

Psychohistory News

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A House Divided: The Republicans in 2016

by Ken Fuchsman

Editor's Note: This article responds to earlier ones by Brian D'Agostino and David Lotto. D'Agostino's piece, "Understanding the Republican Group Fantasy," appeared in the previous issue of this newsletter. His analysis of one of the Republican debates uncovered a recurring theme of humiliation and restoration of power through guns and especially military



Policy showdown between Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan and Presumptive Presidential Nominee Donald Trump

power. The article examined the demise of white male privilege and decreasing economic security since the 1970s and the decline of American power internationally as the historical context for feelings of humiliation among white males, the key demographic in Republican politics. It argued further, based on survey research on

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The IPA Two Years Later

by Brian D'Agostino

Dear IPA Members and Friends,

A lot has happened in our organization since I became president in June 2014. My most important goal was to build a collaborative leadership team; I undertook this at the outset, and everything else followed. Gilda Graff had agreed to serve as Vice President, and former IPA President Denis O'Keefe had agreed to stay involved in the leadership and

take up the role of Treasurer. Ken Fuchsman became the fourth member of our team. Through monthly conference calls, group emails every week, and a lot of hard unpaid work, this little group has accomplished a great deal in two years, which I will share with you in this report.

By far our most time-consuming and demanding project has been the IPA's annual conference, planning for which begins soon after the previous conference. There are many moving parts to this and endless details involving speakers, luncheons, pricing, book tables, program layout, technology, promotion, and much more. Making the right

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decisions on such an array of details, creating a coherent design for the whole, and actually doing the work of implementation would be an overwhelming task for one person. Remarkably, Denis O'Keefe did all this virtually by himself when he was president, but in the last two years this has been mostly a collective effort by the leadership team working in a collegial spirit.

Our Geneva-based International Vice President, Marc-André Cotton, has represented the IPA at several European conferences. During and in between conferences, he has been an important presence for the IPA in Europe—giving presentations, networking, disseminating literature, and having an exchange of ideas with a wide array of people interested in psychohistory in multiple countries and disciplines.

Along with Marc André's work, I have made a point to reach out beyond the IPA's traditional heartland in America's Northeast, in some cases working personally with new members from places as diverse as India (Prof. Souvik Raychaudhuri), Nigeria (Fr. Anthony Bature) and Minnesota (Kristina Blake), while also deepening existing relationships with members from California (Dr. Faye Snyder) to Germany (Dr. Ludwig Janus). I also attended a conference organized by Dr. Habibeh Rahim, Professor of Islamic Studies at St. John's University, and she is now an IPA member and part of our network. I hesitate to mention individual names because there are so many more, but these few give a flavor of the outreach I have been doing as IPA president in the last two years.

The most important recent development in the New York area has been the IPA's exciting partnership with the Object Relations Institute (ORI) for Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy, a NYS chartered educational institution founded twenty five years ago by Dr. Susan Kaveler-Adler. IPA Vice President Gilda Graff, a graduate of ORI, initiated this relationship in 2014. Last year, five members of ORI's scientific faculty became IPA members and eight faculty or affiliates presented at our conference.

Our biggest debt of all in making this partnership happen is to the indefatigable Dr. Inna Rozentzvit, an ORI administrator and faculty member. Inna has done a massive amount of work implementing the ORI's sponsorship of our conference and the authorization of our conference to award Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for social workers and Continuing Education

(CE) credits in psychoanalytic education for all mental health professionals. Last year, Inna videotaped much of our conference, and this year, with Sandra Indig and two assistants hopes to videotape all the presentations.

In order to support creation of the IPA-ORI partnership from our side, the IPA's collaborative leadership team has been indispensable. In working with Inna, I was able to make some decisions and do some of the work myself, but often consulted with Gilda and Denis and got their help with implementation, especially on matters involving the complicated world of CEUs and on the nuts and bolts work of organizing a conference jointly with ORI.

IPA Leadership Team, 2014-2016



Brian D'Agostino



Gilda Graff



Denis O'Keefe



Ken Fuchsman

The last two years have seen a refurbishing of our organization's website, which now hosts online membership renewal and conference registration as well as an archive with back issues of *Psychohistory News*, which we have also begun to distribute electronically. Editing and producing this newsletter has been a major focus of my activity in the last two years. I have solicited or written articles applying psychohistory to current events including racial politics, terrorism, electoral politics, immigration, mass shootings, nuclear weapons, and international events from Syria, Greece, France, and India. We have run essays by graduate students and reports of student research as well as articles about trauma and post-traumatic growth, parenting, emotional literacy, and

sexual abuse. If you haven't been keeping up with the newsletter, I encourage you to visit our website at www.psychohistory.us and peruse the archive for these articles and more.

