

God's Armies

"The Rise and Decline of Christian Militarism in Prussia-Germany from Hegel to Bonhoeffer: The End Effect of the Fallacy of Sacred Violence" by John A. Moses, in *War and Society* (May 2005), School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Univ. of New South Wales, Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra, ACT 2600, Australia.

Today's Islamist terrorism is hardly the first instance of "sacred violence" in recent history. Consider Nazi Germany: Adolf Hitler's brutal rampages at home and abroad had the unshakable sanction of German Protestantism. When Lutheran pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–45) courageously spoke out against the Nazis, he was defying not only the state but a religious tradition that went back to the 16th century and Martin Luther himself, says Moses, who teaches in the School of Classics, History, and Religion at Australia's University of New England.

The German Reformation had brought church and state closer together. In Luther's view, the Prussian and other Protestant Germanic states had to be able to use military force to resist any restoration of papal control. The ironic result was that the church, previously independent of the state, now became subordinate to it, unable to criticize any government policy, foreign or domestic.

Against that background, G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831) formulated what became virtually Prussia's official philosophy. Systematizing Luther's theology of state power, he portrayed the state as the instrument of God's will on earth. And in the Hegelian view, observes Moses, a state had to be able "not only to defend itself but to expand at the expense of less powerful neighbors. By the very fact of being weaker, they had no justification to continue to exist and there-

fore, rightly, ought to be absorbed into the greater power."

Beginning with Otto von Bismarck's chancellorship of the Reich he founded under Prussian leadership in 1871, many Germans "came to believe that Germany was the 'World Historical Nation,' chosen by Almighty God to exert preeminence in the world." Not even defeat in World War I disabused them of this notion.

Hegel's philosophy, giving divine sanction to the state's power politics and warfare, "underlay not only the discipline of history but also Protestant theology in German universities," writes Moses. German Protestant theology "endorsed emphatically the notion of a warrior God."

Bonhoeffer—who warned in mid-1932 that there would be war if the Nazis came to power (as they did the following year), and who later joined a plot to assassinate Hitler—rejected that prevailing theology and its underlying Hegelian notion that the state operated in a realm removed from the rest of humanity. Such thinking, Bonhoeffer wrote, "contradicts fundamentally Biblical thinking. . . . Indeed, there are not two realities but only one reality and that is the reality of God revealed in Christ within the reality of the world." Arrested by the Nazis in 1943, Bonhoeffer was hanged two years later, and became, posthumously, one of the most influential Christian theologians of modern times.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

Environmentalism's EKG

A Survey of Recent Articles

The environmental movement has suffered death by a thousand agendas. That was the message delivered last fall by environmentalists Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus in a manifesto called

"The Death of Environmentalism," and they have ignited a continuing debate in a community that had always considered itself united.

Bogged down in promoting shortsighted,

narrow policy fixes for a miscellany of environmental problems, the movement's leaders have lost their inspiring vision, contend Shellenberger, the executive director of the Breakthrough Institute, and Nordhaus, a pollster with Evans/McDonough. The two base their critique (available at www.thebreakthrough.org) on interviews with two dozen leading environmentalists.

America's voters have become more conservative—and environmentalists' tendency to frame their issues in negative, apocalyptic terms just isn't selling. "Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'I have a dream' speech is famous because it put forward an inspiring, positive vision that carried a critique of the current moment within it," Shellenberger and Nordhaus write. "Imagine how history would have turned out had King given an 'I have a nightmare' speech instead."

They conclude that environmentalism has become just another narrow special interest. Now it must forge a new, visionary identity, embrace a wider spectrum of progressive concerns, and expand its notion of what its issues are, looking beyond the traditional "environmental" label to labor, the economy, and health care.

Environmentalists' lack of—and even distaste for—politicking helped scuttle the Senate's ratification of the Kyoto treaty to reduce greenhouse gases and allowed a deal for higher vehicle fuel-efficiency standards to slip through their fingers, Shellenberger and Nordhaus say. Confronting the calamity of global warming, environmental leaders have been woefully ineffective at building political support, believing that the rightness of their cause is all they need, that "selling technical solutions like fluorescent light bulbs, more efficient appliances, and hybrid cars will be sufficient to muster the necessary political strength to overcome the alliance of neoconservative ideologues and industry interests in Washington, D.C."

American environmental leaders today pattern their tactics after those of *Silent Spring* author Rachel Carson and other activist pioneers, according to Shellenberger and Nordhaus. They define a narrow problem and then pursue a technical solution. They're like "generals fighting the last war—in particular the war they fought and won for

basic environmental protections more than 30 years ago."

