

DUCK RIGHTS, SI, KIDS' RIGHTS, NO

The New York City Council has banned the sale of foie gras, saying it involves animal cruelty; ducks are force-fed to ensure fattened livers. It joins California in making the sale illegal.

Carlina Rivera sponsored the legislation in New York. She says her legislation “tackles the most inhumane process”; she also called it “one of the most violent practices.”

In January, she celebrated a new law making New York City the first city to set aside funds strictly for abortion: the money pays for the transportation expenses of women coming to New York from other states to abort their children. She bragged how “This fund is just another signal, another example of how New York State and New York City has to be the leader on this issue.”

Rivera is right. In January, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo signed a bill that allows abortion through term—right up to the moment of birth—while dropping all penalties against a doctor who intentionally allows a baby who survives a botched abortion to die. Cuomo was so happy with the legislation that he ordered the lights of the Freedom Tower to shine brightly over lower Manhattan.

California will not tolerate the sale of foie gras, but it represents more than 15 percent of all abortions in the nation. There is no waiting period, no parental consent, and no requirement that the abortionist be a trained physician.

Here's a series of questions that deserve a serious response.

Why is it that the cities and states that are champions of animal rights are also the champions of abortion rights?

Why were many Nazi officials animal rights' advocates? Himmler wanted to ban hunting, and Göring carried out Hitler's decree to put Germans who violated animal welfare laws into concentration camps. Hitler, who was a vegetarian, planned to ban slaughterhouses following the end of World War II. Meanwhile, they put Jews in ovens.

When it comes to animal rights v. human rights, why do so many liberals in the 21st century have so much in common with Nazis in the 20th century?

No, it doesn't mean that being an animal rights' advocate today makes one a Nazi. But there is something eerie about persons like Carlina Rivera who find force-feeding ducks to be "inhumane" and "violent" while heralding a procedure that crushes the head of a baby who is 80 percent born. That kind of mentality is surely Nazi-like.

DEFINING RACISM DOWN

Racism, true racism, is being devalued, and nothing contributes to its dumbing-down more than its promiscuous invocation. Being called a racist is by now so common that it has lost its sting. Indeed, the very concept of racism is increasingly irrelevant. For example, Julian Castro, who is running for president, boasts he is opposed to "environmental racism." Does anyone know what that is, including him?

When someone says there is an "Hispanic invasion" going on, is that proof of racism, or is it an expression of concern about large numbers of people who are entering our country illegally from points south of our border?

When a reporter standing in front of an alley in Baltimore

suggests that President Trump is a racist for saying the city is a “rodent-infested mess”—and a large rat is seen running in the alley behind the reporter—doesn’t that undercut the charge?

When actress Ellen Pompeo recently said that Kamala Harris was “overconfident,” was that evidence of Pompeo’s racism, as some said, or was it evidence of devaluing the meaning of racism?

Megyn Kelly was branded a racist for noting that when she was young it was okay for a white kid to put on blackface on Halloween. Her observation was undeniably true. Does that make her a racist for recalling it?

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo recently said on the radio that bigots used to called Sicilians (he is half Sicilian) “nigger wops.” Some black leaders condemned him for making a racist remark. Does that make Cuomo a racist or was he using the exact language used by racists to punctuate his point?

In 2016, comedian Larry Wilmore at the White House Correspondents’ Dinner turned to President Barack Obama (who went by Barry when he was younger) and said, “Yo, Barry, you did it, my nigger.” Is Wilmore a racist, or was he just joking around? Obama laughed at it. Does that make him a racist enabler, or someone who knows he’s being roasted?

When Republicans complained about IRS abuses against conservative organizations under President Obama, MSNBC host Martin Bashir called the GOP leaders racist, saying they are using the scandal “as their latest weapon in the war against the black man in the White House.” Was that what they were doing—dabbling in racism—or protesting corruption by IRS officials?

MSNBC host Chris Matthews said it was racist to talk about all the people on food stamps. Was he right about that, or was Newt Gingrich right when he said to him, “Why do you assume food stamps refers to blacks? What kind of racist thinking do

you have?" [Note: the majority of people on food stamps are white.]

Daily Beast columnist Michael Tomasky once accused Mitt Romney of being a "spineless, disingenuous, supercilious, race-mongering pyromaniac" because he used a "heavily loaded word." What was that racist word? Obamacare. If that makes Romney a racist, would that make the Obama White House racist for promoting what it called Obamacare?

About a decade ago, when Walmart sold white and black Barbie dolls, they were initially priced the same. But when the store had to prepare for inventory, it marked down certain items. Was it proof of racism, as some charged, that the black doll was reduced in price? Or was it simply a routine business practice?