Thanks to the support of our sponsors ORI, NYU Silver School of Social Work, and Advanced Clinical Education Foundation of the NYSSCSW, as well as the careful planning and hard work of Inna Rozentsvit and the IPA leadership team, this year's conference is going to be the largest in the recent history of our organization, including four concurrent rooms of presentations and over 60 presenters. Our keynote speaker, Prof. Sheldon Solomon, is a co-creator of Terror Management Theory, an immensely successful



IPA International Vice President
Marc-André Cotton

interdisciplinary research paradigm based on the work of Ernest Becker. We have presentations on topics ranging from psycho-geography, neurohermeneutics, and psychoanalysis, to Islam, poetry, trauma, and the future of predatory institutions.

With all of this growth and change, the last two years have also been a time of loss, most notably of Helen Lawton last August. As with her husband Henry, a founding member and pillar of our organization who died in February 2014, the IPA was a labor of love for Helen. Long-time members will always remember her sitting behind the registration table of our conferences. All the achievements I have described here were made possible by the hard work and dedication of the Lawtons.

At this year's convention, I will be stepping down as IPA president. Ken Fuchsman expressed a willingness to take up the role, and I was glad he did because I am working on a book—*Nature and the Human Spirit: Creating a Future Without Illusions*—that has not been getting

the attention it requires. However, I intend to remain actively involved on the IPA leadership team as Secretary, communications director and newsletter editor.

Dr. Fuchsman, a professor and administrator at University of Connecticut, is a longtime member of the IPA, Psychohistory Forum, and most recently of the IPA leadership team and Executive Committee. Ken is a meticulous scholar, independent thinker, and visionary psychohistorian brimming with ideas for the development of our organization and field. He is the only one who expressed interest in being president and followed the procedures needed to be nominated. I couldn't be more excited about what lies ahead for the IPA under his leadership.

Last but not least, I want to thank you, our members; without your participation and financial support, there would be no IPA!

Warm regards,

Brian

Brian D'Agostino, Ph.D.
IPA President

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punitive child rearing and political conservatism, that Republican white males on average may respond to this historical context differently than their Democratic counterparts because of their psychobiographies.

David Lotto's paper, The South Has Risen Again: Thoughts on the Tea Party and the Recent Rise of Right-Wing Racism, presented at Psychohistory Forum this January, examined the significance of racism in fueling the recent rise of the Tea Party and related right-wing political groups and activity. It briefly

explored some of the history of racism in the United States that has been directed toward African Americans and how it has influenced political developments from colonial times to the present. It suggested that this racist resurgence can be seen, in part, as a re-enactment of the trauma of the Civil War by the descendants, and those who identify with them, who were on the losing side of that conflict.

Fuchsman's article is followed by replies from D'Agostino and Lotto.

KEN FUCHSMAN: Both Brian D'Agostino and David Lotto venture into psychohistory and the contemporary Republican Party. Lotto

focuses on Tea Party racism and D'Agostino on guns and militarism; they both underplay some crucial historical and ideological elements.

From the late 1970s California tax revolt until mid-way through the second Bush Presidency, there was a consensus that united various Republican factions. It centered on across the board tax cuts, that government was the problem, and blaming tax and spend liberals for the nation's woes. There was also a renewed rise of a religious right that joined together political and social conservatism. Jerry Falwell became

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the most well-known of these religious leaders. Disguised racism was part of this, both in Reagan's talk of welfare queens and the dislike of affirmative action programs. Still, what connected the corporate elite and Reagan Democrats was a hostility to an activist government in domestic affairs that has its roots in the American Revolution and the first Jefferson administration.

In foreign affairs, from the Eisenhower administration of the 1950s through the Reagan and George H. W. Bush presidencies, militant rhetoric was common, but actions did not quite match the speeches. Covert activities flourished, with limited reliance on war. Under the first Bush, the US did remove Noriega in Panama and had a short and contained war over Kuwait.

The military and economic catastrophes of the George W. Bush years destroyed the Republican consensus. When the second Bush took office, he too rolled back taxes, but then the aggressive interventionism and the long Iraq war eventually soured many Republicans. By matching rhetoric and action in foreign affairs, George W. went against some of the modern Republican tradition. The Great Recession was the straw that broke the Republican camel's back.

