

An ADL Special Research Report

Anger on the Right:
Pat Buchanan's Venomous Crusade



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PATRICK J. BUCHANAN

As a columnist, broadcaster and influential staff member in the Nixon and Reagan Administrations, Patrick J. Buchanan has been a long-time, consistent voice of the right. Over the years his nightly skirmishes with liberal Michael Kinsley on the Cable News Network Program, "Crossfire," his weekly appearances on NBC's "The McLaughlin Group," his syndicated columns and his weekly newsletter "From The Right" have given him substantial exposure. In his syndicated columns Buchanan has attacked secularism, abortion and gay rights and has been at odds with ecumenism. He has defended South Africa as besieged, misunderstood and virtually isolated because of its Western orientation. He has compared apartheid with the situation of the Palestinians. Buchanan has in the past been a supporter of Israel but more recently one of its severest critics. He is a proponent of prayer in schools, and a vocal critic of the Justice Department's investigation of Nazi war criminals. Buchanan has become a vocal critic of what he has termed Israel's 'Amen Corner'. In Buchanan's world view the "amen corner" includes American Jewish organizations and individuals such as ADL, AIPAC, New York *Times* columnist A.M. Rosenthal and Henry Kissinger.

The "Amen Corner"

During an appearance on the *McLaughlin Group* (August 26, 1990), in a discussion about the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Buchanan charged that, "There are only two groups that are beating the drums for war in the Middle East—the Israeli Defense Ministry and its amen corner in the United States." He further asserted: "The Israelis want this war desperately because they want the United States to destroy the Iraqi war machine. They want us to finish them off. They don't care about our relations with the Arab world." Buchanan's statements recalled his hostility toward Israel in an earlier *McLaughlin Group* broadcast in June 1990 where he described Capitol Hill as "Israeli occupied territory?" ADL challenged Buchanan's remarks as "reminiscent of scurrilous charges made during World War II that Jews were the only ones who sought American entry in the war against Nazi Germany" and noted that Buchanan's accusation lifted his "characteristic anti-Israel rhetoric to new and graver heights."

On September 14, 1990 New York *Times* columnist A.M. Rosenthal confronted Buchanan's anti-Israel and anti-Semitic slant. Rosenthal wrote: "We are not dealing here with country-club anti-Semitism but with the blood libel that often grows out of it: Jews are not like us but are others with alien loyalties for which they will sacrifice the lives of Americans." Buchanan responded on September 19, 1990, in his nationally syndicated column by stating:

...[Rosenthal's] column reeks of fakery. The "amen corner" crack is not "infamous." I never even saw it in print...what we have here...is a contract hit, done... in collusion with the same folks who used to feed me all that good stuff on Jesse Jackson when I was considered more reliable. For the one character who has been howling about the "amen corner" is Abe Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League.

The New York *Post* editorial of the same date addressed Buchanan's column and stated: "On occasion...it seems necessary to highlight the extent to which a given Op Ed column stands at odds with our principles. Today is such a day—as a consequence of the Buchanan column." It added:

Lest there be any doubt that Buchanan's reference to an "amen corner" was a reference to Jews, one need only look at his Aug. 25 syndicated column. He speaks in that article of "Israelis...goading us to attack" and lists American commentators who argue the pro-attack position. The names he selects are revealing: Abe Rosenthal, Richard Perle, Charles Krauthammer, Henry Kissinger. A series of identifiably Jewish names. These are the only individuals he cites. Yet Buchanan makes no reference to Sens. Alfonse D'Amato and Richard Lugar....

Nor, for that matter, does Buchanan note that Arab states like Egypt and Saudi Arabia are known to favor a military strike against Saddam Hussein. Why this failure? Why the emphasis on Israel, its "amen corner" and commentators with Jewish-sounding names?

And why, in yet another column, does Buchanan argue that war, if it comes, will see American kids "humping up that bloody road to Baghdad" — "kids with names like McAllister, Murphy, Gonzales and Leroy Brown"? The names in this list are chosen just as carefully, we believe, as the names on his list of alleged warmongers: the Rosenthals and the Krauthammers and so forth. The "amen corner?" But Israel isn't the issue here. Pat Buchanan used to like Israel. Now he doesn't. Fine...What concerns us is Buchanan's attitude toward Jews as a group.