The devaluing of racism began in the academy. Here are seven examples of "racial microaggressions" taught in our nation's leading colleges and universities:

- Asking someone, "Where are you from?"
- Asking an Asian person to help with a math or science problem
- Observing that "America is a melting pot"
- Opining that "There is only one race, the human race"
- Saying, "I believe the most qualified person should get the job"
- Noting that "Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough"
- Commenting, "We got gypped"

If the scales seem tipped against conservatives it is because they are. For example, Joe Biden recently said that "Poor kids are just as bright and just as talented as white kids." Does that make him a racist, or was it just a clumsy way of saying that low-income kids have the same potential to succeed as high-income kids?

When Biden once said, “You cannot go to a 7-Eleven or a Dunkin’ Donuts unless you have a slight Indian accent,” was he making a racist remark, or was it simply a sociological observation?

When he said that one of the best things about Obama was that he was “clean” and “articulate,” was he voicing his racism, or his penchant for making gaffes?

When President Bill Clinton was being impeached, Biden, and many other Democrats (white and black alike) called it a “lynching.” Now President Donald Trump is calling attempts to impeach him a “lynching.” If Trump is a racist for using this term, in this context, wouldn’t that make Biden a racist as well?

Let’s be fair: Biden is no racist, and neither is Trump. But according to standards that Biden has now adopted as proof of Trump’s racism, he most certainly is.

When Harvard University hosts a separate graduation ceremony for black students, is it being sensitive or racist? Would it be sensitive or racist if it did the same for white students? To put it differently, are there no principles left? Or is this just a political game, frontloaded against conservatives?

Here’s something else to think about. On a scale of 1 to 10, what score should be given to someone who owns a restaurant, tells racist jokes, but does not discriminate against anyone? What score should be given to Harvard administrators who never tell racist jokes, but who discriminate against Asians—they put a cap on how many can get in?

The reason why accusations of racism are losing their sting has everything to do with the duplicity of the accusers, and their relentless invocations of it. When real racists are lumped in with those who are either innocent, or at worst guilty of inartful constructions, that’s a lose-lose, the biggest losers of which are those who are truly victimized.

WILL OUR CULTURE WAR BECOME A CIVIL WAR?

On October 23, the Georgetown Institute of Politics and Public Service Battleground Civility Poll revealed that two-thirds of Americans believe the U.S. is on the edge of civil war. This was true across the board: sex, age, race, geography, ideology—it did not matter. But why has our culture become so uncivil that it engulfs our national political discourse?

The social fabric began to tear in the 1960s, the decade that celebrated radical individualism. In the 1970s, Christopher Lasch, a man of the left, recounted our maladies in his book, *The Culture of Narcissism*. There are many reasons why we have become more coarse, more self-absorbed, and more uncivil. Those who craft our culture, especially the pop culture, have played a major role.

Music, dance, theater, art, TV, movies—as well as dress, language, manners, and etiquette—have all gone south. We are now at street level.

It is so ironic to note that now, after trashing civility for a half century, our cultural elites are horrified by the outcome. What else would they expect? Yes, our president is crude. So are his enemies. Big surprise. Having nurtured incivility for decades, the harvest is now upon us.

The *New York Times* is constantly decrying the incivility that marks the nation's capital. Yet it calls for more incivility. For example, there is a column in the October 29 edition of the *Times* by Jennifer Weiner cheering the incivility that greeted Trump at a recent World Series game. "If booing is incivility," she says, "bring it on."

Weiner blames Republicans and conservatives for the problem. They need to be more like her side. "For them, cruelty is the point. For us, kindness matters. When they go low, we go high."

Was it "kindness" that *New York Times* columnist David Leonhardt was promoting when he recently called on Americans

to “take to the streets” over Trump’s policies? He used as a model the Women’s Marches on Washington. Did he mean the 2017 one that was sponsored by anti-Catholic organizations? Or the 2019 one that was sponsored by anti-Semites?

Three days after Leonhardt’s op-ed, his colleague, Michelle Goldberg, expressed her dismay at Americans for not “taking to the streets en masse.” Her idea of “kindness” was evident when she was in college: she beckoned pro-abortion students to storm a pro-life exhibit and kick the crosses down. She screamed, “do your part and spit at [pro-lifers]. Kick them in the head.”

Recently the *Washington Post* did a news story on left-wing activists and their ideological kin. These extremists predict more people will take to the streets of Washington, tying up traffic. Will they show their “kindness” by getting violent? You bet. Sociology professor Dana Fisher says, “the natural progression is to get more confrontational and, sometimes, to get more violent.”