The Tea Party, a political movement aligned with the Republican Party, emerged after the economy fell apart. It modeled itself on the Revolutionary era Boston event that broke the law to oppose tyranny. Many in the Tea Party are hostile to big government and Wall Street. It was common among Tea Partiers to

see both major political parties as instruments of special interests and big government. Once these radical Conservatives had elected sufficient numbers to the House of Representatives, they flexed their muscles. With Tea Party intransigence, Republican Speaker John Boehner had trouble holding his caucus together. These militants had no qualms about shutting the federal government down. They became so hostile to Boehner and made it so difficult for him to gain consensus, he both resigned as Speaker and left Congress.

Now Republicans are seriously divided between the so called mainstream, the radical wing, and the Trump followers. Contemporary mainstream Republicans are happy to use the government to aid big business and Wall Street, to support large expenditures for the military, to

Now Republicans are seriously divided between the so called mainstream, the radical wing, and the Trump followers.

keep taxes down, and to allow the deficit to balloon out of control. Tea Party members of Congress hate the deficit, and all sorts of big government. Radical Congressional conservatives advocated for the sequester, which substantially cut back expenditures for the Pentagon. By and large, the Tea Party carries on the anti-authoritarian tradition of the radical elements of the American Revolution era. The mainstream Republicans fit in with corporate America's hierarchical structures. The Trumpites are a diverse group, who are drawn to Trump's promise of American greatness, both economically and in foreign affairs. He is more willing to use big government in domestic

matters than are either of the other two Republican factions.

Now, some of the more establishment Republicans are toying with running a third party candidate as an alternative to a Trump candidacy. The Republicans were so factionalized that at the end of March, none of the three remaining Republican presidential candidates would reaffirm their sworn pledge to back whomever is the party's nominee. As Senator Lindsey Graham said, "My party is completely screwed up." This is a party at odds with itself. With Trump as the presumptive Republican nominee, the party remains divided. Normally, after someone gets the nomination, others in leadership positions declare their support for the winner. Not this year. The last two Republican Presidents and the last two party candidates for the nation's highest

office are not attending the party convention. Many of those who ran against Trump have not endorsed him. The Republican Speaker of the House in early May said he was not yet ready to get behind Trump. The establishment Republicans and many in the Tea Party have not yet declared their support for the presumptive nominee.

The Republicans are no longer a party with a consensus. But what about the other claims of Lotto and D'Agostino. Is racism part of the Tea Party? Yes, but the main thrust of the Tea Party is a fierce opposition to large government, the Affordable Care Act, and our econo-

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mic woes. A 2012 poll found their top issues to be their disapproval of health care reform, that government does not represent the citizenry, the level of government spending, and the state of the economy.

Does the right to bear arms and war mongering bring many Republicans together? You bet. But are guns and the military the most important issues to those in the GOP? Brian D'Agostino thinks so. He says that there is a Republican group fantasy, and it focuses on guns and militarism. He bases this conclusion on the January 14th Republican debate where, by his count, guns and the military were mentioned 156 times. How do we know if what these candidates discussed is representative of Republican opinion? The Gallup organization soon after the debate polled Republicans and those leaning in that direction. Of fifteen issues mentioned, gun policy ranked eleventh. Tied for first were the economy and terrorism/national security. Following that were the federal budget deficit, employment/jobs, and the size of the federal government. While security was tied for the top of the Republican's list of issues, it is not clear to what extent that includes building up our armed forces. The poll did not collect data on opinions about military power as such.

A later poll conducted in March by The Economist and YouGov finds the economy to be the most

important issue for 25 percent of Republicans, gun control for 5 percent, and foreign policy for 4 percent. After the economy the most important issues in order of importance are terrorism, social security, immigration, and the budget deficit. As foreign policy was ranked low in importance, Republicans did not appear to connect terrorism with international relations. For a world power, foreign policy cannot be easily separated from defense preparedness. Again, neither guns nor militarism poll very high among GOP voters. The polls clearly show that economic and fiscal issues are more central to Republicans than weapons and the armed forces.

One debate's rhetoric should not be taken as representative of Republican priorities. For instance, since that January 14th event, Donald Trump has made foreign policy comments that are murky in relation to militarism. He calls NATO obsolete and too expensive, and is willing to remove American armed forces from Japan and South Korea unless those countries pay for them. Trump is in some ways willing to back away from the globalism that has been integral to the use of the American military since the 1940s. Not surprisingly, Senator Cruz said that these suggestions of Trump's show he is out of his depth.

The Grand Old Party remains grandly divided. For some the right to bear arms and a powerful military is most

important, and we need to understand their fantasies. On the other hand, we should not make these concerns more central than the evidence from polls and other sources indicates they are. With a party that is at the moment so factionalized, it is important not to mistake the part for the whole.