The *Post* ended its editorial:

...when it comes to Jews as a group—not Israel, not U.S.-Israeli relations, not individual Jews—Buchanan betrays an all-too-familiar hostility. A.M. Rosenthal did not produce a "contract hit." He faced some painful facts.

The heated exchange between Rosenthal and Buchanan set off a full-scale journalistic debate about whether or not Buchanan was an anti-Semite. William Buckley, Jr., in a September 19, 1990, *Washington Post* column, expressed his concern over the angry confrontation between the two prominent journalists, whom he considers his friends. Regarding Rosenthal, Buckley wrote: "I deem his attack on Pat Buchanan to be an example of Rosenthal gone ballistic. And I deem Buchanan to be insensitive to those fine lines that tend publicly to define racially or ethnically offensive analysis or rhetoric."

Buchanan denied charges of anti-Semitism and anti-Israel sentiment and then proceeded to attack Israel's "gratuitous brutality against Palestinian old men, women, teen-agers and children," and "the caustic, cutting cracks about my church and popes from both Israel and its amen corner in the United States." He also accused the American Jewish community of using a "branding iron wielded by a tiny clique to burn horribly heretics from their agreed-upon political orthodoxy."

Speaking on *The McLaughlin Group*, Buchanan accused the ADL of a "pre-planned, orchestrated smear campaign," of calling newspapers around the country, "threatening them" if they don't cease publication of the Buchanan column. Calling his charge a lie, Abraham H. Foxman stated: "We will not allow these kinds of outrageous lies to go unchallenged... he knows the League is against censorship of any kind."

On Israel

At best Buchanan's position on Israel has been inconsistent. As early as 1981 Buchanan was talking about "Israeli intransigence" and speculating that "many Americans were growing bone weary with carrying the diplomatic, economic and military cost of underwriting

Menachem Begin's policies?' In that same year he also branded Israel as an obstacle to peace and called for U.S. dialogue with the PLO.

On the occasion of Israel's thirty-fifth anniversary, however, Buchanan described Israel's presence on the West Bank as a "military occupation [that] by modern standards is neither severe nor oppressive." He pointed out that Palestinian nationalism ironically flowered under Israeli occupation, and he ended his column with strong support for the Jewish state:

Israel remains a tough, resourceful, energetic nation, an offspring of the West, a strategic asset to the West, whose current struggle merits sympathy and support, not only because it mirrors our own, but because its resolution will likely presage the outcome of our own.

Such support seemed to evaporate after the *intifada* began in December of 1987. Buchanan wrote in January of 1988: "When the day comes that a Palestinian state is established, Gaza's riots will be recorded in its history like the 'Boston Massacre' of 1770, when British troops fired on a rock-throwing mob of Americans, killing six but persuading thousands more in thirteen colonies that the break with London had to come, and soon. This time Palestinians did it right if you will. They got the attention of the world and, most important, of the Americans, not with some bloody massacre of defenseless women and children, but by the physical defiance of Israeli troops."

Buchanan's hostility toward Israel has increased in recent years. In April of 1989 he distorted the history of the UN Partition Plan, failing to examine the Arabs' refusal to accept it: "When Israel was created, a homeland for persecuted Jews after 2,000 years, one great wrong was righted; but another wrong was done—the Palestinian people. The bill has come due?" In January of 1990 Buchanan once again censured only Israel for the current situation on the West Bank and Gaza and stated that the attack on the U.S.S. Liberty was deliberate. He wrote:

That the United States would sit still for anything was brought home to the Israelis, long ago, on the third day of the Six-Day War, when Lyndon Johnson ordered a coverup of an Israeli rocket-and-machine-gun attack on the U.S. intelligence ship Liberty off the Sinai, an attack costing the lives of 37 brave American soldiers. When it suits them, our Israeli allies launch air strikes on Tunis, Baghdad or Beirut; they invade Lebanon; they even enlist U.S. traitors, like the Pollards, to loot the secrets of a nation that has manifested toward them an extraordinary indulgence.

