

THE EPOCH TIMES

# AMERICAN CROSSROADS

THE

## ‘SHADOW AGENDA’

BEHIND MODERN POLITICS

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Chinese youth at a rally during the height of the Red Guard upheaval in the late 1960s. China's state media make rare remarks on Cultural Revolution on May 17, 2016.



# The ‘Shadow Agenda’ Behind Modern Politics

JOSHUA PHILIPP



*Commentary*  
In the undercurrent of today's politics is a deeper debate on values and spiritual belief, and this conflict is embodied in the battle against socialism, says pastor and writer Bruce Porter.

Porter focuses part of his research on the moral and spiritual decline of the United States. His book “Destroying the Shadow Agenda: A Christian Manifesto” explores the values the United States was built on, shows the factors that pulled the country away from those values, and tries to provide a way back, he said.

In the book, he tries to bring readers “to a place where we can see the beauty of our Constitution, the beauty of the Bill of Rights, and the very real and I think inevitable likelihood that we are going to come back to a place of national sanity.”

His analysis of the decline of the United States comes from a spiritual standpoint on the choices we make. Porter believes that there is a “demonic kind of a conspiracy in the unseen realm” and that we are wrestling against “principalities and spiritual wickedness in heavenly places.”

“Human beings are being influenced either for good or for evil, depending on what they yield themselves to,” he said.

When it comes to politics, the “agenda” that Porter mentions ties heavily to the currents of socialism and communism.

While the systems are often debated only as economic theories, they’ve always gone beyond economics to target morality and spirituality for destruction. Karl Marx wrote in “The Communist Manifesto” that “communism abolishes eternal truths, it abolishes all religion, and all morality.” And while the American experiment was one in the ideas of self-governance by a moral people, communism has sought to create a totalitarian and anti-moral regime that is opposed to the prin-



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Bruce Porter, pastor and writer

ciples of the American idea.

Porter believes this agenda ties back to the beliefs of Marx himself, whom he described as having satanic views that grew from his turn against religion.

“Karl Marx was raised in a Christian family. He quoted Bible verses. He wrote some of the most beautiful Christian poetry that you’ll ever read,” Porter said. “Yet, in college, he came under the influence of Bruno Bauer, who was an ardent socialist.”

Bauer asked Marx why there is evil in the world if God is good, and the young Marx couldn’t give an answer. Marx “had no theological understanding of why things happened in the world the way they do. And he became resentful of God. In fact, more than that he became a hater of God,” Porter said.

Marx’s hatred of God was made clear in his later writings, and it’s evident in his “Communist Manifesto” and his new system that sought to overthrow all religion and tradition. In place of God, Marx said there should be a new government that would be given absolute control over every citizen.

Porter noted that this new system that places the government in the

position of God can be seen clearly in countries like China today, where the Communist Party still persecutes religious believers. These countries hold that government in its seat of absolute power “has to be all pervasive, all controlling, all knowing,” he said.

Even countries that aren’t under direct communist rule have been affected by these systems, however, and Porter noted that this can be seen today in the institutions of media and education. “Over the past hundred years, we’ve endured an intellectual and a spiritual frontal lobotomy, in that we are forgetting who we were. We’re forgetting who we were meant to be,” he said.

At the same time, Porter noted he’s hopeful that the United States, and the world, can recover what it has lost.

“I don’t think we’re headed for destruction,” he said. “I think we’re going through rough times. But I think there’s a bigger destiny in play.”

*Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.*

PAUL DRINKWATER/NCUNIVERSAL VIA GETTY IMAGES



Chinese youths walk past several dazibao, revolutionary placards, in downtown Beijing in February 1967, during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

PAUL DRINKWATER/NCUNIVERSAL VIA GETTY IMAGES



Oprah Winfrey accepts the 2018 Cecil B. DeMille Award at the 75th annual Golden Globe Awards in Beverly Hills, Calif., on Jan. 7, 2018.