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RESPONSE FROM DAVID LOTTO

I would like to elaborate on a central aspect of Ken Fuchsman's argument about the importance of ideology, which Brian D'Agostino also addresses in his comments: the idea that Republicans, conservatives, tea partiers, and fellow travelers are believers in small government and its corollaries, low taxes and an aversion to deficit spending.

The first thing that needs to be said is that the vast majority of those claiming that they are against big government simply aren't, the one exception being the libertarian

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wing of the Republican Party. One of the largest categories of government expenditures in this country, the military—the defense department budget plus additional military related activities (such as the VA, pensions for military retirees, interest on the debt from past military spending, and the budgets of the Department of Homeland Security, the NSA, and CIA black ops, among others)—is 1.3 trillion out of a total federal budget of 3.7 trillion a year, every dollar of which comes from taxpayers. To be in favor of these expenditures, or even just not to object to them, while calling yourself an advocate for smaller government is at best blatant hypocrisy. What small government supporters want is to not have to spend “their” money on social security benefits, child care, health care, food stamps, education, and any of the many budget requests that Republicans

usually vote against. They have no problem with spending money on the military and “security.”

Why some people are like this is rich territory for psychohistorical exploration. There are many possible sources for the power and popularity of this belief system, or group fantasy. Hypotheses go from those about harsh child rearing leading to projected aggression, to racism, militarism, American Exceptionalism, white privilege being threatened by changed demographics, or resentment over loss of wealth or status. However, further discussion is beyond the scope of this brief reply.

Another difficulty for anti-big government conservatives is that the vast majority of the 6.7 trillion dollar yearly total of federal, state, and local government expenditures goes to paying for goods and services contracted out and provided by private businesses or individuals. Economic multiplier effects generate large additional economic gains for

the private sector. Government contracts are the lifeblood of much of our capitalist economy; both large corporations and small businesses and all their employees benefit. So when government budgets are cut, the private sector—those who conservatives and Republicans claim to represent—pays a heavy price.

I have a brief comment on the use of polling data in psychohistorical analyses. Poll questions are not very good at ascertaining motives or attitudes that are either largely unconscious or that people are reluctant to admit to because of their negative connotations. For example, poll data is not likely to accurately measure racist motivation.

David Lotto is Editor of The Journal of Psychohistory, a psychoanalyst in private practice in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, the author of numerous peer reviewed articles in psychoanalysis and psychohistory. He can be reached at dlotto@nycap.rr.com

RESPONSE FROM BRIAN D'AGOSTINO

According to Ken Fuchsman, my article presents an overly monolithic picture of the Republican Party. I believe this impression arose from the phrase “the Republican Group Fantasy” in the title. In retrospect, I should have said “a” Republican group fantasy, making it clear that militarism—my chosen focus—was one of several relevant ideological themes.

The data on which I based my article—the transcript of a single debate—was also only one of many sources of data needed for a complete picture.

Fuchsman cites opinion data in which gun rights are much less

salient for Republicans than they were during the debate, and other data that he interprets to mean that militarism is not salient. The data on guns is relevant, but I question his claims about militarism. He notes that “terrorism/national security” was tied with the economy for first place in one of the surveys. There is obviously much overlap between this topic and “a strong military.” Had the latter term been provided as an option for survey respondents instead of “terrorism/ national security,” it is a legitimate question whether the results would have been similar.

Fuchsman also argues that anti-government ideology trumps militarism among radical conservative Republicans and that they advocated for the sequester, which included

defense cuts. Regarding anti-government ideology, as David Lotto argues in his comments, consistent libertarians such as Rand Paul are a small minority of the Republican electorate, including the Tea Party. When the vast majority of Republicans attack “government,” they do not include the military. The sequester was a bipartisan compromise in which most Republicans accepted defense cuts they didn’t want in exchange for social spending cuts they did want. Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz, who enjoyed strong Tea Party support, were among the most hawkish of all the Republican primary candidates.

In summary, militarism is a dominant element in contemporary Republican ideology and unites the

major party factions Fuchsman delineates, with the partial exception of Trump. But the Donald is notoriously fickle and his amorphous policy positions will be shaped by the party he now leads. Getting \$100 million dollars from Sheldon Adelson, for example, will help insure a hawkish Israel policy should Trump get elected.

Finally, going beyond my article, I want to comment on the issue of racism and the Tea Party, which was the topic of David Lotto's paper.

According to Fuchsman, "By and large, the Tea Party carries on the anti-authoritarian tradition of the radical elements of the American Revolution era." I believe this claim merits critical scrutiny. Is the Tea Party really a champion of race-neutral "liberty" in the mold of Thomas Paine or is the "tyranny" to which they object a federal government perceived as benefiting racial minorities at their expense? I would argue that their "anti-government" ideology is compatible with militar-

ism on the one hand, and, consistent with Lotto's paper, correlated with unconscious racist attitudes on the other.

