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February 2006

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by Randal O'Toole

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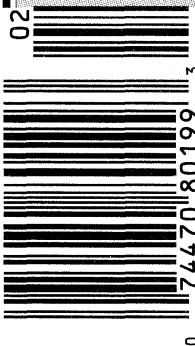
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by Doug Casey

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by Jo Ann Skousen

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Letters

Government Still Necessary

David Friedman's article "Do We Need Government?" (December) made a convincing case for the private production of law, enforcement and adjudication.

My one area of disagreement has to do with his ideas on defense against external states. Historically, the rudiments of a state arose with tribal chiefs or kings which were primarily military offices, based on the need for defense from external enemies. I believe that the most important factor justifying governmental provision is that only government can provide a uniform command and military strategy essential for an effective defense.

For example, during the Vietnam War, the United States pondered two different strategies. The Marines, under General Krulak, proposed a "spreading inkblot strategy" of small unit patrols defending the coastal villages. His idea was that by securing ever larger areas of populated territory, the North Vietnamese army would be denied food, supplies, and recruits from the villages and wither. The Army under General Westmoreland preferred the "search and destroy" strategy of leaving the populated areas to the South Vietnamese and actively engaging the NVA in the hinterlands in a conventional large unit war of attrition.

Note that these strategies were mutually exclusive; you could implement only one or the other. In the chain of command the decision was made at the top, by the president and secretary of defense. Westmoreland's strategy

was adopted because it was thought that the Marine strategy would take too much time.

Whether that decision was right or wrong, it had to be made. That decision had to be enforceable with punitive sanctions for disobedience. Once a strategy has been decided upon, all personnel must adhere to the decision by military law.

Friedman correctly states that "10,000 separate companies of 100 men each do not an army make." I have no doubt that volunteers and funding would come forth in a free society, yet there is no reason to believe as he does that a small cadre could become a commanding structure without the crucial ability to enforce a preferred military strategy for all personnel. This is essential for an effective defense. Although most defense companies might contract with the cadre for a command structure, there is no anarcho-capitalist institution that can enforce compliance from each and every company.

Under a stateless society a strong minority viewpoint in a military made up of companies that were not compelled to adhere to a command structure could subvert any effective policy. Effective military action would prove to be unworkable and rights could not be protected. This is borne out by the fact that even the decentralized Indian warriors and guerrillas have always had a strong unified command structure in war with severe penalties for desertion or disobedience. No other defense strategy can be permitted once a decision is made, and that means a government is

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Liberty invites readers to comment on articles that have appeared in our pages. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. All letters are assumed to be intended for publication unless otherwise stated. Succinct letters are preferred. *Please include your address and phone number so that we can verify your identity.*

Mail to: Liberty Letters, P.O. Box 1181, Port Townsend, WA 98368. Or send email to: letters2005@libertyunbound.com

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necessary to coordinate military forces with a enforceable command structure.

Imagine a rescue mission, where one military group wants to utilize a small covert team, while another wants a large frontal assault. If both were tried, each would endanger the other and the chances are that neither would succeed. The private production of military strategies would prove disastrous. To allow such a situation to develop would endanger the rights of all citizens. At least in this crucial area a government is needed.

Philip Dinanzio, Jr.
Yonkers, N.Y.

Taney Still Wrong

James Harrold, Sr. (Letters, November) opined that "if ever there was a case that upheld original intent," it was *Scott v. Sandford*, claiming that Chief Justice Taney was correct in ruling that the Supreme Court (as well as lower federal courts) lacked jurisdiction. This alleged lack of jurisdiction was based on Dred Scott's non-citizenship status as well as there being no federal slave laws involved, all laws pertaining to slavery being state laws, according to Mr. Harrold.

That is a flawed analysis based on much misinformation about the case, usually put forth by progressives who want to use this case as an example of why a strict constructionist view (as they see it) is no friend of liberty — a problem to be remedied, they believe, only by the concept of the "living Constitution." The amendment process is considered to be too slow, or even unnecessary. The Dred Scott decision is, in fact, a prime example of the "living Constitution" concept, from the Missouri Supreme Court to the United States Supreme Court.

Let's take a quick look at the two claims made by Mr. Harrold:

1) Citizenship. If one is to believe Roger Taney, no blacks could be citizens of the United States, or of any state for that matter, although colonial and post-Revolution American laws clearly said otherwise. Dred Scott scholar Donald Fehrenbacher pointed out in his classic work "The Dred Scott Case — Its Significance in American Law and Politics" that the "general tendency was to regard state citizenship as primary, with United States citizenship deriving from it."

Taney himself argued in the 1849 Passenger Cases that a citizen of a state was also a citizen of the United States. And Taney, in his pre-Supreme Court justice days, occasionally argued as an attorney in front of the Supreme Court in cases involving black litigants, without ever making the point that the cases ought to be dismissed because of lack of citizenship of the other party. Clearly Taney dropped that view later on when it was "time" for a "living Constitution" to say something it didn't, namely, that no blacks could be U.S. citizens or have any rights "that a white man is bound to respect."

2) Jurisdiction. The claim that the Supreme Court had no jurisdiction over the case doesn't hold up, either. Since Dred Scott and his wife were taken by their Army officer master to live in federal territory (present day Minnesota), existing federal laws

regarding slavery came into play. The case involved a federal question per the Judiciary Act of 1789 (based on Scott's two-time residency on free territory at Fort Snelling). Because of that residency, "the Scott case clearly involved a right claimed under the federal Constitution, and the Supreme Court could not justifiably refuse to hear it on jurisdictional grounds" (Fehrenbacher, p. 261).

Justice Scott of the Missouri Supreme Court stated that "changed circumstances dictated the overthrow of precedent" and, as Fehrenbacher points out, "turned a legal explication into a political tract" (264). Taney and other Supreme Court justices had the same mindset, and rubberstamped this ruling while adding additional nonsense of their own.

Bob Tiernan
Portland, Ore.

R.W. Bradford, founder of this journal, died at his home in Port Townsend, Washington, on December 8, 2005, after a gallant battle against cancer. He was 58.

A future issue of Liberty will commemorate Bill's life. Here it is important to say that he was more than the founder of this journal; he was its brain and soul and vital energy. He envisioned Liberty as an independent journal, bound to no party, sect, or ideological tendency, constrained by no editorial line, and existing solely for the purpose of serving individual freedom by publishing the best libertarian writing that can be found.

To that purpose he adhered unswervingly throughout the nineteen years of his editorship.

To that purpose Liberty will continue to adhere, in the memory of a great man and in allegiance to the high principles to which he devoted his life.

Stephen Cox
Editor

At last. A scholarly journal dedicated to the study of Ayn Rand's thought and influence.

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JARS is edited by R.W. Bradford, libertarian writer and publisher of *Liberty*; Stephen Cox, author of many books and articles on Ayn Rand, Isabel Paterson, and libertarianism; and Chris Matthew Sciabarra, characterized by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* as "Rand's most vocal champion in academe."

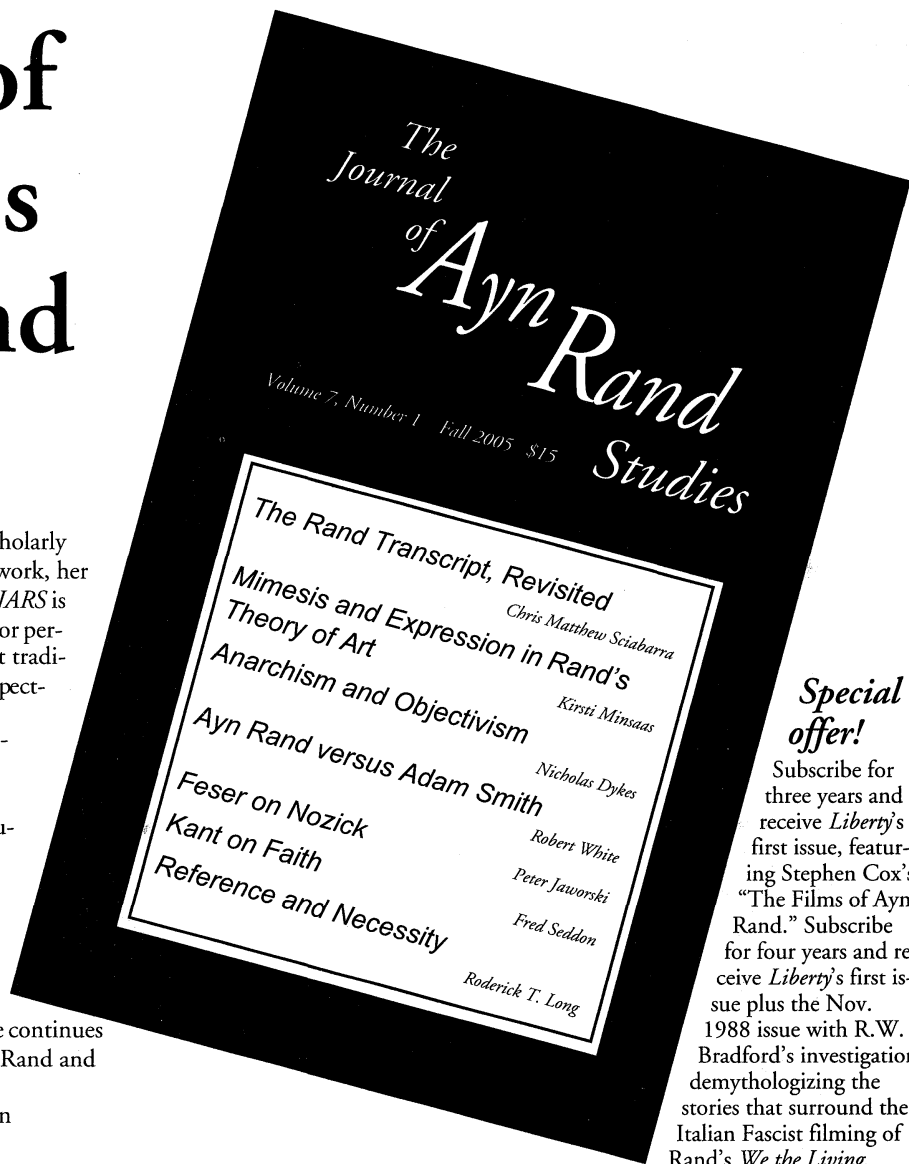
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Reflections

No good deed unpunished — Only 18 House Republicans voted against the reauthorization of the Patriot Act in December 2005, including two who had voted against the Iraq war resolution in 2002: Ron Paul of Texas and John Duncan of Tennessee. Another voting against the Patriot Act was Walter Jones of North Carolina, who has turned against the war.

It took boldness for this handful of Republicans to vote against their party, and some of them are now being challenged from within their own ranks. Jones has a primary opponent already: Greg Dority, who says he's running because Jones no longer backs the war. Ron Paul, the libertarian Republican who ran unopposed in the last election, is being challenged by Greg Roof, an economics professor at Alvin Community College, who notes that Paul does not support the war.

Paul also has a Democratic challenger, Shane Sklar — and a tough fight ahead, because the boundaries of his district have moved, and given him a more urban, and hence liberal, constituency.

— Bruce Ramsey

Now, the good news —

Economies are booming in America and around the world. U.S. gross domestic product growth for the third quarter of 2005 was revised upward to over 4%, annualized. Productivity growth remains well over 4% annually. Much of the developed world is growing in the range of 2 to 3%.

China, India, and other emerging industrial and developed countries are growing by as much as 6 to 10% per year.

More wealth is being created around the world than ever before. Gross world product is on track to double in the next 20 years.

The idea of free markets and free trade is prevailing. While many roadblocks and obstacles remain in the path toward a free society, progress is being made. Now is the time to continue to advance the libertarian agenda of deregulation, lower taxes, less government spending, and privatization of public services.

In the great economic prosperity we are now experiencing — greater prosperity than ever known before — new political possibilities will emerge. One thing the great libertarian thinkers and writers emphasize is that what was once

politically impossible can become politically possible. Now is the time for new thinking and work on how to achieve the free society.

— Lanny Ebenstein

This sickness unto death — Stanley "Tookie" Williams founded the Crips, a California street gang that, to put it mildly, has done a lot of bad stuff. He himself was sentenced to death and on December 13 was finally executed for the 1979 murders of four people. On death row, Williams became a cause celebre. He was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, and antideath penalty activists marched on his behalf, demanding that Gov. Schwarzenegger commute his sentence. Reporters noted that Tookie contemptuously rejected the traditional last meal offered by the state.

I couldn't help but contrast this with another death at the hands of the government in California.

Peter McWilliams didn't start a gang. In fact, he was a libertarian who deplored violence, including state violence.

He got in a heap of legal trouble for taking medicinal marijuana to continue his existence as a sufferer from a life-threatening disease. Few in the media rushed to his defense when the government raided his home and told him he couldn't take his medicine anymore, sentencing him to death without the benefit of the quarter-century of appeals that Tookie got.

I don't recall McWilliams being nominated for any Nobel prizes. And his last meal wasn't offered to him by the state. It was probably very small, and choked down in great discomfort. He vomited it up because he couldn't have his harmless, life-preserving antinausea medication, and he was too weak even to throw up right. He died alone, probably after several minutes of terrible suffering. But he died with honor.

Pardon me if the media's hand-wringing over Tookie makes me want to throw up, too.

— Patrick Quealy

It's Taser time! — In Noblesville, Ind., a woman getting flu medicine from a corner store was accosted in the parking lot by two cops. They thought she was a drunk driver, and gave her roadside sobriety tests (which she

WE WERE THINKING
OF A SLIGHTLY
DIFFERENT APPROACH
TO APPEAL TO THAT
PARTICULAR VOTING
BLOC, SENATOR.



passed) and breath tests (which were inconclusive). They offered her a choice: take a blood test in the parking lot, or go to jail. She refused to make a choice until she could call her lawyer. When she pulled out her cell phone, the cops got agitated and held her over the hood of her car. Then they hit her with a Taser until she submitted — after one of them gloated, saying “That’s it, Taser time!” You’ll have to excuse his excitement; you see, he’d just been given the Taser and was obviously happy for the opportunity to try it out.

The department says that neither officer did anything wrong, except that it was “insensitive” to announce that it’s “Taser time” — better to let flu-ridden citizens figure this out

Neither cop will be disciplined, even though their squad car video clearly shows them terrorizing a small, unarmed woman whose only resistance was trying to call her lawyer.

for themselves, once they’re writhing on the ground, yelling “Oh my God!” Needless to say, neither cop will be disciplined, even though their squad car video (linked on the Indianapolis Star’s website, see <http://tinyurl.com/aoy8a>) clearly shows them terrorizing a small, unarmed woman whose only resistance was trying to call her lawyer.

That wasn’t even the dumbest Taser incident in the past month. In Hamtramck, Mich., six-year veteran Ronald Dupuis was fired after using his Taser on his partner, Prema Graham. The two were headed back to HQ, and Dupuis wanted to stop for a soda. After Graham, who was driving, refused, Dupuis grabbed the wheel and tried to pull them into the store’s parking lot. The two struggled — *with the vehicle still moving* — until Dupuis settled the argument with his Taser.

Every month brings more stupid Taser stories, and it’s clear that many cops now think that “non-lethal weapon”

means “toy.” And why shouldn’t they? Whenever they assault a civilian, they receive little if any punishment. As long as they don’t jolt other cops, they’re free to brandish their Tasers like street thugs flashing butterfly knives.

Enough, I say. If they’re going to use their weapons in ways that would embarrass Barney Fife, they certainly shouldn’t be considered more trustworthy than Mayberry’s second finest. Give cops Taser batteries that only have enough juice for one shot, and make them carry the batteries in their shirt pockets. At least then they’ll have to think for an extra second before shocking the hell out of some poor woman who only wanted some TheraFlu.

— Andrew Ferguson

Spare the rod — I got to thinking about failed states recently, especially in Africa, what with the news that 12% of South Africans may be HIV positive, the massive debt relief negotiated by an Irish pop star, the continuing agony of Darfur, and brazen forays by Somali pirates.

For 50 or 60 years now, it seems as if a whole alphabet soup of governmental and nongovernmental charities (US AID, CARE, UNHCR and WHO) have been trying to wrest sub-Saharan Africa from the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

In October 2001, we dropped a handful of Green Berets and a battalion of Army Rangers into Afghanistan. Two weeks later, bang, civilization returned. Granted, Kabul and Kandahar aren’t yet likely to be mistaken for Beverly Hills or even Compton, but at least the police no longer whip you for shaving.

It makes me wonder if the governments of the poorest countries in the world might stand a little less hand-holding and a little more ass-kicking.

— Brien Bartels

Bit by bit — Freedom is usually lost in steps, for individuals or entire nations. As Scottish philosopher David Hume observed, “It is seldom that liberty of any kind is lost all at once.”

H.L. Mencken saw government gaining ground by way of scaring the bejeebers out of people. “The whole aim of practical politics,” he explained, “is to keep the populace alarmed (and hence clamorous to be led to safety) by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary.”

Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.), for example, regularly sounds the warning bell about hobgoblins like Ellen DeGeneres, hoping that an alarmed populace will clamor for larger Republican majorities in order to provide a federal buttress for the allegedly endangered missionary position.

To Germans burdened by defeat in World War I and the associated reparations payments, Hitler offered Jews and communists as the hobgoblins who conspired to undermine the country’s war effort. To a nation threatened by unemployment and hyperinflation, he offered the scapegoat of Jewish “exploiters” and the hobgoblin of “Jewish financiers.”

In steps, for years, liberty in Germany was rolled back as the government expanded its edicts and regulations. On April 7, 1933, the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service was passed, banning Jews from government jobs. On April 22, 1933, the Law Against the Crowding of German Schools and Institutions of Higher Learning limited

Church Marriage Counseling



“He’s slothful about his lust.”

the number of Jewish students by means of quotas: "In new admissions, care is to be taken that the number of Reich Germans who are of non-Aryan descent, out of the total attending each school and each faculty, does not exceed the proportion of non-Aryans within the Reich German population."

In May 1935, Jews were forbidden to join the German army. On Sept. 15, 1935, the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor was adopted by unanimous vote in the Reichstag, decreeing the following. Section 1: "Marriages between Jews and nationals of German or kindred blood are forbidden." Section 2: "Relation outside marriage between Jews and nationals of German or kindred blood are forbidden." Section 3: "Jews will not be permitted to employ female nationals of German or kindred blood in their households." Section 4: "Jews are forbidden to hoist the Reich and national flag and to present the colors of the Reich. On the other hand, they are permitted to present the Jewish colors."

The final part of the law, Section 5, orders that a person acting contrary to Section 1 be "punished with hard labor" and orders that a person in violation of Section 2 be "punished with imprisonment or with hard labor," thereby providing an early flow of people to the Nazi labor camps, the forerunners of the extermination camps that would in due course produce the mass slaughter of millions.

In March 1936, Jews were banned from all professional jobs in Germany. On Sept. 30, 1936, it became unlawful for "Aryan" physicians to treat Jewish patients, a patient group

that was already restricted in medical care by the fact that Jews were banned from becoming doctors.

Beginning in March 1938, government contracts in Germany could no longer be awarded to Jewish businesses. On November 9, 1938, Germany's Nazi leaders sent the SS

In steps, for years, liberty in Germany was rolled back as the government expanded its edicts and regulations.

on a rampage of destruction against the nation's Jews. With police and firemen standing idle, Jewish homes, cemeteries, hospitals, schools, and synagogues were looted and burned.

In two days of government-directed mayhem, more than 1,000 synagogues were burned, dozens of Jews were murdered, and an estimated 7,000 Jewish businesses were trashed. The attack became known as Kristallnacht, the "Night of the Broken Glass," for the shattered windows of Jewish storefronts that covered the sidewalks and streets.

On November 11, an estimated 30,000 Jewish men in Germany were sent to concentration camps, Jewish children were expelled from the public schools, and the management of Jewish businesses was turned over to non-Jews.

And just to make sure that all went according to plan

News You May Have Missed

Unnamed Source: Secrecy Not a Problem

WASHINGTON — An unnamed Bush administration source, whispering over the phone from an undisclosed location, angrily rejected charges that the Bush White House has a secretive, conspiratorial operating style, as exemplified, according to critics, by the intrigue, duplicity, and innuendo surrounding the launching of the war in Iraq and the outing of CIA agent Valerie Plame. The official said that charges of excessive and deceptive secrecy are easily refuted by documents, only a few of which are forged, obtained by a clandestine, unofficial Defense Department intelligence-gathering operation, but unfortunately, he added, the records are sealed and he could not reveal their contents at the present time or any future time, and he vowed that the administration would fight any con-

gressional inquiries and subpoenas aimed at making them public. He was backed by another unnamed White House source, who remarked, "The public has a right to know that it's better off not knowing what we know, and, more importantly, what we don't know, and we will make sure, in speeches given to carefully screened and vetted audiences from which members of the press are excluded, that we get that message out. That's the story in a nutshell," he concluded, passing an anonymous note contained in a nutshell to Washington Post editor Bob Woodward, who revealed that the official, whom he met in an undisclosed underground parking garage, was cleverly disguised as former New York Times staffer Judith Miller, herself often cleverly disguised in the past as a reporter.

