and re-invigorate the draining spirit of resistance in those who fear we have reached the point of no return.