Brian D'Agostino is President of the International Psychohistorical Association, the author of peer reviewed research in political psychology, and author of *The Middle Class Fights Back: How Progressive Movements Restore Democracy in America*. He can be reached at bdagostino@verizon.net.

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and a brief five-point explanation of the origin of torture in traumatization and mental dissociation. This served as a conversation piece with passersby about the global consequences of violence in childrearing and the major contribution of our field in understanding human violence in general. Most people have never heard of psychohistory, some mention the fictional *Foundation Trilogy* (1951-1953) by Isaac Asimov as sole reference, but all pay close attention when I state that humans are not violent by nature. Discussion begins and many confide their own problems as former victims or concerned caretakers.



The IPA booth at Lyon's Eco-Fair, February 2016

One serious obstacle is the language barrier: the French generally don't read English, the language in which most PH literature is written. These past years, I've made efforts to translate some PH concepts in French and to adapt them to a European audience, notably through our website *Regard conscient* (www.regardconscient.net). Readers of PEPS magazine are also familiar with psychohistory, as my quarterly column regularly deals with PH notions in parenting. Books in French, such as Dr Ludwig Janus's *Introduction à la psychologie*

périnatale (2015), or my own *Au nom du père, les années Bush et l'héritage de la violence éducative* (2014), do sell a bit. But visitors most often leave with a free copy of the many articles available on the stand.

This work was part of my wider effort to spread information on psychohistory and supportive parenting in the Francophone world. It should be noted that the general public is increasingly aware of the adverse influence of violence in education, as the Council of Europe moves towards a general ban of corporal punishment by its member states. The French government itself, which has been reluctant to adopt specific legislation on this matter, has just published a *Parent's book* stating that "hitting a child has no educational value" (*Le Figaro*, 4/4/2016). The Minister of Women, Family and Childhood, Laurence Rossignol, will send this booklet promoting benevolent childrearing practices to all future parents.

Recently, I've also been active on Facebook, posting PH related material within various social groups, occasionally generating a good response by users. The French translation of an article on the psychological impact of C-sections, by Greek colleague Olga Gouni, was shared more than six thousand times (www.regardconscient.net/archi16/1603impactcesarienne.html). These good results are an encouragement to further inform and share, a common objective to which I'm honored to contribute. All the best from Europe!

--Marc-André

Marc-André Cotton is a teacher, Geneva-based psychohistorian, and the IPA's International Vice-President. He can be reached at marc-andre.cotton@netcourrier.com

REPORT FROM EUROPE

Bringing Psychohistory to One of France's Biggest Eco-Fairs

by Marc-André Cotton

The IPA is educating the general public about psychohistorical issues through efforts such as the one described in this article. Our work has never been more timely, as supportive parenting and the adverse influence of violence in education are being debated in France, and the Council of Europe is advocating a general ban on corporal punishment of children.

In February, for the second year in a row, the IPA had a booth at Lyon's annual Eco-Fair, one of France's biggest gatherings of

environmental and social activists. This thirtieth fair featured more than five hundred exhibitors and thirty thousand visitors in a three day long jubilee around progressive solutions for a sustainable future (www.salonprimevere.org).

Last year, I was honored to lecture on Greed: Why Do Rich People Get Richer, from a psychohistorical point of view, at a meeting that attracted more than two hundred people; this may be heard in French on YouTube

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4gDC630ib2I>). This year, along with fellow therapist Sylvie Vermeulen, we shared an information stand on the PH perspective, displaying books in French and English as well as copies of PEPS magazine, our French quarterly on positive parenting.

Since we were placed next to the *Amnesty International* information stand, I made up a poster with the question "Why Do We Torture?"

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Vulnerability/Victory by Sandra Indig

Fear and terror are often embodied in internalized imagery, which, once projected, can evoke in the viewer a powerful, emotional, and physiological response. The struggle to overcome these abstract states, through much suffering, can lead to post traumatic growth or victory over our human body frailty.



The series of paintings by Sandra Indig, "Vulnerability/Victory," Acrylic on archival paper, "19" x 69" will be on view throughout the IPA 2016 Conference.

Sandra Indig is a psychotherapist, psychoanalyst, and arts therapist in private practice in NYC. She is Committee Chair, Creativity & NeuroPsychoED, New York State Society for Clinical Social Work. Her book, "Image/Word" is in print with MindMend Publishing. For examples of her writing and art work go to www.sindig.com