Meanwhile President Bush sought to counter a December Newsweek cover story that said he was too isolated and depicted him trapped in a bubble. He told Brian Williams of NBC that the story was completely off base, admitting that he hadn't seen the issue or heard of the magazine, the name of which he apparently misunderstood. "Newsleak? Sounds pretty good to me," he said. "But I don't need to read any damn magazines or newspapers or other stuff because my staff tells me everything I need to know and they're doing one helluva job," the president claimed, adding that if there's any doubt in his mind about anything or about what he should do, "I get down on my knees and consult a higher authority, and usually Dick Cheney clears it up right away."

— Eric Kenning

without any significant detours, the Weapons Law of 1938 was passed. Stated Section 1: "Jews are prohibited from acquiring, possessing, and carrying firearms and ammunition, as well as truncheons or stabbing weapons. Those now possessing weapons and ammunition are at once to turn them over to the local police authority."

Long before the Third Reich, Thomas Jefferson warned of freedom being crushed, step by step, by an ever-expanding state. "The natural progress of things," he wrote in 1788, "is for liberty to yield and government to gain ground."

— Ralph R. Reiland

Still written by the winners — Each side in a political dispute settles on its own version of history. Each may see an event from the same media eyes, but what they remember will be determined by what they believe. I was reminded of that recently while listening to a local conservative on talk radio.

This was on the day after a man was shot at the Miami airport. The man had run down the aisle of an airplane shouting that he had a bomb. Sky marshals had yelled at him to get down, and when he reached into his bag instead, they had shot and killed him. Afterward it was found he had no bomb. The talk-show host related this story in a way that was sounding more and more familiar. The man was a perceived threat who turned out not to be an actual threat, but who was nonetheless dealt with through lethal preemptive force.

Well, the host said, wasn't it exactly the same as with Saddam Hussein? Saddam had been a perceived threat. Bush took him down. Like the bomb in the bag, Saddam's Weapons of Mass Destruction turned out not to be real, but Bush thought they were real, and acted. He was doing his job.

My problem was the history. The radio host said that in 2002 and 2003 Saddam Hussein was acting as if he had nuclear, biological or chemical weapons, and that "the whole world believed" he had them. I didn't remember it that way. I remembered Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Rice saying he had WMDs, and Saddam saying he didn't have them, and inviting inspectors to come and look for them. I remembered the inspector who went in, Hans Blix, saying he had looked and couldn't find any weapons of mass destruction, and asking Bush for time to look some more. And I remembered the previous inspector, Scott Ritter, saying that he had supervised the destruction of the chemical-weapons plants, and saying (in 2001) that he didn't believe Iraq had these weapons.

We remember different things. The talk-show host remembered that in the winter of 2002–2003 everyone thought Saddam Hussein had WMDs. I remembered the claim that he had them, the war party being challenged about that claim, and the war party falling back on the safer but weaker argument that Iraq had not accounted for the destruction of its WMDs. I remember the "accounted-for" argument immediately confusing weapons with paperwork about weapons, opening up the intriguing possibility that the United States would go to war over errors in accounting.

The talk-show host could not have had a discussion about it — at least not the sort of brief and to-the-point one in which he specializes. He and I didn't agree on a set of common facts. And there was nothing unusual in this. It happens all the time.

— Bruce Ramsey

Time, devourer of all things

— One of the least noticed, let alone resisted, oppressions of contemporary life is the ruthless tyranny of time, our clock-police state. Everywhere Big Brother, in the form of alarm clocks, blinking digital displays, wrist-watches, computer and radio proclamations, and timesheets, is watching us and giving us our marching orders, telling us what we had better do, if we know what's

good for us, right this minute, and that means now. Time heals all wounds, except for the wounds time itself inflicts. We live too fast to notice we are living, eating our fast food, and consuming our instant messages and instant breakfasts, unaware that it is we who are being devoured.

The regime, ever more dictatorial and pervasive in its coerced acceleration of life, began quietly. Pocket watches came in during the 18th century, and in Swift's "Gulliver's Travels" the Lilliputians assume that Gulliver's watch is his god, because he consults it so often. Imagine, for a moment, the unhurried pre-modern world where no one knew what time it was most of the time, where time was measured in slow, stately rhythms, days and months and years and reigns and dynasties instead of minutes and seconds, kept by dawns and sundials and sunsets, by waxing and waning moons and slowly passing seasons, and after dark by town criers who customarily added "all is well." It was possible to enjoy what there was to be enjoyed. We are too conscious of time passing, even in our pleasures, to be really happy.

Being happy means that you have, for the moment, forgotten all about time. The more conscious you are of time passing, the clearer it is that you're bored or desperate or stressed. When life is really good, when conversation is

YES... WELL... IT IS ALSO TRUE
THAT CERTAINTY ANNOYS AND
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ANNOYS ABSOLUTELY.



really good, when movies, plays, books, walks, and sex are really good, time always vanishes, leaving a taste of eternity. When they're bad you can hear the clock ticking. Hell is time the whole time and nothing but the time, like when you are lying in bed, unable to sleep, and you become a helpless appendage of the monotonous bedside clock that keeps you abreast of what you don't really want to know, that it's 4:07, 4:08, 4:09 a.m. Time is the enemy of calm. Serenity and freedom are places where time doesn't intrude, let alone rule. But even childhood, the last pocket of resistance, has become a mad dash through playdates and appointments and scheduled practices. Our whole cul-

We talk about killing time, but we don't take it literally enough. We need an assassin.

ture has become like the two-minute drill in football, a battle against the clock, and whatever Pyrrhic victories are won, we can hardly savor them, because the struggle itself tends to defeat the purpose. Life is too short to be spent hurrying. We talk about killing time, but we don't take it literally enough. We need an assassin. What our culture has to do if some sense of individual freedom and leisurely civilized life is to survive is to figure out a way of overthrowing the tyrant. And we'd better get moving, we haven't got much time.

— Eric Kenning

Beggars can be choosers — California environmental groups and their allies in state government have imposed so many planning regulations that it is virtually impossible to build electric power plants in their state. As a result, according to The Wall Street Journal, California gets 25% of its power from other states.

Rather than humbly accept this gift, California's elites are exhibiting even more chutzpah (and imposing even more costs on their citizens). The latest demand is that any incoming electricity must come from a plant whose emissions of greenhouse gases are no higher than those of a natural-gas-fired utility. So, if the energy comes from a coal-fired plant, its emissions of carbon must be cut in half. About 20 coal-fueled plants are being planned around the West (none in California, of course), and this proposal could require the plant owners to remove carbon dioxide from the emissions and inject it into the ground — a technique that isn't available yet and might not be for a decade.

Is the California Energy Commission trying to bully other states? Not at all, says commission chairman Joseph Desmond. California just happens to be the biggest energy consumer in the West, and this is "an opportunity to shape what is built."

— Jane S. Shaw

Bush vs. Patton — Administration figures are trying their hardest to fend off calls for a timetable for troop withdrawal:

- George W. Bush, November 2005: "Victory is the primary objective. We've sacrificed a lot. We've had, you know,

some of the finest Americans die in Iraq, and one thing we're not going to do is let them die in vain."

- Dick Cheney, December 2005: "The only way the terrorists can win is if we lose our nerve and abandon our mission."

- Former Pentagon bureaucrat you've never heard of, November 2005: "This is a key battle ground in the War on Terrorism, and we've got to stay the course, and we've got to finish this job."

- Condoleezza Rice, December 2005: "If we withdraw now, we will be giving the terrorists exactly what they want."

Actually, by going into Iraq we have already given them exactly what they want: the opportunity to kill Americans by the Hummer-load. Also, because no one involved in the planning for Operation Iraqi Fiefdom allowed for the probability that more than 50% of Americans would start calling for the troops to come home after only three years, the no man's land dividing Red and Blue seems wider than it has seemed in 30 years.

For a strategic thinker like Osama bin Laden, or whatever Svengali holds him in thrall, the present situation is ideal. We're spending a lot of money we don't have, losing a bunch of troops, losing face in the world, and dividing our polity. And we cannot get out.

Practically, withdrawing from Iraq would probably result in chaos and the subsequent emergence of a terrorist-harboring failed state, an Afghanistan on the Euphrates. It would also mean abandoning those Iraqis who collaborated with us in the sincere hope of living in a free, sane, and prosperous society. Baghdad has many lampposts, and when our last helicopters take off from the Green Zone, we can expect

In Iraq, we took the ground our enemies wanted us to have, and now we're letting them kill us.

our friends to dangle from them. (Well, the insincere collaborators — people like Ahmed Chalabi — would also twist slowly in the desert wind, but losing them would leave this world no poorer.)

But there are also other emotional reasons, the ones that Bush, Cheney, and Rice harp on daily: we must stay the course, we must protect America's image in the world, we must make sure our 2,000 war dead did not die in vain. Unfortunately for them, the cut-our-losses-and-run crowd (Rep. John Murtha, Sen. John Kerry, Michael Moore, the Screen Actors Guild, etc.) already hold the high ground when it comes to manipulating the emotions of the American public. It is doubtful our troops and engineers rebuilding the country will leave behind a stable republic, especially if the Republicans in Congress lose in '06 and '08.

Gen. George Patton had this to say about "cooperating" with the enemy in warfare, that is, getting him to cooperate

in his own destruction. "We'll let him have any ground he wants, as long as he lets us kill him." In Iraq, we took the ground our enemies wanted us to have, and now we're letting them kill us.

— Brien Bartels

O, monstrous — It's conventional wisdom, for a very large number of unwise people, to claim Shakespeare was right when he wrote "The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers." The phrase appears approximately 94,200 times in a Google search, usually by people engaged in lawyer-bashing.

What these ignoramuses do not realize is that the line, from "King Henry VI," is uttered by a villain.

In the play, Cade, who plans to lead a rebellion, is making demagogic promises which are so illogical that they could only appeal to fools: "There shall be in England seven

half-penny loaves sold for a penny; the three-hooped pot shall have ten hoops; and I shall make it a felony to drink small [weak] beer." In other words, he imagines that government can repeal the laws of economics.

"Dick the Butcher" — a fool and therefore an admirer of Cade — chimes in with the "let's kill all the lawyers" line.

Cade agrees, and then puts the campaign against lawyers in the context of hatred for literacy, as he complains "That parchment, being scribbled o'er, should undo a man." Cade also complains about being forced to live up to a contract which he had previously agreed to.

Then, a clerk (a prisoner of some of Cade's followers) is brought in. When Cade is told that the clerk "can read and write," Cade responds, "O, monstrous."

Thus, Shakespeare was mocking illiterate rabble-rousing "leaders." The rule of law — as the educated people of

Word Watch

by Stephen Cox

Woe is us! We live in a degenerate age. Nobody reads anymore; everybody just visits his favorite blogs. Nobody writes anymore either; everybody just sits at a computer, emitting emails.

How many times have you heard that? Well, it's not true, and even if it were, it wouldn't be as bad as it's made to appear — often by people diffusing such sentiments in emails, or posting them on their favorite blogs.

Believe it or not, people *are* still reading. Borders and Barnes & Noble aren't as successful as they are because Americans have stopped reading books and journals. Although many people use these places as surrogate churches, coffee houses, dating services, and public parks, I have actually seen people buying books in them. And the books aren't necessarily bad. We're going through a bad patch right now with novels, and a worse patch with poetry, but history, biography, natural history, and many other incitements to read are flourishing mightily, both in quantity and in quality.

And "reading" isn't confined to books, you know. When I read Emily Dickinson online, I am actually reading Emily Dickinson. The same goes for the Anglo-Saxon text of Beowulf or the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. And the same goes for current political discussion, which occurs in books and journals but also occurs online. The advantage of books and journals is that their texts tend to be much better considered, and their contents much more enduringly accessible, than the texts one sees on blogs or bulletin boards. They look, feel, and smell a lot better, too. But more real writing is going on now than ever before, and more writers have access to the tools of writing, because the new electronic media exist.

So what if people don't send letters anymore? They can write more messages, and write more urgent and responsive messages, if they write online. They can also write to an incom-

parably wider audience. A letter that you post on the Internet is still a letter, still a personal communication; but with luck it can become a letter written to millions.

I have visited blogs that are so horrible that, like the world's great poetry, they can never be evoked in any other terms than their own. Suffice it to say that I have visited blogs written by girls with screen names like Pixie, and guys with names that I don't like to repeat, even to myself. I have also visited blogs that publish articles and comments of great scholarly interest, great political insight, and great artistic merit. I have seen the way in which the web can organize spontaneous communities of intelligent individuals: not academics, not people who are paid to write, but people who want to write and who care about writing and whose writing has an immediacy and a capacity for development that one seldom sees anywhere else. (I wrote about some of these people in my article "The Truth Versus 'the Truth'" in the Sept.-October 2003 issue of *Liberty*, in an article that's *available online* at http://libertyunbound.com/archive/2003_10/cox-truth.html.)

I can't see that any of this destroys the market for books and journals, or furthers the process of literary debasement already so well begun by our public schools. Indeed, it demonstrates that even the public schools cannot completely kill people's hunger for intelligent and expressive writing.

I have to admit, of course, that the Internet has done some bad things to language. It promotes (as well as exposes) fads and frauds; it seldom reproves, even by example, the growth of subliterate locutions ("alot," "LOL"), and it positively encourages the habitual use of jargon that evokes its own ambience: "interface," "virtual," "flame," "firewall," etc. And, as we recently saw in the saga of the Bird and the Dominoes, it is a perfect agency by which vapid sentiments can institutionalize themselves.

In case you didn't hear the news that was all over the

Shakespeare's time well understood — was the greatest accomplishment of English civilization, and an essential restraint on the powers of the government.

Today, as in Shakespeare's time, persons who rail against lawyers and ignorantly repeat Dick the Butcher's foolish statement undermine the foundation of civilization. The alternative to lawyers and the rule of law is the rule of tyrants and knaves.

— Dave Kopel

Congressional baggage — Once this issue of Liberty is sent off to the printer, I'll load a few days' worth of clothes into a wheeled suitcase, and a few days' worth of books into a backpack, and fly off to see family for Christmas. On recent flights I've noticed that most people are traveling as I do, with a suitcase and one other carry-on item: a messenger bag, or a purse, or a laptop case. Longer

Internet, some company in Holland decided to beat the Guinness World's Record for the number of dominoes set off in a single chain reaction. So far, the story was appropriate to the world of print media. The placement of the four million dominoes was reported by newspapers; their successful flattening would be noted by one of the world's best-selling books. It was the advent of the sparrow that ushered the project into the domain of electronic writing.

A common house sparrow, a creature that is environmentally protected in the Netherlands because there are "only" one million nesting pairs of them, got into the room with the dominoes and, flitting about, succeeded in upsetting 23,000 of them. Before this demolition could go any farther, the sponsors of the event called in a guy with an air rifle, and he killed the bird. Big deal, right? Well, it's not a big deal to 99%, or more, of the

The bird had metamorphosed into Princess Di.

world's population, but the remaining 1% can start looking really important when they all get on the Internet and start complaining. And that's what they did.

The result was that the sponsors of the event expressed their grief and consternation, television broadcasters provided a "commemoration" of the bird's demise, and a website was created on which people could record, I suppose for the benefit of remote generations, their own expressions of grief. Thousands of people did. The bird, in short, had metamorphosed into Princess Di.

This electronic monument to the death of a sparrow was a disturbing new feature of the European cultural landscape. Given the worldwide reach of the Internet, there is always the possibility that this kind of thing can spread to America. If it does, however, we are well prepared to meet the threat. The Internet is a great medium of nonsense, but it is also a great medium of satire.

security lines mean longer waits at the airport, so many passengers are compensating by printing their boarding passes at home and skipping the checked-luggage line.

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is noticing too: baggage screeners are falling even further behind because they still have to rummage through all those bags for scissors and small tools. In testimony before the Senate Commerce Committee, Homeland Security underling Edmund Hawley said, "It's not about scissors, it's about bombs. Sorting through thousands of bags a day at two or three minutes apiece . . . does not help security. It hurts it." His solution? Let passengers carry them on board. Let screeners worry about the stuff that's actually capable of bringing down a plane.

Makes perfect sense — unless you're a senator. Committee chairman Ted Stevens (who seems to have a bet with Rep. Don Young and Sen. Lisa Murkowski to see which of them can embarrass Alaska most) found that logic "difficult to follow." Seems to him that it would be easier for everyone just to take one item onto a plane. Voila! Instantly, scanning time is cut in half.

Evidently others on Capitol Hill find simple cost-benefit analysis difficult to follow. A few House Democrats have sponsored a bill that would prohibit the TSA from removing anything from the "banned items" list. Of course, they would still be allowed to add new items. In the Senate, Hillary Clinton introduced a companion bill, which Stevens has offered to cosponsor — as long as it includes a provision to limit passengers to one carry-on bag.

Stevens and his colleagues are about to shoot down the only good idea the TSA has ever had, and somehow they've figured out a way to make air travel even more inconvenient in the process. Merry Christmas, from Congress to you.

— Andrew Ferguson

Pyramid, Ponzi, pension — A December 16 headline on MSNBC: "GM to stop paying into some workers' 401(k)s: Auto giant tells white-collar workers it will suspend matching contributions." The article continues, "The company . . . said that white-collar severance packages will limit payments to one month's base salary for each year of work up to 15 months." GM seems to be preparing the ground for massive but less expensive layoffs in the near future. Meanwhile, the Pension Reform Bill has been passed by the House and is wending its way toward enactment. Bush clearly wants to be seen as bolstering pension security for the approximately 44 million American workers and retirees who are hooked into that system.

I've tried to read the Reform Bill and — in its current incarnation — it seems to be a combination of getting tough (with car makers), cutting favors (with airlines), and making taxpayers liable (with the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, the Fed's insurance fund, still picking up pensions upon a company's bankruptcy). But I can't work up enough enthusiasm to sift all the way through the bill and its implications. For one thing, key provisions are still under debate. Also, I don't think a law is going to prevent the coming pension collapse, which will be led by the auto companies; economic factors, including world trade, will play out and that will be that.

Meanwhile, pensions have become a scam: people with-

out them are forced to pay for those who have them through the imposition of taxes and tariffs that make goods far more expensive than necessary. Thug-like unions still grip key industries which negotiated away their futures for short-term gains in the '60s and '70s; they entered labor and pension deals that are virtually impossible to honor. And even though I feel sorry for the little guy and gal caught up in the expanding pension bubble, I don't feel so sorry as to shift responsibility for their own economic well-being and choices onto the shoulders of a new generation . . . or onto anyone else.

— Wendy McElroy

Cicero and the Crimson Tide —

"O tempora, o mores," lamented a Roman kibitzer named Cicero about two millennia ago. Oh the times, oh the customs! He thought the "civilized" world was standing on its head.

I wonder if Cicero went to the games at the Colosseum. Wonder if he followed sports. I wonder what he'd say about Mike Shula and college sports today.

Mike Shula is the well-spoken, seemingly intelligent young man who coaches the University of Alabama football team. I say he's well-spoken because I note that his vocabulary is adequate and totally devoid of crudities. I have only his sound bites to evaluate, but at least he doesn't educate "his kids" with clever aphorisms such as "We gonna beat their butt" when talking about next week's opponents. (So spake the Mississippi State coach. Turns out that he was a better prognosticator than advertisement for a university education.)

I like Mike Shula, don't get me wrong. My problem is with his employer, the University of Alabama, who, rumor has it, yearns to give him a 5-year contract at \$1.4 million a year. Let me correct the above statement; the coach's employer is me — Joe Taxpayer.

The university acts as a proxy in my dealings with Coach Shula. But I don't want to pay a football coach 1.4 mil, especially when the university president is taking home less than half that amount.

What's amazing here is that the prez, Dr. Robert Witt, concurs with this extravagance. Of course, it's my money, not his. And it could be that the good doctor feels that such generosity will eventually inflate his own paycheck.

Compared to carpentry, accounting, and engineering, coaching is a plum. Football is a game, not a science. Coaching a children's game has a Peter Pan aura about it, allowing my employee, Mr. Shula, to remain ever childlike

and playful, enjoying plenty of the big, fresh, hearty outdoors. There's no great brain strain — as there might be if he were working, say, in the university physics department. And there are perks like sweatshirts and jerseys and free tickets to games and maybe a pair of Nikes now and then.

But one and four-tenths million dollars! That would probably buy you eight or nine really good economics professors who could think up a dozen reasons why an educational institution shouldn't be in a game that calls for a \$1.4 million coach.

Don Corleone says to his lieutenants in "The Godfather": "Boys, we're bigger than General Motors." He could have said the same about this game we call college football. And Cicero would have muttered "*incredibilis*" under his breath.

— Ted Roberts

Grave accent — On a hillside in the midst of the giant Crown Hill Cemetery on the north side of Indianapolis, surrounded by nondescript foliage, not facing the road, dwarfed by the lofty monuments that line the crest of the hill above it, you will find a squat grey stone, about the size of a large chest of drawers. It marks the burial place of Benjamin Harrison, 23rd president of the United States. If you're passing through Indianapolis, as I recently was, you ought to go and see it.

I have visited 16 or 17 presidential grave sites. The monuments range from Woodrow Wilson's block of

marble in the National Cathedral to the enormous pseudo-medieval tower, the largest of all presidential tombs, that rises in Lakeview Cemetery, Cleveland, dedicated to the memory of the martyred James A. Garfield. Most of them, however, are modest, village-graveyard memorials. The contrast with the trappings of the modern imperial presidency is emphatic. To watch a presidential interview and visit a presidential grave on the same day makes you feel like an ancient Roman, seeing the republic pass and the Caesars come to power.