## (Don’t) Speak Your Truth

SCOTT JOHNSTON

*Commentary*

Has anyone else noticed the rapidity with which this bit of rhetoric—“speak your truth”—has crept into the cultural firmament? I first took note of it last year, and now, like the proverbial buzzing of a light fixture, I can’t stop hearing it.

Apparently, it was Oprah who first popularized it, saying that speaking one’s truth was the “most powerful tool we all have.” By we, I am quite certain she didn’t mean me, as I don’t fit the demographic profile of those allowed to have their own version of the truth, i.e., I have a Y chromosome.

Allow me to explain. The phrase rose from the heady, shambolic early days of the #MeToo movement, when our culture moved decades in a matter of weeks. Women everywhere were telling their stories, and let’s face it, a lot of this was overdue. But like most cultural swings, this one also went too far, including its attendant rhetoric.

Oprah, at the 2018 Golden Globe Awards, said the following:

“... it is the insatiable dedication to uncovering the absolute truth that keeps us from turning a blind eye to corruption and to injustice. To tyrants and victims and secrets and lies. I want to say that I value the press more than ever before as we try to navigate these complicated times, which brings me to this; what I know for sure is that speaking your truth is the most powerful tool we all have.”

In a nutshell, Oprah finds “your truth” more powerful than “absolute truth”? Does anyone else find this disturbing?

OK, this is where I’ll represent the counterpoint, which is that “tell your truth” simply means “tell your story.” Writing for the Huffington Post, Claire Fallon wrote:

“The words have been used to urge people to be true to themselves, to figure out what they really believe and feel, but also to give people the confidence to be honest about their experiences, even if their words aren’t received kindly.”

Translation: If you have been abused in some way (presumably by a male, likely white), or you have been generally oppressed (again, by white males and the patriarchy), “speaking your

**Your feelings are not unimportant, but they don’t supplant facts.**

truth” is having the courage to give testimony to your experience.

I’m all for people telling their story, truth to power, and all that. I’m all for those who have long not had a voice to find (and use) theirs. But I’m a writer, and words matter. The language matters. Here’s what’s really happening here: Truth and feelings are being conflated.

In 2018, we heard Sen. Cory Booker use the “speak your truth” phrase to describe Christine Blasey Ford’s Senate testimony. Her truth was that Brett Kavanaugh tried to rape her in the early 1980s.

I have two problems with all this. First, let’s say, for the sake of argument, that Blasey Ford was telling the whole truth. That would mean it was the truth, would it not? Not her truth.

Calling it her truth implies there could be other truths. Isn’t there only one truth? That’s what I was taught. Not only does the phrase undermine Blasey Ford’s position, it undermines our language. Again, words have meaning.

Aly Raisman, the gymnast, was in fact abused by the abominable former Olympic team physician Larry Nassar. It was the literal truth. Why undermine it by calling it “her” truth? Don’t let Nassar off the hook like that.

Let’s now say Blasey Ford was not telling the truth about what happened, or more to the point, was telling a story that speaks to her broader life experiences. Not truth, but truthiness. This is where I have an even bigger problem.

Perhaps Blasey Ford was abused by someone at some point, someone who wasn’t Kavanaugh. She certainly seemed troubled by something. Projecting onto Kavanaugh could have been an outlet for her anguish or maybe a bogus recovered memory—who knows? In that case, what she was doing was making Kavanaugh guilty by association. The left has gleefully accepted this approach, basically because Kavanaugh was a man and they didn’t like his politics. (His Catholicism didn’t help, either.)

Facts didn’t matter. What mattered was Blasey Ford’s anguish, whether real or manufactured. It hardly mattered which. Other women certainly had been abused, so Blasey Ford’s feelings validated their own.