That accusation has stung leaders of some of the country's largest environmental organizations. Sierra Club executive director Carl Pope, whom the authors interviewed for their report, accused the two of "patricide" in a long rebuttal published in *Grist* (Jan. 13, 2005). He says the two mischaracterize the environmental movement and perceive normal differences in leadership styles, political strategies, etc., "as a matter of generational succession."

But former Sierra Club national president Adam Werbach aligns himself with the two: "The purpose of describing the environmental movement as dead," he writes in *In These Times* (July 11, 2005), "is to allow the space for a new movement to grow—a new movement that does not set arbitrary limitations for what is considered an 'environmental issue.'"

Some critics see such a move as perilous. "Since when did the environment become a partisan issue?" asks former *Time* magazine editor and environmental journalist Charles Alexander in *Conservation in Practice* (July–Sept. 2005). In order to succeed, he writes, environmentalists need to attract wide public support, work with far-sighted corporate leaders, and compromise enough to gain conservative political support for measures such as the Climate Stewardship Act, introduced in the Senate by Republican John McCain and Democrat Joe Lieberman. To lump the environment together with other causes is to "run the risk of reinforcing the notion that enviros are knee-jerk leftists."

Others fault Shellenberger and Nordhaus for failing to examine a true cross-section of the environmental movement. In *Social Policy* (Spring 2005), longtime activist Ludovic Blain says that the report should have been titled "The Death of Elite, White, American Environmentalism," declaring that its argument for a larger vision of what environmentalism ought to be merely echoes those expressed nearly 15 years ago at a National People of Color Environmental Summit. And Pope, of the Sierra Club, charges that the authors interviewed only environmental-

ism's wonks, neglecting its many poets and visionaries, such as Wendell Barry and Terry Tempest Williams.

If environmentalism really is dead, what then? Shellenberger and Nordhaus offer few prescriptions, saying that a new blueprint will emerge from collaboration. Some view this claim as disingenuous, pointing out that the two originally distributed their tract,

which snipes at other organizations that compete for grant dollars, at an Environmental Grantmakers Association conference. "The Death of Environmentalism" touts the New Apollo Project, a nascent initiative aimed at freeing the United States from oil dependency and creating new "green" jobs. Both Shellenberger and Nordhaus are leaders of the project.

Flip-Flop Medicine

"Contradicted and Initially Stronger Effects in Highly Cited Clinical Research" by John P. A. Ioannidis, in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* (July 13, 2005), 515 N. State St., Chicago, Ill. 60610.

One day it's horrible for your health to let a drop of alcohol pass your lips; the next, you're told that a glass of red wine is just what the doctor ordered. So it's gone lately, with one highly publicized medical study after another contradicted or reversed.

This is no laughing matter. In 1991, the Nurses' Health Study found that women receiving hormone therapy (estrogen and progestin) enjoyed a big (44 percent) reduction in the risk of coronary artery disease, and millions of women were encouraged to begin the therapy to counteract the effects of menopause. But in 2002, the Women's Health Initiative produced a radically different conclusion: Hormone therapy *increases* the risk of coronary events in postmenopausal women by 29 percent. A subsequent study confirmed that result.

The explanation, according to Ioannidis, who teaches at the University of Ioannina School of Medicine in Greece and Tufts-New England Medical Center, is that the first study was not based on a random sample of the population. A "randomized" sample

reflects various factors, known or unknown, that might be involved in the body's reaction to the thing being studied. (Why aren't all studies randomized? Cost is not the only explanation; ethical and other considerations are sometimes involved.)

But randomization alone does not assure valid results. Ioannidis isolated 45 widely cited clinical studies from the medical literature between 1990 and 2003. Six of the original 45 articles were based on non-randomized trials, and five of the six were later challenged—a very high error rate.

The other 39 studies were all based on random samples, yet nine were nevertheless challenged. The reason? For the most part, the sample sizes were smaller than in subsequent studies.

"The examination of contradictions and refutations offers a fascinating look at the process of science" as new studies appear over the years, writes Ioannidis. In an age of instant publicity, however, a surprising study can make global headlines before that process has a chance to run its course.

The Big Questions in Science

"What Don't We Know?" by Donald Kennedy et al., in *Science* (July 1, 2005), 1200 New York Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

It's staggering to think what marvels scientists have discovered in just the past few decades, but more interesting to ask what science still does *not* know—and may discover before too long. To mark its own 125th an-

niversary, *Science* surveyed this immense realm of scientific ignorance, coming up with 125 "hard questions" that its contributors think might be answered in the next quarter-century, and highlighting 25 of them.