Postrel and "Dynamism"

In this issue, Sarah Barton exposes the mendacious smear leveled against Rockford Institute and *Chronicles* by *Reason* editor Virginia Postrel in the April 1 issue of the *Washington Post* Sunday "Outlook". Her smear was a desperate attempt to link these distinguished paleoconservatives with environmentalism, a fraudulent and profoundly anti-human movement that no one can oppose more strongly than Lew Rockwell or myself.

But Postrel's thesis deserves a more detailed examination. Seeing the breakup of older coalitions, she identifies only two antagonistic groupings alongside one fault line: "dynamism" (good) vs. "stasis" (bad). If the environmentalists are the reactionary anti-growth statics, *who* are the dynamic types, the Good Guys whom she vaguely identifies with "classical liberals"? They first appeared, it seems, during the same decade of the 1970s that saw the emergence of the Bad Guys— like Jimmy Carter and Jerry Brown —who proceeded to take over the Democratic Party. The dynamic Good Guys persuaded the Republican Party to "drop its tradition of cautious naysaying" and to embrace "dynamism as a fundamental principle." The Good Guys turn out to

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be, in particular, Jack Kemp, Newt Gingrich and fellow supply-siders (*read* neocons), who have never seen a Welfare or Warfare State spending program that they haven't loved. In short, precisely the "Big Government Conservatives" recently heralded by *The New Republic's* Fred Barnes, one of their very own.

But wait a minute! Precisely to *what* were those crabby pre-Kemp Old Republicans cautiously naysaying? Postrel, her ideological world-outlook (like all neocons) beginning in the 1970s, doesn't say. Actually, they were saying all-too cautious nays to the Great Leap Forward to the Leviathan State engineered by the New Deal, the Fair Deal, and World War II. For, if we jiggle our historical memories and consider what the Democratic Party was doing before being captured by static types like Brown and Carter, they were foisting upon us the all-too dynamic collectivism of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the "let's get America moving again" Camelot of that randy Yankee Prince, Jack Kennedy.

You see, Virginia, there's dynamism and there's dynamism: there's a whale of a difference between the dynamism of free-market capitalism and the dynamism of State-rulers like FDR and Jack Kennedy. And come to think of it, surely no one was more satisfactorily "dynamic" and got his country moving again faster than Adolf Hitler. Moreover, knowing this dif-

ference is precisely what your much-vaunted "classical liberalism" was all about. Classical liberals were bold nay-sayers to the very State dynamists you seem to extol. And yet in your discussion of ideological groups there is not one mention of the crucial problem of *government* (except to sneer at Rockford for offering a "dollop of limited government rhetoric.")

The *really* Great Divide, of our time or of any time, is not static vs. dynamic, but precisely on the issue that Postrel evades: liberty vs. statism. And one astounding fact makes it all too clear where Postrel stands on this crucial issue, and it's not with classical liberalism: Her having the effrontery to list the socialist hustler Jesse Jackson as one of her "dynamic" heroes. Enough said.

- M.N.R.

"Dr." King

Martin Luther King was not only a socialist satyr with a long and close relationship with the Communist Party, he was apparently also a phony.

I've long wondered why King is the only person to keep his doctorate in death. We don't hear about Dr. Einstein. But we do hear—incessantly—about Dr. King. But maybe, at long last, the Dr. will have to be dropped.

The top conservative newspaper in Britain, the London *Telegraph*, reports evidence that King plagiarized his PhD thesis from a fellow left-wing student. Although unmentioned, my guess is that it would have been done under Communist Party discipline, since King was singled out early for grooming by the Reds.