Harrison wasn't much of a president, but he must have had some sensible friends. They didn't overplay their hand. The most prominent inscription on his monument, outside of his name, describes him merely as a "Lawyer and Publicist." Only later does the word "President" appear, as one item in the list of jobs that Harrison held. The short eulogy carved on the tomb begins with the words "Statesman, yet friend to truth." Somebody recognized that truth was ordinarily a

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From the USSR to the EU

by Doug Casey

The Balkan countries are modern enough to join the European Union — and foolish enough to want to.

My first trip to Bulgaria was in January of 1967 when, with two other penniless hippies, I alighted from the train in Sofia at about 4 a.m. Even to this day I don't remember being colder in my life than when I landed. Not that leaving the Orient Express meant leaving a pleasure dome; we had been riding in back, sitting on the floor with some Gypsies, who had brought along some sheep to help us keep warm.

Why, you might ask, would I want to return to such an obscure country? I might answer rhetorically: "Why not?" I've long believed, after all, that no matter where you go, there you are.

A more direct answer is that I was invited by my old friends Richard Harteis and William Meredith. Meredith is Poet Laureate Emeritus of the United States; Harteis also is a well-known poet and author. Both men were given Bulgarian citizenship some years ago in recognition of their achievements. Poetry is a surprisingly big thing in Bulgaria, and the boys were happy to introduce me to everyone from the president on down. On every level, in every market, the buzz was about Bulgaria's anticipated entry into the European Union in 2007.

European Union?

All the relatively backward countries of Eastern Europe want to join the EU, believing it will somehow guarantee prosperity. Everyone sees the advantages of membership, which boil down to more freedom to travel and work within the EU and an easier flow of goods across borders. It's true that their workers would be able to double or triple their wages by transplanting to the West. And it's true that it would become easier to export goods to other EU countries. These are excellent things. But they're offset by a long list of EU follies.

What these countries aren't considering is the extra costs that Brussels will impose with its regime of hyper-regulation. Rich countries can better afford sterile rule-making and other waste than poor ones can. And the Europeans are forgetting that they're not just competing with one another, but with the rest of the world (read: China and India). Bonding to your neighbors in a blanket of political Gunite is a disadvantage, not an advantage, in a competitive world.

My guess is that the EU itself won't last. To see why, look at its stated purposes: 1. Prevent wars by subverting nationalism and replacing it with transnationalism; 2. Promote prosperity and interdependence by lowering trade barriers. The EU will be a disaster on both counts.

After a century of war driven by nationalism, Europeans were eager to try anything to avoid more slaughter. One idea they bought was that citizens of a transnational union would forget that they're French, German, Lithuanian, or one of 25 other nationalities. The effect of union, however, is precisely the opposite. As you force people into a political cage where some groups are being subsidized by others, they become more sensitive to what their group is giving and getting, they feel greater solidarity with those who share their culture and history, and they get daily practice at blaming other groups for their disappointments. They become, in a word, more nationalistic.

As for promoting prosperity, the way to enhance the pay-

off from trade and travel (this will come as a shock to the politically oriented) is to eliminate taxes and regulations — and to do so unilaterally. When a government imposes duties, quotas, and other restrictions on foreigners who want to sell, it places those same burdens on its own citizens who want to buy. In effect, the government enforces a trade embargo against its own country. Why do governments do this? Usually to enrich some favored constituency (at the expense of everyone else), or to punish some other country, or just to look busy.

A government that wants to escape its self-embargo doesn't need to negotiate with anyone. It can cure the problem easily on its own. Requiring a treaty or a political merger to reduce tariffs and quotas is like waiting for permission to stop beating your head against a wall. As an aid to prosperity, then, the EU is a clumsy and unnecessary device at best. Add in its extra layers of taxes and regulation, and it's actually counterproductive.

It wasn't so long ago that everyone just assumed Europe was going to unite into something like a bigger, modern-day Roman Empire. People seemed to think this somehow would make Europe stronger. But does Krazy-Gluing together dozens of disparate countries, with conflicting interests and cultures, make for a stronger whole? No more than attaching to the Chinese government helped Hong Kong. What made Hong Kong great was its freedom; now it's just another city in China. Uniting disparate cultures only makes them stronger for one thing: waging war, whether it's a battle against an enemy outside the union, or a conflict exploiting the revitalized nationalism inside.

The idea that Europe is stronger because it's united is yet another idiotic notion from popular journalists like Thomas Friedman. He applauds union, and everyone claps along because he's a widely read celebrity. (His record is unblemished. Everything he's ever written, at least that I've read, is idiotic — but very stylishly done. Always confused, but always elegant.) Still, almost everyone supports the idea of union. But what is a union of disparate cultures under one government? An empire. And empires, more than other political structures, require centralized control — at the inevitable expense and with the inevitable resentment of the controlled. In the modern world, they're inherently unstable.

In fact, as information technology improves and allows more decentralization, and as wealth increases and the nastiest weapons become affordable for even small countries, there are likely to be more independent political entities, not

fewer. Iraq, for example, is breaking into at least three states. And Chechnya is just one of a number of countries that will eventually separate from Russia. Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland could yet leave the United Kingdom. Spain and France still have breakaway movements in their provinces. I sincerely doubt that U.S. borders 100 years from now will much resemble today's. Separation, not union, is the megatrend.

Fortunately, the EU empire may never get the chance to coalesce, because the French and Dutch voted against ratifying the EU constitution — a fat, laughable hodgepodge of collectivist sentiments destined for the garbage heap of history. Rather than being a brief, easily read document that sets out how the government operates and what it can and can't do, the EU constitution runs 300 pages. No, I haven't read it. And I doubt there are a thousand Europeans outside government who have. But any political document put together by a huge committee drawn from vastly differing cultures can't help but be a tangle of incomprehensibilities and contradictions.

Doubts about the fate of the EU carry over to the euro. Notwithstanding its recent strength against the dollar, the euro will eventually reach its intrinsic value. Its holders will find that if the U.S. dollar is an "IOU Nothing" issued by a bankrupt government, the euro is a "Who Owes You Nothing."

Before the EU, every European government was accustomed to supplementing its revenues by creating currency out of thin air. With a transnational central bank in charge of the euro, this luxury is no longer available to these governments individually. Eventually one country will withdraw from the EU because of an ostensible need to control its own economy (i.e., defraud its own subjects through currency inflation). Then another will withdraw and reestablish its own currency, and another, and another. Who will be left holding all the euros? The same people who lose at Old Maid.

The EU is a marriage of convenience between people who will find they have very little in common except some mistaken economic and political theories. If I were the Bulgarians, or anybody else, I wouldn't join.

Of course, when I met with the president of Bulgaria, the question of his country joining the EU was only one of several we saw differently.

Me and the President

One of my hobbies is approaching government leaders with a radical, common-sense plan to liberate their econo-



mies. I never expect the plan to be accepted, but tales of the reactions I get from heads of state make for fun cocktail chatter.

I didn't have particularly high hopes in Bulgaria because, despite President Georgi Purvanov's youth (he's only in his forties), he impressed me as rather humorless. Europeans generally place a big premium on being "serious." And any idea or building less than a hundred years old risks being dismissed as "not serious" — which may be why so many

Does Krazy-Gluing together dozens of disparate countries, with conflicting interests and cultures, make for a stronger whole?

Europeans seem as old as serious buildings. Of course this presented a problem for your correspondent, because I'm notorious for taking very, very few things seriously. I felt I'd already made a concession to seriousness by not wearing my Bart Simpson tie.

As you probably suspect, there's not much to tell about our meeting. I didn't even get thrown out. After the usual pleasantries, we turned from blah-blah to business.

I asked, "Have you been to Dubai?"

"Yes."

"How did you like it?"

"It's not a direction in which Bulgaria wishes to go."

The Prez appeared to have read my brochure on the topic and harbored some philosophical disagreements with me on the nature of Man and the State.

Then Mr. President said Bulgaria should have a "strong, effective, and working" government. Since I don't believe in government as an institution, we certainly couldn't agree on the necessity of a strong one. Since I think government is only rarely effective at anything worthwhile, that point was out. And since I don't believe government works, that left us three for three.

Philosophy aside, Purvanov's bias against change is understandable. Why should he rock the boat, and perhaps break a few rice bowls, by making the place more like Hong Kong or Dubai, however smart that might be? Stocks and property both have gone through the roof, and the conventional wisdom is that things can only get better. And that view, I believe, has merit: almost all the old Soviet bloc countries, including Bulgaria, have gone to a flat tax, ranging from just 13% in Russia, to about 33% in Lithuania. This is a big draw for many reasons. Now if only those governments would discard their VATs, which average around 20%, they'd be off to the races.

A Slice of Life

My experience in Bulgaria was overwhelmingly favorable because the circles I moved in were sophisticated — writers, artists, poets, businessmen, and ex-nomenklatura. Many evenings we'd stay up until all hours drinking, smoking cigars, and talking philosophy. But, truth be told, that's pretty much my experience everywhere, unless I've hopped

a westbound freight with my hobo friends. A rootless cosmopolitan can easily delude himself that the world is a better place than it actually is, because he's surrounded with others like himself. It's easy to forget that the denizens of trailer parks in the boonies greatly outnumber owners of penthouses in the city.

So let me relate a bit of local color, to convey a more rounded view of the Balkans. You don't get the essence of a place by reading stuff published by the International Monetary Fund or by breathless travel mags.

While I was in Bulgaria, a cruel but rather comical scandal was unfolding in Romania, just across the Danube, involving a young orthodox priest. The Romanian Orthodox Church is still fairly strong throughout Eastern Europe and rabidly popular among hoi polloi, who still believe Dracula lurks in the mountains of Transylvania. This viewpoint is pretty much universal in that region.

Anyway, it seems a 29-year-old priest crucified a 23-year-old nun, in the presence of several other nuns, on the ground that she was possessed by the devil. Press reports indicate that the young woman was bound hand and foot and denied food and water for several days before her ritual execution. It's a nice touch that the bearded young priest who crucified her also said a mass for her soul afterward, saying, "God has performed a miracle for her. Finally Irina is delivered from evil." The serious young priest was further quoted as saying, after the mass, "Over there, in your world, the people must know that the devil exists. Personally I can find his work in the gestures and speech of possessed people, because man is often weak and lets himself be easily manipulated by the forces of evil. I don't understand why journalists are making such a fuss about this. Exorcism is a common practice in the heart of the Romanian Orthodox church, and my methods are not at all unknown to other priests."

It's going to take a while to overcome some of these cultural artifacts. And it's the culture, more than the lack of roads, electricity, and plumbing, that will keep Eastern Europe lagging behind the French Riviera, where therapeutic crucifixion is rare. □



"How about arbitration?"

Why Do Houses Cost So Much?

by Randal O'Toole

For decades, planners have worked at raising the price of housing. When prices go down, they may take the rest of the economy with them.

Housing prices have soared in most of the developed world over the past five years. Increased spending on homes and spending out of loans against the increased equity in homes have kept the world economy afloat despite slow growth in Europe, stagnation in Japan, and the dot-com and telecommunications crashes in the United States.

But the increased prices have also brought speculators into housing markets, creating numerous housing bubbles. When these bubbles deflate, it could result in a deep recession. "The whole world economy is at risk," claims *The Economist*, which estimates that "two-thirds (by economic weight) of the world . . . has a potential housing bubble."¹ "It is not going to be pretty," concludes the magazine-that-calls-itself-a-newspaper.²

If this happens, you can blame urban planners for creating the bubbles. Throughout the United States and much of the rest of the developed world, home prices are rising fastest where planners have imposed rules aimed at slowing or controlling growth. Planners call this *growth management*, of which *smart growth* is a recent variation. By preventing homebuilders from meeting the local demand for housing, growth management leads to sharply increased housing prices. This in turn attracts speculators who have shied away from the stock market. As a result, housing prices in many areas have risen far above the true value of the homes.

Though they pay lip service to "affordable housing," many planners actually welcome the run-up in land and housing costs that results from growth management. Smart-growth planners believe that more people should live in multifamily housing or in single-family homes on tiny lots. Large lots, they say, waste land and lead people to drive too

much. High land prices encourage smaller lots and high housing prices encourage multifamily housing.

Planners count on the support of existing homeowners who see their house prices and apparent wealth dramatically increase. Homeowners could take advantage of their windfalls through home equity loans. But the real wealth gain is illusory because a family often cannot afford to sell a home and buy another unless they are moving to a region that does not have such rules. Moreover, planners fail to take into account the fact that their policies make housing prices more volatile — i.e., more subject to downward as well as upward swings. As a recent economic analysis of the housing market in Great Britain concludes, "By ignoring the role of supply in determining house prices, planners have created a system that has led not only to higher house prices but also to a highly volatile housing market."³

The effect a deflating housing bubble can have on an economy can be seen in Japan, which (at least since World War II) has strictly regulated land use to prevent urban encroachments on agricultural lands. The result was such a huge property bubble that downtown Tokyo was at one time supposedly worth more than all the private real estate in the United States. The bubble burst in 1991 and home values have since fallen to less than half their 1990 peak.⁴ Since then, there have been 15 years of stagnation.

Imagine that you make a 25% down payment on a \$400,000 house. But then home prices start falling. You try to wait it out, but when your house value falls to \$200,000, you still owe \$300,000. If someone offers you a higher paying job in another part of the country, you can't accept because you can't afford the \$100,000 it would cost to sell your house. You can declare bankruptcy, but that just passes the problem onto someone else. When this happens to enough people, the result is a drastic slowdown of the economy.

Like Japan, most European countries have had strict land-use controls since World War II. The result is housing that is less affordable and prices that are more volatile than in the United States. This is one of the reasons Europe's economy has fallen so far behind the United States' in the last decade or so. No communities in the United States attempted to control or manage growth before 1970.

According to the 1970 Census, housing in 1969 was affordable everywhere in the United States except Hawaii and parts of the greater New York metropolitan area. The decennial census estimates the previous year's home prices and family incomes. Dividing median home values by median family income produces the price-to-income ratio, a useful measure of affordability. At a price-to-income ratio of 2, a family dedicating 25% of its income to a 5.5% mortgage would pay it off in eleven years, which is affordable. If the ratio climbs to 3, the period would be a marginally affordable 22 years, while at 4 it would be an unaffordable — because no lender will loan for that long — 55 years. In 1969,

Throughout the United States and much of the rest of the developed world, home prices are rising fastest where planners have imposed rules aimed at slowing or controlling growth.

price-to-income ratios in Honolulu, which has very limited amounts of private land available for development, were just over 3, while they ranged from 2.4 to 3.1 in various parts of the New York area.

Today, residents of the San Francisco Bay Area are used to million-dollar ranch houses, half-million dollar condos, and, in general, some of the most unaffordable housing in the country. But in 1969, San Francisco and other California regions such as San Jose, San Diego, and Santa Barbara all had affordable price-to-income ratios of less than 2.3, which is less than the national average today. Nationwide in 1969, the average price-to-income ratio at less than 1.8 made homes very affordable.

By the year 2000, the average price-to-income ratio had pushed up to 2.2. Affordable housing could still be found in many fast-growing regions whose price-to-income ratios were less than 2. But the average was pushed up by a large increase in the ratios in a number of regions, most importantly in California, Massachusetts, Oregon, and Wash-

ington. By 2004, says the Census Bureau, the national average price-to-income ratio was 2.8, again mainly due to increases in those regions along with Florida and other states on the East Coast.

Liberal economist Paul Krugman divides the country into what he calls the "Zoned Zone," where "land-use restrictions" make it "hard to build new houses," and what he calls

Planners fail to take into account the fact that their policies make housing prices more volatile — more subject to downward as well as upward swings.

"Flatland," the parts of the country that may have zoning but do not have aggressive growth-management planning. Krugman observes that prices are rapidly increasing in the Zoned Zone but remain very affordable in Flatland. Moreover, a close look at price-to-income ratios and other home price indices over time shows that increases in various regions correlate closely with the imposition of land-use controls.

When confronted with the unaffordable housing that results from their work, planners place the blame on growing demand. They even seem to take high housing prices as evidence that their growth limits are making regions more livable and thus more in demand as places to live. The reality is that housing is what economists call an inelastic good, meaning that small restrictions on supply can lead to large increases in price. Quite simply, people need a place to live and will pay what it takes to live there. Because of jobs, family, and other ties, few people are willing to move to another region where housing is more affordable.

Homebuilders are able to meet the demand for new housing, even in rapidly growing areas, unless something stands in their way. During the 1990s, the Atlanta, Dallas, Houston, and Phoenix urban areas were among the fastest-developing in America, all growing by 900,000 people or more. Houston has no zoning at all, and while the other cities have zoning, it is aimed strictly at protecting the status quo in existing neighborhoods, not at controlling new development. Homebuilders easily kept up with demand, and housing prices in these regions grew by about 3–4% per year, or slightly faster than the rate of inflation. By comparison, an urban-growth boundary, design codes, and other development restrictions caused home prices in slower-growing Portland, Ore. to increase faster than 7% per year in the 1990s.

American-style growth-management planning got its start in Ramapo, N. Y. In 1970, the city approved an "adequate public facilities" ordinance, saying that it would approve new developments only when all the capital improvements needed for these developments were fully financed.⁵ Two years later, Petaluma, Calif. passed an ordinance allowing no more than 500 new residential building

permits per year.⁶ Boulder, Colo. soon followed with an ordinance restricting annual building permits to a fixed percentage of the number of existing dwellings in the city. Boulder was also the first city in the United States to pass a tax dedicated to open space preservation, and the city and county of Boulder have since purchased a greenbelt around the city that is several times the land area of the city itself.⁷

Petaluma and Boulder set out to slow growth, but other growth-management policies claimed to seek only to control where growth would take place. In 1974, the city of San Jose and Santa Clara County agreed to draw an urban-growth boundary outside of which development could not take place. Inside the boundary growth could continue unabated, but growth outside would be strictly limited. East of San Jose are tens of thousands of acres of marginal agricultural land, and the growth boundary effectively placed these lands off limits to development. Since most other communities in the San Jose urban area are landlocked by San Jose or other cities, this boundary effectively constrained the entire San Jose urban area.

Taking after Ramapo, San Jose said it would add land to the growth boundary when financing could be assured for the urban services needed for new developments. But in 1978, California voters passed Proposition 13, which strictly limited the property taxes cities could collect for urban services. This made California cities dependent on sales taxes and therefore reluctant to devote more land to residential areas. As a result, San Jose has never expanded its urban-growth boundary.

Even before Proposition 13, cities throughout the San Francisco Bay Area had approved a variety of growth-management policies, including growth boundaries, density limits, and purchases of land for open space. While growth-management planning is supposedly aimed at protecting environmental quality, it is exceedingly vulnerable to manipulation by not-in-my-backyard (NIMBY) advocates whose hidden goal is to boost their property values by limiting the supply of housing for others. As MIT planning professor Bernard Frieden notes in his 1979 book, "The Environmental

Downtown Tokyo at one time supposedly was worth more than all the private real estate in the United States.

Protection Hustle," one important limit to growth was a public involvement process that made it so easy for people to challenge proposed developments that "even a lone boy scout doing an ecology project was able to bring construction to a halt on a 200-unit condominium project."⁸

Berkeley planning professor David Dowall's 1984 book, "The Suburban Squeeze," points out that people living in a neighborhood of \$200,000 homes fear that an adjacent development of \$100,000 homes will bring down their property values, but they will welcome a development of \$300,000

homes. When NIMBYs object to plans, developers respond by eliminating readily affordable housing and proposing to build only expensive houses. For example, one proposal to build 2,200 homes selling for \$25,000 to \$35,000 on 685 acres in Oakland was, due to public opposition, scaled back to a mere 150 homes that would sell for \$175,000 to \$200,000.⁹

Federal, state, county, city, and regional governments were able to tie up a huge amount of potential residential land in the Bay Area as open space. According to Dowall, by 1984 "over 15 percent of the region's total land supply [was] in permanent open space controlled by" various government agencies.¹⁰ Ostensibly this was for environmental protection, but the hilltops that were reserved tended to have the lowest values for fisheries, wildlife, and streams. The main effect of such reservations was a significant boost of land prices throughout the region.

Proposition 13 spurred city governments to go farther than ever before in beggar-thy-neighbor efforts to force residential developments into adjacent cities while capturing retail developments, and the sales taxes they generated, for themselves. As one city put up barriers to growth, that growth would spill over into nearby cities, leading them to

When confronted with the unaffordable housing that results from their work, planners place the blame on growing demand.

erect their own barriers. "Santa Clara County cities have become extremely combative," observed Dowall, "fighting back with a variety of growth-restricting mechanisms that have made each community a 'tight little island.'"¹¹

As a result of these policies, California was the first state to suffer planner-induced housing bubbles. By the 1980 census, price-to-income ratios in many California regions, including Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, and San Jose, ranged from 4 to 4.5, and Santa Barbara was a staggering 4.8. California was also the first state to suffer the bursting of a housing bubble: between 1989 and 1994, housing prices in most of these regions fell from 15–25%. Fortunately, other parts of the United States thrived, so the nation as a whole did not suffer a severe depression.

Meanwhile, Massachusetts set out to protect farmland from urban sprawl by using easements to create greenbelts around Boston and other cities, leading to significant declines in affordability. Oregon and Florida also passed growth-management laws in the 1970s, requiring all cities to have urban-growth boundaries, but these laws did not take effect until near the end of the decade. A recession in the early part of the 1980s kept Oregon housing prices low as the state actually lost population in 1982 and 1983. Most Florida communities treated urban-growth boundaries with generous flexibility, so housing in that state remained affordable until 2000 or so.

