



Written by [Staff](#) on June 27, 2023

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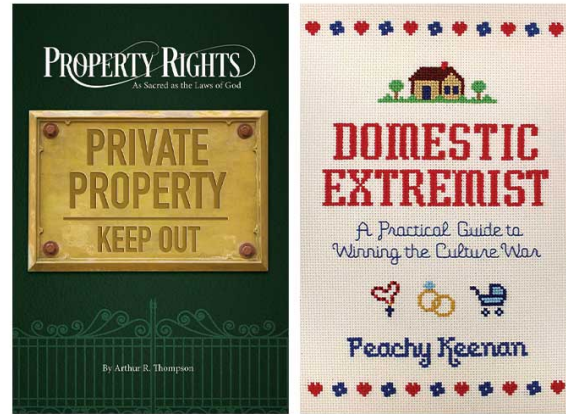
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## The Review

### The Centrality of Property Rights to Liberty

[\*Property Rights: As Sacred as the Laws of God\*](#), by Arthur R. Thompson, Appleton, Wisconsin: The John Birch Society, 2022, 114 pages, paperback.

Many Americans have heard of the song “This Land Is Your Land,” penned and sung by Oklahoman Woody Guthrie in the 1930s. While the tune is quite catchy, its message is Marxist. In one verse of the song, Guthrie tells of a sign that read “Private Property” on one side, but the other side was blank. That side, according to Guthrie, was “made for you and me.”



This is not surprising. As Art Thompson, former CEO of The John Birch Society, argues in his latest book *Property Rights: As Sacred as the Laws of God*, the abolition of private property has always been a goal of communists such as Karl Marx and Woody Guthrie. Thompson notes that the American government was created to protect the rights of individuals, including the right to own property, making our system of government the hated enemy of international communism. After all, as Thompson explains, for a totalitarian government to succeed, private property must be abolished.

This assault on private property is not only an attack upon our system of government, it is also an attack upon all “existing social conditions.” Today, many pretend that there is a difference between human rights and property rights. But, of course, property itself has no rights. Rather, individuals have rights — given to them by God — including the right to own property. If property rights are not respected, the destruction of all other liberties will soon follow.

Thompson makes this point by citing John Adams, who said, “The moment the idea is admitted into society that property is not as sacred as the laws of God, anarchy and tyranny commence.” Other Founders expressed similar sentiments. For example, James Madison said, “Government is instituted to protect property of every sort.” Though not cited by Thompson, John Locke, the English philosopher who greatly influenced the Founders, argued that all individual rights were essentially property rights, including life and liberty. After all, one’s life and one’s liberty are the property of an individual.



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Arthur R. Thompson. (John Birch Society)

Thompson explains the phrase found in the Declaration of Independence asserting that the Creator has endowed us with certain unalienable rights, including “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” Some mistakenly believe that the right to private property was overlooked by this phrase, but, as Thompson writes, “The short definition of the Pursuit of Happiness is the ability to seek out property of all kinds to ensure the happiness of the individual: land, personal property, property in money, etc.”

“Without property,” Thompson continues, “one could not earn a living, have shelter, and in general live a happy life: the Pursuit of Happiness.”

He further explains that the rejection of the right of an individual to own property is a rejection of *three* of the Ten Commandments. The Eighth Commandment clearly states, “Thou shalt not steal.” The Tenth Commandment forbids coveting, which means *desiring* to obtain someone else’s property, whatever that property is. (Socialist politicians today regularly appeal to covetousness in their platforms, when they call for a more “equitable distribution of wealth.”)

The Ninth Commandment, which forbids bearing false witness, is not one that normally is thought of in the context of the protection of private property, but Thompson writes, “This implies an aspect of property not always noticed — that it is lying to rob someone of some level of their freedom and/or property.”

“Morality plays a role in this, yet the foundational basis for morality is denied in the educational system if God is banned from the classroom,” Thompson notes, adding, “If God can’t be mentioned, how can we possibly affirm the words of the Declaration of Independence?”

