

politics

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 01 Jul 1998

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Dan Parmenter — 01 Jul 1998, 07:58

From: Jim Jordan <jbjordan at gnt.net>

4. He is fully capable of sympathizing with anti-establishment movements, as we see in "Hour of Trial." But notice that while Gene Wolfe marches with the radicals, he does so praying the Lord's Prayer!

Which is of course well within the traditions of "radicalism" here, as in the civil rights movement.

5. The whole PC movement is so incredibly bigoted and anti-intellectual that it is hard to see why anyone, conservative or liberal, would credit it!

I think the value of what is loosely described as the "PC movement" might be that despite the examples you gave of conservatives opposed to colonialism, it seems harder to find such critiques among today's mainstream conservatives, though Pat Buchanan occasionally goes in that direction. Of course Buchanan seems like a pretty marginal figure among mainstream conservatives these days, despite his demonization by the "PC" crowd. The severest critiques of American colonialism these days seem to come out of the left. Consider Noam Chomsky who, despite calling himself an anarchist is pretty clearly in the leftist tradition. His critiques of American corporations and foreign policy and in particular, his views on how the media whitewashes these things are extremely influential in the academic lefty world. And of course, not all academic lefties are particularly hardcore "PC" on quite a range of other issues. But that's part of the problem with the straw-man called "PC". People who believe in real affirmative action, which much like Catholicism bears little resemblance to what is often called "affirmative action", end up getting tarred with same brush as those who insist on calling overweight people "vertically challenged".

From: Miles Goosens <outdoorminer at mindspring.com>

Not to go entirely off-topic, but what Jim is talking about serves to highlight the radical disjuncture between what most people think "conservative" means vs. what academics usually mean by the same term. As Jim points out in #1, philosophical conservatism often questions the morality of a "laissez-faire" market-driven economy, whereas those popularly identified with "conservatism" usually fetishize "free markets" and, in at least this sense, embrace liberalism just as heartily as "liberals"!

But if you tell people that their "conservatives" are really liberals, you'll get nothing but puzzled stares.

I believe what you are talking about what is generally known as "classical liberalism" of the sort that Milton Friedman articulates rather well. I think that this is just a semantic game and is best avoided; however, the essential point is taken that these labels are indeed quite slippery. One of the real annoyances of modern life is when one is asked to characterize one's "politics", as if this could be as easily summed up in a few short conversational nuggets.

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