In 1993, Oregon had recovered and was growing rapidly. All the lands inside urban-growth boundaries in Oregon cov-

ered just 1.25% of the state, yet planners somehow convinced people that stricter rules were needed to preserve farms and open space. Homebuilders asked the legislature to force planners to keep an early promise to expand urban-growth boundaries to insure a 20-year land supply, but planners convinced the legislature to allow them to accommodate growth by rezoning existing neighborhoods to higher densities.

Many neighborhoods of single-family homes were therefore rezoned to multifamily standards. While past zoning had specified maximum densities — so that homes could be

In San Francisco, it was so easy for people to challenge proposed developments that a lone boy scout doing an ecology project was able to bring construction to a halt on a 200-unit condominium project.

built on half-acre lots in an area zoned for quarter-acre minimum lot sizes — the new regime was minimum-density zoning, requiring that all development be at least 80% of the maximum density allowed by the zone. In some cases, this meant that if people's homes burned down, they would be required to replace them with apartments.

Developers did not immediately respond by replacing homes with apartments. In 1996, homebuilders told the Portland city council that people wanted to live in single-family homes, but the market for high-density housing was flat. The city responded by providing tens of millions of dollars of subsidies for the planners' preferred housing.¹² By 2005, planners were pleased to see that the urban-growth boundary had driven land prices high enough to reach a "tipping point" where builders would buy suburban homes and, without subsidies, replace them with high-density housing.¹³

Thanks to similar plans, land in the San Francisco Bay Area, San Diego, and other California urban areas had reached such a tipping point years before. While an acre of land suitable for residential development may cost \$20,000 in Houston, it can cost \$300,000 in Portland and several million dollars in San Jose.

Washington state passed a growth-management law in 1991. On the East Coast, Parris Glendening, then governor of Maryland, coined the term "smart growth" to refer to Portland-style planning that promotes high-density development. This term was useful because anyone who disagreed with the planners could be accused of favoring "dumb growth."¹⁴ As president of the National Governors' Association, Glendening persuaded other governors, such as New Jersey's Christine Whitman and Utah's Michael Leavitt, to endorse smart growth. Denver, Minneapolis-St. Paul, and Salt Lake City began implementing smart-growth plans in the mid-1990s, but otherwise most growth-management planning was on the coasts.

Urban planning is not the only cause of rapidly rising prices. Hawaii has unaffordable housing because it has very little private land available for development. Las Vegas, the nation's fastest-growing urban area, has few restrictions on development. But the region, which is on a small island of private land in a sea of federal land, literally ran out of developable land in 2003, with the result that housing prices began increasing at 30–40% per year. But these are the exceptions that prove the rule: any restrictions on homebuilders can lead to rapid increases in prices.

The 2000 census revealed that during the 1990s Oregon had suffered the greatest decline in affordability of any state. In addition to California, Hawaii, and Oregon, price-to-income ratios had grown to 3 or higher in many Massachusetts, Utah, and Washington communities, and reached 2.7 or more in Denver and Salt Lake City. As of 2000, there were probably few housing bubbles outside of California. But both coasts of the country and a few interior regions were ripe for housing bubbles when low interest rates and the stock market bust encouraged people to put more money into real estate.

Marked by no-downpayment loans, no-interest loans, 40-year loans, and other high-risk mortgages that suggest many new owners are buying homes for their speculative value, the last five years have seen some of the fastest increases in housing prices in history. The Census Bureau estimates that price-to-income ratios in 16 states are now greater than 3. All these states are on the coasts except Colorado, Nevada, and Utah, and all of them except Nevada have some form of growth-management laws.

The difference in today's home prices among various urban areas is staggering. According to Coldwell Banker, in 2005 you could buy a four-bedroom, two-bath, 2,200-square-foot home with a two-car garage in Houston for less than \$152,000. That same house would cost twice that amount in Portland and four times the amount in San Jose.

These high prices often cannot be supported by "fundamental" assessments of home values, notably rents. As *The Economist* noted in early 2005, in many places "it is now much cheaper to rent than to buy a house."¹⁵ In many places



"When they're actually leaving the country, you can't just call it 'voter apathy' anymore."

the differences between home prices and rents is greater today than it was in California in 1989, so a correction could easily see home prices falling by more than the 15–25% they declined in California by 1994.

San Jose is the clearest case of a housing bubble. Between 2001 and 2004, the region's employment declined by 17% and office vacancies increased from 3% to 30%. Yet housing

When housing prices deflate, consumer spending will decline, banks will falter, and economic growth will slow or stop.

prices in the same period grew by more than 20%. Clearly there is no support for such increases other than the expectation that prices will continue to increase indefinitely.

Of course, they won't. "The first law of bubbles is that they inflate for a lot longer than anybody expects," observes *The Economist*. "The second law is that they eventually burst."¹⁶ Some markets, such as San Diego and southern Florida, already show signs of softening.

The bursting of a housing bubble does not result in a sudden crash, as sometimes happens in the stock market. "But," as *The Economist* notes, "it still hurts."¹⁷ Housing prices deflate slowly, as they have in Japan and did in California in the early 1990s. When prices deflate, consumer spending will decline, banks will falter, and economic growth will slow or stop. The big problem with the current bubbles is they are nearly ubiquitous: *The Economist* estimates that housing is overpriced in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and

most of western Europe, as well as in much of the United States and parts of China.

If the next recession really hurts, blame the urban planners. □

NOTES

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long way from statesmanship, and was willing to say so, even on a ceremonial occasion. Imagine something like that on the tomb of . . . well, choose your own contemporary politician to fill in that blank.

— Stephen Cox

Failing Marx — I just received word that Ayn Rand's novels, along with my book "The Making of Modern Economics," have been pulled from the shelves of the libraries at the University of the Philippines, a hotbed of Marxism. Here's the story.

In 2002, a UP student named Francisco (a pseudonym) read "The Making of Modern Economics" (ME Sharpe, 2001). One of the most controversial chapters is chapter 6, "Marx Madness Plunges Economics into a New Dark Age." The student was a member of a Communist front student organization at UP, but was so impressed with my critique of Marx that he typed the entire chapter into an email and sent it to all his Marxist friends and his sociology professor. As a result, they abandoned Marxism in favor of free-market economics.

So far, so good. But here is the latest email from my

"friend in the Philippines": "Dear Mark: I donated a copy of 'The Making of Modern Economics' to the libraries of each of the four major universities here. Later, a friend of mine checked the library at the University of the Philippines and sure enough, it was there on the stacks. And had become a little dog-eared . . . meaning it had been read and read. Well, just yesterday she looked again — and it was gone! Also all Rand's books have disappeared (they were in both the main library and the library of the College of Arts and Letters — gone from both). Also, the copy of your book had been heavily highlighted by the librarian — complete with annotated comments disputing what you said. Especially in the chapter on Marx. For example, where you talked about Marx's theory of exploitation, 'exploitation' was crossed out with the comment: 'not true'. . . As good Marxists (UP is riddled with them) they use the term "superstructure" instead. Apparently, both you and Rand are too radical and revolutionary for tender young Filipino minds — at least, according to their Marxist minders! — Best . . . Francisco."

— Mark Skousen

Development by Democracy

by Richard Fields

Green space, solar panels, community centers — what more can voters possibly want?

When the gendarmes in Davis, California arrested a local citizen for breaking a noise ordinance by snoring too loudly, we chuckled. When the city council built a tunnel so that frogs could cross the newly constructed Pole Line Road overpass to get to a pond called Toad Hollow, we built a miniature Mr. Toad's village at one end of the tunnel. When former Mayor and city council member Julie Partansky advocated planting fruit trees in vacant lots so homeless people could "graze," limiting the output of streetlights to facilitate stargazing, and preserving potholes because of the historical significance of the building materials that used to be where the potholes are now, we just shrugged and went about our business. We one-upped California's antismoking laws by limiting smoking even outdoors. But in the special election on November 8, the denizens of Davis showed an uglier side when they voted against the construction of new housing.

The People's Republic of Davis, as it's known to its conservative detractors, is a modern liberal bastion in an already blue state. The town's primary employer is the University of California-Davis. Other employers include Moller International, which has had personal vertical takeoff and landing aircraft almost ready to go to market since 1983. Retail employment is pretty much limited to mom-and-pop shops in our oh-so-cute downtown — Davis would never allow construction of a Costco, Wal-Mart, or any other big-box retailer. If you aren't employed by the university, you probably commute to a job in nearby Sacramento. Davis elementary and primary schools are noted for producing students who score well on standardized tests. It's an open question

whether that is because of the quality of the schools or because of the self-selecting pool of people attracted to the community and able to afford the housing.

Several years ago the voters of Davis passed Proposition J, which subjected any new housing development requiring annexation of land adjoining the city of Davis to a popular vote. The first test was this year's Proposition X. The development that voters were passing judgment on, Covell Village, was designed by Michael Corbett, who previously designed Village Homes in Davis. Village Homes, with its solar panels, organic community gardens, and street names from "The Lord of the Rings," is beloved by Greens in Davis and beyond. Covell Village was designed to have solar power installed on every home. It would have had ample green belts and parks. It would have had bike paths, school sites, an outdoor amphitheater, a Rotary Hall, a hospice, a nursery school, a fire station, a community recreation building, an 82-acre educational organic farm, a 124-acre wetland wildlife habitat, a 776-acre farmland buffer, and affordable housing subsidized by the more expensive homes. It got the endorsement of a who's who list of prominent local people in and out of politics. It had the endorsement of the local newspaper. It even had retail within walking distance, with the promise of a Trader Joe's, the only source of Two Buck

Chuck (drinkable wine for \$2.00 a bottle, from the Charles Shaw winery). In short, it had everything a politically correct community like Davis could ask for.

Opposition to Prop X fell into two categories — environmental concerns, and concerns about sprawl. Environmentalists argued that the solar panels were a token measure, that part of the site lies in a flood plain, and that prime agricultural land would be “paved over.” The anti-sprawl camp complained that not enough “affordable” housing was included, that traffic gridlock and air pollution would ensue, that crime would go up, and that the development would not carry its own weight in taxes versus services.

Let's take those arguments one at a time. First, that the proposed solar units are only a fraction of the size of the average solar unit already in Davis. Clearly that's just looking a gift horse in the mouth. Individual homeowners would be free to upgrade the size of the solar units on their own homes. Second, that the site is on a flood plain. Davis is essentially flat. The town is built in the flood plain of the Sacramento River. Before levees and dams were built, the Sacramento River was known to have spring floods a hundred miles wide, from the California coastal mountain range to the Sierra foothills. Age and neglect have made the levees likely to give way; most of the Central Valley has a flood risk

Property rights should not be subject to the whim of voters, whose own economic interests can conflict with the economic interests of others.

greater than that of New Orleans right now. But that's another story; with proper grading, the Covell Village site has no more flood risk than anywhere else in Davis. Third, that agricultural land will be paved over. Every structure in the Central Valley is built on agricultural land. The market is a much better arbiter of the best use of land than bureaucrats or voters.



“I distinctly remember telling you to conquer Austria!”

Now to the anti-sprawl arguments. These are all essentially NIMBY (not in my back yard) in nature. There *is* a shortage of “affordable” housing in Davis and the rest of California, but that's thanks to the imbalance of supply and demand. The number of people living in California is not going down anytime soon. Demand for housing can only go up. Supply is restricted when new housing developments

Age and neglect have made the Sacramento River levees likely to give way; most of the Central Valley has a flood risk greater than that of New Orleans right now.

like Covell Village are voted down, ergo prices for “affordable housing” or any other kind of housing go up. Second, more people does mean more traffic, everything else being equal. However, everything else is not equal in this case. Many people who work or go to school in Davis commute from neighboring cities five to 50 miles away. Covell Village would reduce total traffic by letting people live closer to work and shopping. Third, that the development would lead to more crime. This is incomprehensible. Covell Village is modeled after Village Homes, which has lower crime rates than the rest of Davis. Finally, the argument that infrastructure costs of the development would exceed its tax revenues is, at best, speculation. The development's residents will certainly bring in more tax revenue than the frog tunnel.

I am not convinced that voters made their decisions based on which arguments they found most persuasive. My guess is that voters rejected Covell Village (60% to 40%) to maximize future price appreciation of their own homes. I bought a new home in Davis in 1994 for \$230,000. It is now worth north of \$700,000, due in part to the restrictions on new housing. I believe a substantial number of Davis liberals were voting to promote their own economic interests and rationalizing their vote with the standard slow-growth green arguments. As a result, many of the “No on X” coalition's stated goals are, in the big picture, negated. Traffic will increase as people drive farther to get to work or college classes in Davis. Housing developments in other communities will not be nearly as environmentally friendly as Covell Village would have been. But property values in Davis will continue to go up, and people forced to commute from afar to get to work or school will pay the price.

This raises the subject of the proper limits on majority rule. As the old saw puts it, pure democracy is two wolves and a lamb voting on who should be dinner. At the other extreme, it is better to elect our president than have a tyrant foisted upon us. The Bill of Rights is designed to limit what a majority can do, whether that means censoring speech, dictating religious beliefs, or forcing us to testify against ourselves in a criminal trial. It's unfortunate that the Bill of Rights does not specifically limit majority assaults on property rights. □

The Opiate of Almost Everyone

by Robert H. Nelson

Marx famously said that religion was the opiate of the masses — while building a religion of the state. But the impulse to secular religion didn't stop with him.

Every day brings reminders of the importance of religion. The war on terrorism pits the United States against an adversary that grounds its doctrines — however implausibly — in Islam. The Iraq war is fought as a missionary crusade to spread “American religion” across the globe. Domestically, American politics features heated debates about abortion, stem cells, gay marriage, and other moral issues where positions are often determined by religious conviction.

Yet, there is no novelty to be found in a revival of religion per se. Rather, the newest element is the camouflaged resurgence of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and other traditional faiths. For most of the 20th century, it looked as though the old-style religions might be disappearing. There were fierce religious struggles — such as the 40-year Cold War — but they involved secular religions, rather than the ancient faiths of Western civilization. World War II produced a struggle between national socialism in Germany and Marxist international socialism in the Soviet Union. Germany and the Soviet Union were in essence two vast and all-controlling national churches with their own theologies, inquisitions, and other accoutrements of religious expression.

The idea that secular religion played a central role in the history of the 20th century is nothing new. The religious elements of socialism, communism, American progressivism (the “gospel of efficiency”), and other secular creeds are rather obvious to anyone not specifically educated to believe otherwise. What is more recent is the growing understanding that secular religion and traditional religion are closely linked. The secular religions of the 20th century were much less novel than they once seemed. Indeed, one might say that Christianity reappeared in the 20th century with renewed vigor, but in disguise. The various secular religions are prov-

ing, on close study and with the perspective of a bit of history, to be derived from earlier branches of Christianity. Much like Protestants and Catholics, secular devotees sometimes hate and even kill one another. The world wars and other fierce conflicts of this century were a secular re-enactment — if on a much more destructive scale, thanks to the “advances” of modern technology — of the European religious wars of the 16th and 17th centuries.

These themes are increasingly being explored in two bodies of literature that I will discuss below. Some authors — and I include myself in this category — operate more in a spirit of intellectual curiosity. Tracing the connections between traditional Jewish and Christian faiths and the secular religions of the modern age turns out to be fairly easy. Whether old or new, religion in the Western world has always been about salvation, about finding the correct path to heaven — in the hereafter or, more recently, on earth.

The other body of literature is found among the defenders of historic Jewish and Christian faiths. For them, secular religion has cleverly and falsely assumed the mantle of true religion. The 20th century offered the greatest field for heresy in the Western world since the Roman Empire. Unlike other investigators motivated more by historical interest, these critics of secular religion adhere to traditional faiths. For them, unmasking the false claims of secular religion is part of a wider agenda of restoring valid

Jewish and Christian religions to their proper place in the world.

Both fields of research devote themselves to the "theology" of secular religions. It is possible to focus on the assumptions and lines of reasoning of secular religions through critical analysis — what might be called "secular theology." Recent studies have employed such methods to explore the contents of "economic theology," "psychological religion," "Marxist eschatology," and the "constitutional faith" of America. All of the authors agree in one way or

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another that modern religion is really old religion disguised in superficially new — typically, scientific and economic — vocabularies and metaphors. The modern age, in mostly failing to see these connections, has engaged in a grand act of self-deception. Although this is hardly unprecedented in human history, it does belie the many claims since the Enlightenment of the arrival of a new era of human insight and self-awareness. Modern human beings are just as capable of acts of intellectual folly as any of their predecessors.

The new literature of "secular theology" is often published by well-known university presses and has been respectfully received. It has not, however, had the effect on contemporary thought that I believe it deserves. This should not be a surprise. The modern university is itself a religious institution, one that rivals the Roman Catholic Church in its resistance to change. In the contemporary academy, secular religion is still commonly regarded as "value-neutral" and non-religious.

The Seafood Palace



"Do you want the large, the extra large, or the 'Call Me Ishmael'?"

The truth is that, while now taking secular forms, America has official religious orthodoxies to guide its affairs of state no less than any previous society in history. Government officials vigorously employ the authority of the state to defend the national religious orthodoxy. Heretics are no longer burned at the stake in America, but in some cases, such as the war on drugs, heresy can expose an individual to a long prison sentence. More often, the penalty is a loss of job and livelihood.

There is only one avenue to the restoration of true religious freedom in the United States — a sharp decline in the powers of the state. A large part of what falls under the name of government "regulation" is in fact the exercise of religious control over the institutions of American society, grounded in the tenets of contemporary secular religion. A wilderness area is a cathedral of a secular faith no less than a parish church is a cathedral of the Roman Catholic variety.

To advocate a libertarian political philosophy is thus to advocate genuine religious freedom — getting rid of many state functions that are inescapably religious. This may sound "off the wall." If the books described below are taken seriously, however, this libertarian conclusion is difficult to escape.

America as a Religion

Sanford Levinson is the Charles Tilford McCormick professor of law at the University of Texas. He is well known and respected in American legal circles and has reached wider audiences through mainstream publications. In 1988, however, Levinson published a radically innovative and provocative book, describing his own efforts as those of a "legal theologian." In "Constitutional Faith," the U.S. Constitution is seen — literally, not just metaphorically — as the American equivalent of the Christian Bible. The Constitution is America's "sacred text" that represents the founding document of an American "civil theology." Quoting approvingly from a Stanford Law Review article on "The Constitution as Scripture," Levinson agrees that "America would have no national church . . . yet the worship of the Constitution would serve the unifying function of a national civil religion." The role of constitutional law is to provide "a public vocabulary absolutely essential to understanding the nature of political discourse within our society."

As America's ultimate adjudicators, the members of the Supreme Court not only dress and act like priests, but stand as confirmation that the nation has exchanged a "priesthood of lawyers for a pontifical Court." For Levinson, the contemporary legal debates about constitutional original intent versus a "living Constitution" re-enact much older theological disagreements between Roman Catholics and Protestants. The Catholic Church historically saw Christianity through the prism of centuries of church interpretation, papal encyclicals, Catholic theological writings, church councils, and other historic events. For Protestants, this was heresy, the arguments of flawed human beings seeking to substitute their own words for God's revealed truth; the real meaning of Christianity could be found in the teachings of the Bible alone. Today in American law, according to Levinson, there is a similar clash among "protestant" and "catholic" legal experts in which "the protestant position is that [the source

of doctrine] is the constitutional text alone, while the catholic position is that the source of doctrine is the text of the Constitution plus unwritten tradition."

In "Reaching for Heaven on Earth," I found a similar "Protestant tradition" and "Roman tradition" that had also long shaped economic understandings and interpretation. Like Levinson's portrayal of the law, some of the most important schools of economics could be traced back to the medieval scholastics and to the natural law teachings of the Catholic church; other schools saw the world in less rational and more individualistic — more "Protestant" — terms. The great success of Adam Smith was attributable to his ability to develop a persuasive synthesis of these two traditions central to the West, adapted to the scientific vocabulary coming to dominate the Enlightenment.

Richard Ely, a leading economist in early 20th century America, suggested that economics departments should be located in theology schools. For Ely, Christianity was about reaching heaven on this earth, and economic knowledge was central to such a Christian theology because it offered the key to salvation in this world. Levinson similarly suggests that "since law really does serve as the basis of our civil religion," it should be studied fundamentally as a secular system of theology. One option, favored by Levinson, would take a neutral position on the law's claims to truth, and thus follow a "model of the law school as a secular department of religion" — much as leading universities today treat religion as an object of historic interest. A different view, favored by many others in the legal community, regards the law school as a training ground in "the American creed," grounded in the constitutional faith, and thus a law school should be based on a model "of the law school as divinity school." Under the latter interpretation, agnostic law professors (those who do not believe in the constitutional faith) may properly teach in academic history departments but they should not be welcome in a law school that exists to prepare its students for a lifetime in the legal priesthood.