In chapter three, Thompson examines the difference between a republic and a democracy, and the problem of “majority rule.” While many Americans today view the two terms — republic and democracy — as synonyms, they are really not. A republican form of government, properly understood, is designed to protect liberty, while democracy — majority rule — can actually be destructive of liberty. In a letter written in 1814, John Adams said, “A democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself.” Thompson cites English philosopher G.K. Chesterton, who wisely said, “You can never have a revolution to establish a democracy. You must have a democracy in order to have a revolution.”



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Marxists certainly *say* they favor democracy (leftists in America often refer to socialism by euphemisms such as “industrial democracy”), by which they mean a first step toward a totalitarian government. Once the people of a nation come to believe that they can take away someone else’s private property via the ballot box, it is a short step to a communist oligarchy doing the same thing.

Thompson argues that the 16th and 17th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution have greatly damaged the concepts of limited government, federalism, and private property. The 16th Amendment gave Congress the authority to impose a *progressive income tax*, while the 17th took away from state legislatures the power to choose their state’s U.S. senators, thus diminishing the power of state governments. The income tax gave Congress the money to offer funds to state governments in exchange for them giving up some of their reserved powers. For example, when Congress threatened to take away the state highway funds of any state government refusing to lower their speed limits to 55 miles per hour, all 50 states meekly complied.

Another way that property rights have been diminished is through foreign entanglements, including so-called free trade agreements. As Thompson explains, these international agreements (which are actually treaties, another instance of the Constitution being ignored, as all treaties have to be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Senate, not just majority votes in the House and Senate) are an “insidious” attack on property rights.

While President Donald Trump may have done many good things, his trade deal with Mexico and Canada — the USMCA — has cost Americans property rights already, and will continue to do so. The Law of the Sea Treaty (LOST), which had been negotiated by President Jimmy Carter and withdrawn from Senate consideration by his successor, Ronald Reagan, was inserted into the USMCA. As Thompson writes, inserting an unratified treaty into a trade agreement was yet another unconstitutional act.

In other chapters, Thompson documents the erosion of American property rights over the course of our history. As the country expanded westward, Congress abandoned the anti-colonial policy the Confederation Congress had adopted with the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. In it, Congress provided that lands south of the Great Lakes be made *states*, rather than *colonies* of the federal government. Unfortunately, starting with the Louisiana Purchase, lands in the West were not all transferred to those states and their citizens, but some lands were retained by the federal government. Alaska, for example, is 61-percent owned by the U.S. government.

Civil asset forfeiture laws are another way that governments attack private property. With these laws, law enforcement can seize property, arguing it was used in a crime. Instead of the burden of proof being on the government to prove a person was using his property in a crime, the accused must now prove his innocence.

Gun-control laws are yet another example of infringement on property rights, Thompson writes. For example, President Joe Biden falsely said that individuals could not buy cannons at the time of the passage of the Second Amendment, but the truth is they could and they did. While Biden and other anti-gun politicians argue that average citizens should not be able to possess “weapons of war,” the fact of the matter is that the muskets and cannons of 1776 were the latest available arms in their day. The media is not restricted to using the primitive printing technology of the time in which the First Amendment was written, and neither should individuals be limited to muskets. Thompson calls the



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assault on the Second Amendment an assault on the “last barrier to the elimination of property rights.”

What can we do about all of these assaults on our property rights? Thompson suggests joining The John Birch Society (the parent company of *The New American*). The Society provides education in constitutional government, promotes Americanism, and offers effective strategies to save our Constitution.

There is much more in Thompson’s book than what can be adequately covered in a short review, and this writer highly recommends the book for anyone wishing to gain a better understanding of the importance of property rights.

— *Steve Byas*

## **Mother Knows Best**

***Domestic Extremist: A Practical Guide to Winning the Culture War***, by Peachy Keenan, Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 2023, 384 pages, hardcover.

If there’s somethin’ strange in your neighborhood, who ya gonna call? The “Ghostbusters” won’t be enough. Consider that, in this battle, the other side has already taken, or is in the process of taking, your fleeting fertility, gender, virtues, unborn children, maternal instinct, parental authority, and much more. Your very happiness is at risk.