In a March 13, 1991, syndicated column, Buchanan described Israel as "a strategic albatross draped around the neck of the United States" and asked "is it too much to ask her to behave more like [a democracy]—to the least among her people, the Palestinians?"

In a subsequent column, dated April 20, 1991, Buchanan accused "Messrs. Shamir and Sharon" of "turning the West Bank into a trailer park for the crazies of Gush Emunim?" "Why," he asked, "are we not protesting what [Bush's] bully boys are doing to... Palestinians? The Palestinians have lost everything, even hope?"

Decrying possible U.S. loan guarantees to Israel, Buchanan wrote in his syndicated column of September 18, 1991, "it is propaganda to call that \$10 billion, 'humanitarian aid.'" He added, "Israel's settlements policy is not only illegal and unjust; it is folly?" He praised President Bush for asking Congress to delay the loan guarantees to Israel and said: "Even if his veto of the

guarantees is overridden, he will have won high marks for his courage, and exposed Congress for what it has become, a Parliament of Whores incapable of standing up for U.S. national interests, if AIPAC is on the other end of the line?"

Buchanan has attacked AIPAC and exaggerated its political strength. 'AIPAC., . the mighty American-Israel Political Action [sic] Committee, and hundreds of allied PACS, hold life-and-death power over the careers of countless U.S. politicians, who have permitted themselves to be cowed into a shameful silence.'

Operation Desert Storm

Buchanan was a strong critic of America's involvement in the Persian Gulf war. In a November 10, 1990, column entitled "Why Do We Beat The War Drums?" he reasoned that "Kuwait was never an ally. And, unlike Hafez al-Assad, Saddam never blew up an American airliner or a Marine barracks. Why, then, is Saddam's 'brutal, naked aggression' against Kuwait a *causis belli* for the United States when his 'brutal, naked aggression' against Iran was abetted by the United States?"

In a previous column, dated September 5, 1990, Buchanan defended Jordan's pro-Iraqi stance. "...[O]ne can only view with puzzlement the contemptuous attitude of U.S. officials. Flanked on the west by Israel, whose Likud party sees Jordan as dumping ground for its unwanted Palestinians, on the north by Syria.. .on the east by Iraq, with which most of Jordan's vital trade is conducted, the king is desperately seeking a political solution."

Buchanan's later columns became more harshly critical of the U.S. involvement in the Gulf. He stated, in a January 23, 1991, column, that 'Anti-American riots are reported throughout the region,' and he said, "when the war ends...the Palestinians, locked up by the curfew, with no income from the Gulf, all hope of 'liberation' dead, will be in the worst condition since 1948."

On Nazi War Criminals and the Holocaust

Since the early 1980s Buchanan has repeatedly attacked those he has called "the hairy-chested Nazi hunters" in the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigation (OSI). "Why not," wrote Buchanan, "devote those resources to going after organized...instead of running down 70-year-old camp guards?"

In a 1982 television interview with Allan Ryan, Jr., then OSI director, Buchanan questioned the wisdom of funding the OSI. "You've got a great atrocity that occurred 35-45 years ago, okay? Why continue to invest...put millions of dollars into investigating that? I mean why keep a special office to investigate Nazi war crimes...Why not abolish your office?" In that same interview Buchanan also said he saw no "singularity" about the Holocaust that would justify maintaining a special prosecution office.

Buchanan has maintained that Nazi war criminals John Demjanjuk, Frank Walus and Karl Linnas have been denied due process and were victims of the Justice Department's "fraternal collaboration" with the KGB. Buchanan referred to mounting evidence that "this devil's bargain—between federal prosecutors and Soviet secret police—may have produced more than one horrible miscarriage of justice."

On another issue related to World War II and the Holocaust, Buchanan has voiced his steadfast support for the actions of the Catholic Church and Pope Pius XII. In an interview in *Present Tense* magazine, Buchanan stated that "if my friends in the Jewish community feel Pat Buchanan, a traditionalist Catholic, owes some kind of apology for his religion or the history of

his religion or the record of the Holy Father during World War II or the record of John Paul II, they can wait, because it's not going to be forthcoming.”