I explore our rhetorical decline and the rise of feelings in my new novel “Campusland.” In this scene, Eph

Russell, an English professor at the Ivy-like Devon University, complains about one of his students:

“Since when do feelings trump everything else? I had a student the other day tell me that something was wrong—something that was an historical fact—simply because he felt it was wrong. No supporting evidence. He had on a T-shirt that said always speak your truth. Isn’t there only one truth? Since when are we entitled to our own? This kid thought it was history’s obligation to validate his feelings. He then went on with all this Descartes drivel about how you can only know yourself, and therefore the only objective reality is what you perceive. It wasn’t the first time a student has served that up.”

Yes, you can blame the French philosophers, Descartes, Foucault, and the rest. They were big on feelings, which has caused a collective swoon on modern college campuses. The general idea is that you can’t really prove anything about the nature of existence. The only thing you can know that exists for sure is your feelings.

This, as it turns out, is a remarkably convenient philosophy for the modern left. No need to bother with facts, logic, or reason. No need to debate or argue, or give the slightest credence to those with differing views. Your feelings are your facts. They are your truth.

I have a character in “Campusland,” a student called Gala, who begins every sentence with the words I feel like. Have you noticed how this phrase is everywhere? It’s almost a verbal tick. Most people can’t offer an opinion without leading with it. “I feel like it’s too hot in here.” I, myself, succumb now and then when I’m not careful.

It was not always thus. Personally, I feel like ... ugh!, I believe the phrase had little place in the rhetorical landscape even two decades ago.

Your feelings are not unimportant, but they don’t supplant facts. As George Orwell said, “If thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought.” So don’t feel like you need to tell us your truth. Stick to the facts. They are the foundation of reason.

*Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.*



A women's liberation demonstration in New York on Aug. 26, 1970.

## Children of the Great Scattering: Life After the Sexual Revolution

PAUL ADAMS



*Commentary*  
Like fools, we rushed in. I came of age politically in the 1960s, earned my doctorate in the 1970s, and taught social work students (mostly at masters and doctoral level) until retiring in 2011. In the first period of the sexual revolution, my students and I mostly celebrated the revolution as a period of liberation for adults, especially women, from the constraints of tradition, law, and custom.

Insofar as we considered at all the impacts of the revolution on children, families, and communities, we minimized them or saw them as beneficial. Easy divorce would free children from having to grow up in loveless, conflict-ridden families. Thanks to the pill and abortion, all children would be “wanted.” Children would be freed from the stigma of their parents’ divorce or their mothers’ unmarried status, cohabitation with an unrelated man, or other nontraditional family structures.

We didn’t consider seriously the coming drop in fertility and the shrinkage of families. What was the impact on children to spend, as half of them now do, at least some of their childhood without one or both biological parents? What was the social impact of fatherlessness, of growing up with few or no siblings, of having few cousins, aunts, uncles, or little involvement of the father’s side of the family?

Sometimes, especially at the end of the 20th century, a family scholar sounded the alarm, but far too few of us seriously examined these questions.

**Against all evidence, textbook authors, publishers, and professors persisted in perpetuating a false narrative about marriage and the needs of children as if it were factual.**



Mary Eberstadt.

### Denial

These issues go to the heart of almost every social problem social workers address. Yet my students and I had difficulty discussing them frankly, no doubt in part because many or most of us were directly affected by them in a world of divorce, premarital sex, cohabitation, and lone parenthood.

There was also concern that noticing the adverse outcomes in education, criminal justice involvement, employment, mental health, and just about every other social indicator, from fractured families and fatherless children would stigmatize single mothers, children born out of wedlock, and cohabiting couples.

So we talked, not about the family, but families, as if one kind of family structure was as good as another and it was discriminatory to say otherwise. We could call for more public resources to meet the needs of single mothers and their children and praise the heroic struggles made by such mothers, but not worry that such family structures themselves disadvantaged children or that the government was bankrolling and incentivizing them by substituting for the role of fathers as providers and protectors.