Yet there is a plan to take back what has been lost. It involves becoming ever-so-slightly more domestic, or, as Peachy Keenan puts it, becoming “domestic extremists.” We will, our pseudonymous author assures regular American families — both men and women, though this pep talk is more particularly addressed to women — take the fight to our opponents and overcome.

How? Combining lyrico-dramatic with droll, she counts some of the ways: “We will claim victory peacefully. We will extinguish their ideas elegantly; we will dismantle their dictates with decorum. We will grind their gruesome ideologies to dust gracefully. We will take prisoners and claim scalps, but not a hair on their shrunken heads will be harmed.”

Moreover, proving how innately dangerous this woman really is, especially when such matters are *verboten* in her former social circles, the author comes clean and admits — after issuing a “trigger warning” — that she refused to “hire strangers” to raise her kids for her.

There are countless other flabbergasting and witty disclosures within.

## **Though Much Is Taken, Much Abides**

The book is divided into two main sections, describing, candidly, the damage that has been wreaked on our country and families in recent decades, and then outlining how to reclaim what is rightfully ours. Amid the sharp commentary and incisive observations, there are both serious and fun sides. The author’s personal growth is an important part of this volume; she clearly hopes that her experiences can help others.

The author of *Domestic Extremist: A Practical Guide to Winning the Culture War* is a contributing editor for *The American Mind*, a publication of the Claremont Institute. She also writes at [peachykeenansubstack.com](http://peachykeenansubstack.com) — where one learns that she did not do the counted cross-stitching on the



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book's cover (though the design idea was apparently hers.) A pseudovisage also accompanies her frequent Twitter remarks.

The writer, a mother of five, describes herself as living behind enemy lines in Southern California. She was originally scheduled to “dox” herself on Tucker Carlson’s show on the night of her book’s publication in early June, though that changed when Carlson and Fox News went in different directions. As it happens, the “facedoxxing” and “unboxing” did take place on Harris Faulkner’s Fox show. Lest you wonder, that “face reveal” confirms that the real Peachy behind the *nom de plume* is more animated and better looking than the Twitter profile representation.

We learn a good deal about the younger (and current) Peachy throughout the book, with a whole chapter about her “origin story.” Faith, albeit belated, is a key for her — though she is hardly a Preachy Peachy. She describes how, after three children, she had her “final burn-the-ships, cross-the-Rubicon moment.” This was the “day I converted from secular atheism to Catholicism, officially reversing my long-held feminist positions on abortion, premarital sex, birth control, and more. The old Peachy was dead. Long live the new, domestically extreme Peachy!”

## Stratagems vs. Powerful Forces

There’s no doubt that Keenan is aware of the “immense forces” deployed against tradition, parents, and children, “and against the nearly dead American Dream.” That, however, is not the main focus in *Domestic Extremist*. This is a volume about being in the trenches.

If this were a different type of book, an outright military one as opposed to one about our cultural clash, the skirmishing she discusses could be called “tactical” or “operational” — as opposed to being at a more notional “strategic” level.

To be clear, Peachy doesn’t get into such details. More to the immediate point, she does expound on, for instance, what she calls the “three filthiest words in the English language: beauty, chastity, modesty.”

The author is mindful, however, of a larger picture — pointing out how such forces “pretend their plan to destroy the family is a right-wing conspiracy theory, only they have been saying it — out loud — in academic circles for years.” Keenan does mention other “largely invisible villains.” These are, as she writes,

New World Order globalists, the “you’ll own nothing and you’ll be happy” sociopaths who control everything from the World Economic Forum to most Western governments, Big Tech, Big Media, the wine aunt hive mind, teachers’ unions, the media, Hollywood, celebrity culture, think tanks, institutes, climate change radicals, NGOs, Planned Parenthood, the woke velvet mafia in charge of the Catholic Church, the global monetary system, Wall Street, Big Tech, Big Pharma, Big Gender (that is, the powerful LGBTQ+ lobby), D.C., and the entire American educational system from pre-K to grad school.

