

## **HUCKABEE SUPPORTERS FIGHT A CLASS WAR**

**By Don Feder**

Borrowing a page from the left's playbook, some of Mike Huckabee's supporters are now engaged in full-scale class warfare.

Their message to the right: If you're skeptical about the Huckster, you're an elitist – a coupon-clipping, Wall Street Republican snob who distains social conservatives and is probably prejudiced against evangelical Christians.

But once you get past the preacher-man façade, it's Huckabee who most resembles the old Rockefeller Republicans among the current crop of candidates. Take away his pro-life position and his primary posturing, and Huckabee is John Edwards with a \$15-haircut – a softer Hillary Clinton.

One of the most egregious examples of class-baiting by a Huckabee partisans is a commentary (“The View from the Back of the Bus”) by Ken Connor, chairman of the Center for a Just Society.

Connor claims beltway Republicans -- who “summer at Nantucket and Bar Harbor,” “are educated at Harvard and Yale,” and “read the *Wall Street Journal* and *Barron's*” -- are frantic over the Huckabee phenomenon.

“They are the Republican elites, the bluebloods who fund political campaigns” and are “fiscally conservative and socially liberal.” They're willing to use evangelicals as campaign foot-soldiers, but are horrified by the prospect of Huckabee sitting at the head of the table instead of merely giving the benediction.

Connor claims the battle for the GOP nomination comes down to “bluebloods” versus “blue collars.”

It’s the business elite against regular folks (what Pat Buchanan calls the Main Street/Wall Street dichotomy), economic populists versus running dogs of corporate America, those who favor “Harvard-educated, multimillionaire Mitt Romney” or guitar-picking, good ole boy, preacher-turned-politician Huckabee, in a cage-match for the soul of the Republican Party.

For the record, a lot of Main Street Republicans are dubious of Huckabee’s conservative bona fides. In the Michigan primary, Romney got 41% of the vote among self-identified conservatives, versus the 20% who went with the populist preacher.

Connor’s sentiments are echoed by my friend, syndicated columnist Star Parker, who decries the “hate campaign being conducted against Huckabee” (which viciously focuses on his record) by “inside the beltway Republicans.” Said malefactors of power and privilege “have also lost touch with the increasing seriousness with which grassroots conservatives relate to the traditional values agenda.”

I don’t want to be the one to tell Phyllis Schlafly that she’s an economic royalist. The founding mother of the modern conservative movement says that as governor, Huckabee “destroyed the conservative movement in Arkansas, and left the Republican Party a shambles.”

Ann Coulter must be one of those champagne-sipping Republican elitists who veer left on social issues. Coulter declares, “On illegal immigration, Huckabee makes George Bush sound like Tom Tancredo.” FYI, the elitist position on immigration is the same as Huckabee’s: borders – open at all hours of the day and night.

I've visited Nantucket and Bar Harbor exactly once in my life, both on day trips. I "summer" in my backyard. I graduated from distinctly non-elitist Boston University. It's hard to find anyone to the right of me on abortion, marriage and other family issues. I've probably devoted more effort to defending conservative Christians than any other non-Christian in America.

And Huckabee scares me spit-less. Unlike his android followers, I am not mesmerized by his clerical credentials or his God-talk.

Besides his following on the deluded right, the Governor has a vocal cheering section on the left. If they could anoint the next Republican presidential nominee, it would be Huckabee.

New York Times columnist Frank Rich, the doyen of Christian-bashers, wrote a column after the Iowa Caucuses ("They Didn't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow") singing the praises of Huckabee and Obama. "The two men are ... the least angry and the least inclined to seek votes by saturation-bombing us with the post-9/11 arsenal of fear...."

"They both radiate wit and joy (and, yes hope)," Rich gushed. Are you sick yet? "They don't run from Americans who are not in their club."

"It's such populist Huckabee sentiments that are already driving the Republican empire to strike back," Rich warns. "The party that has milked religious conservatives for votes for two decades is traumatized by the prospect that one of that ilk might actually become its standard-bearer." (Sound familiar?)