Many of us saw such dependence on government as liberating women and children from dependence on men. Some described marriage, in the common phrase of the time, as a “hitting license”—ignoring the research evidence that women were safer in marriage than in any other kind of relationship, such as cohabitation. Children were most at risk of violence and abuse when living with their mother and her partner who wasn’t the children’s biological father.

Textbooks used in marriage and family courses treated marriage as pathological rather than what it had been understood as since it was recognized in the first legal codes millennia ago—as the optimum setting for raising children and assuring paternal responsibility. They continued to expound these distortions and expose hundreds of thousands of students to their ideology long after researchers of all political persuasions had shown them to be false.

Against all evidence, textbook authors, publishers, and professors persisted in perpetuating a false narrative about marriage and the needs of children as if it were factual.

### Children of the Great Scattering

In her important new book, “Primal Screams: How the Sexual Revolution Created Identity Politics,” Mary Eberstadt shows how the children of the sexual revolution responded to this brave new world with primal rage.

They grew toward adulthood in a state of panic over identity. They had lost the experience of a natural, intact family, not to war or disease but to the sexual consumerism of their parents. In the process, they were bereft of a clear answer to the question “Who am I?”

Previous generations, Eberstadt says, had answered the question in terms of their expectation of growing up in a family—the expectation that they would have children and a family themselves, that parents and siblings and extended family would remain their primal community, and thus, that it was a tragedy not to be part of a family.

Eberstadt discusses many aspects of the “Great Scattering” of families and the angry responses to it.

In some cases, young people whose interests were ignored when they were babies—like the children of anonymous sperm donors who were conceived with the deliberate intent from the start that they would grow up fatherless, without knowledge of or contact with their own biological father—found their own voice as young adults.

Unlike adoption, which had developed as a way to provide a child without a functioning family with parents, the aim in surrogacy was to meet the desires of adults, not the needs of children. But those children grew up and expressed publicly their sense of loss, as in organizations like The Anonymous Us Project and Stop Surrogacy Now.

One of the most striking manifestations of the anger and loss of sense of belonging is the profound shift in the pop music that children of the Great Scattering drove up the charts. It was no longer the music of abandon of their

parents’ youth but, as Eberstadt says, the music of abandonment. It was an anger—expressed most powerfully, but not only, by rap superstar Eminem, against parents, especially fathers, for breaking up their families and leaving them to grow up with a dysfunctional childhood.

As Eberstadt puts it, “During the same years in which progressive-minded and politically correct adults have been excoriating Ozzie and Harriet as artifacts of 1950s-style oppression, millions of American teenagers have enshrined a new generation of music idols whose shared signature in song after song is to rage about what not having had a nuclear family had done to them.”

In some cases, especially on college campuses, the identity rage took on irrational, preadolescent forms. Protesters behaved like children having a tantrum, shouting down speakers on campus with different views from their own, crying, chanting, screaming, or taping their mouths shut as if they were the ones being silenced rather than doing the silencing.

Shorn of identity rooted in family, argues Eberstadt, young people adopted alternative nonfamily identities as ways of being—defining self in terms of combinations or “intersections” of race, sex, sexual appetite, and “gender”—with some curious results.

In its coarseness, vulgarity, swagger, and belligerence, says Eberstadt, feminism in its latest phase (as in the Women’s March) has adopted some of the more obnoxious features of the “toxic masculinity” it deplores. Feminism manifests the “routine re-norming of women toward men”—the message continually given to women that, to succeed, they must behave like men. It’s a message that, far from liberating women, traps them in the paradigm of being “failed men.”

These, a generation later, are some of the poison fruits of the sexual revolution that we rationalized as being in the interests of everyone. But it was, as much as anything, a revolution in parenthood—in the subordination of children’s needs to the desires of adults.

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## The Quiet Spiritual Awakening In the US Government



President Donald Trump and faith leaders pray in the Oval Office at the White House on Sept. 1, 2017, after Trump signed a proclamation calling for a national day of prayer on Sept. 3.

