



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on November 6, 2025

National Review Smears Schlafly

Conservatives nationwide are reeling over *National Review's* [attack](#) on Phyllis Schlafly in its 70th Anniversary issue.

The founder of Eagle Forum and a leading activist from the early 1960s until her [death](#) in 2016, Schlafly earned such flattering titles as “sweetheart of the silent majority” and “first lady of the conservative movement” in recognition of the foundational role she played in mobilizing grassroots conservatism.

As a self-styled “conservative” publication, one might think *National Review* (NR) would embrace such a heroine. Nevertheless, author Rachel Lu calls Schlafly “mean-spirited” and “conspiratorial” — a “shill” of “shameless propaganda.”



AP Images
Phyllis Schlafly in 2007

“The attack on a beloved icon of the right is bad enough on its own,” [writes](#) Mark Hemingway of [The Federalist](#), “but what makes the whole thing especially intolerable is that it is ultimately an attack on the legacy of *National Review* itself.”

Really, Mark? Is it truly such an about-face?

Why is *National Review* publishing a piece by an author who is a regular contributor to *America* magazine, a far-left Jesuit periodical that has long supported such causes as homosexuality and abortion, and which in 2009 backed the University of Notre Dame’s award of an honorary “Doctor of Laws” degree to then-U.S. President Barack Obama?

Granted, one week after NR broadcast Lu’s smear piece, the magazine also published a defense of the conservative bellatrix, “[Phyllis Schlafly Still Drives Opponents Mad](#),” written by her youngest daughter, Anne. Anne points out that had her mother been the sophist of Lu’s imagining, she “would not have built a movement that has lasted generations.” Hands down, Anne wins the debate with Lu, but what do the editors of NR care? Either way, the controversy is free advertising for them.

Indeed, in answer to Hemingway, such pandering is perfectly in line with “the legacy of *National Review* itself.”

National Review’s Founder

John F. McManus, former president of The John Birch Society (JBS), exposed NR’s neocon origins in his biographical critique of its founder. [William F. Buckley, Jr.: Pied Piper for the Establishment](#) describes the political pundit as a delusive gadfly who lured conservatives into serving Establishment interests by systematically marginalizing genuine anti-globalist voices — particularly JBS — to align Americans with neoconservative ideologies.

“William F. Buckley, Jr. is one of America’s slyest deceivers, a clever but supremely duplicitous



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frontman for a behind-the-scenes cabal whose operatives have been laboring for generations to steer America into their contrived ‘new world order,’” McManus wrote.

Buckley’s rationale was perfectly in line with the political Left. “In order to fight communist totalitarianism, according to Buckley, one must accept Big Government and adopt totalitarian ways,” explained William F. Jasper in his exposé “[Faux Conservatism](#)” published in *The New American* magazine.

An example of this early double-dealing is NR’s October 1965 issue, dedicated entirely to savaging JBS and its founder, Robert Welch. But these have not been the only victims of Buckley’s pseudo-intellectual rag.

“Although Robert Welch has been the recipient of the most vicious and sustained attack from Buckley’s Politburo at *National Review*, other conservatives, including many of that magazine’s former top-drawer writers and editors — L. Brent Bozell, Ayn Rand, Medford Evans, M.E. Bradford, Sam Francis, Joseph Sobran, Paul Gottfried, Peter Brimelow, John O’Sullivan, Pat Buchanan, and Murray Rothbard — were similarly purged,” warned Jasper. “They were replaced by *neoconservatives* (some of whom have migrated to the far liberal-Left)....”

And while smearing the vanguard, Buckley was loath to shun the company of such despicable as porn mogul [Hugh Hefner](#), drug addict [Allen Ginsberg](#), and Black Panthers [Huey Newton](#) and [Eldridge Cleaver](#).

True to Form

Such debasement of true conservatives has been the NR modus operandi from its inception in 1955. In fact, by 1962, Schlafly herself “decided that Bill Buckley and his magazine were no longer worthy of her support,” McManus [related](#). So “she sent a letter to Buckley that started with a listing of her many relationships with him and *National Review*. She pointed to having been a charter subscriber, contributor, promoter and more. Then she added: ‘I now ask you to cancel my subscription and send the refund to either Robert Welch or Pope John XXIII.’”

True to form, today’s NR staff continue to carry out leftist smears on the likes of U.S. President [Donald Trump](#), social media influencer [Candace Owens](#), political commentator [Tucker Carlson](#), free-market giant [Ron Paul](#), and, as ever, the so-called “[anti-Semitic](#)” JBS. At the same time, readers get regular doses of praise for the totalitarian ways of globalists such as former presidents [Joe Biden](#) and [George W. Bush](#). Indeed, Mark Levin [discredits himself](#) by appealing to NR authority in his [copy-cat attacks](#) on JBS.

Schlafly fans should consider it a compliment that their superstar has finally taken her rightful place among the elite in the crosshairs of *National Review* charlatans.

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