Throughout "Constitutional Faith," Levinson goes far beyond the common current use of "religion" to refer to almost any strongly held belief. When he writes about the law as a religious system, he means it literally. This reflects in part Levinson's view that "we cannot escape membership in some civil faith even if we wish to, for the alternative to organizing belief is chaos." Thus, except for a few complete nihilists, everyone has a religion, whether they know it or not, and whether it is traditional or secular. But in the modern age, Levinson says, traditional religion "has lost its power to structure reality for most Western intellectuals." Such people did not, however, give up religion altogether, thereby ending up believing in nothing at all. Rather, they turned to various "analogues [that] present themselves in the guise of various civil religions" and that in fact today offer the most powerful religious truths in American public life.

Guided by secular religion, the American nation-state became a modern kind of church, based on a founding belief in an American "Constitutionalism [that], like [traditional] religion, represents an attempt to render an otherwise chaotic order coherent, to supply a set of beliefs capable of channelling our conduct" in our personal lives and in the affairs of state. Five hundred years ago, as Levinson

observes, "God's law" fulfilled this role; today, it is a secular system of law that originates in the Constitution. Most Americans have seen little tension between a deep belief in a Christian God and a deep belief in the Constitution. Matters are not so simple, however; as Levinson explains, for a fully committed Christian, the worship of the American Constitution really amounts to a "deification (or idolatry) of the nation-state (including its constitution)." Many Americans are really worshipping two gods of two religions at the same time — if in most cases unaware of the conflict.

America is not simply another ethical community gathered together within the boundaries of a nation. One hears frequently of "anti-Americanism" but never of "anti-Englishism," "anti-Germanism," or "anti-Chinainism." Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington recently wrote in "Who Are We?" that "becoming an American" is a process "comparable to conversion to a new religion and with similar consequences." For citizens, the American flag becomes "the equivalent of the cross for Christians." In the

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American civil religion, "Washington becomes Moses, Lincoln becomes Christ," the savior who gave his life to redeem the world.

As Huntington observes, America is unique in the ethnic and religious diversity of its population, the product of waves of immigration over several centuries. Hence, in America, the national bonding agent has to be a national religion. No traditional faith could hold together 290 million Americans of all races and backgrounds. This integrating force has had to be provided by "a nondenominational, national religion and, in its articulated form, not expressly a Christian religion." This civil religion "converts Americans from religious people of many denominations into a nation with the soul of a [single] church."

Much like Levinson, Huntington finds that American civic religion has older roots than most followers have comprehended. The common faith of America is secular only in its outward appearance; the reality, Huntington writes, is that the American civil religion is essentially Christian — and Protestant Christian, reflecting the origins of the nation. The American nation-state is in essence "a church that is profoundly Christian in its origins, symbolism, spirit, accoutrements, and, most importantly, its basic assumptions about the nature of man, history, right and wrong. The Christian Bible, Christian references, biblical allusions and metaphors, permeate expressions of the [American] civil religion."

It is not, to be sure, identical to Christianity. As Huntington notes, the American civil religion allows for the frequent use of the word "God," as on the nation's coins. However, "two words . . . do not appear in civil religion statements and ceremonies. They are 'Jesus Christ.'" This

omission is of course of great religious significance. Many religions believe in a "God," but only Christianity believes in the divinity of Christ. Again, though, the reality can be deceptive; as Huntington finds, even with little explicit mention "the American civil religion is Christianity without Christ."

Perhaps Americans simply have two alternative vocabularies, sets of stories, and bodies of saints for a single religious faith. It may be that they can speak interchangeably of worshipping a Biblical law or a constitutional law. Or — and I would say this is more plausible — it may be that Christian religion and the religion of America are really two different faiths, although sharing many common threads. Many devout Christians would admittedly find this difficult to accept, suggesting that they may have been drawn into a modern heresy. But one way or another, America is the church of a powerful shared national religion.

The Third Rome in Moscow

It has long been commonplace to observe that Marxism is a religion. This is often stated in a sociological sense — that the followers of Marx behave in ways characteristic of true believers. Some have been willing, for example, to die as martyrs for the cause. More recently, however, a few students of Marxism have begun to study it as a genuine form of religion, one that drew its central messages from Judeo-Christian sources.

This theological line of analysis was developed in 2000 with great clarity and force in "From Darkness to Light." The author, Igal Halfin, is an Israeli historian who not only studied the writings of leading communist intellectuals but scrutinized Russian archival documents that only became available in the 1990s. He concludes that the "eschatological" elements of Russian communism were powerful influences in molding the very categories of thought that shaped the Soviet government and economy in the 1920s and 1930s. It was not economics that determined religion but the opposite. Indeed, it would otherwise be difficult to explain why Russia embarked on such economically and politically self-destructive actions after the 1917 Revolution. Even when the

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results soon involved widespread death and destruction, the theological tenets of Russian communism continued to drive the day-to-day workings of the nation.

Thus, Halfin states that the New Economic Plan of the early 1920s was significantly shaped by the tenets of "the Marxist eschatology." During this period, Soviet universities functioned as "a grand laboratory, designing techniques for the perfection of humanity." Lists of eligible students were purged to ensure that "only those capable of attaining mes-

sianic consciousness were to remain." The contents of "the Bolshevik identity narratives" worked to produce "a society that thought of itself in terms of class purity." Life in revolutionary Russia was everywhere a reflection of "messianic aspirations" as the teachings of Marxist religion "shaped the

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identity of the Soviet citizen; it did not just coerce preexisting, fully formed citizens to adjust to a Soviet reality that was somehow external to them," but for the communist faithful controlled the way they saw the world.

As with America's civil religion, the categories of communist religion were ultimately derived from Christianity. Marx said that religion was the opiate of the masses, but this required one of the greatest acts of individual self-deception in the history of the world. Marxism was literally religion, and more specifically a variant of — or a heretical twist on — the Biblical faiths. It was this very feature that explained its extraordinary spread across the world and enormous influence on history. The communist gospel resonated in cultures already imbued with many of its main themes. As Halfin reports, "Marxists would doubtless have renounced notions such as good, evil, messiah, and salvation as baseless religious superstitions that had nothing to do with the revolutionary experience. Yet, these concepts, translated into a secular key, continued to animate Communist discourse" for several decades after the 1917 Revolution. Most Russian Communists were altogether blind to the reality, as Halfin puts it, of the close "affinity" of Russian communism "with Christian messianism." Yet, as described by Halfin, the parallels are obvious to us today:

The Marxist concept of universal History was essentially inspired by the Judeo-Christian bracketing of historical time between the Fall of Adam and the Apocalypse. The Original Expropriation, at the beginning of time, represented a rupture in the timeless primitive Communism, which inaugurated History and set humanity on a course of self-alienation. The universal Revolution, an abrupt and absolute event, was to return humanity to itself in a fiery cataclysm. . . . Imbuing time with a historical teleology that gave meaning to events, Marxist eschatology described history as moral progression from the darkness of class society to the light of Communism.

When Marx described "alienation," it had almost the same meaning as "original sin" in Christianity. Both were the result of an original fall — for Marx with the beginning of the class struggle, for Christianity with the apple in the Garden of Eden. The economic laws of history were for Marx as omniscient and omnipotent as the God of Christianity. Indeed, economic history, shaping everything that happened in the world, was for all intents and purposes the new god of Marxism. In this and other respects, Halfin says, the main

corpus of Marxist thought consists of ideas historically “adopted by Christianity and transmitted to Marx.”

There were of course some differences. The Marxist prophecy of a new heaven on earth looked to the economic powers of the modern age. With the end of economic scarcity, as Halfin quotes Engels, it becomes “possible to raise production up to such an extent that the abolition of class distinctions can be a real progress.” Halfin describes the path to the “new man” of communism:

The essence of man had to be embodied in real action. In the Marxist view, humans could not achieve consciousness through [intellectual] illumination alone. The path to freedom would open only once the real production system had been transformed so as to be able to generate a spiritualized producer. Only when laborers could change the circumstances of their lives through action could a “change of self” occur. Once a change in the real, which lay entirely within man’s abilities, acquired the dimension of a spiritual breakthrough, the termination of history came to be within man’s control.

This might be described as an “economic theology”; Marx replaces God with economics, and the workings of economics now predestine the salvation of mankind and the arrival of a new heaven on earth. What is most remarkable is that this modern variant of Christian eschatology became the state religion of a large and powerful nation, shaping the very terms of public discourse, the development of state policy, and in many cases even the inner thoughts of good communist citizens. As Russian communists sought to export their religion to the world, they created the Comintern and other state instruments for this purpose. Moscow would once again in the 20th century be “The Third Rome.”

Social Science Priesthoods

In America, a new state religion was also shaping the detailed institutions of society and the very categories of thought in the early decades of the 20th century. This was the American progressive gospel that sought the efficient scientific management of society. As modern religions of progress, Russian communism and American progressivism had important similarities. Both, for example, regarded economic forces as the real determinants of history and looked to engineers and economists to save the world. There was a critical difference, however. In Christian terminology, Russian communism was a “premillennial” religion in which heaven arrives in a cataclysmic burst outside the previous workings of history. American progressivism, by contrast, is a postmillennial religion in which heaven has already been partially realized and its final fulfillment on earth will occur incrementally within the framework of ordinary historic events.

Thus, in place of the comrades of Russian communism devoted to fomenting a worldwide apocalypse — with the disastrous consequences of which we are now all too aware — American progressivism created a social science priesthood to oversee gradual but continual improvements in the practical workings of society. At first, all the social sciences were blended together, but separate fields of sociology, economics, and political science were emerging during the early part of the 20th century. In 1985, Arthur Vidich and Stanford Lyman authored “American Sociology: Worldly Rejections

of Religion and Their Directions.” It might just as accurately have been titled “Sociology as Religion.” It did for American sociology what Levinson later did for American law: tracing the theological sources of professional values.

As Vidich and Lyman demonstrated, the religion of American sociology was yet another example of a secular creed suffused with longstanding Christian messages. The early American sociologist Lester Ward had “replaced God with science” and American sociology in general was a “new secular science of society.” Beneath all the scientific language, sociologists offered a promise of “the fulfillment of a secular eschatology — perfectibility on this planet.” The task of “reconstructing the world” required the extensive professional development of “positive scientific legislation, produced by sociologists conducting practical experiments, and passed quickly and easily by intelligent . . . legislatures, [that] would provide nothing less than the scientific ‘organization of human happiness.’” Sociology would be the basis for a new American “politics in the image of the technocratic administrator,” based on full scientific knowledge of the laws of society, as developed and disseminated by sociological research.

Many of the early American social scientists came from devout Protestant backgrounds and quite a few, such as Woodrow Wilson, had fathers who had been ministers.

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Vidich and Lyman show how the development of American sociology represented — with the social gospel as a transitional stage — a secularization of American Protestantism. Ward, like many other sociologists of the time, was “a product of a peculiar optimism about the capacity of applied science to overcome the problems of industrial society. . . . Its authority paralleled that of the colonial Puritan divines who claimed the right to guide the earlier New England communities.” In Russia, communism resurrected a Christian message that was rapidly losing its influence in the face of Darwinism and other 19th century challenges. In America, as Vidich and Lyman similarly find, the new profession of sociology “provided grounds for the resurrection of appropriately disguised Protestant authority” and theology.

As part of the process of disguise, “all religious elements of social uplift, charity and philanthropy are manifestly eliminated [from sociology], and the research activity has taken on the quality of objective science and professional work.” Science had by then replaced God for many Americans as the legitimate source of authority. The paradoxical result in sociology was a secular “salvational social science” that portrayed itself as entirely “rational” and “value-free.” Professionally acceptable work for a sociologist “came to be equated with numerical measures, statistical surveys, and the ever-expanding use of quantitative measures.” In the

process “the [Protestant] Social Gospel . . . was transformed into positive science.” Beneath all the camouflage of 20th-century scientism, the real goal was little altered — “to secure the secular salvation of the United States.” Many of the reformers who had enlisted in the social gospel movement had by now outwardly abandoned the Protestant clergy. Instead, they had joined a new religious brotherhood, “a secular and scientific priesthood” of professionals, albeit one no less committed to saving the world.

Theologically, it was possible for sociologists to have such grand aspirations because they shared an assumption widespread in the Western world since the Enlightenment. John Locke said that human beings were formed by their external environment. The ills of mankind — misleadingly seen as the products of original sin in old-fashioned

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Christianity — were in fact attributable to the influence of bad environments. It followed that good environments would produce better people and perfect environments perfect people. By the late 19th century, the vastly enhanced powers of science and economics to alter nature and transform the world were increasingly recognized. If these historically unprecedented powers could now be properly marshalled — and for this the social sciences were essential, and sociology had the widest scope among the social sciences — the perfection of human existence by human action would be possible. It required only that politicians and other men and women of affairs be persuaded to obey the commands of scientific truth, as revealed by sociology.

As in revolutionary Russia, the commands of progressive secular religion shaped the very institutions of American society. As further elaborated in the New Deal, the Great Society, and other periods of 20th-century American history, the result was the welfare state. The university, for example, had been for most of its history in the United States a training ground for Protestant ministers. As progressive-era hopes for salvation shifted to this world, the university was drastically reorganized to fit a new religious mission. Departments of social science were everywhere created to advance the sciences of society. New schools of forestry, urban planning, and other social concerns were built to provide the requisite technical knowledge. Business schools would help to organize American corporations in the most efficient way. Schools of public administration would do the same for government.

The use of comprehensive scientific knowledge would ultimately have to be orchestrated by America’s political leadership, acting in the best interest of society. As the progressive gospel became the religion of the American nation-state, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and other older religious bodies were increasingly marginalized. They did not disappear, but found their most important functions at funerals,

marriages, bar mitzvahs, and other social rituals. The more essential tasks of religion took place within the new church of the welfare state. Two of the leading state temples, not only in their functions but in outward appearances, were the Supreme Court and the Federal Reserve.

In my 1991 book “Reaching for Heaven on Earth,” I showed that the basic tenets of the welfare state owed more to the Roman Catholic side of Christianity. The welfare state took care of the poor, provided for the elderly, and served other welfare functions historically emphasized in the Catholic tradition. This may seem paradoxical because so many American progressives came from Protestant backgrounds. Even in the 19th century, however, the theology of American Protestantism was well removed from John Calvin’s pessimistic views of an irremediably sinful humanity. Many American Protestants had come to agree with the historically more Catholic view that natural laws provided a rational ground for ordering the world and that salvation by good works was possible.

The welfare state now had its own social science priesthood. The president was the pope and Washington was itself a separate jurisdiction — much like the Vatican. By the end of the 20th century, the authority of the federal government for actions within its domain matched that of Rome in the worldwide body of the church. As Thomas Huxley once said, socialism — and this applied to American progressivism as well — was “Catholicism minus God.” Yet, the heritage of old-style Protestantism did not altogether disappear — especially as found in the commitment to individual rights and to democratic rule. The history of the United States in the 20th century was significantly shaped by long-standing religious tensions within and among Americans, now resolved mostly in the secular religious domain.

The Rise of Economic Religion

In “Economics as Religion,” I examined how professional economists gradually surpassed sociologists, experts in public administration, political scientists, and other social scien-

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tists in prestige and influence. By the second half of the 20th century, economists had become the highest priests of all, the only social science body with its own office in the White House: the Council of Economic Advisors, created in 1946. It was logical in a way that economists should have such a pre-eminent religious status because in secular gospels the salvation of the world commonly follows an economic path. Theologically speaking, economic scarcity is the original sin. People sin because they are driven to it by material necessity. It then follows that ever greater economic abundance will gradually eliminate sin in the world. It was not only

Marxism but all the other religions of economic progress that saw the world this way. Hence, the responsibility for leading the way to heaven on earth would necessarily fall to the leading experts in economic progress. Economists were the ones who produced the most important scientific knowledge, capable of revealing the laws of the economic system by which society's resources could be employed with maximal efficiency, material production maximized, and the world thereby perfected.

When the American Economic Association was formed in 1885, its 50 founding members included 20 who were current or former practicing Protestant ministers. One of the leading economists involved, Richard Ely, was best known nationally at the time as a preacher in the social gospel movement. Ely believed that "Christianity is primarily concerned with this world, and it is the mission of Christianity to bring to pass here a kingdom of righteousness." He criticized fellow social gospellers, however, for their ambitious plans to cure all the ills of American society that were not grounded in any adequate foundation of economic knowledge. To understand and advance the mechanisms of economic progress, it would be necessary to turn to the scientific research of professional economists, which the American Economic Association would now facilitate.

John R. Commons, John Bates Clark, and a number of other early American economists were also linked to the social gospel movement. The role of economics, as Ely said, was to provide the scientific understanding to succeed in "a never-ceasing attack on every wrong institution, until the earth becomes a new earth, and all its cities, cities of God." Ely's attempt to incorporate economics as an element within Protestant theology soon foundered, however, on the pluralism of American life. There were important economists who were Catholics and Jews, for example, and rejected the close connections to Protestant religion. Henceforth, economics would have to be a secular religion of progress, suitably disguising the original Protestant values. By the early 20th century, professional economics thus became the secular discipline that it has since been.

Yet, the religious elements were still there, if buried deeper. Jewish by birth, Edwin Seligman was professor of economics at Columbia University and in 1903 served as president of the American Economic Association. His views were developed in his treatise on "The Economic Interpretation of History." Improving the moral condition of humanity was for him a matter of altering the economic circumstances. "The demand of the ethical reformer," Seligman considers, will be unavailing "unless the social conditions . . . are ripe for the change." Indeed, the existing aspirations for "international justice and universal peace" will depend on a continuation of "the economic changes now proceeding apace." As a result, "the real battle [to create a new world] will be fought by the main body of social forces, amid which the economic conditions are in last resort so often decisive." It was still the social gospel, now minus the Protestant vocabulary.

By most estimates the most influential economist of the 20th century was John Maynard Keynes. Editor of *The Economic Journal* for many years, much of Keynes' work concerned abstruse matters of economic theory. On some occasions, however, Keynes put his secular religious convic-

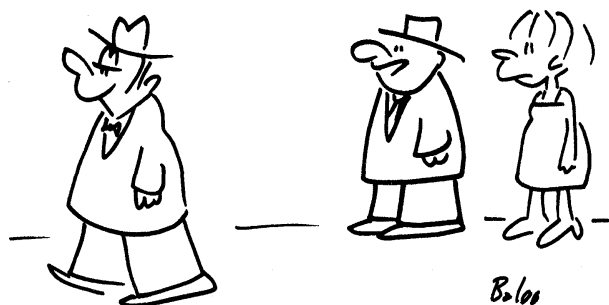
tions on the line. In his 1930 essay, "Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren," Keynes agreed with Marx (and the Jesus of the social gospellers) that capitalism — necessarily grounded in the desire for money and the competitive workings of self interest — is a "disgusting" system.

But Keynes also saw an escape in the economic forces in history. Keynes thus prophesies the birth of a new man: "[A]ll kinds of social customs and economic practices, affecting the distribution of wealth and of economic rewards and penalties, which we now maintain at all costs, however distasteful and unjust they may be in themselves, because they are tremendously useful in promoting the accumulation of capital, we shall then be free, at last, to discard." It will all come about, Keynes foretells, as a result of "the greatest change that has ever occurred in the material environment of life for human beings in the aggregate." The continued

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advance of economic progress would soon enough — perhaps within the next 100 years — "lead us out of the tunnel of economic necessity into daylight."

Like Marx, Keynes not only studied but made history. Unlike Marx, in Keynes' case it was a history of social democracy and the welfare state in England, in the United States, and today in a significant portion of the world. In America, the most important Keynesian disciple in the second half of the 20th century was MIT economist Paul Samuelson. Samuelson authored the textbook "Economics," the bible of American economic religion. The vocabulary and categories of thought of Samuelson and other American economists shaped the political dialogue of much of American public life. Relying on economic facts and theory, the public could have confidence that the rapidly growing American welfare state would serve the public interest. Economists displaced good and evil with a new moral vocabulary of "efficient" and "inefficient." The real purpose of American education was to increase "human capital," thus advancing the economic productivity of the nation.



"He's very liberal — he owns trigger locks, but not guns."

Samuelson and his fellow economists never said anything about saving the world but the underlying progressive theology remained, even as the camouflage became thicker.

Modern-day economists are mostly silent when it comes to the ultimate purposes of their professional lives, beyond a good job and benefits. Some suggest that they merely enjoy it as an exciting intellectual game. Others argue that no grand mission is present or necessary — that simply maximizing total goods and services in a nation is a sufficient objective. If pressed, many economists would acknowledge that the precise methods of maximizing production — whether they enhance human freedom, whether they produce a just social distribution, the number of “losers” in economic progress who face large psychic costs, and so forth — can themselves significantly affect the total social welfare. But such considerations are left outside their professional purview; they are effectively dismissed in the work of most economists.

However, all this makes sense if economic progress really is about saving the world. Almost any short-run sacrifices for progress will then be overwhelmed by the prospect of long-run perfection. Indeed, metaphorically and theologically, that is what current economists are saying by the initial sim-

Among many outside observers, there is a clear recognition that psychology's categories are indistinguishable from those used for religious cures and conversions.

plifying assumptions they make. The practice of professional economics resembles a scholastic mode of discourse where the most important content lies in the assumptions. What these assumptions say today is that the saving power of economic progress justifies ignoring potential complications that might stand in the way of progress. It would be an economic sin to prohibit usury, because interest rates are essential to the rational allocation of capital and maximal efficiency depends on this. Many other “irrational” impediments to economic efficiency and progress are put in the same modern sinful category.