Against all of that, and much more, the author offers a solution, promising that “Living a more domestically extreme lifestyle will carry you and your family safely over the gaping abyss!” Then she backs up her assertions.



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## Gender Activists Brandish Pronouns

At the personal level — very personal — normal women have become the bad guys. Keenan says goodbye, sadly, to such girls in her list of descriptions of what has been lost of late, in this case in a chapter about gender. Her arguments, here and elsewhere, are frank and forthright. As we read, women who “object to the ‘male-bodied’ showing up in their more intimate areas, like locker rooms and saunas, in bathrooms and dressing rooms, are the villains.”

Complain about naked male genitalia in the women’s spa, she says,

and the establishment feminists accuse you of committing violence against transgendered people. Some women’s rights groups, who have fought for years to support women in prisons and allow them to have greater access to their children, now stay silent as rapists with male bodies are locked in jail cells with female rape survivors. Sorry, ladies, that is what equality looks like: prison rape is now equally distributed at the men’s and the women’s penitentiaries.

Some of us recall when women got praised for their intuition. Nowadays, it seems, they can’t even have their own institutions.

Keenan also unleashes straight talk against bent men. You know them. In the author’s words, they are the ones whose “greatest fear is to be misgendered.” When that happens, she says, “it only reminds them of the great lie they are living and the comical futility of their attempts to pass.”

Some things don’t change, even in cultural collisions. We still find that there’s one thing to be said for ignorance: It leads to interesting arguments.

## From Feminism to Faith

Genuine faith is assuring and enduring. It seems that when conversion is added into the equation, it is insuring. Throughout the book and her other writing, Peachy acknowledges the dramatic changes of her views and life. In one of her Substack pieces, for instance, Keenan takes note of some of the transformations — citing how her “longtime career as a copywriter for woke corporations and ad agencies” suddenly took “a thrilling turn — into right-wing *samizdat*.”

In the same regard, here’s more on what the former archetypal feminist has learned, from *Domestic Extremist*, where she describes how so many young women (and men), especially amid the proliferation of dating apps, have opted out of early marriage. Writes Keenan, “Sixty years of unchecked feminism convinced young women marriage is a trap and a prison — and gave permission to several generations of young men to collect digital harems of cheap concubines.”

**Protect the children:** Public schools are now centers of indoctrination, particularly regarding sex and LGBTQ dogma. Parents should consider taking their children out of the government schools.

(LeManna/iStock/Getty Images Plus)



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Things have changed, largely for the worse, in terms of “domestic extremism” over recent generations. Keenan points out that Generation X veterans of boomer divorces (her situation) came to fear marriage because of the divorces in their childhood. Then when they did marry, their parental authority was attacked on multiple fronts.

Amid her “origin story” remarks, the author says that most of the girls she went to college with were the last generation with “fairly normal” adulthoods, albeit delayed. How about now? They are (she’s writing from Southern California, remember)

perfectly progressive liberals raising perfectly progressive children. Their youthful libertinism has evolved into magic mushroom microdosing parties for moms who could step smartly into *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*. Their children go to expensive schools where kindergarteners announce their pronouns when they address their class; they’re put on the pill the day they get their periods, no matter what gender they are.

These are your elite, America.

The author isn’t proselytizing her specific religious beliefs in *Domestic Extremist*, but unmistakably has traveled on a spiritual road from the days when, in Keenan’s words, she was “baptized in the Church of MTV” and a “secular and sanitized household left me to grope my way in darkness.”

## Parents for Girls and Boys

There’s plenty to discuss concerning the ongoing gender wars, and it is a particularly strong part of *Domestic Extremist*. Such battles also erode parental authority, another area that is well covered here. As Keenan observes, if you don’t believe that children need to be learning at an early age from government officials and teachers about sex and gender dysphoria, it is *you* who are the supposed extremist. She continues: “*You* are the extremist if you question a teacher or school administrator’s choice of books to read or lessons to learn.” (Emphasis in original.)