Antifa is a group of urban terrorists who wear masks while they assault innocent persons. The left loves them. In April, CNN’s Chris Cuomo praised them for their “good cause” (he did not explain why anarchy is a “good cause”). In May, CNN did a show on Antifa that also heralded their “good cause.” In June, journalist Andy Ngo was the recipient of Antifa’s “kindness” when they beat him so mercilessly that they almost killed him. Incivility was not generated by conservatives in Hollywood or New York City. The left has worked hard to morally debase our society. Now that many who are not in their ranks have adopted their stylebook, if not their support for violence, it’s a little too late to cry foul.

ATHEIST HATERS KNOW WHERE TO

ADVERTISE

Being an atheist does not necessarily mean being anti-Christian, but being an atheist organization, especially these days, means exactly that. It's how they survive—by bashing Christians. Their favorite target, of course, is the Catholic Church.

Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) is one of the most Christian-hating atheist organizations in the nation. It advertises its hate speech on billboards, the internet, radio, television, and in newspapers. With rare exception, it chooses liberal-left venues. That is quite revealing. Of course, not all of those who are left-of-center are haters, but when it comes to those who harbor an animus against religion, they are found almost exclusively on the left.

In the recent presidential primary debate of Democratic contenders, FFRF ran two ads featuring “unabashed atheist” Ron Reagan. Choosing an audience of mostly Democrats was a smart move. A Pew poll that was recently released found that college-educated young Democrats were joining the ranks of the religiously unaffiliated faster than any other segment of the population; they would be the most likely to be attracted to an FFRF ad.

Ron Reagan said he was “alarmed by the intrusion of religion into our secular government.” He provided no examples (examples of the opposite—government encroaching on religion—are easily found on the Catholic League's website). He also bragged how he is “not afraid of burning in hell.” Good luck with that.

The station that carried the ad, CNN, is no longer considered a moderate cable network, having moved decisively to the left. By contrast, CBS, ABC, and NBC, are more moderate: they will not run FFRF attack ads.

Rachel Maddow is the most popular left-wing talk-show anchor on television. It figures that FFRF would choose her MSNBC-TV show to advertise on more than any other. The atheist organization also likes to strut its hate speech on Comedy Central, especially Trevor Noah's show. There is no network that attacks Catholics more than Comedy Central, and Noah has contributed mightily to it.

Stephen Colbert is host to late-night TV's Trump-hating audience, a segment of the population that is not exactly known to be religion-friendly. Predictably, FFRF likes to advertise on his show. "Morning Joe" is another show that appeals to those on the left, and it is also home to FFRF ads.

The *New York Times* is known as the gold standard of liberal-left commentary, and is therefore a perfect spot for FFRF. We counted over a dozen full-page ads placed in the *Times* by FFRF. Other newspapers that it uses are the *Washington Post* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, both of which attract a liberal-left readership.

The content of the ads is the best index of FFRF's mind-set.

Religious liberty is something FFRF disdains. In 2014, when the Supreme Court issued its ruling in the Hobby Lobby case, affirming religious liberty, FFRF not only set off the alarms, it reverted back to its anti-Catholic bigotry by condemning the "all-Roman Catholic majority" on the high court. Its ads ran in several liberal newspapers, reserving its big bucks for a color ad in the *New York Times*.

Donald Trump is one of the most religion-friendly presidents in American history. To prove that he is, FFRF wasted no time attacking him. It did so over a month *before* he took office. "Washington, D.C. is about to be overrun by zealots. The Religious *Wrong* will soon control all three branches of government." Why a theocracy has not taken root by now remains unexplained.

Whenever a pope visits the U.S., it's a sure bet that FFRF will go bonkers. The visit by Pope Francis in 2015 was no exception. FFRF placed its demagogic ads in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Its "Global Warning" ad accused the pope of imposing Catholic doctrine on the nation. How did he manage to do this? By addressing a joint session of the Congress.

FFRF loves abortion. This is not an exaggeration. How else to characterize an organization whose co-founder, Anne Nicol Gaylor, wrote a book titled, *Abortion Is A Blessing*?

It was hardly surprising, then, to read a *New York Times* ad this past June that warned how "Emboldened Christian Nationalists are ramping up their relentless, religiously motivated war on reproductive rights." Who are these people? The ad identifies them as "fundamentalist Protestants and Roman Catholic zealots." They are "ruthlessly trying to inflict their punitive religious views upon the rest of us."

While FFRF despises evangelical Protestants, it saves its biggest guns for Catholics. "Value Children over Dogma: It's Time to Leave the Catholic Church." This ad is part of its "Quit the Catholic Church" campaign. Another ad reads, "It's Time to Quit the Catholic Church," beckoning "Liberal" and "Nominal" Catholics to seize "your moment of truth." It sure knows its audience. In Times Square it also ran a billboard saying, "Quit the Church. Put Women's Rights Over Bishops Wrongs."

Loving abortion and hating Catholicism certainly go hand in hand, so we can't argue with FFRF about that. It should know—it is Exhibit A.