In June of 1985, Buchanan met in the White House with Eberhard Rees, a German rocket scientist who had succeeded Werner von Braun, and a colleague of former NASA scientist Arthur Rudolph. Rees met with Buchanan to plead Rudolph's case. Rudolph had been stripped of his United States citizenship and was being investigated as a Nazi war criminal for his role in utilizing slave labor during World War II. Although Buchanan denied that he was seeking to restore Rudolph's citizenship, Rees told United Press International that the issue had been raised and that he felt very positive about the meeting. Elizabeth Holtzman, then Brooklyn District Attorney, called for Buchanan's resignation. (While in Congress, Holtzman began calling for more systematic prosecution of Nazi war criminals in the U.S. In 1978, a bill popularly called the Holtzman Amendment rendered Nazi persecutors deportable and excludable from the country. President Carter signed the bill into law in 1979.) Holtzman said, “It is outrageous that a high level official of the Reagan administration, Patrick Buchanan, would have the audacity to hold a meeting at the White House with sympathizers of Nazi war criminal Arthur Rudolph.” A Buchanan column in July of 1989 showcased Arthur Rudolph as an American hero victimized by his adopted country.

Buchanan continues to defend accused Nazi war criminals. During the Reagan Administration, Buchanan urged then-Attorney General Edwin Meese to halt the deportation of suspected Nazi war criminal Karl Linas in 1987 on the grounds of Linas' right to due process. Buchanan argued that evidence obtained from the Soviet Union by government attorneys should be ruled out as inherently suspect. In the Chicago *Sun Times* of March 1989, Buchanan criticized the West for ostracizing Kurt Waldheim. Buchanan rationalized, “like others in Hitler's army, Lt. Waldheim looked the other way.

In an attempt to cast doubt on the reliability of concentration camp survivors' testimonies, Buchanan has referred to a “so-called ‘Holocaust Survivor Syndrome’” which he described as involving “group fantasies of martyrdom and heroics.” Buchanan rejects indisputable evidence that the Jews of Treblinka could have been suffocated by carbon monoxide emitted from diesel engines. (The facts, as documented in numerous scholarly works, are that different methods of gassing, including the use of exhaust and Zyklon B were operating by 1942 in the death camps of Majdanek and Treblinka.)

In light of Buchanan's previously held attitudes about the Holocaust, his departure from bedrock historical facts was not surprising. He has suggested that the attention accorded to the Holocaust was a preoccupation which served as a diversion from the evils of communism. He has written, “To what end, all this wallowing in the atrocities of a dead regime when there is scarcely a peep of protest over...the concentration camps operating now in China and Siberia, in Cuba and South Vietnam.”

Buchanan's blindness to Nazi evil found its way into a June 1990 column on mercy killing: “Is there a higher law, call it God's law, or natural law, to which man-made law must conform, or be invalid? And, if no higher law exists, upon what moral ground did we stand to condemn the German doctors whose ‘crimes against humanity’ consisted only of doing to the feeble-minded exactly what we seek to do today?”

The Convent at Auschwitz

During the painful 1989 controversy over the presence of a convent housing Carmelite nuns at Auschwitz, Buchanan's defense of the nuns included formulating a kind of Holocaust "revisionism" rationalizing the Church's wartime policy of strict neutrality. Buchanan ignored the Jewish centrality of the Holocaust and wrote, "Films, books, plays speak of Hitler's pogrom: no one denies it; what is being resisted is a systematic campaign to exclude all others from the honor roll of the dead, to write us out." Claiming to respond for Orthodox Catholics, Buchanan noted, "The demand [that] we be more 'sensitive' to Jewish concerns is becoming a joke."

In an August 16, 1989, column, Buchanan labeled the criticism of the convent "scandalous." He added: "Here, we have it, the blood libel: Because Pius XII did not speak out publicly during the Holocaust, [then] the Catholic Church is morally culpable in Hitler's pogrom."