None of this should be taken to suggest that all secular religions are equal. Whatever its many deficiencies, I believe that contemporary economics is greatly superior to Marxist economics — not only technically, but morally. Government in the welfare state may accept too much responsibility for the well-being of the citizenry, requiring the creation of large and cumbersome administrative bodies, but there is still room for human freedom in both the market for goods and services and in the market for ideas.

The Religion of Psychology

Salvation in the religions of economic progress is ultimately social; individual actions play an important role, but in the end it is a whole society and its members that either does or does not reach heaven on earth. The social character of salvation in the welfare state is reflected in the writings of

its economists, sociologists, political scientists, and other social scientists. There is one large exception, however: the field of psychology. Admittedly, psychological knowledge can be used to manipulate individual behavior as part of the collective scientific management of society. However, the main goal of American psychology has been the individual's scientific management of himself.

Many previous observers have commented that Freud was no less a messiah than Marx, if ultimately a less dangerous one. This analysis is extended by Paul Vitz to the full profession in “Psychology as Religion,” an early example of “doing secular theology.” Vitz is a professor of psychology at New York University who later in life became a Christian, and found increasing tension between his professional and his Christian lives. Indeed, he has come to see psychology and Christianity as religious competitors. Vitz argues that even many Christians actually “worry more about losing their self-esteem than losing their souls.”

“Psychology as Religion” offers an early analysis of the religious contents of a leading contemporary social science. Vitz is aware that other social sciences besides psychology have challenged traditional religion. While secular religions typically attribute human sinfulness to the external environment, the traditional Christian view is that “the locus of sin . . . is in the will of us.” Such Christian messages, he finds, have “been under relentless attack for many years by almost all advocates of social science, from traditional economics and sociology to Socialism and Communism.”

This is true as well of “psychology [which] has become a religion: a secular cult of the self.” He labels this secular creed as the modern faith of “selfism.” In psychology, the guidance for achieving “self actualization, self-fulfillment, etc.” ultimately serves to give order, intelligibility, and justification for individual actions. The ideal self-actualized type exhibits personal characteristics such as “acceptance of self and others,” “an autonomous self independent of culture,” “creativity,” and “having ‘peak’ experiences.” One might call the last being psychologically “born again.” In the religion of psychology, one finds “standard explanations for the purpose of everything from college education to life itself.”

Psychological religion, like other secular religions, poses as science. Yet, again like Marxism and other modern scientific faiths, it has the character of religion, something apparent to all but the truest believers. As Vitz explains, “clinical psychologists used to argue strenuously that their discipline was a bona fide science.” However, among many outside observers, there is a clear recognition in “describing psychology” that its “categories [are] indistinguishable from those used for religious cures and conversions.”

Vitz ventures into the realm of political philosophy when he asks how it can be justified that “tax money is used to support the cult of self worship,” when government is not supposed to support any official establishment of religion? Indeed, a similar question could be asked with respect to strong government support of other secular religions. These religions are today widely proselytized in the public schools, even as traditional Christian faiths are excluded. Yet, if the separation of church and state is to be applied consistently and comprehensively, including to secular religions, little of government as we know it would survive.

Even though most psychologists, including Vitz, are hostile to the free market, psychological religion offers the strongest religious defense of individual rights within the social sciences. This is particularly true with respect to social libertarianism but also carries over to offer theological support for the acceptance of individual self-interest in eco-

Even though most psychologists are hostile to the free market, psychological religion offers the strongest religious defense of individual rights within the social sciences.

conomic realms. Like old fashioned Protestants were saved individually "by [their] faith alone," psychological salvation today is one individual at a time.

The Environmental Gospel

The secular religions discussed to this point have had a strong belief in progress. With the partial exception of America's constitutional faith, they have claimed scientific status. However, the newest powerful secular religion in American life, the environmental gospel, often distrusts science and is hostile to economics. It sees the technological capacity of modern governments to manipulate and control nature as a danger. The Holocaust showed that even economically advanced nations could do horrible things — now more efficiently than ever before. The atom bomb raised the possibility that the products of modern science could create a new hell on earth, instead of the heaven so confidently expected only a few decades earlier. Environmentalism thus represents an important change in the direction of American secular religion.

Perhaps because they are ambivalent towards science, yet recognize the necessity for some source of moral authority and legitimacy, environmentalists have been less overtly hostile to religion, as compared with many followers in secular religions. Indeed, environmentalists now often argue that the protection of the environment requires new values in society and that religion will probably have to play a role in supplying these values. This does not necessarily mean Christian values, however, and few leading environmentalists are devout Christians. Indeed, any suggestion that the secular messages of American environmentalism are actually grounded in Christian doctrine meets wide resistance.

The appearance in 2004 of "Faith in Nature: Environmentalism as Religious Quest" is thus noteworthy. The author, Thomas Dunlap, is a historian at Texas A&M University. He is aware that many of his fellow environmentalists may be uncomfortable with his new line of analysis. Yet, he thinks intellectual honesty — and perhaps good long-term political strategy — requires seeing "environmentalism, its roots in the culture, its development as a movement in religious terms." To be sure, environmentalism "does not

(necessarily) involve God (or gods) or devils, and afterlife, revelations from On High, prophets, or miracles." Nevertheless, environmentalism is very much a religion in helping its followers to "make (ultimate) sense of our lives in the context of the universe."

It is, moreover, a product of Christian religion — specifically Protestant Christianity — now expressed in a secular setting. Dunlap observes of John Muir, who in 1892 founded the Sierra Club, that "he began in conventional Protestantism, his father's Cambellite faith, . . . and ended [finding God] in nature." His prose was "steeped in Old Testament rhetoric. . . . Muir preached the Emersonian gospel of Nature as ultimate reality, refuge from society, and place of pilgrimage." A few years later, another early environmentalist, John Burroughs, preached a message that he had first encountered in "the iron discipline of his father's Calvinist faith." By the 1940s, Aldo Leopold had "moved from the Bible to ecology," offering an environmental religion that was still effectively grounded in Protestant understandings, if without any explicit mention of "Christian concepts and language."

Most recently, Dave Foreman, the founder of Earth First!, was "from an evangelical Protestant background, [and] looked at humans much as the Puritan divine Jonathan Edwards had — as a disease upon the earth — and found redemption in a pristine world of nature." All in all, as Dunlap concludes, for the past 150 years "Americans who failed to find God in church took terms and perspectives from Christian theology into their search for ecstatic experiences in nature. Environmentalism's rhetorical strategies, points of view, and ways of thought remain embedded in this evangelical Protestant heritage, which forms the unacknowledged background of many environmental attitudes and arguments." It is no mere coincidence that there are not

It is no mere coincidence that there are not many Jews in the American environmental movement; Catholics are underrepresented as well.

many Jews — prominent in so many other areas of American intellectual life — among the leaders of the American environmental movement; Catholics are underrepresented as well.

Thus, even as environmentalism expresses new doubts about science and economics, it resembles other secular religions in offering a camouflaged revisiting of traditional Christian faith. Reflecting its roots, environmentalism embodies some of the same paradoxes and tensions of old-style Protestantism. Carried to the farthest extreme, the logic of Protestantism might be taken to deny any religious authority beyond the individual. Protestantism in fact eliminated the special privileges of the priesthood. When Protestants were a minority, they fiercely defended religious

freedom. But when Protestants became dominant, paradoxically, they were among the fiercest oppressors of those who dared disagree. Old-fashioned Protestantism had a fierceness and moral intensity that could easily turn to dogmatism.

Positively, Protestantism played a critical role in setting the world free from sterile orthodoxies, helping to set the stage for capitalism and modern science in Europe. Negatively, Protestantism, as a form of "free-market religion," spurred fierce internal divisions and civil wars. The

Separation of church and state does not exist in the United States, only separation of Christian (and Jewish) religion from the state.

English Puritans and their American cousins eventually played an important role in three civil wars — one in England (the rebels won and then lost), the American Revolution (the rebels won), and finally the American Civil War (the rebels lost). Protestant Germany became the center of conflict in Europe.

Environmentalism now shows some of the same paradoxes. On the one hand, environmentalists have challenged the progressive scientific managers in Washington and often defeated their proposals for dams, synfuel plants, superhighways, and other — often pork barrel — projects. Skeptical of scientific claims to authority, environmentalists have often been among the harshest critics of federal government plans. Just like Protestantism, environmentalism, has a strong libertarian streak when it is a minority view. On the other hand, when environmentalists hold power, they show little restraint in its exercise. Environmentalists have shown a dog-

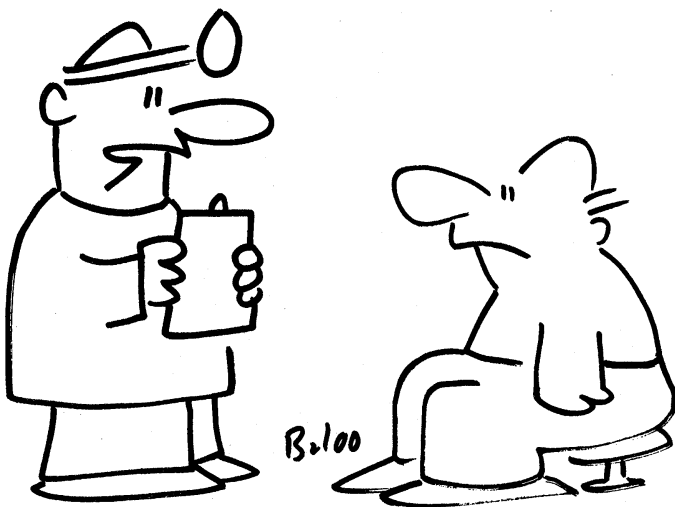
matism and sharp intolerance of disagreement fully matching their Puritan forbearers.

Opposing State Idolatry

Most devout Christians today have barely begun to explore the tensions between their worship of Christ and their simultaneous worship of the American creed and other secular religions. Most people today in any case are too busy to engage in deep theological reflection and mainstream American religion has not offered much help. There is at least one leading American Protestant theologian, however, who has confronted the tensions more directly. A nationally prominent professor of theology at Duke University Divinity School, Stanley Hauerwas in 2000–2001 delivered the Gifford Lectures in Scotland, the most prestigious world platform in Christian theology. In "Against the Nations," and in other writings, Hauerwas argued that too many Christians had sold their souls to the state, effectively turning away from a valid Christian faith. As he writes, "accounts of the Christian moral life have too long been accommodated to the needs of the nation-state, and in particular, to the nation-state we call the United States of America." If Christianity is to flourish again, it will require "a recovery of the independence of the church from its subservience to liberal culture and its corresponding agencies of the state."

Hauerwas finds that much of the problem lies in the devotion shown by many Christians to secular theologies. As he laments, too many Christians "have let the Gospel be identified with utopian fantasies." Many people have left traditional Christian churches and turned instead to secular faiths that derived their core messages from Christian sources but distorted and corrupted them. As Hauerwas thus complains, "the Christian substance is translated into Marxism, into secularised forms of biblical eschatology, existentialism, and psychology; and it develops themes from [Protestant] Reformation anthropology divorced from Reformation theology." Many adherents of secular religion have left institutional Christianity altogether (becoming what might be called "secular Christians") — but Hauerwas is equally disturbed by the invasion of Christian churches themselves by secular religion. He is critical of the many "attempts to interpret the Kingdom [of God] in terms of liberal presumptions about what constitutes human progress."

American progressives — both within and without the Christian churches — have believed that human existence can be perfected by human action alone, when the truth is that "the Kingdom [of heaven] is not to be established by men but by God alone." It is impossible even for human beings to know precisely the character of the final heavenly destination because "scripturally there seems to be no good grounds to associate the kingdom of God with any form of political organization and/or to assume that it is best characterized by any one set of ethical ideals such as love and justice." Partly because it is impossible to know God's actual design for the world, Hauerwas rejects the view that America offers an ethical and political model that must be followed everywhere, declaring that as Christians "it is not our task to make the 'world' the kingdom." When a Christian church "thinks and acts as if 'America has a peculiar place in God's promises and purposes,'" it is betraying



"I'm going to refer you to a doctor with a better sense of humor."

its proper role and losing its "ability to be a 'zone of truth-telling in a world of mendacity.'" A good Christian must remain vigilant to the "ways the democratic state remains a state that continues to wear the head of the beast."

Hauerwas is no libertarian and in fact has critical things to say about the individualism of the libertarian philosophy. Yet, he also argues that "no state will keep itself limited, no constitution or ideology is sufficient to that task, unless there is a body of people separated from the nation that is willing to say 'No' to the state's claims on their loyalties." Instead, many Americans have become worshippers in secular religions that have become official religions of the American state. Separation of church and state does not exist in the United States, only separation of Christian (and Jewish) religion from the state. For too many Christians, Hauerwas explains, American "democracy has in fact become an end in itself that captures our souls in subtle ways we hardly notice." The result is that, rather than independent religious voices, many Christian churches have "in fact become a captive to and in America." Their Christian religion has become subordinate to their American constitutional faith, a national mission to save the world, and other powerful, and for many intoxicating, elements of American national religion.



The rise of modern science posed a great challenge to traditional Christian religion. Since the Enlightenment, and partly as a product of this challenge, the Christian (and sometimes Jewish) message increasingly has been found in secular religions. By the 20th century, secular religions were more powerful over most of the western world than traditional Christian faiths. This development can be seen in several lights. The spread of secular religion might be seen as a new valid expression of Christianity — in the category of, say, the emergence of Protestantism during the Reformation. Or it might instead be seen as a great heresy which falsely distorts and caricatures the valid Christian message. Or it might be the development of a brand new religion, even if it borrows heavily from Christian sources — much like the emergence of Islam in the 7th century.

However one sees it, secular religion became the most powerful religious force in western Europe and the United States in the 20th century. The nation-states of the West saw the apparatus of the state become a state church. In some nations the punishments for heresy were no less severe in the 20th century than in the medieval Christian period, while in other nations heretics no longer feared for their lives, although they often paid other prices. Religion — in its new secular forms — was as central to the tasks of governance, the organization of society, the moral judgments of the populace, as it had ever been. Even though Marxism collapsed at the end of the century, and other progressive gospels came under increasing scrutiny, powerful new secular religions continued to arise, such as the environmental gospel.

If secular religion is taken seriously as a real form of religion — and it is difficult to see why it wouldn't be — certain political and religious questions must be answered. If Americans wish to maintain the traditional separation of church and state, much of the modern welfare state — which amounts to a new "secular church" — will have to be dis-

mantled and privatized. Libertarians will find this a happy prospect, but it is perhaps equally likely that the principle of separation of church and state will be jettisoned.

That will, however, create its own large complications. What is the justification for religious coercion? When the state is a church, tax collections become coercive tithes. This problem could be ameliorated if the United States broke into a number of smaller sovereign jurisdictions. A state religion is less objectionable when the citizens of the state are religiously homogeneous. There is little need for religious coercion when you and I share the same faith. Perhaps an American principle of free secession will have to be enshrined. When a state becomes a church, secession becomes the practical means of asserting freedom of religion.

Heretics are no longer burned at the stake in America, but in some cases, such as the war on drugs, heresy can expose an individual to a long prison sentence.

Protestantism asserted this right 500 years ago with respect to the Roman Catholic Church; perhaps a similar new "protestant" movement against 20th century national state churches of secular religion is required.

It is time to take secular religion seriously. It is real religion. In the 20th century it showed greater religious energy, captured more converts, and had much more influence on the world than traditional Christian religion. Once this is accepted, the conventional pieties of our times will face some difficult challenges. The task of integrating Christian, American, economic, sociological, psychological, environmental, and other religious impulses into the full domain of world theology lies ahead: the books discussed here are all steps in the right direction. □

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The Politics of Hatred

by Stephen Paul Foster

There are two ways to campaign: either run on the issues, or demonize your opponents. For many people in our society, it's not a hard choice.

A recent visit to the "Politics & Government" section in a Borders bookstore put me before a deluge of books whose authors all evinced a feverish enthusiasm for exposing the innumerable shortcomings of our current commander in chief. Bush is a moron, a hypocrite, a lush, an illiterate, a draft dodger, a feckless rich kid, a fundamentalist cretin, a crazed militarist, a stooge of Big Oil, a toady for the Saudis, Karl Rove's puppet, and so on and so on.

Among these angry productions I contemplated a remarkable series, a collection of "I Hate" titles. Here was a deep reservoir of resentment into which loathers of Republicans could plunge: "The I Hate George W. Bush Reader," "The I Hate Republicans Reader," "The I Hate Dick Cheney, John Ashcroft, Donald Rumsfeld, Condi Rice . . . Reader: Behind the Bush Cabal's War on America," and "The I Hate Ann Coulter, Bill O'Reilly, Rush Limbaugh, Michael Savage, Sean Hannity . . . Reader: The Truth About America's Ugliest Conservatives." In vain I searched for the "I Hates" on the other side, e.g. "The I Hate Ted Kennedy, Al Gore, and Jesse Jackson Reader: The Truth about America's Most Bloated Leftists." Many books on these shelves denounced liberal Democrats, but they tended to be critical of ideas and policies rather than rely on ad persona attacks.

What irony, though, that these "hate" books come from the Left. It has been the Left in recent years that has striven both to criminalize hate and to tar Republicans as the party of hate. Democrats exude compassion and toleration. Republicans manufacture hate, and they hate just about everybody — blacks, gays, single mothers, non-Christians, etc. This calumny fits into a syllogism simple enough for the electorate. Hate is bad. Republicans hate. Ergo . . .

In the aftermath of the 1994 congressional elections, when

the Republicans captured both Houses of Congress for the first time in 40 years, Democrats appeared shell-shocked and in disarray. From the beginning, the Clinton administration was a scandal machine in overdrive. Bill and Hillary proved to be even more inept in managing the White House than they had the governor's mansion in Little Rock. What, the Democrats must have been thinking, could be worse in the eyes of the electorate than incompetence and corruption? Hate. And what was the source? Angry right-wing talk radio hosts, egged on by mean-spirited Republicans. Rush Limbaugh and his ilk acquired an impressive following by poking fun at liberal Democrats and harping on their defects. "Politics ain't beanball," as they say, but Rush's ridicule-laden bloviations drew many listeners and rallied them around Republicans. Meanwhile, antigovernment paranoiacs had recently blown up the Federal building in Oklahoma City. Rush and other conservative Republicans deplored Big Government liberals.

So, from these two distantly related facts the Democrats, including President Clinton, conjured up and peddled the howler that the Republicans, in their disdain for Big Government liberals, had through the vehicle of talk radio established "a climate of hatred" that launched the antigovernment bombers into murderous action. Hate thus became a hefty political stick with which to beat Republicans. In the following elections Republicans were coupled with arsonists

of black churches, murderers of gays, and lynch mobs. During the 2000 presidential election, the NAACP put out a political ad that featured the grisly murder of James Byrd, Jr., in Jasper, Texas. The ad ran with a voiceover of Byrd's daughter, saying: "My father was killed. He was beaten, chained, and dragged three miles to his death, all because he was black. So when Governor George W. Bush refused to

In vain I searched for the "I Hates" on the Left side, such as "The I Hate Ted Kennedy, Al Gore, and Jesse Jackson Reader: The Truth about America's Most Bloated Leftists."

support hate-crimes legislation, it was like my father was killed all over again." Democratic nominee Al Gore seized on this issue to suggest that because Bush was against hate-crime legislation, he was soft on murderers inspired by racial hatred — even though Bush had signed the murderers' death warrants.

The Left's recent smearing of its critics as haters replicates the Fascist-smear strategy developed by Comintern Stalinists in the late 1920s and '30s. During the Spanish Civil War, the Left perfected this smear and passed it on to its progeny. Today those on the Left routinely resort to the F-word or its equivalent to describe Republicans who displease them. Recently, NAACP Chairman Julian Bond compared Republicans to Nazis and the Taliban.

To put some history with this: the Stalinists developed the Fascist smear after the consolidation of Mussolini's dictatorship and Hitler's rise to power in the 1930s put Fascism into play as Communism's most formidable ideological rival. Fascism, of course, was an enemy of democratic, constitutional government — as was Communism — but the Stalinists adroitly positioned themselves as anti-Fascists and promiscuously attached the epithet of "Fascist" to almost all of their rivals.

In the years between 1928 and 1935, Moscow Bolsheviks anticipated the worldwide collapse of capitalism. They castigated the non-Communist Left as Fascists, including the reform-oriented Social Democrats, an especially powerful political force in Germany. They called them "Social Fascists" because even though they were Socialists, they participated in bourgeois politics, played by parliamentary rules, and eschewed violent revolution.

But as Hitler armed the Third Reich and Nazi Germany grew more menacing and formidable, the Stalinists concluded that they actually needed those "Fascist" allies on the Left. So in 1935, the Comintern made one of its notorious about-faces and embraced the former "Social Fascists" as partners in an anti-Fascist alliance that became known as the Popular Front.

The Second Spanish Republic elected a Popular Front government in 1936 that within six months found itself under siege by General Franco. In resisting Franco, Popular

Front Communists, guided by Comintern propagandists, skillfully crafted a Manichean interpretation of the civil war in Spain, scripting the conflict as a struggle that pitted Francoist forces — whose victory would plunge Spain into a Fascist abyss — against the anti-Fascist, democracy-affirming, freedom-loving defenders of the Republic.

The truth was more complicated, and quite different. Franco was no doubt an enemy of freedom. However, the Popular Front government that fought him throughout the 32-month war was increasingly dominated by Communist operatives under orders from Moscow. They wanted for the Spanish people the same kind of freedom and democracy enjoyed by the helots in Stalin's workers' paradise.