Rich has spent years calling down curses on the GOP for “pandering” to the religious right, but now he wants “one of that ilk” to lead the party?

Over the past two decades, Rich enthusiastically smeared religious conservatives as patriarchal, homophobic, theocratic, demagogues – with pronounced fascist tendencies. Rich attacked “The Passion” as anti-Semitic before he even saw it and could barely contain his glee over the death of Jerry Falwell last May.

Rich is willing to overlook the Governor’s pro-life, pro-marriage stands, because Huckabee is so joyfully PC on issues like global warming, education spending, compassion for border-jumpers, taxes and the war on terrorism.

Besides, Rich knows that Huckabee is the candidate most likely to make the Reagan coalition implode this year.

Among the Huckster’s other admirers on the left is Larry Schweiger of the tree-hugging National Wildlife Federation, who beams, “He’s only the second Republican (*the first being McCain*) to say he supports cap-and-trade, which we believe is the critical part of any effort to stop global warming.”

I didn’t know grassroots conservatives had joined the Al Gore crusade – that they’d bought in to junk science and were willing to sacrifice industrial jobs, kill off what’s left of the U.S. auto industry and bleed at the pump for environmental Marxism? Hmmm? I must have been clipping coupons and reading *Barron’s* while vacationing in Bar Harbor when that went down.

Prior to the Granite State’s presidential primary, Huckabee was endorsed by the New Hampshire Education Association, state affiliate of the NEA, the left-leaning teachers’ union.

The teachers' collective really digs Huckabee's "strong views on public education" – translation, as Arkansas governor, he reflexively supported shoveling more money at the public schools and adamantly opposed education vouchers, which might threaten the state school monopoly.

In his new book, "Culture Shift: Engaging Current Issues With Timeless Truth," Albert Mohler predicts that public schools "will soon become even more hostile to the convictions of Christian families."

"I am convinced that the time has come for Christians to develop an exit strategy from the public schools," the president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary writes. But Huckabee wants to slam the door shut on those trying to escape.

Earlier this week, the Governor engaged in the most shameless opportunism I've ever seen in a presidential campaign (and my memory of same stretches back to William Henry Harrison's run for office).

With not a hint of irony, the Huckster signed a pledge to oppose amnesty and make illegal aliens go home. His frantic attempts to reinvent himself here started before Iowa, when Huckabee vowed to send supporter Chuck Norris to the border. (To make bad B-movies?)

Could this be the same candidate who only months ago disclosed, "I tend to think that the rational approach (*to illegal immigration*) is to find a way to give people a pathway to citizenship." Writing in *Human Events* (not the *Wall Street Journal*, which sounds like the old Huckabee on immigration), James R. Edwards, Jr. observes, "Pathway to citizenship is Bush-McCain-Kennedy code for amnesty."

Huckabee used to compare efforts at border enforcement to racism. He told us that by being nice to illegals, we could atone for slavery.

For God's sake, would Huckabee's supporters please look past his opportunistic rhetoric and examine his record. I know it's hard for you, but, come on, give it a try.

As governor, he opposed a bill to require proof of citizenship to obtain government benefits and vote. That's right, Huckabee thinks that those who are in America illegally should have a voice in the electoral process. (He said the measure "inflames those who are racists and bigots.")

Why not allow the Mexicans still in Mexico to vote by absentee ballot? Why discriminate?

He supported drivers' licenses for illegals and in-state tuition for their children. In 2005, he told the open-borders League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), "We should accommodate people" who want to come here from Latin America. What more could we do, provide public subsidies for Univision?

Moreover, the man who now bills himself as an honorary Minuteman told LULAC that we had to "recognize and cherish diversity in culture, in language and in population." Hello bilingualism, multiculturalism and the devolution of America from nation state to conglomeration of warring tribes.

And you wonder why Huckabee is Frank Rich's favorite Republican?

Immigration isn't the Governor's only flip-flop.

He supported a nationwide ban on smoking in public places, until he figured out that those blue-collar voters he claims to represent are more likely to smoke than other Americans. (It's hard to play tribune of the people while acting as agent of the nanny state.) Huckabee now says states should decide whether to impose this form of health fascism.