Buchanan's articles on the subject glossed over Cardinal Jozef Glemp's anti-Semitic barbs regarding the convent controversy. Glemp had stated: "We have our transgressions concerning the Jewish people, but today one would like to say 'Dear Jewish people, do not talk to us from the position of a nation raised above all others and do not dictate terms that are impossible to fulfill.'" In a column devoted to Glemp's statements, Buchanan said: "Cardinal Jozef Glemp's suggestion that the Jews had unique access to the media brought thunderous denunciation." He added "Anyone heard even a mild chastisement of Yitzhak Shamir for a savage ethnic slur that hatred of Jews is bred into Polish Catholics? 'They suck it in their mother's milk,' Mr. Shamir said. 'This is something... deeply imbued in their tradition, their mentality, like their loathing of Russia.'"

Miscellaneous Issues

In 1984 Buchanan wrote articles on the subject of prayer in the schools in which he portrayed the debate as a conflict between Christians and non-Christians. Buchanan asked, "Should the United States be a Christian or pagan country? ... America was a Christian country. A quarter of a century ago, without prior consultation with a democratic people, without support in precedent or the Constitution, the Warren Court undertook the systematic de-Christianization of America, beginning, but not stopping, with the public schools." Buchanan complained in a June 1990 column, "we have let this country be driven to where the Ten Commandments cannot be posted in a public school, or a manger placed in a public park at Christmas.

Buchanan has expressed his pro-life views by equating abortions to Nazi war crimes. In 1985 he wrote, "Something is terribly amiss when we can be caught up in remorse over crimes committed in Eastern Europe four decades ago while overlooking the holocaust going on within our own land, with 4,000 children being done to death every single day."

Buchanan has mischaracterized the Federal Hate Crimes Statistics Act enacted in April, 1990 which requires the U.S. Attorney General to collect statistical information for crimes motivated by prejudice and already punishable under existing laws. In a March 1990 column Buchanan interpreted the act as promoting "the big lie that the United States is Amerika, i.e. a nation where fascism and white racism are rampant, and neo-Nazis, the Klan and Skinheads are running wild." He also saw the bill as a way for liberals "to posture as anti-crime warriors," and declared that the bill would elevate homosexuals "to the state of victimized minority, and

entitled to special protection and privilege.” Buchanan ignored the fact that the law does not define or create any new crimes.

In June of 1990 a Buchanan column characterized ethnic groups as a danger to the “EuroAmericans who founded the U.S.A.” Buchanan attempted to link the racial clash in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn and his notion of a “Jewish Mafia” in Brighton Beach, Brooklyn to the problem of illegal aliens from Mexico.

Buchanan’s Early Background

Born in 1938 in Washington, D.C., Buchanan was raised in a traditionally Catholic and fervently anti-Communist household. In his 1988 autobiography, *Right from the Beginning*, Buchanan explained that his ardent defense of his faith and his rightist convictions were instilled in him early on by his father.

Buchanan was educated in Catholic parochial schools, Georgetown University and Columbia University’s School of Journalism. After Columbia he wrote for the now-defunct *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. In 1965 he joined Richard Nixon’s presidential campaign and followed him to the White House where he crafted some of Vice President Spiro Agnew’s famous speeches assailing the media. After Nixon’s resignation, Buchanan stayed on for part of Gerald Ford’s term, but when his bid to become Ambassador to South Africa failed, he resigned and launched his career as a newspaper columnist.

Conclusion

Patrick Buchanan has opposed the prosecution of Nazi war criminals; labeled America as “a Christian nation”; described aid to Israel as “subsidizing a policy that denies to Palestinians that God-given right to a homeland,” and called Jewish appeals for Catholic sensitivity regarding the presence of a convent at Auschwitz, a “joke.” He continues a disturbing pattern of baiting Jews and attacking Israel.

Recently, public attention has focused on Patrick J. Buchanan because of speculation that he may run for President of the United States in 1992. Buchanan has said he is considering challenging President Bush but as of this time, has not announced his intentions.

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