JOSHUA PHILIPP



A moral and spiritual awakening is taking place in the United States, and it is being helped along by a group of ministers in Capitol Ministries who hold regular, bipartisan Bible studies with members of the U.S. government.

Among the several weekly Bible studies in Washington is one attended by 11 out of 16 members of President Donald Trump’s cabinet, according to Brian Hansen, international director of Capitol Ministries. “They’ll even come back from foreign countries just to make sure that they’re back on Bible study days,” he said.

Additional Bible studies are held weekly with members of the U.S. House and Senate. And even more are held in the legislatures in 43 of the 50 states across the United States. Hansen noted similar Bible studies are also being held outside North America, which he helps facilitate.

Hansen said this spiritual awakening is receiving little coverage in the media, and noted that the publicity it does receive appears intent on stopping it. “The only publicity that we really ever get is negative publicity,” he said. The movement has an almost grassroots nature to it, driven by a “real thirst for biblical truths.”

“What we have found is it doesn’t matter if you’re Republican or Democrat, independent, libertarian—it doesn’t matter. Everybody wants to know, is there a foundation or a core to my beliefs?” he said, noting that every policy and every belief has a deeper value behind it, and their verse-by-verse Bible studies help reveal these deeper values.

“There is a large movement

**The American founding fathers held that government is instituted among men to uphold inalienable rights bestowed on them by their Creator.**

that is taking place,” he said. “It is growing by leaps and bounds.”

“There is such a thirst for foundation, for truth, for substance. And so we’re telling them all truths of life can be found in the word of God. Let’s look at it together there. It’s just remarkable what’s taking place.”

When it comes to government, Hansen noted the institutions are separate from religion and morality, but a person’s deeper values will always guide their decisions, regardless of what their beliefs are. He shared his belief that religion creates the foundations for moral government—and creates a baseline that can’t be changed on a whim.

“Where is the moral standard? What is the foundation?” If there is no belief in a higher authority, “who knows where society can go.”

Yet, this is where Capitol Ministries comes in. Hansen said they aren’t trying to influence government policy or decisions, but are instead working to restore the religious foundations of the world’s leaders.

He noted Vice President Mike Pence as an example of their participants. “I can tell you that Mike Pence—and he’s not been quiet about it—he’s a man of faith,” Hansen noted that Pence has been open about his beliefs, despite the discrimination that brings in today’s society. “He’s taken a lot of heat for his stance on a lot of things, but he takes his stance boldly, without being ashamed.”

The principle ties into a deeper concept on the foundations of individual liberty, and into the nature of traditional government.

The Founding Fathers held that government is instituted among men to uphold inalienable rights bestowed on them by their Creator. If the government failed to uphold these rights, they believed the people of the country have a responsibility to

overthrow it.

In other words, it was believed that government was instituted to uphold God-given rights, and it wasn’t right for the government to overstep its authority to interfere in the inalienable rights of individuals, which include life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

The American experiment was one in self-governance, and traditional government didn’t stretch too far into the everyday decisions of an individual. This system of self-governance was also meant for a moral people, and people were left within the law to choose between right and wrong, and to make moral decisions when faced with the diverse complications that life can throw at us.

The destruction of morals under socialist regimes has often led very quickly to the destruction of self-governance. And according to Hansen, in a very similar sense, the destruction of a belief in God often leads to the destruction of morals.

When people have only thoughts, abilities, and inclinations, yet lack belief, he said, “you see a rapid deterioration of morality.” The belief in an authority and law higher than government establishes boundaries and standards for evaluating government. “That is the authority that gives you freedom.”

It’s from this standpoint that Capitol Ministries works to restore belief in God among members of government.

“We’re not lobbying for laws. We’re not trying to say, vote this way, vote that way,” he said. “We just believe that we need the word of God in the hearts of legislators.”

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