In 2002, the then-governor supported lifting the trade embargo against Castro's regime. After looking at Florida's Cuban émigré vote, the Huckster reversed himself on that too.

When asked about his change of heart, he cynically replied, "Well, what changed was I'm running for president." Now there's a response guaranteed to inspire confidence in a candidate's commitment to principle.

The man from Hope recently picked up an important Republican endorsement, that of the Iranian Republican Guard.

A December 25 report in Iran's state-run Fars News Agency observed: "Huckabee is of the opinion that relations with Iran deteriorated following Bush's 'axis of evil' speech. In many points his message on Iran is more akin to that of the Democrats: there is a need to dialogue with Iran and more diplomacy is needed."

About the same time, Huckabee told conservative talk-show host Hugh Hewitt: "We haven't had diplomatic relationships with Iran in almost 30 years, most of my adult life. And a lot of good it's done. Putting this in human terms, all of us know that when we stop talking to a parent or a sibling, or even a friend, it's impossible to resolve the differences and move the relationship forward. Well, the same is true for countries."

So let's negotiate with Hitler at Munich, and let's have arms control treaties with the Soviet Union. And, by all means, let us

engage in diplomacy with theocratic Dark Ages Holocaust-deniers who arm terrorist gangs and are Allah-bent on acquiring nukes.

It's hard to tell if Huckabee is more Opie or Oprah.

On foreign policy, he's pure psychobabble: Communication breaks down barriers. When we're talking, we're not fighting. If we're really nice, people will love us. Will he try to resurrect Mr. Rogers as his Secretary of State? ("It's a wonderful day in the global neighborhood and won't you *please* be my neighbor?")

After admitting in early December that he hadn't heard of the National Intelligence Estimate on Iran (is it an IQ test?), Huckabee wrote an article for the January/February 2008 issue of *Foreign Affairs* ("America's Priorities in the War on Terror"), presumably to prove that he can spell foreign policy.

As the world's last superpower, America is less vulnerable to military attack but "more vulnerable to the animosity of other countries," Huckabee wrote. "Much like the top high school student, if it is modest about its abilities and achievements, if it is generous in helping others, it is loved. But if it attempts to dominate others, it is despised."

Thus, "American foreign policy needs to change its tone and attitude, open up, and reach out," and move away from "the Bush administration's arrogant bunker mentality."

That's exactly what the left has been telling us since Vietnam, and especially after 9/11, albeit phrased in Huckabee's folksy metaphors – Jihadists don't love us because we're arrogant and ungenerous and haven't taken the time to get to know them. ("Hi, Osama, I'm Sam, and I'm humble and would be grateful if you'd stop trying to kill me.")



Some of his supporters got agitated when it was disclosed late last month that Huckabee is getting foreign-policy advice from Richard Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations (more elitist than this you can not get).

Haass beats the New World Order drum when he observes, “States must be prepared to cede some sovereignty to world bodies if the international system is to function.”

To quell a case of jitters among the faithful, Huckabee responded to an inquiry from CNN’s Wolf Blitzer: “Well, I have a number of people from whom I get policy (*sic.*). I’m talking to Frank Gaffney (*of the hawkish Center for Security Policy*). I talk to Richard Haass.” This is like saying, “I seek broad input on criminal justice issues. I talk to Joe Arpaio (the law and order sheriff of Maricopa County, AZ.) and the head of the American Civil Liberties Union.”

Let’s see – wants to help the downtrodden from the taxpayers pockets, kowtows to radical environmentalism, wants more money for public education, thinks we can win friends and influence people abroad by showing that we care, hangs with internationalists, believes in tax-and-spend policies (during Huck’s years as Arkansas governor, there was a net tax increase – adjusted for inflation and economic growth -- of \$505 million) – yup, sounds like a Rockefeller Republican (AKA a RINO) to me.

But, hey, what do I know?

I’m one of those anti-Huckabee elitists, a minion of Wall Street and a beltway-insider who lives off his trust fund and is about to sail off to Nantucket in my yacht as I enjoy a fine bottle of Chateau Manischewitz.