The Fascist-smear tactic of the Comintern is the model for today's hate smear. The smear works like this. The accuser attaches to the opponent an opprobrious label (e.g., *Fascist* or *bigot*) while at the same assuming the mantle of the opposite virtue. The attack creates morally and politically dichotomous spaces occupied by the virtuous and the villainous. The morally opprobrious villain is then turned into a criminal. As a criminal, he deserves no consideration, and can be eliminated from competition. Stalin, during the Spanish Civil War, framed his old Bolshevik comrades, whom he had come to resent. He had them imprisoned and executed as traitors. N.I. Bukharin, who appeared as Rubashov in Arthur Koestler's great novel "Darkness at Noon," was the most notable. Stalin's agents in Spain also labeled their non-Stalinist Marxist rivals, such as Andrés Nin, as Fascist collaborators and executed them.

Similarly, the Left has moved to criminalize hate even as it has smeared Republicans as a party of hatred. In the 1990s, university administrators across the country came under the tutelage of neo-Marxists who read domination and exploitation into every facet of social life. They imposed hate speech codes that banned any kind of speech deemed "insensitive" to ethnic minorities, gays, or women. Since the self-esteem of victims groups was considered to be fragile, any less than

Sen. Kennedy's long history of efforts to advance the well-being of women is thoroughly documented.

congratulatory remarks from a dominant group member to a minority or woman victim could be construed as a hateful slur.

Disapproval was rarely distinguished from hate. Violators were subjected to compulsory re-education programs, forced public apologies, and expulsion. Victims were institutionally immune from criticism and took advantage of that immunity to scorn, intimidate, and silence critics. Seldom then and seldom now do critics of the Left appear on college campuses. When they do, they are often shouted down and sometimes physically assaulted.

Many of the college speech codes failed court challenges and were thrown out. The war on hatred moved to Congress

and from the 1990s on there has been an explosion of hate-crime legislation at the federal level. Hate crimes, it was argued, were more nefarious than “regular” crimes and hence deserving of more vigorous punishment and enforcement. Congress passed the Hate Crimes Statistics Act of 1990 (28 U.S. Code 534); the Hate Crimes Sentencing Enhancement Act of 1994 (Section of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, Public Law 103-222); the Church Arson Prevention Act of 1996 (18 U.S. Code 247); the Campus Hate Crimes Right to Know Act of 1997 (H.R.3043); the Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1999 (Amends 18 U.S. Code 245); and the Violence Against Women Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-386).

In 2001 Sen. Edward Kennedy introduced an amendment to existing law that would extend hate crime protection to more groups and add new offenses. In a Senate debate over this amendment in 2002, Kennedy, whose long history of

The Left has moved to criminalize hate, while smearing Republicans as the party of hatred.

efforts to advance the well-being of women is thoroughly documented, denounced Republicans for their lack of commitment to basic civil rights when they blocked action on the amendment. In 2004 the enhancements passed the Senate.

Hate crimes remain problematic and controversial. They have a much larger scope in socialist countries like Canada where “hate speech” is a crime. The very concept churns up legitimate fears about the criminalization of thought and emotion and the concomitant erosion of freedom and expansion of state power. In 1999, Andrew Sullivan, a well known writer on gay rights, published a devastating cri-

tique of the hate-crime concept titled “What’s So Bad about Hate?” Sullivan argued that hatred remains too complex, ambiguous, and primal an emotion to be unique to oppressor groups, or to be neatly categorized as either good or bad. Hatred, he noted, would likely be stronger among victims than oppressors because the victims frequently experience the injustice of the oppressor group. How then can hatred be unequivocally excoriated? Must we embrace the preposterous notion that some should hate and others should not? “Violence,” Sullivan wrote, “can and should be stopped by the government. In a free society, hate can’t and shouldn’t be.”

Republicans, at least conservative ones, have tended to oppose hate-crime legislation because it confers differential status and special treatment based on group identity, and it criminalizes thought and emotion. But just as Communists in the 1930s and ‘40s denounced their critics as Fascists, so today’s leftists, who build their power base on collectivist identity politics and race-baiting, denounce critics of hate-crime legislation as sympathetic with hate-motivated criminals. They assail the motives and character of the critics, not their arguments. And the hate smear is now standard operating procedure for the Left in combating Republicans. Just recently, Harlem Rep. Charles Rangel called President Bush, who has placed more blacks in positions of national leadership than any other president, “Our Bull Connor,” linking Bush to the man whose name stands for the racial hatred and violence of the Jim Crow era.

But as hard as Rangel, Kennedy, Gore, and others try, they will likely never top CNN commentator Paul Begala’s virtuoso performance in his commentary on the 2000 election:

[I]f you look closely at [the electoral map distinguishing Republican red states versus Democratic blue states] . . . [y]ou see the state where James Byrd was lynched — dragged behind a pickup truck until his body came apart — it’s red. You see the state where Matthew Shepard was crucified on a split-rail fence for the crime of being gay — it’s red. You see the state where right-wing extremists blew up a federal office building and murdered scores of federal employees — it’s red. The state where an Army private who was thought to be gay was bludgeoned to death with a baseball bat, and the state where neo-Nazi skinheads murdered two African-Americans because of their skin color, and the state where Bob Jones University spews its anti-Catholic bigotry; they’re all red too.

There you have it — a sextuple hate smear, not from a fringe political hack but from a Georgetown University professor, nationally syndicated columnist, and adviser to our most recent Democratic president. This is not an argument but a malignant diatribe worthy of Stalin’s show trial prosecutor, Andrei Vyshinski. This attack was intended to put the opposition beyond the pale, to taint Republicans as moral cretins, mindless haters, and vicious criminals. With his reference to neo-Nazi skinheads, Begala pulls off a twofer, a Fascist-smear and a hate-smear, all in one.

As the parties begin to position candidates for the 2008 presidential election, it appears likely that another Clinton will head the Democratic ticket. Given recent history, it’s reasonable to expect that the party of compassion will once again rely heavily on hate as a weapon. □



“I’ve got an epistle to the Corinthians, fifteen cents postage due.”

Reviews

"The Tycoons: How Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, Jay Gould, and J.P. Morgan Invented the American Supereconomy," by Charles R. Morris. Times Books, 2005, 382 pages.

Weighing the Gilded Heroes

Mark Skousen

Were the giants of the Gilded Age — John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, Jay Gould, and J.P. Morgan — pious frauds who exploited and bilked the public on their way to achieving their ill-gotten millions? Or were they bold innovators and noble capitalists who established America as the richest, most productive country on the planet?

Was Balzac onto something when he claimed that "behind every great fortune is a crime"? Or was Carnegie more accurate when he observed that "great inequality and concentration of business are essential for the future progress of the race"?

In the past, historians have taken positions at opposite poles in this debate in American history, when railroads, oil, and steel transformed the world economy. On the one hand are the muckraker Ida Tarbell and Marxist historian Matthew Josephson. Ida Tarbell's "History of Standard Oil Company," based on her famous 19-part series that ran in McClure's Magazine from 1901 to 1903, is an expose of John D. Rockefeller. She has since been honored as one of the first female journalists, with the U.S. Post

Office issuing a stamp in 2002. Her book hastened the breakup of Standard Oil in 1911. "They had never played fair, and that ruined their greatness for me," she wrote. Since then, her historical accuracy has been challenged. Charles Morris concludes, "The great power of Tarbell's prose conceals the holes in her argument." (p. 86) The railroad rebates Rockefeller engineered, which she described as "secret, unjust and illegal" were in fact neither secret, nor illegal, nor unjust. "There was no law against rebates, on either the federal or state level, and they were standard practice among all carriers," states Morris. (88) Despite complaints at the time, the Cleveland refiners who were pressured to sell to Rockefeller were offered a fair price, and those who accepted Standard Oil stock became quite wealthy.

Matthew Josephson's classic work, "The Robber Barons," was published in 1934, during the depths of the Great Depression. It is still in print, and widely considered "the classic account" of the captains of industry. Josephson's bias is apparent in his frequent citations of Thorstein Veblen, Charles A. Beard, and Karl Marx. Although written in an entertaining style, his history is cleverly prejudiced

against the creators of industry. Witness its highlighting of their peculiar personal habits (for example, he claims that Rockefeller had a "queer habit of talking to his pillow") and their misdeeds and deceptions, while it religiously avoids references to their positive contributions. In his chapter on J.P. Morgan, Josephson emphasizes Morgan's imperial wizardry at 23 Wall Street, where he conspired to monopolize and unify the transportation business of Vanderbilt, Gould, Huntington, and Hill, and create the world's first billion-dollar company, U.S. Steel. Yet he conveniently leaves out any mention of Morgan's twice saving the U.S. Treasury from the gold drains and near bankruptcy of the 1890s, and his role as quasi-central banker in restoring order during the Panic of 1907. These omissions are a fatal flaw.

On the other extreme is Burt W. Folsom Jr.'s "Myth of the Robber Barons." Folsom teaches history at Hillsdale College and lectures regularly at student conferences sponsored by Young America's Foundation, which also published his book. He is in the vanguard of a revisionist movement reevaluating the genius of the barons of industry. Countering the standard textbook view that Com-

modore Vanderbilt's actions in the steamboat business were "immoral and in restraint of trade," he portrays Vanderbilt as an entrepreneur with "superior skills" in driving down prices and offering better services than his competitors. Unlike his rivals, Vanderbilt accomplished this feat without resorting to government subsidies. In his chapter on Rockefeller, Folsom

Josephson conveniently leaves out any mention of Morgan's twice saving the U.S. Treasury from the gold drains and near bankruptcy of the 1890s.

shows how the oil magnate repeatedly slashed the price of oil and constantly expanded production, "refining oil for the poor man." He paid fair prices in buying out his competitors, and paid his employees higher than market wages. "Standard Oil was rarely hurt by strikes or labor unrest," states Folsom.

Folsom's book is strangely hit and miss, probably because it was written as a series of articles, not a complete history, and his focus is on industrial giants who succeeded without state favors. His railroad chapters cover Commodore Vanderbilt and James J. Hill, but omit Jay Cooke. His banking

chapter highlights Andrew Mellon, while hardly mentioning J.P. Morgan. His steel chapters focus on the Scrantons and Charles Schwab, rather than kingpin Andrew Carnegie. And despite the title of his book, Folsom never mentions Matthew Josephson, nor does he review "The Robber Barons."

Just as Josephson typically ignores the beneficial actions of the 19th century tycoons, so Folsom turns a blind eye to their shortcomings. His chapter on Carnegie Steel (under the title, "Charles Schwab and the Steel Industry") ignores Carnegie's flaws. Here are three cases omitted in Folsom's book:

- In 1888 Carnegie wrote a letter to every railroad company in the United States, warning them that the new, cheaper steel process of his competitor Allegheny Bessemer was risky. He had no evidence for this accusation, but his complaint eventually forced Allegheny Bessemer to sell out to Carnegie Steel; afterwards, Carnegie adopted the new process.

- Carnegie had a policy of ruthlessly reducing costs, including wages, even while his company was making record profits. He offered bonuses and other incentives to managers, but the rank-and-file employees had to fight for every concession. Carnegie's refusal to honor the new eight-hour workday the Carnegie Steel workers had negotiated was a major cause of the Homestead Strike of 1892, one of the worst labor strikes in U.S. history. When Carnegie ordered workers to

return to the twelve-hour shift, the workers not surprisingly staged a strike, which Carnegie, through his partner Henry Clay Frick, violently suppressed.

- The dispute between Carnegie and Frick in 1899, when Carnegie tried to expel Frick from the firm and pay him only book value for his shares, would have wiped out 80 percent, or \$10 million, of the fair market value of Frick's holdings. Frick sued in court and won.*

This brings me to Charles R. Morris' "The Tycoons," which takes into account the latest economic research and analysis of the Gilded Age, and is not only comprehensive in its account of the major players in the early industrial age, but is even-handed. He credits all four main characters — Carnegie, Gould, Rockefeller, and Morgan — with dogged determinism and entrepreneurial genius in expanding output, cutting prices, and "turning luxuries into necessities" (Carnegie's description of capitalism).

Was Balzac onto something when he claimed that "behind every great fortune is a crime"?

As a result, America surpassed England in the late 19th century and rapidly became the dominant power in the global economy. But Morris doesn't ignore their flaws. To Morris, Carnegie — despite his humanitarian acts — was "the most irritating" and "repellently smarmy," a manager who issued pro-labor manifestos while he "steadily ratcheted up the demands on his workers and steadily cut their pay." Jay Gould created the national railroad map that prevails today, but was "always financially stretched" and had "a strange streak of self-destructiveness." Morgan was the last

*All three accounts are included in Les Standiford's recent history of Carnegie Steel entitled "Meet You In Hell: Andrew Carnegie, Henry Clay Frick, and the Bitter Partnership that Transformed America."

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of the great merchant bankers, engineering the first world class merger, U.S. Steel, but engaged in some questionable business dealings, and was in and out of bankruptcy for the rest of his days. Rockefeller comes off the best. "On balance," Morris concludes, "while there were skeletons aplenty in John Rockefeller's closet [Morris points

to Rockefeller's once lying under oath], he was not a brigand, or embezzler, or stock manipulator in the manner of the early Jay Gould." (91) In depicting the Gilded Age's tycoons as neither the saints of Folsom's apology, nor the demons of Josephson's and Tarbell's rants, Morris himself has hit upon a fine balance. □

"Syriana," directed by Stephen Gaghan. Warner Bros, 2005, 126 minutes.

Jargon Good, Oil Bad

Jo Ann Skousen

"Syriana" is about big government and big business and oil deals and terrorism. It's about spies and counter-spies and loyalty and betrayal. It's about suicide and sacrifice and accidental death. And yet — it is one of the most interminably boring movies I have seen in ages. Even the torture scene is a disappointment (you'll know it's coming because the soundtrack begins an ominous pounding beat, heralding the only bit of excitement in the first half of the film). Forget what you've been hearing about this movie being "important" and "Oscar-worthy" and in the style of "Traffic." The characters and locations are so scattered, the characterizations and motivations so weak, the action so lacking, that I found myself pleading, "Please! Just do something!"

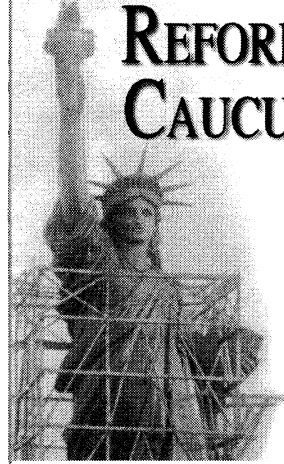
Mostly these people talk. They talk in coffee shops, in lines, in cars, in offices, at parties, on boats, on TV. They speak glibly, and they use a lot of MBA jargon: "In a climate of falling prices" . . . "Let us problem-solve that for you" . . . "This merger is balance-positive." The women talk in the stern, no-nonsense voices of agency executives, while the men whine about hav-

ing to get home for Johnny's birthday party or Susie's soccer game when asked to work late. They talk about each other but not to each other, and they seldom call one another by name, which makes it very difficult to keep everyone straight.

Here's an example: midway through the film a character reveals to another character who the bad guy, the villain behind the corruption, is (this is never really explained — I guess the fact that it involves an oil company is considered explanation enough). I kept trying to remember the face that belonged with the name. Was it Matt Damon? Christopher Plummer? The head of the oil company? The character is mentioned frequently but never appears on screen again. I finally had to go home and do a Google search of the cast and characters to figure out who he was. And even now, remembering him on screen, I would have to go back and watch the movie again to remember what he said or did. (Now *that* would be real torture.)

The biggest problem with this film is that it doesn't tell a compelling story. In a way, that's good; it avoids annoying stereotypes and acknowledges that there are no easy solutions

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or obvious villains. But the characters are so thinly drawn and so feebly connected to each other that it is difficult for the audience to create a vicarious bond. We just don't much care. I found myself identifying with the young Arab terrorists-in-training, simply because they were the only ones who

seemed to bond with each other and struggle with their decisions.

As the credits rolled I overheard the man behind me say to his companion, "I want to see that again." She responded, "I didn't get it either." I'm not sure seeing it again would help all that much. □

"The Rape of the Masters," by Roger Kimball. Encounter Books, 2004, 186 pages.

Secondhand Gnostics

Andrew Ferguson

When is a lower-case e like a clitoris?

Unlike the Mad Hatter's "How is a raven like a writing desk?" chestnut, there is actually an answer, though it is as silly and unsatisfying as later generations' attempts at finishing off Lewis Carroll's riddle: when you're a tenured professor and you can write anything you want without fear of your colleagues mocking your blatant, fanciful misinterpretations.

The professor in question is David M. Lubin, the Charlotte C. Weber Professor of Art at Wake Forest University (which also continues to pay Maya Angelou six figures to use her Hallmark cards as class texts). The sphinx's question above is inspired by his bizarre analysis of "The Daughters of Edward Darley Boit" by portraitist John Singer Sargent. Lubin's narrative can't even be called tangential: he takes the name Boit; jumps to the French word *boîte* (meaning box); lingers on

the phallically plunging î and its "circumcision" by the circumflex; detours into the differences between the straight, erect, capitalist E and the curvy, clitoral, lower-class e; and winds up saying that Boit is *boîte* minus E, which is of course Edward Darley Boit's penis. Therefore the Boit daughters are trapped in the "box" of femininity by culturally ascendant male-dominated capitalist society.

Lubin cheerfully admits that not a single one of those thoughts ever passed through Sargent's mind. But the professor excuses his attempts to shove them in there by asserting that "somehow a psychic transfer or transmutation occurs between the verbal part of the creative mind . . . and the visual part." At this point, he should be treated like anyone else who talks about psychic transfers and transmutations: mocked, pitied, and soon forgotten. Instead he's been praised, envied, and widely read.

He is not unique. In "The Rape of the Masters," New Criterion editor Roger Kimball presents eight paintings, along with an academic's ridiculous commentary on each. Others are equally as silly as Lubin's: visions of a Madonna with Child seen in three bands of Rothko color, or castration anxiety inserted into a Courbet hunt-

ing scene. But the silliness is a bonus; what's important is how far removed the commentaries are from the works they discuss: the paintings disappear from sight, and only academic digressions are left. Staple our pages to the canvas, say the critics, because without our words you'll never understand what's beneath.

This is an old heresy, perhaps the first: it answers to "gnosticism." Heresies have a way of coming back around; where once gnosticism concerned itself with saying people needed special secret knowledge to be saved, now it's saying people need special secret knowledge to understand art in a culturally conscious way. Of course, to these particular heretics, salvation and cultural consciousness are one and the same.

But all these billowy dons, these black-gowned conspiracy theorists, receive their gnosticism secondhand: it's manufactured by Marx and processed through Adorno or Foucault, before it gets squeezed out by David M. Lubin or any of a thousand like him. That intellectual regression is

Kimball acts as a kind of curator for an exhibit of stupidity.

symptomatic of the gnostics: when Socrates says that knowledge leads one to a greater awareness of how much more there is to know, they take it as an invitation. They fiddle around with phallic punctuation, turn in the word-play gyre, become ever more irrelevant and extreme.

What should be done about them? Not much, really. Many are already so loopy that they're only taken seriously by other professors; refuting them point-by-point would be as useless as trying to explain to a sociologist the flaws in the labor theory of value. But where one cannot lecture, one can point a finger and laugh, and it is ridicule that Kimball recommends. An old prescription, but an effective one: examples can be found in just about

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any literature that comments on the human condition (Ecclesiastes is a personal favorite). Indeed, many writers dear to libertarians have specialized in ridicule, from Voltaire to Mencken to O'Rourke.

Kimball can't match those luminaries; too often he makes direct appeals to the reader, like an amateur thespian winking at pals in the crowd. The best sections of "The Rape of the Masters" are those in which he acts as a kind of curator for an exhibit of stupidity: choosing excerpts with care, and using his words as gallery lights, to accentuate the phrases that best display the author's peculiar gifts. Curiously, this approach is not too far off from Duchamp's signing a urinal and entering it in an art competition, and the Dadaists earn a backhanded compliment in the introduction: "[T]hough impish, they are at least direct." (p. 11) Kimball puts the works of modern art critics on display, but only after he's drawn mustaches on the publicity photos of each and every one.

If the book were an actual exhibit, it would barely fill a small room: "The Rape of the Masters" is too short by half. While it's tough to fault Kimball for not subjecting himself to more art-circle gnosticism, his publishers could spare a few blushes for charging more than 15 cents for each page of large-print text. And if they wanted people to read the book in public, they certainly could have designed the book so the spine and dust jacket don't shout "RAPE MASTERS," as if the book were a tribute to the disciples of de Sade.

A more substantial problem is that Kimball views art as subject to some sort of Gresham's Law of criticism. But even though bad commentary has practically driven good out of the academy, Kimball's regular employment indicates that some sort of counterweight exists: as art critic for the *Spectator* of London and *National Review*, he reaches an audience many times that of the average tenured radical. Deranged musings on clitoral vowels are like hyperinflated deutsche-marks: officially sanctioned but worthless, good only for carting around by the wheelbarrow. Outside the academy, though, is a vibrant black market, full of barter and intrigue; every day more people join it, aban-

doning the gnostics to their vacant wit and straining barrows. Like any hyperinflated system, there's no

doubt that this one is headed for a crash; the only question is if anyone will notice. □

Booknotes

Straws in the wind —

When you get right down to it, the United States is rapidly becoming just another country that doesn't represent anything more than a color on the map. Why should its citizens feel any special warmth towards its government? As the last two elections demonstrated, the U.S. may be becoming more polarized than at any time since the War for Southern Independence — and fiction is taking note of the nation's instability. I've read two novels in the past few months on the same topic: regime change in the United States, and how to induce it.