Depending on where you live, the battles between parents and perverse sex promoters may have become hot wars. California is truly extremist. In her native state, notes Keenan,

students in middle school can ask their school to change their names and genders in the



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school computer system, and the school is not permitted to inform the parents. The school authorities and the teachers are legally allowed to conspire with eleven-year-olds in sixth grade to induct them into a cult and keep it secret. Literally “it’ll be our secret,” a classic groomer move.

On the other hand, there are alternatives. And the top item on the “How to Reclaim Your Parental Authority” section of this book suggests some of the various ways to exit government schools.

Things have clearly been getting worse when it comes to “heir-conditioning” (don’t blame Peachy for that pun). Accordingly, Keenan suggests, among other matters, becoming an “anti-feminist.” She also asks rhetorically if swapping “traditional feminine values for feminist values” — her previous personal path — did make young women happier. That was, as she says, “the promise, remember. Did it work? Let’s check in with Gen Z and find out!” Peachy answers her own question:

Ah, unfortunately, it looks like depression among Gen Z is sky-rocketing, and it’s highest for young women. Could it be a connection between all this summertime sadness and the feminist indoctrination they receive from birth?

As you can see, Keenan really is an extremist: She even promotes traditional femininity. Nor does the book ignore her husband. In that vein, according to Peachy, she identifies as a husbosexual — meaning that she is “only attracted to people who identify as her husband.”

*Domestic Extremist* features a number of editorial add-ons, including apropos chapter epigraphs (from Aristotle to G.K. Chesterton and from Audrey Hepburn to Joan of Arc); a pointed quiz to measure if you are a Domestic Extremist; and a semi-flippant game of “Feminist Bingo.” The latter allows readers to see if they can identify some of the archetypes in their neighborhoods, with about three dozen categories. You get points for IDing each; here are three representative examples: Women Who Think Children Cause Climate Change; Women Who Hang BLM, LGBTQ+, and Transgender Flags on Their Homes but You Never See an American Flag; and Women Who Donate to Planned Parenthood but Want to Tell You How to Parent. Peachy acknowledges that since she lives in Southern California, she always wins this game.

In short, readers are in for a treat with Peachy’s book. Meanwhile, between the insightful and the sarcastic — generally deserved — she can also dish out poetically. Here she is, for instance, characterizing mothers with multiple children and their views on motherhood. To such women, the author writes,

Every day is a step forward in shaping a new human being who repays you with a million joys, a million delightful giggles, and profound love. From the outside, an infinity of mundane moments — wiping a tear, cutting up grapes, pushing a swing — looks like nothing. But each throwaway gesture is another stone in the monument to you that slowly rises unseen deep in your child’s heart.

Sure, there are rough days. After all, mothers only have two hands. And, as we all know, it is also advisable to save something for a rainy day — patience.





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In a chapter on saving the planet (one family at a time), the author has a modest proposal or two. A financial one about giving grants for a third child is admittedly just spitballing and politically farfetched.

More fitting is this maxim: Obey the Babies. As Peachy puts it, with a wink, the next time you “see a baby, look into his eyes. He is telling you that he agrees with me. Or maybe he’s just making a weird face while he poops.”

— *William P. Hoar*

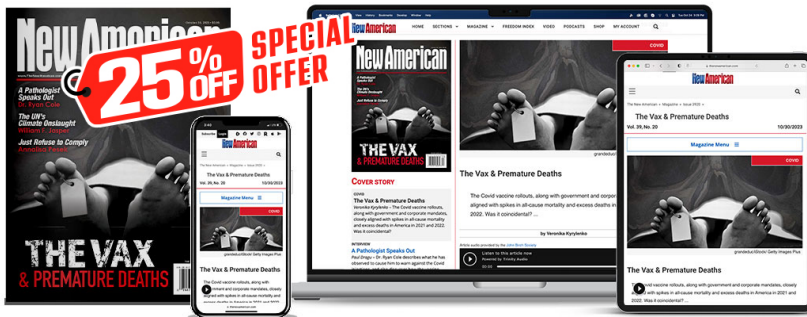


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