



Written by [James Heiser](#) on November 10, 2009

Krugman Vents His Vitriol on Conservatives

Hypocrisy knows no political boundaries and the refrain “do as I say, not as I do” is a not-uncommon refrain in many circles of human society. Still, there is something that seems particularly humorous about the ideological hypocrisies of the Left.

At present, there is a great deal of handwringing in the ranks of the establishment media in the aftermath of the Ft. Hood massacre: “Will the fact Maj. Hasan is a Islamic extremist cause a backlash against Moslems in the military and society in general?” If the mavens of political correctness are to be believed, one of the chief intellectual “sins” that one may commit is to predict patterns of behavior based on belief systems. To contend that a person may be inclined to believe a certain way, or act in a certain way, based on what they purport to be their most fundamental beliefs is deemed “profiling.”



But there is a time when this assessment of “profiling” may be flipped on its head — when profiling becomes a necessity, and may even become the basis for publicly hurling epithets at one’s opponents in the public square.

Consider the example of Paul Krugman at *The New York Times*. In a November 9 “op-ed” for the *Times* (“[Paranoia Strikes Deep](#)”), Mr. Krugman vents his vitriol on conservatives who recently dared to give voice in Washington, D.C. to their dissatisfaction at the forced march for collectivism currently under way in the nation’s capital.

Last Thursday there was a rally outside the U.S. Capitol to protest pending health care legislation, featuring the kinds of things we’ve grown accustomed to, including large signs showing piles of bodies at Dachau with the caption “National Socialist Healthcare.” It was grotesque — and it was also ominous. For what we may be seeing is America starting to be Californiafied.

The key thing to understand about that rally is that it wasn’t a fringe event. It was sponsored by the House Republican leadership — in fact, it was officially billed as a G.O.P. press conference. Senior lawmakers were in attendance, and apparently had no problem with the tone of the proceedings.

True, Eric Cantor, the second-ranking House Republican, offered some mild criticism after the fact. But the operative word is “mild.” The signs were “inappropriate,” said his spokesman, and the use of Hitler comparisons by such people as Rush Limbaugh, said Mr. Cantor, “conjures up images that frankly are not, I think, very helpful.”



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Since he views such protests in terms of a Republican-Democrat dynamic (a fundamental misunderstanding of what is at work here), one might wonder whether Krugman was as outspoken when his compatriots were busy painting Hitler mustaches and swastikas on images of Republican presidents. In fact, such images have been a mainstay of left-wing protests against every action by the U.S. military since the 1960s.

But the heart of Mr. Krugman's thesis is found in the last sentence cited above: "What all this shows is that the G.O.P. has been taken over by the people it used to exploit." You see, according to Mr. Krugman, the Republicans have lost control of the right-wing "extremists" it usually just exploits for votes.

For Krugman, the "far right" began its rise in American politics with the campaign of Ronald Reagan, but he interprets that rise to a mostly symbolic place within the Republican Party.

That changed with the rise of Ronald Reagan: Republican politicians began to win elections in part by catering to the passions of the angry right.

Until recently, however, that catering mostly took the form of empty symbolism. Once elections were won, the issues that fired up the base almost always took a back seat to the economic concerns of the elite. Thus in 2004 George W. Bush ran on antiterrorism and "values," only to announce, as soon as the election was behind him, that his first priority was changing Social Security.

In a sense, none of this is particularly surprising to regular readers of *The New American*. Conservatives have long understood that neither party is dominated by a desire to return to a strict reading of the U.S. Constitution regarding the role and powers of the federal government, and that the influence of conservative views within the party is often safely packed in a quickly forgotten party platform. Conservatives are wanted when it is time for fundraising, canvassing, etc., but after the election, their ranks are quickly forgotten in the political calculations.

But something snapped last year. Conservatives had long believed that history was on their side, so the G.O.P. establishment could, in effect, urge hard-right activists to wait just a little longer: once the party consolidated its hold on power, they'd get what they wanted. After the Democratic sweep, however, extremists could no longer be fobbed off with promises of future glory.

One must appreciate the effort: "Snapped"? Really, Mr. Krugman, what a delightful way to describe everyone who disagrees with you as mentally unhinged. But he has the timeline wrong: The discontent had reached the boiling point well before last November. The figure whom Krugman apparently cannot bring himself to name is Rep. Ron Paul, whose presidential race mobilized such widespread support that it terrified the establishments of both major political parties as well as the establishment media, which had gotten used to eliminating conservative candidates with a scornful look and a tut-tut of comments regarding their supposed extremism. The more Paul's support grew, the more frantic the party establishment and the media were to silence both the candidate and his supporters.

The defeat of the Republican ticket deprived talk radio "conservatives" of the refrain that they had sounded during the eight-years of the mediocre Bush administration: "Shut up and support the president, or someone worse will get in office." Such compromising led to the predictable result — the election of someone even worse — and combined with a conservative movement that is seeing its place in the body politic more clearly than it has in generations, Krugman is certainly not alone in the concern



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that voters may avail themselves of the opportunity to reject the false choices that had previously been inflicted on them. Thus Krugman opines,

Furthermore, the loss of both Congress and the White House left a power vacuum in a party accustomed to top-down management. At this point Newt Gingrich is what passes for a sober, reasonable elder statesman of the G.O.P. And he has no authority: Republican voters ignored his call to support a relatively moderate, electable candidate in New York's special Congressional election.

That's right. Gingrich asked voters to support a Republican who, in the end, threw her support to Democrat, and whose views were apparently indistinguishable from the Democratic Party on many central points. Conservatives supported a choice that was not simply a party-based distinction without a difference. Krugman continues:

Real power in the party rests, instead, with the likes of Rush Limbaugh, Glenn Beck and Sarah Palin (who at this point is more a media figure than a conventional politician). Because these people aren't interested in actually governing, they feed the base's frenzy instead of trying to curb or channel it. So all the old restraints are gone....

In fact, the party of Limbaugh and Beck could well make major gains in the midterm elections. The Obama administration's job-creation efforts have fallen short, so that unemployment is likely to stay disastrously high through next year and beyond. The banker-friendly bailout of Wall Street has angered voters, and might even let Republicans claim the mantle of economic populism.

Conservatives may not have better ideas, but voters might support them out of sheer frustration.

They would support them because they have witnessed the culmination of generations of trading away our constitutional heritage as part of a slide into Socialism. The protesters may not have the polish and class that Krugman demands of them, but they also defy his attempt to "profile" them. Krugman and his political class may hold the American people in contempt, but they will still have to watch the coming backlash.

Photo of Paul Krugman: AP Images



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