The first of these books is John Ross' "Unintended Consequences" (Accurate Press, 2005), a rather massive novel of 861 pages. It explains how an average law-abiding citizen winds up leading a movement to, more or less, overthrow the U.S. government. It traces the degeneration of American freedom from the viewpoint of a subculture that's still pretty large, but definitely on its way out: the gun culture. The insight it offers into the gun culture is a good part of what makes the book interesting as something other than pure entertainment. When I grew up in the '50s and '60s the gun subculture was still quite strong. Every kid wanted a BB gun, and many got the Red Ryder advertised in the back of comic books, as a first step to a .22, and then, if you wished, a mail-order 20mm antitank rifle (which ran about \$125). Anyone could, and many did (including yours truly) trans-

port weapons on planes without a second thought.

Another reason the book is interesting is that it can't be purchased in bookstores, or on Amazon. The reason is not that it doesn't sell (the book has apparently sold 70,000 copies — a big number for almost any novel, and an absolutely astounding number for a self-published novel, actually achieving cult status), but that it's a political hot potato, dealing with things like assassinating government agents. The idea of regime change in Washington, D.C., is a strong subtext throughout. In today's political and judicial climate, where publishers have been successfully sued for nonfiction books that allegedly, however unintentionally, instructed people on how to commit crimes, and where the FBI has actually investigated those who borrow books on Osama bin Laden from libraries (over 200 inquiries since Sept. 11, according to *The Guardian*), I suppose this reluctance is understandable. But the decision of retailers is an especially slippery slope. Tom Clancy's detailed techno-thrillers would certainly be banned, except for the fact he's a running dog of the military and a reflexive cheerleader for almost anything



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Washington does. The only difference between "Unintended Consequences" and a Clancy book is its attitude towards the political status quo.

Despite the fact it's very hard to get and advertising is only by word of mouth, it's a big, continuing seller. The question is whether that would be the case if there weren't a huge number of really unhappy campers out there in The Homeland. Most of them are white, male, middle-aged, middle-class Bush supporters, and therefore quiescent at the moment. But, assuming we have an election in 2008, when Hillary gets in, there's a good chance their rallying cry will be "Sure, you can have my gun . . . when you pry it from my cold, dead fingers."

Think I'm kidding? Recall that social unrest tends to come (from different strata of society) either at economic troughs or peaks. The most recent serious trough was in the early '80s, when there were massive tax and regulation resistance movements. It's hard to predict exactly what will hap-

Tom Clancy is a running dog of the military and a reflexive cheerleader for almost anything Washington does.

pen as the Greater Depression starts to evidence itself. But this book may be a straw in the wind.

The same could be said of the second book: "Molon Labe," by Boston T. Party, just published last year by Javelin Press. (*Molon labe* is Greek for "come and take them," the answer the 300 Spartans at Thermopylae gave to the Persian army when asked to lay down their arms.) Boston is the nom de plume of an old friend of mine, Ken Royce, who has written a half-dozen other books as well, most of which I've read. There are broad similarities with the why (no secrets here) and how (very interesting) parts of both books. "Molon Labe," however, extrapolates the consequences of the nascent Free State Movement, whereby thousands of libertarian-leaning folks are migrat-

ing to the smallest counties of the thinly populated states of Wyoming and New Hampshire, with the objective of regaining some measure of control over their lives. In the novel, however, things go a bit farther . . .

I recommend both of these books, partly for the information they're loaded with, partly because they're good reads, and partly because they're straws in the wind. — Doug Casey

Heroism and hope —

Evidence of the crumbling of collectivist thought is given in "Return of the Heroes: The Lord of the Rings, Star Wars, Harry Potter, and Social Conflict" (Cybereditions, 2003, 176 pages) documenting the continued resiliency of the "heroic" novel in a world where the intellectual elites have succumbed to mind-numbing nihilism. Hal G.P. Colebatch wrote the first version of this intriguing monograph many years ago (prior to the Harry Potter phenomenon) for the Australian Institute for Public Policy, an economic liberal group. His writings were prescient in that he saw, in the midst of the intellectuals' self-hatred, the seeds of rebirth. Despite the writings of the best and the brightest, the populace continued to find meaning and pleasure in novels of hope, of heroism.

Colebatch takes as his primary texts to develop his thesis the Lord of the Rings novels and the Star Wars movies, but enriches his discussion with frequent references to the works of C.S. Lewis, Arthur Ransome (the author of the "Swallows and Amazons" books of the early 19th century), and even Robert Heinlein. (There is much more that could be said about the idealism and morality of the Heinlein juvenile series — wonderful books for the moral education of youth.)

Colebatch argues that humanity cannot abide the doom and gloom of the modern intellectual, nor does it find compatible the arrogance of the earlier collectivist "heaven on earth" hubris. Mankind, he notes, has never responded well to the efforts of the mandarins to strip away history, tradition, and faith. He quotes some of these apostles of despair: "The race is to be freed from its crippling burden of good and evil."

As a devotee of the Lord of the Rings series, I will always remember the lines with which the wizard Gandalf confronts the defeatist Denethor, Steward of Gondor. Denethor, a Neville Chamberlain character, believes that defeat is inevitable, the West has proven too weak, Gondor will fall, and after that fall — he believes — there will be nothing left worth saving. Better to die now than

The battle for liberty is never decisively won — and never foreordained to victory.

live in that blackest of worlds. To that negativism, Gandalf responds: “Know too that I am a steward. And if, in the blackness that may occur, one flower survives in one remote vale in the mountains, I will not have totally failed in my charge.”

The battle for liberty is never decisively won — and never foreordained to victory. It requires each of us to fight and never surrender. Readers of Liberty should find this book worthy of their attention. — Fred L. Smith

Frontier gun control — The year is 1878. The place, Gold Creek — a mining town in the territory of New Mexico, not far from the Mexican border. The West is still young, but not so young that Gold Creek is without law and order. Society is based on responsibility and respect for individual rights. But after a stern gun law leaves Gold Creek defenseless, 17-year-old Blackie Sheffield and Gold Creek’s former marshal Morgan must set off together on the trail of *The Wolf*, a Mexican desperado who has ransacked the town.

Morgan was deposed after a young boy playing in the streets was killed by a stray bullet, and a new “hotshot” was voted into office. This new marshal, Wiggins, persuades the townspeople to ban all guns within the town’s limits — after all, no guns in town, no shooting of innocent bystanders; simple as that. The law was passed in spite of Morgan’s warning that “the proposed law is dangerous. A citizen may never

have to use his gun in self-defense; but if he should ever need it, it’s his right to have it at hand.” In response to the law, all guns in town were delivered to Wiggins for safekeeping.

When *The Wolf* and his band of outlaws learn that the town is essentially defenseless, they consider it an easy target. Early one morning, they shoot up the town, kill many people and wound many more — including Federal Marshal Wiggins — set buildings afire, kill all the horses they can’t take with them, and escape with the bank’s gold bullion and as many young girls as they could corral, including Blackie’s resourceful sister, Dusty. The Wolf and his gang leave the town in shambles; buildings burning, windows broken, and the street strewn with the dead and wounded — men, women and children.

Blackie, who had been jailed by Wiggins for disrespect and “for violating the gun law,” misses the excitement; he isn’t found for several days because no one but Wiggins knew he was there. As soon as Blackie is released, he tries to organize a posse to

go after the bandits. After failing to rouse the townspeople, he grabs his good friend Morgan, who had gone to work at an out-of-town ranch, and the two of them set out to track down the Mexican outlaws before they reach Mexico and safety — back then U.S. lawmen were prohibited from crossing the border into Mexico “in hot pursuit.” Although *The Wolf’s* band far outnumber their pursuers, the determination of the two men, their knowledge of the terrain, and their tracking skill eventually pay off.

“*The Trail of the Wolf*” (Clear Stream Communications, 2002, 299 pages) is extremely well-researched. W. Richard Trimble describes in detail the guns and bullets used by western settlers, and the geography of the region over which the story takes place. He describes the tenuous relationship between the United States and Mexico back when Arizona and New Mexico were still territories. The book offers a realistic account of life on the western frontier in 1878. And it is also a well-written, exciting story.

— Bettina Bien Greaves

Medianotes

Play it again — “Walk the Line” (20th Century Fox, 2005, 136 minutes), the recent biopic about Johnny Cash, walks a fine line between greatness and imitation. It’s a terrific movie, but following closely on the heels of last year’s phenomenal biopic “Ray,” it feels unfortunately familiar. A young boy grows up in rural poverty, loses his beloved brother in a freak accident, feels lifelong guilt and responsibility for it, finds solace in creating music, falls under the spell of illicit drugs and groupie sex, and ultimately finds salvation through the love of a good woman. Great movies are made of great stories, and this one has it all. But it isn’t receiving the acclaim it probably deserves, because “Ray” did it first and, I think, did it a little bit better.

Still, this is one of the best films of the year (admittedly in a year of disappointing movies). Joaquin Phoenix and Reese Witherspoon, who seems born to play the witty, homespun June Carter, deliver top-notch performances. In fact, the film is as much about June Carter as it is about Johnny Cash. I admit I cringed when I heard that Phoenix and Witherspoon would provide their own voices for the songs, but they both sing remarkably well — Phoenix manages Cash’s deep bass bravado with aching emotion, and

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Witherspoon's southern accent is delightful without being corny. The theme of redemption is subtle but rings true; framed as a flashback during the concert Cash recorded at Folsom Prison, "Walk the Line" is about breaking free from one's own captivity, and finding redemption in a partnership with the woman one loves.

— Jo Ann Skousen

Chomsky's chamber music

— The projectionist starts the reel. The members of Godspeed You Black Emperor! — all nine of them — walk to their seats, images of slums, bombs, and rubble flashing briefly across their faces as they find their chairs. The concert begins without introduction or ostentation: a guitar picks up a simple riff, then another chimes in; two basses complement them, one electric, one upright. A melancholy violin plays over all four, and a cello bows one note, again and again, each time with greater urgency. Two percussionists join in, one tapping out a military cadence on a snare, the other bashing cymbals on the downbeat;

Hell breaks loose as the distorted growls twist every other note into something mutant and unrecognizable.

eight musicians crescendo together, instruments clashing with one another in what should be cacophony, but still the sound hangs together as a whole. The word "hope" splashes on the screen and is gone. At last the third guitarist enters, and hell breaks loose as his distorted growls twist every other note into something mutant and unrecognizable, until the club itself seems about to crumble around them.

Then: silence. "Hope" reappears; the projector rolls on. After a pause, the band does too, and from there swings between stillness and ferocity, crafting a two-hour soundtrack that Morricone would be proud to have scored.

Who was this band Godspeed? When they released their first album,

"f#a# Infinity," (Kranky, 1998, 62 minutes) the musicians were credited only by first name, with no indication of which name went with which instrument. As they grew in fame and spun off into side projects, they became better known; but on stage they remained stubbornly anonymous, returning to the days when they were just a bunch of music students forming a collective in Montreal.

The shift in tense above is not an error: Godspeed are at present on extended hiatus. They may play together again (and I'll dip into my emergency travel funds if they do), but for now most of them seem happiest not sharing a stage. Many progressive *kibbutzim* flame out within a decade; add music to the mix and it's surprising Godspeed toured at all.

A shame, for when they did go on the road, they channeled that tension into unforgettable performances: pro-

test music without the need for tendentious lyrics or rock-star spotlights. Whenever I attended a show of theirs, no matter what mood I started out in (even the time I went costumed as a Republican: cigar, blue blazer, and all) I left with the urge to throw monkey-wrenches into the secret machines of the world. The music is just that stirring.

Their bleak, Chomskyite view of the world always fades once I step outside the club, once I remember that the secret machines run by multinational corporations are less dangerous than the overt, obvious machines at the government's disposal. But the music stays with me, and I can't imagine it's left the members of the band. Perhaps a little time outside is all the Godspeed members will need before they recollect themselves and again make powerful music. There is always hope.

— Andrew Ferguson

Notes on Contributors

Baloo is a *nom de plume* of Rex F. May.

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Patrick Quealy can be seen in his natural habitat, a Seattle coffee shop.

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Jane S. Shaw is a Senior Fellow of PERC — The Property and Environment Research Center in Bozeman, Mont.

Jo Ann Skousen is a writer and critic who lives in New York.

Mark Skousen is the author of *The Making of Modern Economics*.

Fred L. Smith, Jr., is president of the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

Elk Grove, Calif.

Musical note in the *Sacramento Bee*:

As he works on his two legal cases, atheist Michael Newdow is also rehearsing a one-man musical. "Our Coruscating Constitution" will feature Newdow playing guitar, singing about the "brilliance of our Constitution," and explaining his legal battles to remove the phrase "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance.

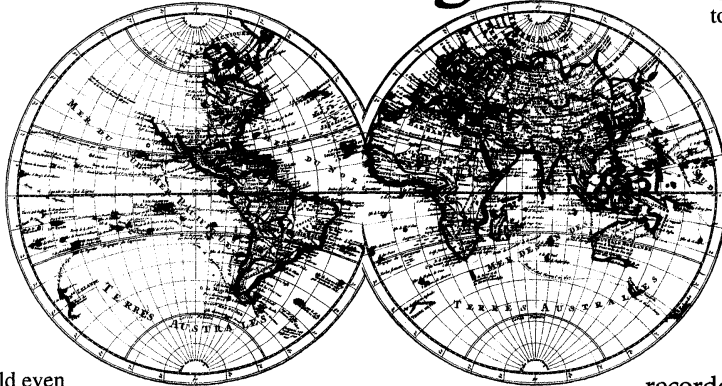
Seattle

Advance in flying fish technology, from the *Seattle Times*:

Alaska Airlines has rolled out its new "Salmon-Thirty-Salmon," the world's most intricately designed jet. It took a crew of 30 almost a month to paint a giant chinook on both sides. It cost five times the standard rate. Greg Latimer, the airline's marketing director, said: "There is no way we could even entertain such a project if we had to incur the cost ourselves."

The paint job was paid for with a federal grant from the Alaska Fisheries Marketing Board, which has spent \$29 million over the past two years to encourage people to eat Alaska salmon.

Terra Incognita



London

A new breed of spy, profiled in the *News Telegraph*:

Daniel Craig, the actor chosen to portray a tougher, grittier James Bond closer to the cold-blooded killer in Ian Fleming's novels, admits he is scared of guns. "I hate handguns. Handguns are used to shoot people and as long as they are around people will shoot each other. That's a simple fact," Craig said. "Bullets have a nasty habit of finding their target and that's what's scary about them."

Copenhagen, Denmark

The battle for equal treatment rages on, chronicled by the *Copenhagen Post*:

A disabled Danish man is fighting for the state to pay for him to have a prostitute visit him at home. Torben Hansen, who has cerebral palsy, which severely affects his mobility, believes his local authority should pay the extra charge he incurs when he hires a sex worker — because his disability means he cannot go to see them. "It's unfair to deny people with disabilities the right to a sex life," Hansen says.

Hansen started seeing a prostitute after attending a course at a social center. There, he and other disabled people were taught that if they had needs, they "could do something about it."

Graz, Austria

Curious way to shame one's hometown, reported in *Kleine Zeitung*:

A majority of members on the Graz City Council voted to rename the Arnold Schwarzenegger Football Stadium after the Austrian-born governor of California approved the execution of convicted multiple murderer Stanley "Tookie" Williams.

Montreal

Climatology takes to the streets, from the *Toronto Globe and Mail*:

Tens of thousands of people ignored frigid temperatures Saturday to lead a worldwide day of protest against global warming.

"Time is running out to deal with climate change," said Steven Guilbeault, the director of the Greenpeace movement for Quebec. "Global warming can mean colder, it can mean drier, it can mean wetter, that's what we're dealing with."

Des Moines, Iowa

Mutually beneficial exchange, recorded in the *Des Moines Register*:

Kathleen Carter, an 18-year veteran of the Des Moines Fire Department, was accused by a Des Moines businessman of using her position as a fire inspector to try to get a better deal on a lawnmower and snowblower she planned to purchase for herself.

Store owner Terry Janssen told police that when he arrived at the store Carter said to him, "We can work together. You need a permit. I need a mower."

In a written statement, Carter admitted her actions could have been misconstrued. "I was a customer, and then, after seeing the repair-garage operation not regulated, I also began to code enforce."

England

Hidden holiday peril, reported in the *Daily Mail*:

Sixty percent of British families end up fighting on Christmas Day because of what they eat, food scientists claim. Helen Conn, a fellow of the Institute of Food Science and Technology, said the turkey dinner contains high levels of salt and carbohydrates, which help make diners grumpy.

Atlanta

The thin blue line separating public transit from chaos, from the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*:

Transit police handcuffed and cited Donald Pirone for selling a \$1.75 subway token at face value to another rider who was having trouble with a token vending machine. Transit authority spokeswoman Jocelyn Baker said Friday that the officer "acted within the law."

As for the handcuffs, Baker said the officer felt they were necessary: "Our officers do that for their own safety."

Special thanks to Russell Garrard, Tom DiMaio, and Philip Todd for contributions to Terra Incognita.

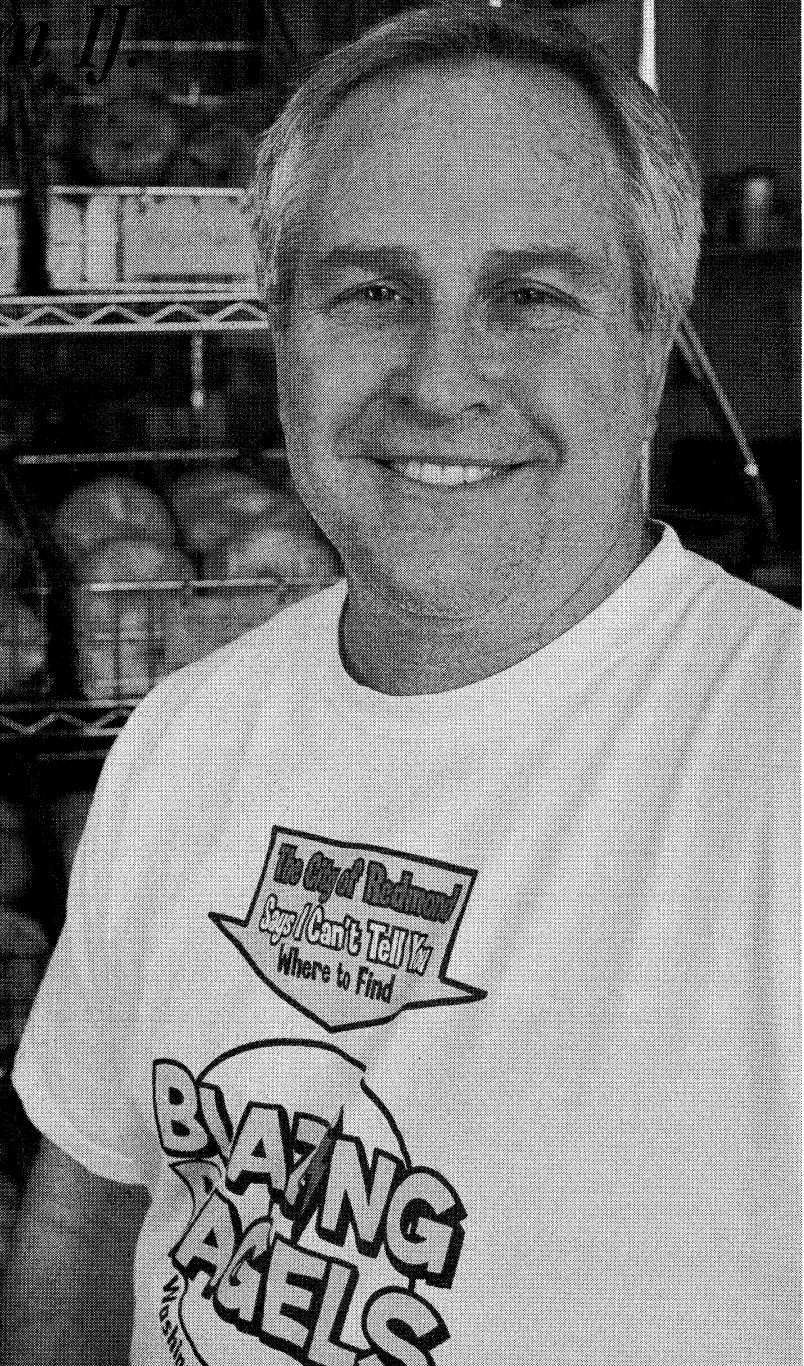
(Readers are invited to forward news clippings or other items for publication in Terra Incognita, or email to terraincognita@libertyunbound.com.)

I couldn't believe the City of Redmond said politicians and realtors
could have portable signs, but my bagel shop couldn't.

If that ban stayed in place, my right to free speech
would have a hole in it bigger than my bagels.

I am fighting for my First Amendment rights.

I am IJ.



*Dennis Ballen
Redmond, WA*

WWW. IJ.ORG

*Institute for Justice
First Amendment litigation*