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Hentoff on `George W. Obama`

January 16, 2010, 1:12 pm

Posted by [Paul Moses](#)



Village Voice

I've tired of hearing critiques from the left of Barack Obama's presidency, but when Nat Hentoff speaks, I listen. In a Village Voice [article](#) provocatively titled "George W. Obama," he produces a list of overt acts from the past year to support this argument:

"Bush's successor—who actually taught constitutional law at the University of Chicago—is continuing much of the Bush-Cheney parallel government and, in some cases, is going much further in disregarding our laws and the international treaties we've signed."

A lot of the left-wing critics Obama faces today misinterpreted him when he was a candidate, playing down or just plain missing his instinct for the practical. But I don't think Hentoff falls into that category.

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Posted by [George D](#)
on January 16th, 2010 at 2:06 pm
Hentoff needs to grow up.

As Flannery O'connor once wrote to Cecil Dawkins who was having some difficulty with the Church, we have our own responsibility not to be "little ones" for too long – to not be scandalized for in being scandalized you scandalize others and the guilt for this belongs to you. To be scandalized is to be sentimental and this is a softness that ends in bitterness.

Posted by [George D](#)
on January 16th, 2010 at 2:08 pm

As I recall the quote was to expect too much is to be sentimental.

Posted by [Mollie Wilson O'Reilly](#)
on January 16th, 2010 at 2:36 pm

Obama deserves (and has been getting) much criticism in this vein. But I'm not sure Nat Hentoff counts as a left-wing critic. He's a Cato Institute fellow now, and this summer he was [scaremongering](#) about the end-of-life counseling provisions in the health-care bill. That made me much less likely to listen to what he says — too bad, because he's been an important prolife voice over the years.

Posted by [gene palumbo](#)
on January 16th, 2010 at 7:26 pm

George D:
You say, "Hentoff needs to grow up." What, specifically, do you mean by that?
Thank you.

Posted by [Charles L. Ladner](#)
on January 16th, 2010 at 8:38 pm

When I voted for Obama I thought we were getting FDR, instead we got Herbert Hoover!
The same pandering to Wall Street, the same contempt for the middle class, and the same economic solutions. Hoover gave us Smoot-Hawley which constrained trade and passed costs to consumers. Obama gives us a tax on banks which may constrain lending and will certainly result in higher costs to everyone as banks pass these costs on to their customers. In the glorious tradition of Herbert Hoover everyone pays except the individuals who created the mess. Their bonuses are apparently sacred and untouchable. Hentoff is right. Not only did we get Bush, but we got Hoover as well.

Posted by [George D](#)
on January 16th, 2010 at 9:17 pm

Gene:
Obama, yes like George W. Bush his predecessor, has a solemn duty to protect the citizens of his country. Presidents are elected for the judgment they bring to policy and the discretion they show in the national interest.

It is very easy to sit in a coffee shop in Manhattan and attend wine and cheese parties and wax righteously about the people's right to know and pick apart every single decision or judgment – it is quite another to

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